

Parole Board

Annual Report 2024



An Bord Parúil
The Parole Board





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Following my appointment as Chairperson in January 2025, it is my privilege to present this Annual Report on the work of the Parole Board in 2024.

This report details the activities and work of the Parole Board during 2024. There were 76 parole decisions issued in 2024: 6 of these relate to cases considered in 2023 but the decisions were not issued until 2024.

Of the 108 applications considered in 2024, the Parole Board engaged with victims in 83 of those cases. These were primarily surviving family members, and 70 of those made submissions to the Parole Board. It is a credit to the work of the Parole Board that we were able to engage with so many victims, in the absence of a register of victims of serious crime in Ireland. At our conference we learned that many victims welcome the changes in parole and in particular victims welcome the right to make submissions to the Parole Board, if they so choose. However, many victims also informed us that they found the process lengthy and felt they were in a cycle of making submissions – with most opposing the granting of parole.

Applying for parole is a lengthy process. The legislation envisaged it would take 18 months, and the reality is that it takes at least 18 months for most initial applications. A real challenge for the Parole Board has been the delays we have incurred in receiving reports. We, pursuant

to our legislation, direct the provision of reports from services such as the Irish Prison Service, Probation Service and An Garda Síochána. Yet there are multiple occasions where these reports are not received in a timely manner due primarily, we understand, to those services finding themselves understaffed and under resourced. These reports are critical to the decision making of the Parole Board, and it is inevitable there will be delays in our decision making unless we get the reports we need in the timeframes we need them in.

I would like to thank each Board member for their time, expertise, commitment and dedication to the important role they play in the criminal justice system. It was a pleasure to work alongside them as a fellow Board member in 2024 and I look forward to further engagement in my new role as Chair.

I would especially like to thank Mr Justice Michael White for his exceptional dedication as Chair of the Parole Board since 2021. His hard work and insightful guidance have been truly invaluable to the functioning of the parole system. His commitment and the significant positive impact of his leadership over the past years is most valued.

Finally, a sincere thank you to all the dedicated members of the Parole Board and the Secretariat. Your hard work and commitment are truly appreciated.



A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Margaret Heneghan'.

Ms Justice Margaret Heneghan
Chairperson of the Parole Board

Parole is an important, critical element of our criminal justice system; it has enormous impact on the lives of those applying for parole, their victims, and the wider community.

Of the 108 applications considered in 2024, 70 included a victim’s submission. I would like to thank each victim who shared their experience with us. It is a privilege that you entrust us to hear your experience, and it is not one we take lightly. We are very conscious that making a submission to the Parole Board can be a daunting prospect for many victims. While it is not an easy process, we do try to make it as straightforward as possible. I’m also very aware that not all victims choose to make a submission: as is their right. No victim should feel under pressure to make a submission, it is entirely a decision for themselves. I would encourage all victims to consider registering with the Victim Liaison Services in the Irish Prison Service (IPS), who can provide some information on where the parole applicant is being held, and any significant developments in their sentence.

In 2024, the Parole Board conducted 11 information sessions within prisons nationwide. These meetings served as a platform to engage with parole applicants, those who are eligible to apply for parole, and those who are at earlier stages of their life sentences. We hope that these sessions help in providing clarity on the parole process and the expectations associated with submitting an application. The Parole Board extends its gratitude to the Irish Prison Service for their facilitation of these sessions, which represent an invaluable aspect of our

engagement strategy with parole applicants and eligible prisoners.

Effective decision-making by the Parole Board hinges on the timely provision of quality information and reports from An Garda Síochána, the Probation Service, and the Irish Prison Service (including the IPS Psychology Service). We are deeply thankful for the collaborative support and expertise offered by the Irish Prison Service (including IPS Psychological Services), the Probation Service, An Garda Síochána, and the Courts Service. Their shared insights and expertise are critical to our ability to fulfil our mandate. That said, I am very conscious that not all reports can be provided in a timely fashion. Given the lack of resources across the services, we have found delays in receiving reports an increasing challenge. At the end of 2024 there were 52 applicants who did not have their application considered in a timely fashion, due to delays in our receiving reports – specifically reports from the Irish Prison Service (including the IPS Psychological Services) and the Probation Service. This is something the Parole Board takes very seriously, and we are working with those services to ensure these delays are minimised.

We also made significant progress in 2024 towards a functioning case management system, working in partnership with the Department of Justice. I very much look forward to having a functioning case management system in 2025 and the benefits this will bring to our work. While we had some improvements in our staffing levels in 2024, these were very limited, and we continue to work with the Department of Justice towards the

implementation of our external, independent review of our staffing structures.

The work of the Parole Board is not easy, and can – and should – challenge all of us at times. We hear from both victims and applicants, and it can be difficult to hear what they have to say. I would like to thank the members of the Parole Board, and the Parole Board Secretariat, for their dedication and commitment to their work.

In particular, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Mr Justice Michael White, who chaired the Parole Board with unwavering dedication since 2021, until his retirement in December 2024, for his invaluable hard work and commitment. I look forward to working with Ms Justice Margaret Heneghan in her new role as Chairperson in 2025.

Finally, I would like to thank those who place their trust in us – parole applicants and victims – to deliver

an independent Parole Board, which protects the community, is fair to applicants, and listens to victims. Go raibh maith agaibh.



Cairín de Buis
Chief Executive

Section 1:

Who we are and
what we do

Section 1: Who we are and what we do

The Parole Board is an independent statutory body under the aegis of the Minister for Justice and was established on 31st July 2021 under section 8 of the Parole Act 2019 (“the Act”).

About us

The Parole Board is an independent body that:

- considers parole applications, from people in prison serving a life sentence, and decides whether or not they should be released on parole. Parole involves release from prison under certain conditions;
- considers variations to and revocations of parole orders;
- interacts with victims who have a right to a voice in the parole process.
- undertaking, commissioning or assisting in relevant research projects and making recommendations to the Minister arising from those projects or activities.

The Parole Board has additional functions as set out in section 9 of the Act. In summary, those functions relate to:

- providing information to persons serving sentences of imprisonment, victims and members of the public in relation to its functions;
- providing information to the Minister in relation to its functions and making recommendations to the Minister to assist them in coordinating and making policy; and

Our Core Values

- 1
- We operate with fairness and impartiality in all we do;
- 2
- We are accessible and approachable, and are respectful of the wishes and concerns of all those with whom we engage;
- 3
- We are independent and evidence-based in our decision-making;
- 4
- We strive to protect the community in our work;
- 5
- We are responsible and operate with professionalism, openness and transparency.

Our Vision Statement

Victims and parole applicants are considered, heard and respected, with all decisions reached in a fair and impartial manner.

Our Mission Statement

An independent Parole Board that protects the community, is fair to parole applicants and listens to victims.

Parole Board structure

Under Section 10 of the Parole Act 2019, the Board shall consist of no fewer than 12 and no more than 15 in number and Board members are appointed by the Minister for Justice.

The Chairperson is nominated by the Chief Justice and Board membership includes nominees of the Chief Justice, General Council of the Bar of Ireland, Law Society of Ireland, College of Psychiatrists of Ireland, Psychological Society of Ireland, Director General of the Irish Prison Service, Commissioner of An Garda Síochána and the Director of the Probation Service.

There is also provision for a representative of an NGO that specialises in advocating for the rights of persons serving terms of imprisonment in prisons or the amelioration of conditions in prisons.

As at 31st December 2024, there were 14 members on the Parole Board including the Chairperson, Mr Justice Michael White. 19 Board meetings were held in 2024.

Board member	Date of Appointment	Date of Reappointment (if applicable)	Meetings attended in 2024
Mr Justice Michael White (Re-signed on 31st December 2024)	10 th August 2021		18 of 19
Ms Justice Margaret Heneghan	10 th August 2023		17 of 19
Ms Sinead McMullan BL (Resigned on 26th July 2024)	10 th August 2021	10 th August 2023	11 of 13
Dr Shane McCarthy	10 th August 2021	10 th August 2023	18 of 19
Dr Patrick Devitt	10 th August 2021		15 of 19
Dr Laura Mannion	10 th August 2021	10 th August 2023	18 of 19
Ms Leah McCormack	10 th August 2021		13 of 14
Mr Paddy Richardson	10 th August 2021		19 of 19
Ms Ann Reade	10 th August 2021	10 th August 2023	18 of 19
Mr Kieran Kenny	10 th August 2021	10 th August 2023	18 of 19
Mr Andrew Brennan	02 nd June 2022		18 of 19
Chief Superintendent Brian Sugrue	14 th April 2023	10 th August 2023	19 of 19
Dr Lisa Cuthbert	10 th August 2023		17 of 19
Dr Geraldine O'Hare	01 st August 2023		17 of 19
Dr Brendan Rooney	1 st April 2024		10 of 12

Chief Executive

The Chief Executive of the Parole Board is Ciairín de Buis.

Gender Balance

As at 31 December, the Board had 6 (42%) female and 8 (58%) male members, including the Chairperson, with 1 position vacant. The Board therefore meets the Government target of a minimum of 40% representation of each gender in the membership of State Boards.

Committees

There are currently 2 sub committees of the Parole Board. The Finance, Audit, Risk and Governance (FARG) Committee and the Victim Engagement Committee.

The members of the FARG Committee are Dr Shane McCarthy (Chairperson), Mr Paddy Richardson, Dr

Geraldine O'Hare and Ms Noella Carroll (external member). There were 8 FARG Committee meetings held in 2024.

The members of the Victim Engagement Committee are Dr Laura Mannion, Chairperson Michael White and Mr Kieran Kenny. There were no Victim Engagement Committee meetings held in 2024. The Victim Engagement Committee was established to agree procedures to identify, contact and engage with relevant victims. The committee has fulfilled its obligations within the victim engagement process. Victim engagement is routinely discussed at Parole Board meetings.

FARG Committee member	Committee Meetings attended in 2024
Dr Shane McCarthy	8 of 8
Mr Paddy Richardson	8 of 8
Dr Geraldine O'Hare	4 of 5
Noella Carroll (External Committee member)	7 of 8

Secretariat Overview

The Parole Board is supported by a team of Secretariat staff which operates across two functions: Operations and Corporate Affairs. As of 31st December, there were 21 staff and 1 Legal Intern who is on placement with the Secretariat for 9 months. There were 2 vacancies at the end of the year. Staff numbers are due to increase in 2025.

The Secretariat performs a wide range of duties to enable the Board to carry out their duties in line with the Parole Act 2019.

How the Parole Board Operates

Parole involves release from prison under certain conditions. If granted parole, the parolee must follow all the conditions of their parole order. The parolee is still serving a life sentence, while in the community. The parolee may be returned to prison if they reoffend or break any of the conditions of the parole order.

When deciding on an application, the Parole Board considers many factors including:

- the potential risk of harm to the public;
- the rehabilitation of the applicant;
- the capacity of the applicant to successfully reintegrate into society;
- whether it is appropriate the applicant be released on parole.

For the purposes of considering an application for parole, or the variation or revocation of a parole order, the Parole Board has the power to direct that a written report in respect of the relevant person be prepared and furnished to it from relevant services including: the Irish Prison Service, the Irish Prison Service Psychology Service, the Probation Service, An Garda Síochána, a psychiatrist, a psychologist and medical practitioners.

Applications for parole are considered at meetings of the full Parole Board. The quorum necessary for a meeting of the Board to proceed is 8 members. The Parole Board, at its meetings, decides whether or not to grant parole.

When considering a parole application, the Parole Board can:

- meet with a relevant victim to hear from them directly or through their legal representative and/or
- receive written submissions from a relevant victim directly or through their legal representative.

Meetings with victims are held separately to the Parole Board's meeting with the parole applicant.

The Parole Board has a Legal Aid Scheme in place and legal assistance is made available free of charge to the parole applicant and to the victim, should they wish to avail of it.

Decisions to grant or refuse parole

The Parole Board’s decision-making process is outlined in section 27 of the Parole Act 2019.

The Parole Board may decide to either grant or refuse a parole application. In its considerations, the Parole Board shall have regard to a number of matters such as:

- The nature and gravity of the offence,
- The sentence of imprisonment imposed on the applicant and the period of such a sentence served,
- Any other offence for which the applicant has been convicted of,
- The conduct of the applicant while serving their sentence,
- The risk of the applicant committing an offence while on parole,
- The risk of the applicant failing to comply with any conditions attached to their release,
- Any treatment, education or training the applicant has undergone while serving their sentence,
- Any report relating to the applicant which has been prepared to assist the Board in their decision,
- Any meeting between the applicant and the Board,
- Any meeting between the relevant victim(s) and the Board, and
- Any submissions provided by or on behalf of the applicant or relevant victim(s).

The Parole Board may also vary or revoke an existing parole order.

108

The Parole Board considered 108 applications in 2024

76

Final decisions issued by the year end

11

Temporary Release Recommendations

9

Recommendation to transfer an applicant to an open centre

62

Applicants were refused parole

14

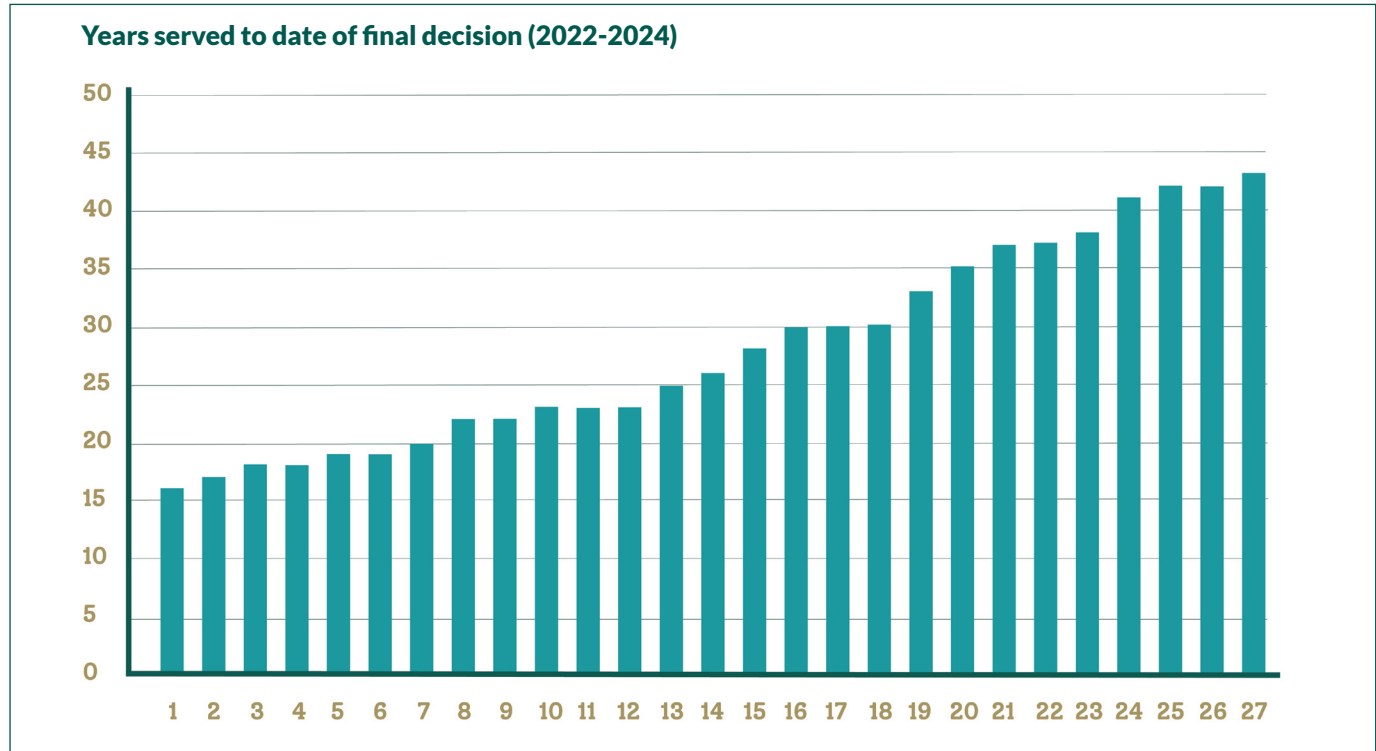
Applicants were granted a parole order

7

Variations made to 7 parole orders

1

Parole order revoked



Breakdown of length of time served in prison
Amongst those granted parole, the length of time served ranged from 16 to 43 years.

Engagement with applicants
11 information sessions were held in prisons across the country in 2024. During these meetings, we meet with parole applicants, including those eligible to apply, as well as those earlier in their life sentence, to discuss the parole process and what they can expect when they make a parole application. Key issues which arose during these meetings include lack of access to support services in prison and delays in having cases considered.



Shelton Abbey at Christmas



Illustration of Risk and Rehabilitation discussion - drafted at Parole Board's inaugural Conference

Engagement with Victims

When a crime is committed and the perpetrator is serving a life sentence for the crime, the victim has a right to a voice in the parole process.

The Parole Act 2019 defines a “victim” as:

- A person who has suffered harm, including physical, mental or emotional harm or economic loss, which was directly caused by a criminal offence for which the prisoner is serving a term of life imprisonment;
- The family members of a person whose death was directly caused by a criminal offence and who have suffered harm including physical, mental, or emotional harm, or economic loss as a direct result of that crime.

Victim submissions

When a person serving a life sentence applies for parole, victims can make a submission to the Parole Board, if they wish to do so.

A submission is generally a victim's account, in their own words, of the effect and impact the crime has had on them and can also include the effect on the wider family. Victims share with the Parole Board how the offence has affected them and how they think the applicant's release could potentially affect them, their family and their community.

In 2024 the Secretariat engaged with 104 victims and 33 meetings between Parole Board members and victims took place. 101 victim submissions were made to the Parole Board in 2024.

A victim can also ask the Parole Board to consider specific conditions they would like to see attached to a person's parole order, if granted. Meetings with victims are held separately to, and in advance of, the Parole Board's meeting with the parole applicant.

Free legal aid is available to victims to assist them in making their submission. Victims availed of free legal aid in 16 parole cases during 2024.

If they wish, victims can be made aware of the outcome once the Parole Board has made its decision on the parole application. Victims can register with the Parole Board by completing the registration form available on the Parole Board website www.gov.ie/paroleboard



Parole Board was represented in the 'Supporting Victims of Crime' tent at the Ploughing Championships 2024

Section 1: Who we are and what we do

Section 2:

Progress we have made in 2024



Illustration of victims' perspective - drafted at the Parole Board inaugural Conference

2024 Statistics: At a glance



Our Goals

The Parole Board identified 5 key goals in its Strategic Plan 2023–2026.



An overview of 2024

Improving Our Work

- Increased number of applications considered
- Protocol agreed and operational with the Probation Service, Irish Prison Service and An Garda Síochána
- Sanction for additional staff obtained in 2024
- A review of victim and applicant materials commenced
- Reviewed existing processes for victim identification. Ongoing monitoring and refining of process

Training for Board members in:

- Co-facilitation
- Child Safeguarding
- Data Protection

Training for Secretariat staff in:

- Child Safeguarding
- Resilience
- Fire Warden
- First Aid training
- Cyber security
- Just a Minute (JAM)
- Equality & Human Rights
- Data Protection

Board self-assessment

- Annual self-evaluation of performance
- FARG self-evaluation of performance
- External evaluation of the Board’s work

Stakeholder engagement and Outreach

- 11 information sessions in prisons in 2024
- Public information campaign ‘My Voice Counts/Your Voice Counts’ across local and national radio, local and national print media, and with a digital presence

Participation and/or attendance at:

- World Congress on Probation and Parole (The future of probation and parole) in The Hague
- Probation (Prisons Region) National Conference
- Training session of the Prison Visiting Committees
- Irish Criminal Justice Agencies (ICJA) Conference annual conference
- National Ploughing Championships at the ‘Supporting Victims of Crime’ information tent

Parole Board’s Inaugural conference held in November with over 100 attendees

Our conference featured 3 panel discussions on the themes of:

- The role of victims in the parole process
- Risk and Rehabilitation
- Learning from others

These panel discussions fostered in-depth engagement and laid a strong foundation for future advancements and collaborations within the justice system



Parole Board Inaugural Conference

Working with the Department of Justice

- Performance Delivery Agreement agreed
- Met with Minister McEntee in January
- Ongoing liaison with Department of Justice IT to scope requirements for a suitable case management system. This will progress in 2025



CEO meeting with Minister McEntee

Section 3:

Areas we continue to work on

Section 3: Areas we continue to work on

Challenges to achieving our goals during the year

There were a number of areas we were unable to progress as hoped for a variety of reasons, largely due to resource challenges:

Reports

- We experienced significant delays receiving reports from some services in 2024 which impacted our timelines. Pursuant to s13 of the Parole Act 2019, the Parole Board directs the provision of such reports to assist in its consideration of individual parole applications. Delays in the receipt of such reports significantly contributes to delays in considering parole applications in a timely fashion. The matter was discussed by the Finance, Audit, Risk and Governance (FARG) Committee and at Board level. We are engaging with the relevant services and will continue to monitor this issue.

Staffing and Resources

- PwC were appointed in 2023 to complete an external, independent review of the Parole Board Secretariat structure and resources. The PwC report was shared with the Department of Justice in 2024. The report finds that the Parole Board is significantly understaffed and that several new roles

are required – the most critical across senior and management level. We will continue to engage with the Department of Justice in relation to our staffing requirements, and to ensure that we are directly involved in the recruitment of staff before they are assigned to the Parole Board.

- Due to a lack of adequate staffing, a number of areas of work could not be carried out. These include reviewing our publications and leaflets, greater awareness raising and research.
- In November 2024 the Parole Board's budget allocation was significantly reduced. Several large invoices went unpaid by year end and this may negatively impact next year's budget.
- The entire parole system and process is currently run in the absence of a case management system, and is reliant on excel spreadsheets, institutional knowledge and individual memory. It is a significant risk for the Parole Board and one that is increasing as the number of applicants grows.
- There has been some progress on the matter and the Parole Board has been engaging with the Department of Justice since February 2024 to scope system requirements.

Section 4:

Compliance and Governance Overview

Section 4: Compliance and Governance Overview

The Chairperson’s Statement of Internal Control (extract from the Chairperson’s Comprehensive Report to the Minister) is at Appendix 1.

As at 31st December 2024, the Parole Board had complied with the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies.

Performance Delivery and Oversight

In April 2022, the Parole Board signed an Oversight Agreement 2022-2024 with the Department of Justice (our line Department). We agree a Performance Delivery Agreement on an annual basis in accordance with the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies.

The Oversight Agreement sets out the broad governance and administrative accountability framework within which the Parole Board operates and defines the key statutory and administrative roles, responsibilities and commitments which underpin the relationship between the Parole Board and the Department of Justice.

Risk Management

The Parole Board operates a formal risk management policy and maintains a Risk Register, in accordance with the Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform guidelines.

The maintenance of the Register is designed to ensure that risks are identified and assessed and necessary

mitigating actions, when necessary, are put in place. The Risk Register is compiled by the Head of Corporate Affairs and reviewed monthly by management. It is also reviewed by the FARG Committee at its meetings and subsequently by the full Board. The Annual Report of the FARG Committee is available at Appendix 2.

Protected Disclosures

There were no protected disclosures in 2024.

Conflicts Of Interest

The Secretary to the Parole Board maintains a register of conflicts of interest disclosed by Board members. As at 31st December 2024, there were 19 conflicts of interest on individual cases disclosed to the Secretary.

Where a conflict of interest is disclosed, Board members remove themselves from any discussion and will not read any documentation relating to the application of the individual concerned. There were no conflicts of any other nature disclosed.

Procurement

The Parole Board has procedures in place to ensure compliance with current procurement rules and guidelines. Where appropriate, the Parole Board will procure goods and services in line with EPA Green Public Procurement Guidance and using and using the Green Public Procurement GPP Criteria Search where appropriate. There were no above-threshold procurement needs in 2024 to which this applied.

Public Sector Duty and Human Rights Obligations

Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014 imposes a statutory obligation on public bodies in performing their functions to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote the equality of opportunity and treatment for staff and persons to whom it provides services and protect the human rights of staff and stakeholders. The Parole Board acknowledges this duty and is committed to its full implementation. The Parole Board was mindful of this duty in the performance of its functions in 2024, in particular in dealing with victims and parole applicants.

Health & Safety

The health and wellbeing of our staff and Board members is a key consideration and due to the nature of the work, a counselling service is available to all staff and Board members. Regular events and training are also organised to support staff in their work.

Energy Usage and Climate Action

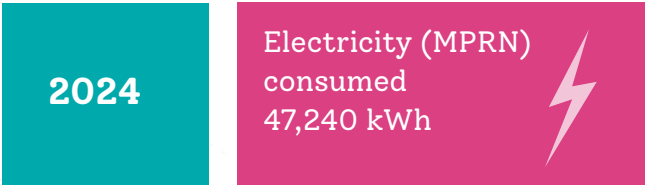
The Parole Board has a designated Energy Performance Officer (EPO) at Assistant Principal level that is responsible for oversight of the energy efficiency performance.

The Public Sector Climate Action Mandate was approved by Government in May 2023. The Parole Board appointed a Climate and Sustainability Champion, established a Green Team and introduced

our first Climate Action Roadmap in 2023. We have identified a number of key actions to be prioritised in the Roadmap, and we have set targets to make improvements and reduce our carbon footprint in 2025. We will continue to update this Roadmap under the guidance of SEAI and it will be reviewed annually.

Energy Usage Data For 2024 From The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI)

The table below sets out the return made by the Parole Board to the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) in compliance with S.I. No. 426 of 2014.



Data Protection Compliance

The Parole Board takes its responsibility in respect of information security and privacy and its obligations under relevant legislation very seriously. A preliminary assessment was carried out on the Parole Board’s compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) requirements and related procedures and processes. The Parole Board continues to develop policies, systems and procedures placing considerable emphasis on staff awareness and training, aimed at ensuring compliance with the requirements of

data protection legislation. Staff of the Secretariat and Board members attended training on data protection matters in 2024.

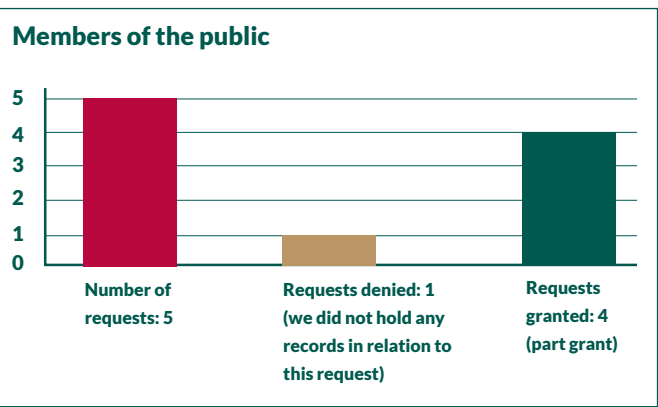
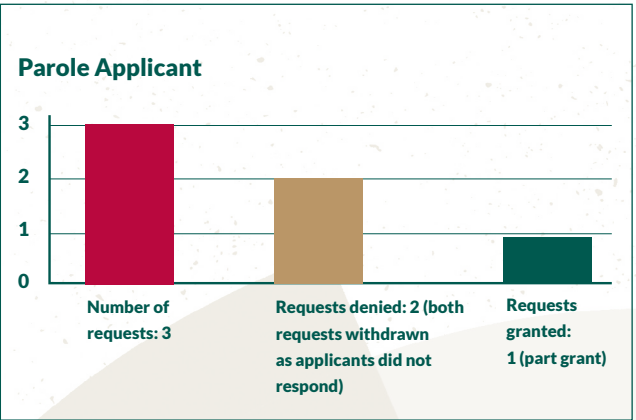
Access To Information On The Environment (AIE)

The Access to Information on the Environment (AIE) Regulations 2007 - 2018 gives citizens the right to access information on the environment from public authorities. The Parole Board did not receive any AIE requests in 2024.

Freedom Of Information (FOI) Requests

Type of request received	Number of requests	Request denied	Request granted	Requests partially granted
Parole Applicant	3	1	1	1
Member of public	7	4	2	1

Subject Access Requests



Data Breaches

There were no data breaches in 2024.

Parliamentary Questions (PQs)

The Parole Board answered 2 PQs in 2024. This does not include contributions to Departmental PQs.

Under circular 25/2016, State Bodies under the aegis of Government Departments must provide and maintain a dedicated email address for Oireachtas members. The Parole Board’s email address for this purpose is: oireachtasqueries@paroleboard.gov.ie

Service Users Charter

The Parole Board’s Service Users Charter is available on its website www.gov.ie/paroleboard. It sets out the standards of service users can expect to receive from us. No complaints were received in 2024.

Section 5:

Financial overview and expenditure in 2024

Section 5: Financial overview and expenditure in 2024

Financial provision for the operation of the Parole Board is provided by the Department of Justice annually. In 2024 the Parole Board received a budget allocation of €2,500,000. However, in November the Department of Justice reduced the Board’s allocation by €217,000. A number of invoices were not paid until January 2025, amounting to €149,000, this may have significant impact on the Board’s 2025 budget. Financial information presented for 2024 is, as yet, unaudited.

Grant Income	2024	2023
	€	€
Department of Justice (Vote 24 Subhead A17)	2,331,977	2,167,938
	2,331,977	2,167,938

Board Member Fees And Expenses

In 2024, members of the Board and FARG Sub Committee were paid the following fees and expenses:-

Membership	Fee (€)	Expenses(€)
Mr Michael White	20,766	-
Ms Sinéad McMullan BL	8,297	-
Dr Shane McCarthy	17,349	24,155
Dr Patrick Devitt	12,565	-
Dr Laura Mannion	13,612	11,678
Ms Leah McCormack	-	-
Mr Paddy Richardson	19,143	11,298
Ms Ann Reade	15,107	4,838
Mr Kieran Kenny	19,891	21,695
Mr Andrew Brennan	-	-
Chief Superintendent Brian Sugrue	-	8,801
Ms Noella Carroll (FARG)	1,980	3,173
Dr Geraldine O'Hare	13,313	11,683
Dr Lisa Cuthbert	15,107	3,927
Ms Justice Margaret Heneghan	14,060	6,500
Dr Brendan Rooney*	-	-
TOTAL	171,190	107,748

Fees include Per Diems, where applicable

Ms Leah McCormack, Chief Superintendent Brian Sugrue and Mr Andrew Brennan did not receive a fee under the One Person One salary (OPOS) principle.

*Dr Brendan Rooney did not receive a fee under the One Person One Salary (OPOS) principle. A payment of €8,978 was made to his employer for the period 1st April 2024 to 31st December 2024.

CEO Remuneration

The CEO’s salary for the year ended 31st December 2024 was €113,179 (2023: €108,299). No benefits were paid to the CEO during the year. Additional Superannuation Contributions (ASC) were deducted in line with statutory requirements.

Consultancy Costs

Consultancy costs include the cost of external advice to management and exclude outsourced ‘business-as-usual’ functions.

	2024	2023
	€	€
Organisational Design review	-	61,308
Design of Strategic Plan	-	4,614
Psychology expert report	-	2,200
Governance Advisory	-	4,428
Communication support	1,107	-
Recruitment	7,737	-
Board Evaluation	2,337	-
Total	11,181	72,550

Travel and Subsistence Expenditure

Travel and subsistence expenditure is categorised as follows:

	2024	2023
	€	€
Board Members – Foreign Travel	-	-
Staff Members – Foreign Travel	151	217
Board Members – Domestic Travel	107,748	81,795
Staff Members – Domestic Travel (includes taxi costs)	32,871	35,599
Total	140,770	117,611

The Parole Board has offset carbon emissions as per Circular 01/2020 in respect of foreign travel undertaken in 2024.

Hospitality Expenditure

Hospitality expenditure incurred during the year ended 31st December 2024 was €1,367 (2023: €1,008)

Appendix 1:

Chairperson's Statement of Internal Control

Appendix 1: Chairperson's Statement of Internal Control

I acknowledge that the Parole Board is responsible for the internal controls and that the system can provide reasonable but not absolute assurance against material error.

I am familiar with the *Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies* and can confirm the following:

- There have been no off-balance sheet financial transactions.
- There have been no commercially significant developments during the reporting period.
- The Parole Board is compliant with current procurement rules and guidelines.
- All appropriate procedures for financial reporting, internal audit, travel, and procurement have been carried out.
- A Code of Conduct for Parole Board members is in place.
- The Parole Board operated in compliance with the Government policy on pay of the Chief Executive and employees.
- The payment of Board members fees is in accordance with Government guidelines.
- The Parole Board is compliant with the Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform's public spending code.
- The Parole Board is in compliance with tax law and travel guidelines.
- There are no legal disputes with other State bodies. The Parole Board does not have any subsidiaries.
- Procedures are in place to allow for protected disclosures required under section 22(1) of the Protected Disclosures Act 2014.
- In accordance with circular 25/2016, the Parole Board has a dedicated email address for the provision of information to members of the Houses of the Oireachtas and adheres to the standards set out in that circular.

The Parole Board's system of Internal Control is based on a framework of regular management information, administrative procedures including segregation of duties, and a system of delegation and accountability. In particular, it includes:

- An appropriate budgeting system with an annual budget which is reviewed regularly by the senior management team.
- Regular reviews by senior management of periodic and annual financial reports.
- A risk management system that is fit-for-purpose.
- Clearly assigned management responsibilities, with corresponding accountability.

Both the Finance Audit Risk and Governance (FARG) Committee and the Parole Board conducted a review of effectiveness of the internal controls in December 2024 and are satisfied with the controls in place.

¹ Extract from the Parole Board's Draft Financial Statements 2024 which will be audited by the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General in 2025

Appendix 1: Chairperson’s Statement of Internal Control

No breaches of control have occurred nor have there been material losses or frauds, to the best of my knowledge.

The Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) completed an audit of the Board’s 2023 Financial Statements, and all recommendations were, or are, being addressed. 2024 draft Financial Statements were submitted to the C&AG in March and will be audited later this year and published to the Parole Board’s website accordingly.

Earlier this year, the Internal Audit Unit of the Department of Justice carried out an audit of the internal controls operating in the Parole Board in 2024. The audit findings provide assurance to the Board and the Chief Executive in the Parole Board that an effective system of internal controls was maintained and operated.

I confirm that an Oversight Agreement is in place with the Department of Justice, which indicates compliance with the requirements of the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies. The Oversight Agreement

runs to 2027. The Parole Board also has an annual Performance Delivery Agreement in place with the Department of Justice and reports periodically on the targets and outcomes in that agreement.

On behalf of the Parole Board



Justice Margaret Heneghan
Chairperson

Appendix 2

Finance, Audit, Risk and
Governance Committee
Annual Report 2024

FARG Committee Chairperson’s
Statement

It is my pleasure to present the Annual Report of the Parole Board’s Finance, Audit, Risk and Governance (FARG) Committee setting out the Committee’s activities during the period 1 st January 2024 to 31 st December 2024.

The Committee met on 8 occasions during 2024. The Committee achieved all of the actions set out in its Work Plan for 2024 with the exception of one item which was to review metrics from the radio information campaign for victims that ran in Quarter 4 of 2023. This could not be completed due to lack of availability of the required statistics from the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO) due to a technical issue with their website analytics.

Looking ahead to 2025, the Committee plans to meet 7 times during the year and has recently finalised its annual Work Plan with tasks for each quarter.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank my fellow Committee members for their work during 2024 and to the CEO and staff of the Secretariat for their continued support.



Dr Shane McCarthy
Chair of the FARG Committee
March 2025

1. Role of the Committee

The Parole Board constituted a Finance, Audit, Risk and Governance (FARG) Committee in March 2022 to ensure:

- effective review and monitoring of financial and other risks;
- reliable management and financial reporting;
- compliance with laws and regulations;
- maintenance of an effective and efficient audit;
- a comprehensive risk management process is in place.

The FARG Committee reports to the Board and its main objective is to assist the Board in fulfilling its functions by providing independent and timely advice to the Board on areas within its remit.

2. Responsibilities of the FARG Committee

The Committee acts in an advisory capacity. Full responsibility for the organisation’s affairs lies with the Parole Board.

In order to meet its responsibilities, the FARG Committee may investigate any matter which falls within the scope and remit of the Terms of Reference of the Committee. It will be granted access to any information it requires to do this and may seek external professional advice if it deems necessary

The Committee may procure specialist expert advice at the reasonable expense of the Parole Board, as necessary.

A summary of the Committee’s responsibilities is set out hereunder:

2.1 Effective Review and Monitoring of Financial Risks

To be constantly aware of the current areas of greatest risk and ensure the management team are effectively managing the risk.

To satisfy itself that effective systems of accounting and internal control, including computerised information systems are established and maintained to manage risk.

To satisfy itself as regards the integrity and prudence of management control systems, including the review of policies and/or practices.

To ensure that the Board is aware of any matters that might have a significant impact on the financial condition or affairs of the Parole Board.

2.2 Reliable Management and Financial Reporting

To review and assess the adequacy of management reporting to the Board in terms of the quantity, quality and timing of information necessary to understand and report internally and externally on the risks, operations and financial condition.

To review the annual draft financial statements and other financial information before submission to the Board, where possible.

2.3 Maintenance of an Effective and Efficient Audit

To recommend to the Board the appointment of the internal and external auditors, as required.
To review the efficiency and effectiveness of both the internal and external auditors in relation to their respective responsibilities.

To ensure there have been no unjustified restrictions or limitations placed on the auditors.

To ensure that the scope of the audit (external and internal) is adequate, ensuring emphasis is placed on areas where the FARG Committee, management or the auditors believe special emphasis is necessary.

To review and assess the findings of the internal and external auditors and the action taken and timetable proposed by management in response to the findings.

2.4 Duties Relating To Governance and Risk Management

The Committee shall:

- review the establishment and maintenance of an effective system of integrated governance
- risk management and internal control, across the whole of the organisation's activities

- develop a risk appetite statement in line with it strategic objectives, for Board approval
- review the adequacy and effectiveness of the process for the identification, impact
- assessment and occurrence assessment of regulatory, operational and financial risk
- review the adequacy and effectiveness of external auditors and other services that may be procured by the Board
- review the adequacy and effectiveness of controls operated by management to mitigate regulatory, operational, financial, reputational and other risks
- review draft policies, as relevant to the Committee, before submission to the Board
- report to the Board on matters relating to the process for risk assessment and management of action/s to mitigate risk/s.

2.5 Other Responsibilities

To report any matter identified during the course of carrying out its duties that the Finance, Audit, Risk & Governance Committee considers should be brought to the attention of the Board.
To perform or undertake on behalf of the Board any such other tasks or actions as the Board may from time to time authorise.
To ensure that there are arrangements by which staff of the organisation and Board members may, in confidence, raise concerns about possible improprieties in matters of financial reporting or other relevant matters.

3. Committee Membership

The Committee is appointed by the Board comprising of 3 Board Members: Dr Shane McCarthy (Chairperson of the Committee), Dr Geraldine O'Hare (joined the Committee in June 2024), Mr Paddy Richardson and 1 external member: Ms Noella Carroll.

The Chief Executive, and relevant members of the Senior Management Team support and attend the meetings.

4. Meetings

The Committee met on 8 occasions in 2024. The Committee is scheduled to meet 7 times in 2025.

The Committee aims to meet approximately every 2 months. The quorum for the Committee to meet is 2 Committee members.

Minutes of the FARG Committee meetings are provided at Board meetings for information and discussion and matters of note are raised as specific items on the Board meeting agenda.

The Chair of the Committee provides an update to the Board at each of the governance Board meetings which are held at least 4 times a year.

5. Reporting

Summary of work undertaken by the Committee in 2024

- The Committee reviewed a number of corporate documents including the Child Protection Policy, Risk Register, Risk Management Policy, procurement Policy and Corporate Procurement Plan
- Reviewed the Risk Register and had an in depth discussion on one high level risk item at each relevant meeting
- Developed a Risk Appetite Statement which was adopted by the Board
- Conducted annual budget planning and presented to the Board, a mid-year financial review and realignment of projected expenditure was also undertaken
- Reviewed monthly expenditure reports and compared actual vs budgeted expenditure
- Monitored procurement and purchasing activity
- Financial Statements 2023 were reviewed in advance of proposing to the Board for audit by the Office of the Comptroller & Auditor General (C&AG)

- Tracked progress on the implementation of recommendations arising from the Office of the C&AG’s audit of the Parole Board’s Financial Statements and the recommendations of the Department of Justice Internal Audit Review of Internal Controls 2022
- Conducted a self-assessment in line with requirements set out in the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies
- Reviewed the adequacy and effectiveness of controls operated by management to mitigate regulatory, operational, financial, reputational and other risks
- The Committee also held a standalone meeting to discuss delays receiving reports from some Services. Pursuant to s13 of the Parole Act 2019, the Parole Board directs the provision of such reports to assist in its consideration of individual parole applications. Delays in the receipt of such reports significantly contributes to delays in considering parole applications in a timely fashion. The Committee made recommendations to the Board and discussed the matter with the relevant services. There has been some improvement however the delays are impacting the Parole Board’s timelines. We will continue to monitor this issue.

Findings of the Committee

- C&AG audit of the Parole Board’s 2023 financial statements were completed. The draft findings do not show areas for concern
- Review by the Committee and Board of the internal controls in place found that they are adequate.

Summary of key risks to the Board:

- Lack of a case management system to conduct the work of the Parole Board safely and efficiently continues to be a high level risk. The Parole Board Secretariat is working with the Department of Justice on developing a system and the matter will be monitored closely by the FARG Committee and the Board in 2025. The Parole Board is reliant on the Department of Justice to progress this matter
- Challenges with adequate resourcing of the Secretariat and Board member caseload continue to be a risk. The Secretariat will continue to liaise with the Department of Justice to attain the necessary resources and recruit additional staff
- Staff and Board member wellbeing is an ongoing challenge, given the nature of the work of the Board
- Risk that current structure of the Board would be unable to support the level of work arising from any extension of its remit to other prisoner groups

- Were this to happen without legislative amendment the current structure would become unworkable and the current resources to the Parole Board would be insufficient. The CEO of the Parole Board is a member of and contributes to the Department of Justice’s Parole Working Group. The Committee will continue to monitor this matter and issues will be raised with the Department as necessary.

The Committee will continue to monitor these and all other risks captured in the Risk Register closely with a view to ensuring adequate risk mitigation measures are in place.

6. Planned work for 2025

The Board has approved a Work Plan for the FARG Committee for 2025. Some of the tasks included in that Plan are set out hereunder:

- Approve draft Financial Statements 2024 for subsequent approval by the full Parole Board
- Ensure any findings of the C&AG audit report are implemented
- Review the findings of the Department of Justice Internal Audit (taking place in Q1 2025) and ensure findings are addressed/implemented as necessary.
- Review the Board’s Risk Appetite Statement
- Continue to review corporate policies

- Continue to review the Risk Register and work to mitigate against high level risks in particular
- Set aside time to consider as a Committee any new risks not already captured in the Risk Register. Bring any new risks identified to the Board’s attention for further consideration
- Monitor expenditure of the Parole Board’s budget allocation
- Review metrics from the Q4 2024 information campaign for victims, if metrics are available from the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO)
- Continue to track progress on the recommendations from the GDPR compliance assessment that was carried out in 2023
- Monitor progress by the Department of Justice on the matter of implementing a case management system for the Parole Board
- Conduct a self-assessment of the Committee.

