

Annual Report 2025



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



An Bord Parúil
The Parole Board



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Foreword

Chairperson



Over the course of 2025 the Parole Board continued to progress its functions and strategic objectives as set out in the Parole Act 2019.

During the year, the Parole Board held 15 board meetings. In these meetings, 81 parole applications were considered by the Parole Board and 55 final parole decisions issued by year end. 44 parole applications were refused, 12 parole orders were granted, 24 parole orders were varied and 3 parole orders were revoked. In addition to consideration of applications and issuing of decisions, the board secretariat conducted 11 information sessions in various prisons around the country to provide information to relevant parties on the parole process.

Victim engagement is a key part of the parole process. The Parole Board received 50 written victim submissions in 2025. The Parole Board Secretariat engaged with 138 victims in total in 2025, and 31 meetings between Parole Board members and victims took place. While the Parole Board try to ensure the process is as straightforward as it can be, we are very conscious that the making of victim's submissions can be very challenging. We are very aware of the trauma experienced by the families we meet with, and we are further aware of how that trauma can continue through generations. We know that many victims welcome the opportunity for engagement with the Parole Board, but we also recognise that not all victims choose to make a submission. Some victims choose to rely on an original submission if the applicant makes further applications later in their sentence. As a Board, we recognise that every victim must choose what is right for them to do, without feeling under pressure to make, or not to make, a submission.

I would like to thank my colleagues for their work in ensuring information sessions happen across the prison system. This is a vital part of our work and gives those serving a life sentence the opportunity to hear directly about the parole process and to ask any questions they may have. While we have information leaflets available, we are conscious that literacy can sometimes pose challenges amongst parole applicants, and these information sessions are a particularly important part of our work.

There was ongoing liaison throughout 2025 with the Department of Justice, Home Affairs & Migration (DOJHAM) with a view to developing a Case Management System for the Parole Board, and I look forward to its implementation in 2026. I would like to thank the members of the Project Team Board,

as well as those working on the development of our Case Management System. The eventual introduction of a functional Case Management System will be a significant step forward for the Parole Board.

Over the course of 2025, the Parole Board's Finance, Audit, Risk and Governance Committee met 7 times. Their report is contained in this Annual Report and outlines their considerations throughout the year. I would like to thank each of the members of the committee for their hard work.

Throughout the year the Parole Board continued to build on its strong relationships with its various stakeholders and I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation to each of our stakeholders for their engagement and important input in the parole process. In its decision making, the Parole Board values the expertise and information shared with us by An Garda Síochána, the Irish Prison Service (including IPS Psychology Service), the Probation Service, the Courts Service and others. The Parole Board also welcomes the participation of parole applicants and that of victims. I would like to thank all of those services and individuals, who contribute to and participate in the parole process.

I would further like to thank each Parole Board member for their time, expertise, commitment and dedication to the important role they play in the criminal justice system. I am very grateful to the Chief Executive, Ciairín de Buis, and staff of the Parole Board Secretariat for their ongoing hard work.

I look forward to building on our achievements in the year ahead.



Margaret Heneghan

Ms Justice Margaret Heneghan
Chairperson of the Parole Board

A Note from the Chief Executive

Ciairín de Buis

It is my honour and privilege to present the Parole Board Annual Report 2025 outlining our work and impact for the year.

Parole is a critically important element of the criminal justice system, one that has enormous impact on the lives of those applying for parole, their victims and public safety.

We have now been engaging with victims for past 4 years. One common theme we hear from many victims is that they can feel they are in a 'cycle' of submissions to the Parole Board. That the (maximum) 2-year gap between applications is too short. Some victims tell us they have barely had time to absorb the impact of our decision, when they are preparing to make their next submission. This is something that can only be changed legislatively – it is something we have raised with the Department of Justice, Home Affairs & Migration (DOJHAM), along with other aspects of the legislation.

I strongly encourage any victims to consider registering with the Victim Liaison Service in the Irish Prison Service (IPS), who can provide information and updates on where the parole applicant is being held, and any significant developments in their sentence.

We have also now been engaging with parole applicants for 4 years. Each year, we meet with people serving life sentences in prisons across the country to explain the

parole process and to answer any questions they may have. Over the past 4 years those serving a life sentence have had an opportunity to attend information sessions in prison. The sessions are also open to prison based services and staff to attend. Throughout 2025 we continued to meet with those serving life sentences across the prison system. Information leaflets are available in a range of different languages, and we share copies of the Parole Act 2019 at those meetings. We meet with parole applicants, those eligible to apply for parole, and those earlier in their life sentence. At many of those sessions frustrations with delays are raised: delays in accessing services, delays in reports being received, delays in their parole application being considered and delays in receiving their parole decision.

Delays can arise for a number of reasons – last year I raised the fact that we were increasingly frustrated in the delays in receiving reports in a timely fashion. Unfortunately, this is still an issue. At the end of 2025 there were 92 parole applicants whose parole applications were not considered in a timely fashion – while 2 of these were due to legal issues, the vast majority were because we had not yet received all of the reports necessary to enable the members of the Parole Board to make a decision. This is despite the provisions of the legislation which enable the Parole Board to 'direct' the relevant report be provided to us. Effective and timely decision making by the Parole Board is contingent on high quality, timely, informative



and expert reports from An Garda Síochána, the Irish Prison Service (including the IPS Psychology Service), the Probation Service and the Courts Service. Their shared information, insight and expertise inform our decision making. We are very grateful for their commitment to work with the Parole Board and their collaboration to reduce delays as much as possible.

While a lot of very important work was done in 2025, the year was not without its challenges, particularly in relation to staff shortages in the Parole Board Secretariat. The impact of this on our work capacity and output was inevitable. Capacity and resource constraints within the Parole Board secretariat meant that while we did meet our caseload target, we were unable to undertake work in other areas that we are mandated to do as outlined in the Parole Act 2019. These include conducting and/or commissioning research as well as working towards greater awareness of the work of the Parole Board amongst those serving life sentences, victims and members of the public. We did not, for example, have a public engagement campaign in 2025 highlighting how victims can engage with us. This is not a decision we made lightly, it was something we simply did not have the resources or the capacity to do. We have highlighted the impact of staff shortages to the Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration, our line Department, and will continue to do so.

On a more positive note, there has been progress in relation to the development of a much needed, and long awaited, case management system for the Parole Board and we remain on track to have a system in place in 2026.

The work we do in the Parole Board is not easy. It is work we can, and should, all find challenging at times. Hearing from both applicants and victims can be difficult and challenging. These are not easy decisions to make. I would like to thank the members of the Parole Board, as well as my colleagues in the Parole Board Secretariat, for their hard work, commitment and dedication. It has been a pleasure to work alongside Ms Justice Margaret Heneghan, who took on the role of Chairperson in January 2025, and I thank her for her hard work, expertise and unwavering commitment. I look forward to continuing to work together in 2026.

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. We do not take our role lightly.

Go raibh maith agaibh.



Ms Ciairín de Buis
CEO of the Parole Board

1

Who we are and what we do



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

The Parole Board:

- 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;
- engages with victims who have a right to a voice in the parole process.

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 for Justice, Home Affairs and Migration in relation to its functions and making recommendations to the Minister to assist them in coordinating and making policy; and
- undertaking, commissioning or assisting in relevant research projects and making recommendations to the Minister arising from those projects or activities.

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.

Our Strategic Goals

The Parole Board identified 5 key goals in its Strategic Plan 2023-2026:

1. Make independent, quality, impartial decisions in a timely manner
2. Create greater awareness and understanding of the role of the Parole Board
3. Enable the Board and staff to work efficiently and effectively
4. Be as accountable, open and transparent in our work as possible
5. Build and maintain the required governance and organisational structures to discharge our role effectively and efficiently

A new Strategic Plan will be developed during 2026.

Our Mission

‘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. Parole Board members are appointed by the Minister for Justice, Home Affairs and Migration.

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.

The legislation also makes provision for additional Board members, including:

- a person the Minister deems to have sufficient relevant experience and expertise that would enable them to make a substantial contribution to the performance of the Board; and
- 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 2025, there were 13 members on the Parole Board including the Chairperson, Ms Justice Margaret Heneghan. 15 Board meetings were held in 2025.

Membership	Date of Appointment	Date of Re-appointment	Meetings Attended
Ms Justice Margaret Heneghan*	10 August 2023	10 August 2025	15 of 15
Mr Andrew Brennan	02 June 2022	–	13 of 15
Dr Lisa Cuthbert	10 August 2023	–	12 of 15
Dr Patrick Devitt	10 August 2021	10 August 2025	8 of 15
Mr Kieran Kenny	10 August 2021	10 August 2023	14 of 15
Dr Laura Mannion	10 August 2021	10 August 2023	14 of 15
Dr Shane McCarthy	10 August 2021	10 August 2023	14 of 15
Ms Leah McCormack (Resigned on 8 January 2025)	10 August 2021		0 of 0
Mr Niall Nolan	07 January 2025		15 of 15
Dr Geraldine O'Hare	01 August 2023	10 August 2025	13 of 15
Ms Ann Reade	10 August 2021	10 August 2023	15 of 15
Ms Michelle Richardson	15 April 2025	10 August 2025	7 of 11
Mr Paddy Richardson (Term of appointment ended on 9 August 2025)	10 August 2021	–	9 of 9
Dr Brendan Rooney	01 April 2024	–	13 of 15
Chief Superintendent Brian Sugrue	14 April 2023	10 August 2023	13 of 15

*Ms Justice Margaret Heneghan was appointed as Chairperson of the Parole Board on 1st January 2025.

Gender Balance

As at 31 December, the Board had 6 (46%) female members, including the Chairperson, and 7 (54%) male members. The Board therefore meets the Government target of a minimum of 40% representation of each gender in the membership of State Boards.

Committees

There is currently one sub committee of the Parole Board, the Finance, Audit, Risk and Governance (FARG) Committee.

Dr Geraldine O'Hare and Ms Noella Carroll (external member). There were 7 FARG Committee meetings held in 2025.

The members of the FARG Committee in 2025 were Dr Shane McCarthy (Chairperson), Mr Paddy Richardson (term ended on 9th August 2025),

FARG Committee member

Committee Meetings attended in 2025

Dr Shane McCarthy	7 of 7
Noella Carroll (External Committee member)	7 of 7
Dr Geraldine O'Hare	7 of 7
Mr Paddy Richardson	4 of 4*

**(Term of appointment ended on 9 August 2025)*

Parole Board Secretariat Overview

The Parole Board is supported by a team of Secretariat staff which operates across two functions: Operations and Corporate Affairs. As at 31st December, there were 24 staff and 5 vacancies.

A Director of Operations was appointed to the Parole Board in January 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 meet 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 for parole, the Parole Board considers many factors including:

- the potential risk to the safety and security of the public (including victims);
- 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 person concerned 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 to grant or refuse parole.

When considering a parole application, the Parole Board can:

- a) meet with a relevant victim to hear from them directly or through their legal representative and/or
- b) 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).

If the Parole Board refuse an application for parole, it may, where it considers it appropriate, specify in its decision, measures in respect of the management of the sentence which the Board is of the opinion would assist the person make a future successful application for parole.

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



Revocations and Variations of Parole Orders

The Parole Board may at any time, of its own motion or on application from a service, vary or revoke a parole order as outlined in sections 31 and section 33 of the Parole Act 2019.

In order to revoke a parole order the Parole Board must satisfy itself that a parolee subject to a parole order:

- (i) poses an undue risk to the safety and security of the public, or
- (ii) has breached a condition attaching to the order, and
- (b) the revocation of the order is justified by the gravity of the risk or breach of the condition, as the case may be.

When considering a variation or revocation of a parole order, the Parole Board must have regard to such matters as it considers appropriate, including –

- (a) the circumstance giving rise to the consideration of the revocation,
- (b) any report relating to the parolee prepared and furnished to the Board pursuant to a direction in that regard under [section 13](#),
- (c) any meeting with the parolee conducted in accordance with procedures determined under [section 14](#),
- (d) any submissions made by or on behalf of the parolee in accordance with procedures determined under [section 14](#), and
- (e) any submissions made by or on behalf of the relevant victim in accordance with procedures determined under [section 14](#).

As the number of parolees currently serving their sentence in the community grows, it is possible that the Board will be required to consider a number of variations and revocations.

In 2025, the Parole Board considered a variation to 24 parole orders.

In 2025, the Parole Board revoked 3 parole orders.

Engagement with Applicants

There were 11 information sessions held in prisons across the country in 2025. 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.

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.

Under the Parole Act 2019 a “victim” means a person who has suffered harm, including physical, mental or emotional harm or economic loss, which was directly caused by an offence.

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 2025 the Secretariat engaged with 138 victims and 31 meetings between Parole Board members and victims took place. 50 victim submissions were made to the Parole Board in 2025.

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 18 parole cases during 2025.

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

Feedback from those we have interacted with to date has highlighted that many victims feel that they can feel they are in a ‘cycle’ of submissions to the Parole Board and that the amount of time between parole applications is too short.

The Parole Board has shared this feedback with the Department of Justice, Home Affairs & Migration, who are responsible for the legislation and any amendment to same, for consideration.

Parole Application

The parole application process is lengthy, taking approximately 18 months from the time of an application to issuing a final decision. There are several reasons it takes time including: the requirement to interact with a number of people as part of the process – including State services, applicants, legal representatives, engagement with victims - which is challenging due to the lack of a central register for victims in Ireland.

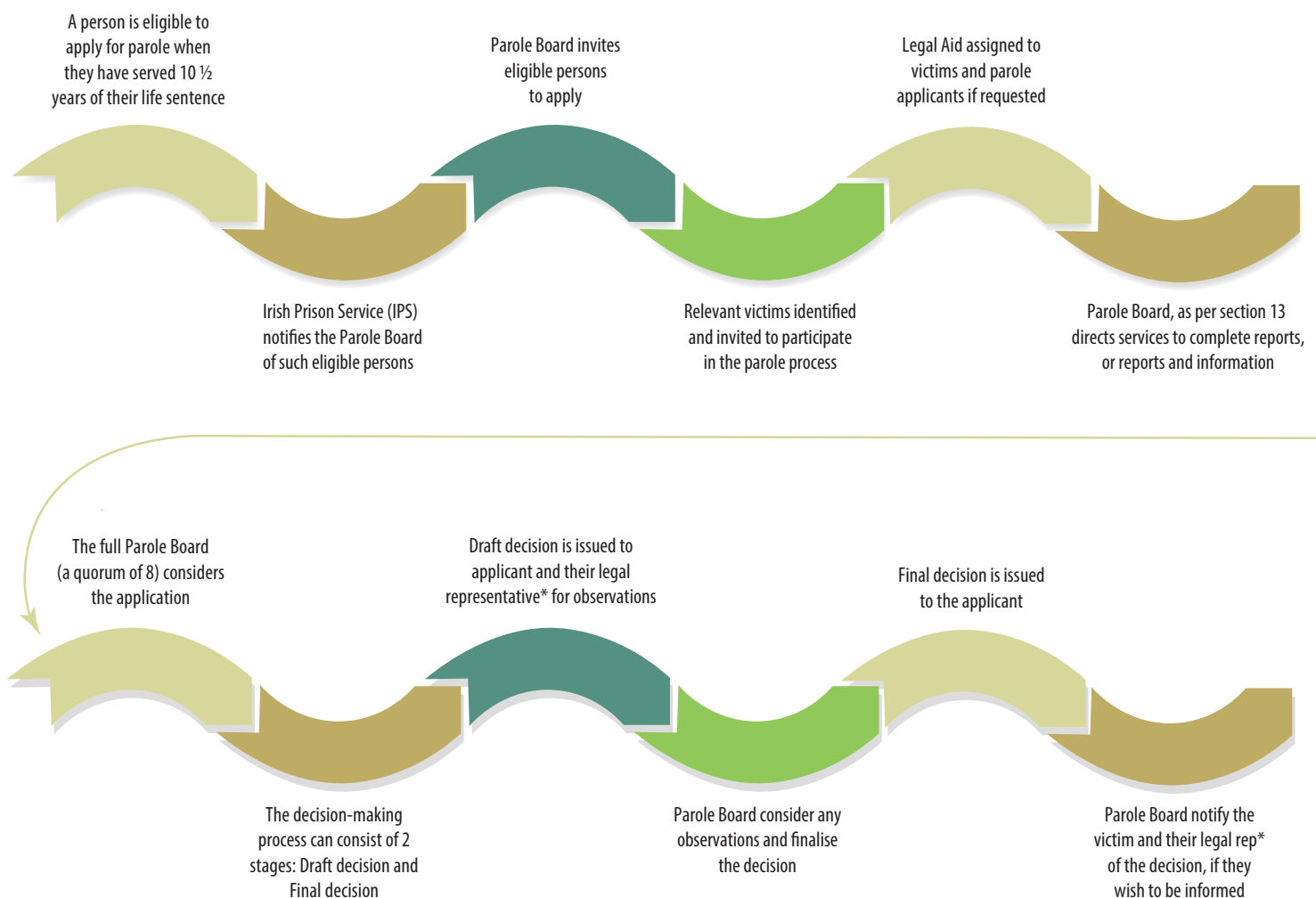
It takes time to contact and meet with victims and to receive submissions from them, if they wish to submit one. The same two Board members will usually meet separately with the parole applicant which requires scheduling.

The Parole Board is dependent on receiving reports from other State services in order to have all information required to assess applications. Membership of the Parole Board is not a fulltime role, most Board members have other professions and there is a limit to the number of cases that can be reviewed monthly.

Once all relevant information has been collated, the application must then be considered by the full Board and the risks assessed. The Board's decision must be drafted and approved before it issues to the parole applicant.

Victims may also request to be notified of the outcome of the application.

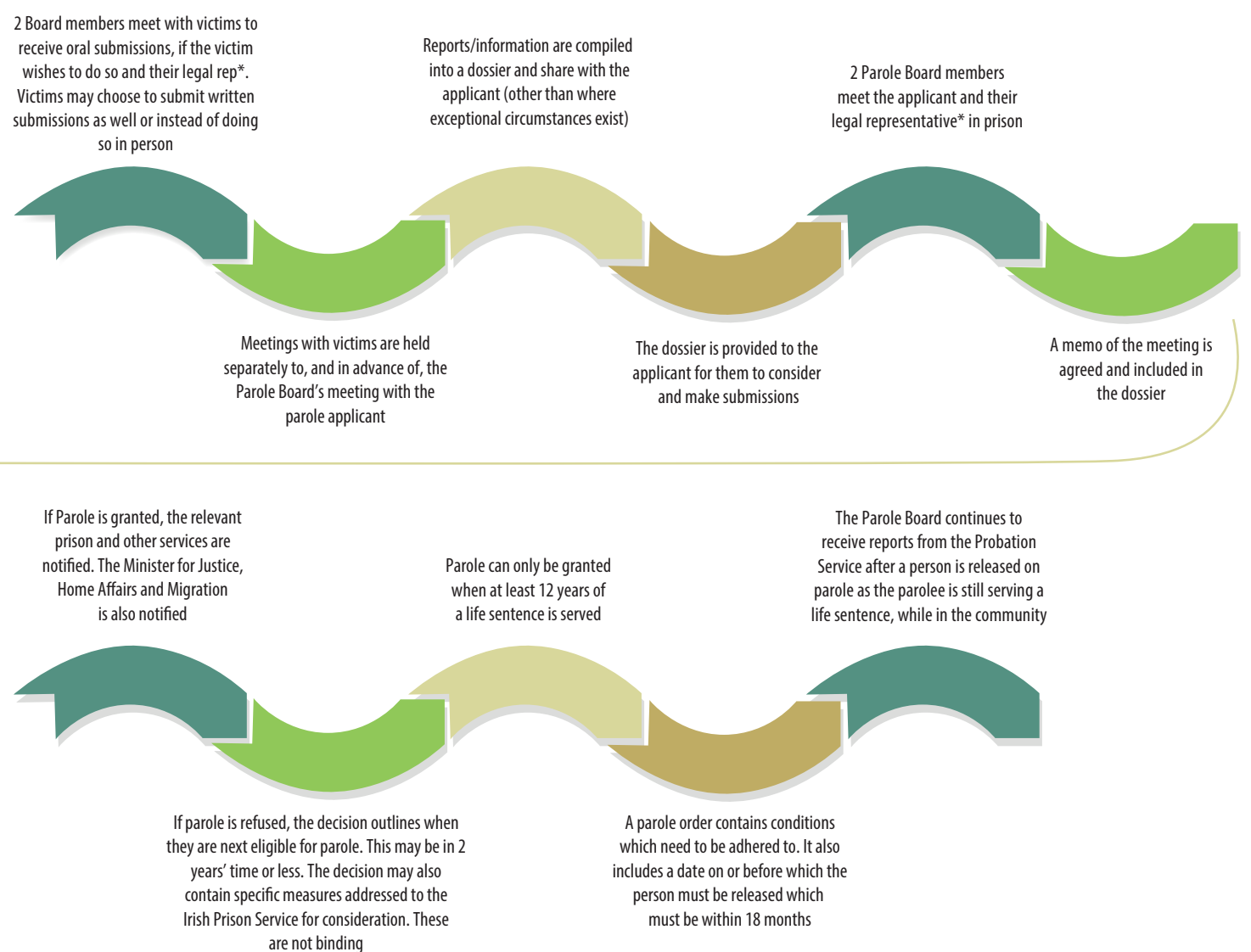
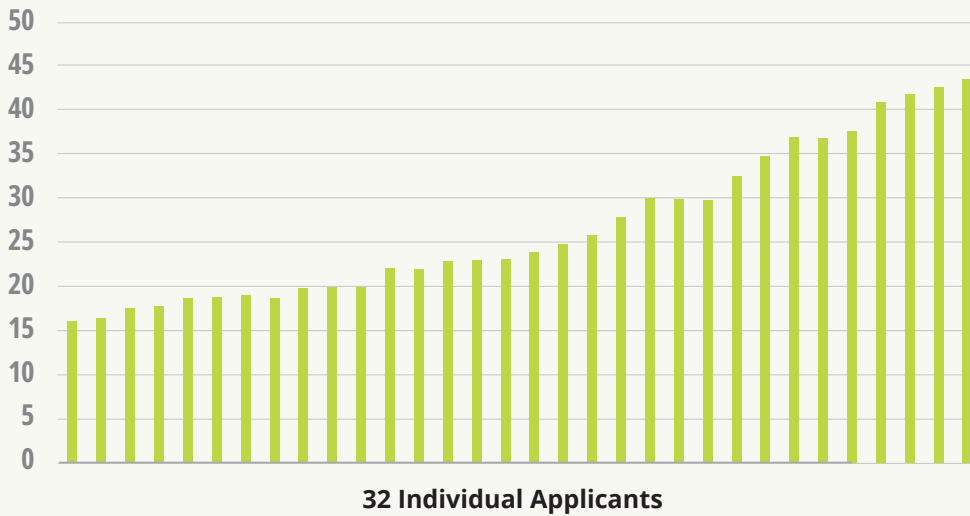
Overview of parole process



Breakdown of Length of Time Served in Prison

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

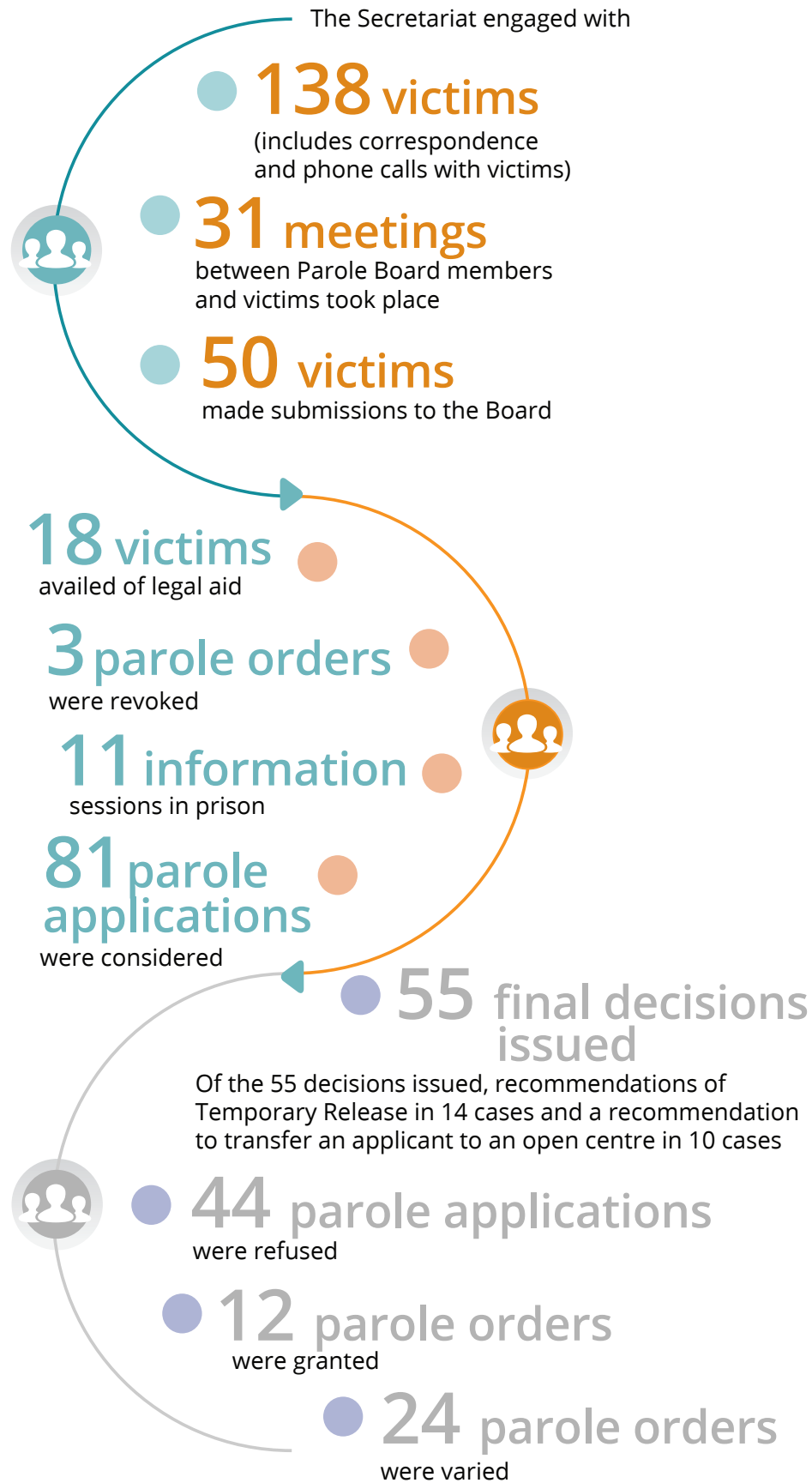
Years served to date of final decision issued to grant parole 2022 – 2025 (16.4 – 43.6 years)



A parolee may be returned to prison if they reoffend or break any of the conditions of their parole order.

2025 Statistics at a Glance

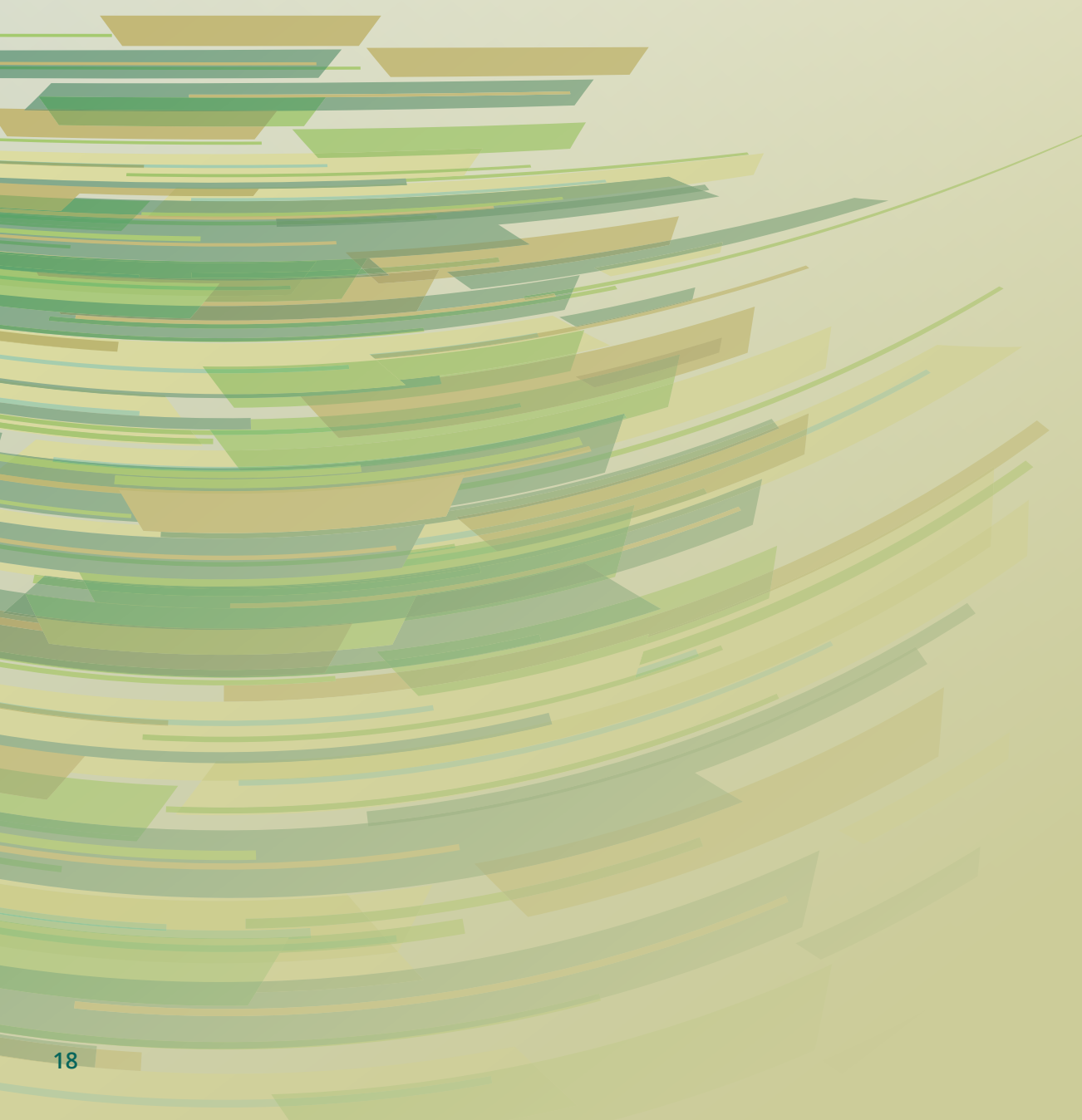




* **Note** The provision of statistics is very limited as the Parole Board does not have a case management system and these figures are manually derived.

2

Progress we
have made
in 2025



Improving our work in 2025:

Streamlining of some processes by the Operations team

A Protocol for the Management of Parolees in the Community, agreed between the relevant State agencies, was revised and agreed

Training for Board members, and in some cases, Secretariat staff in:

- Unconscious bias
- Climate Action Leadership
- Conflict resolution and de-escalation techniques
- Child protection/ Children First

Stakeholder engagement and outreach:

11 information sessions were held in prisons about the parole process

Participation and/or attendance at a range of events including:

The Parole Board has participated in, or attended, various conferences and events including but not limited to the following:

Justice Sector Leaders Conference

Chief Executive chaired the 18th Annual Martin Tansey Memorial Lecture *"Strategy to tackle domestic, sexual and gender based violence in Ireland"*

Irish Criminal Justice Agencies Conference

Launch of One in Four research (Irish Attitudes to Tackling Child Sexual Abuse – May 2025)

The Annual Volunteers Conference of VSAC (Victim Support at Court)

Chief Executive spoke at the Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI) annual conference

Confederation of European Probation on the Operation of Framework Decision 947 (presented jointly with the Probation Service)

25th anniversary of the opening of Dóchas

Prison Visiting Committees 100-year anniversary

Council of Europe: Presentation of CPT report in Dublin

Support After Homicide event in the Hodson Bay Hotel – November 2025

Council of Europe: Foreign Nationals in Prison & Probation Roundtable



CEO at ETBI annual conference 2025

Consultation and Engagement

The Parole Board is a member of, and attends the Restorative Justice Forum led by the Probation Service.

An information session was held with the staff of PACE to inform them of the work of the Parole Board.

The Parole Board meets regularly with the Irish Prison Service to discuss operational issues that may arise in relation to parole.

Working with the Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration

Performance Delivery Agreement 2025 agreed.

The Chairperson and CEO of the Parole Board met with Minister O'Callaghan in September.

The Parole Board is a member of, and contributes to, the Electronic Monitoring Steering Group led by the Department of Justice, Home Affairs & Migration.

The Parole Board is a member of, and contributes to, the Department of Justice, Home Affairs & Migration Parole Regulations Working Group.

There is ongoing liaison with Department of Justice, Home Affairs & Migration IT to develop a case management system for the Parole Board. A Project Board was established to oversee the development of the system. Roll out of a Minimum Viable Product is expected in 2026.



Case Management System (CMS)

The Parole Board has been operating without a case management system since its establishment in 2021 and has been reliant on Excel spreadsheets, institutional knowledge and manual processes to manage its data. This has been an ongoing concern and high level risk for the Board.

In 2022 a business case request was submitted by the Parole Board to the Department of Justice, Home Affairs & Migration, requesting a case management system solution.

The Microsoft Power Apps programme was identified by them as a suitable solution for the Parole Board's needs. The CMS project is overseen by a Project Board of senior stakeholders from the Parole Board and the Department's IT Division, ensuring strategic alignment and key decision approvals.

Significant progress was made throughout 2025 due to collaboration between both parties and it is anticipated the CMS will go live in quarter 2 of 2026 following the completion of appropriate User Acceptance Testing and data migration.

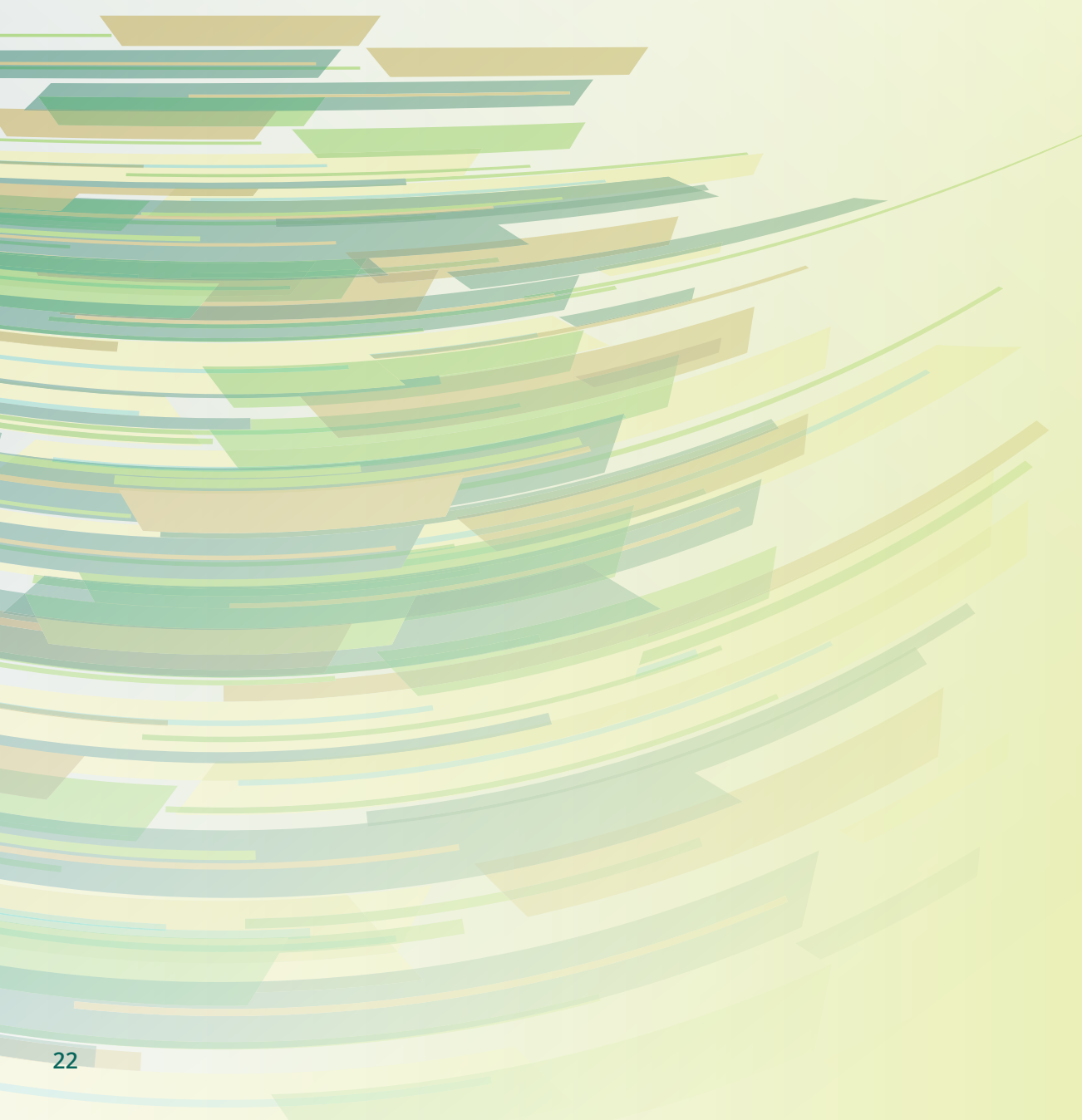


Chairperson and CEO of the Parole Board met with Minister O'Callaghan in September



3

Challenges and setbacks to achieving our goals



Staffing

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 found that the Parole Board is significantly understaffed and that several new roles were required.

Staffing constraints remain an ongoing and significant challenge. This is likely to be a greater challenge in 2026. Capacity and resource constraints within the Parole Board have limited several areas of work we would have liked to progress including commissioning research, expanding our awareness raising and communications work, among other areas. Communications planning work was also delayed due to a lengthy procurement process for external communications services and limited resourcing within the Corporate team.

We will continue to highlight the impact of staff shortages to the Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration. Under the Parole Act 2019, staffing of the Parole Board secretariat is provided by the Department of Justice, Home Affairs & Migration.

Budgetary restrictions have also limited progress in several areas of our work and the possibility of unplanned budget reductions during the year makes planning difficult.

Reports from Services

Timely decision making by the Parole Board is dependent on the receipt of high quality and timely, expert reports from services including An Garda Síochána, the Irish Prison Service (including the IPS Psychology Service), the Probation Service and the Courts Service. There can be delays receiving reports, which has an impact on our timelines and deliverables. However, the Parole Board is cognisant of the resource challenges also experienced by many of these State organisations and agencies and we continue to work closely with the services and discuss any issues with them.

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 2025, the Parole Board had complied with the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies.

Performance Delivery and Oversight

In April, the Parole Board signed an Oversight Agreement 2025-2027 with the Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration (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. It defines the key statutory and administrative roles, responsibilities and commitments which underpin the relationship between the Parole Board and the Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration.

Risk Management

The Parole Board operates a formal risk management policy and maintains a Risk Register. The maintenance of the Register is designed to ensure that risks are identified and assessed and that necessary mitigating actions, when necessary, are put in place. The Risk Register is compiled by 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 2025.

Conflicts of Interest

The Secretary to the Parole Board maintains a register of conflicts of interest disclosed by Board members and members of the Senior Management Team.

As at 31st December 2025, 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 (GPP) Guidance and using the Green Public Procurement Criteria Search where appropriate. There were no above-threshold procurement needs in 2025 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 ensuring that there is a culture of respect for human rights and equality among our staff and for the people we interact with. The Parole Board was mindful of this duty in the performance of its functions in 2025, in particular in dealing with victims and parole applicants.

To eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and treatment and protect the human rights of staff and people we engage with, we upskill our staff in human rights and equality issues through training. For example, the IHREC eLearning module on Equality and Human Rights in the Public Service is mandatory for all staff.

The Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration's Dignity at Work Policy aims to promote respect, dignity, safety, and equality in the workplace. As staff of the Parole Board Secretariat are also staff of the Department, this, and all other HR policies apply.

The work of the Parole Board Secretariat is further underpinned by the Civil Service Code of Standards and Behaviour, which sets out standards required of employees in the discharge of their duties.

Our Service Users Action Plan and Service Users Charter set out the standards of service our service users can expect.

We will be incorporating Human Rights and Equality, Diversion and Inclusion matters into our next Strategic Plan which will be published in 2026.

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.

Towards the end of the year we commenced work with *A Healthy Place to Work* on our culture and wellbeing with staff. The results of the first survey were discussed with the staff team, and a working group is being established to build on staff wellbeing and connection.

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 Parole Board has appointed a Climate and Sustainability Champion, established a Green Team and has a Climate Action Roadmap in place. 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 2026. We will continue to update this Roadmap under the guidance of SEAI and it will be reviewed annually. Several Board members and representatives of the senior management team completed Climate Action Leadership training in December.

Energy Usage Data For 2025

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

Energy	Unit	2025
MRPN electricity	kWh	19,123

Data Protection Compliance

The Parole Board takes its responsibility in respect of information security and privacy and its obligations under relevant legislation very seriously. 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.

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 2025.

Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

Type of request granted	Number of requests	Requests denied	Requests granted
Parole applicant	0	0	0
Member of public	6	0	6

Subject Access Requests

There was 1 Subject Access Request in 2025.

Data Breaches

There were no data breaches in 2025.

Parliamentary Questions (PQs)

The Parole Board responded to several PQs and provided contributions to Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration 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

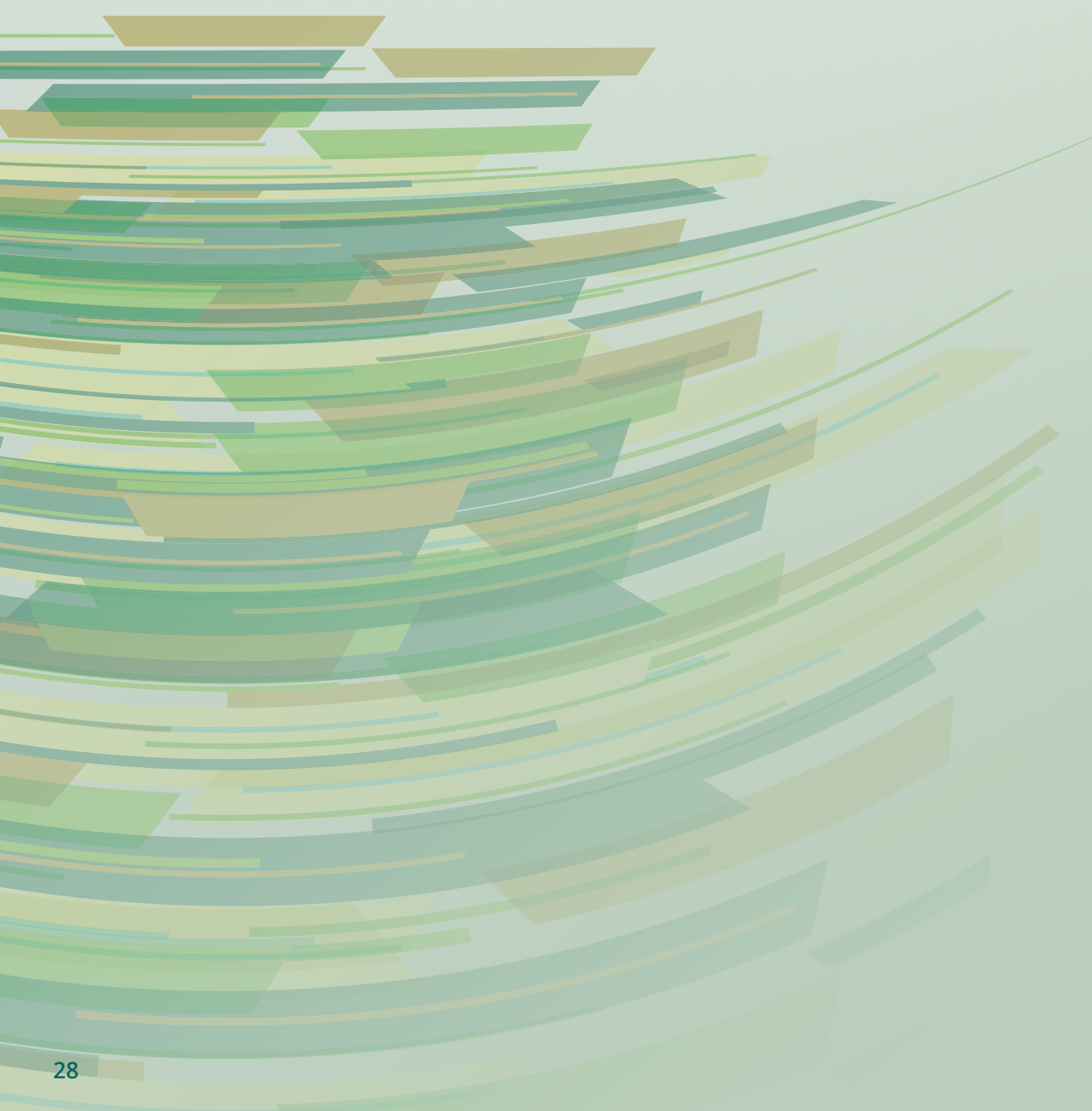
The Parole Board's Service Users Charter is available on its website www.gov.ie/paroleboard

It sets out the standards of service users can expect to receive from us. No complaints were received in 2025.



5

Financial overview and expenditure in 2025¹



Financial provision for the operation of the Parole Board is provided by the Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration annually.

In 2025 the Parole Board received a budget allocation of €2.729m. However, in November the Department of Justice reduced the Board's Pay allocation by €117,000.

Financial information presented for 2025 is, as yet, unaudited.

Board Member Fees and Expenses

In 2025, members of the Board and FARG sub-committee were paid the following fees and expenses:

Membership	Fee (€) ^a	Expenses (€)
Ms Justice Margaret Heneghan	20,520	–
Dr Shane McCarthy	15,857	20,008
Dr Patrick Devitt	12,568	–
Dr Laura Mannion	13,166	9,279
Ms Leah McCormack ^b	–	–
Mr Paddy Richardson	11,333	8,804
Ms Ann Reade	16,007	6,971
Mr Kieran Kenny	17,950	19,222
Mr Andrew Brennan ^b	–	–
Chief Superintendent Brian Sugrue ^b	–	9,065
Ms Noella Carroll (FARG)	1,979	2,338
Dr Geraldine O'Hare	15,408	12,810
Dr Lisa Cuthbert	16,156	5,176
Mr Niall Nolan	15,333	835
Ms Michelle Richardson	–	–
Dr Brendan Rooney	14,362	–
TOTAL	170,639	94,508

- Notes**
- a) Fee includes per diem payments, where applicable.
 - b) Ms Leah McCormack resigned on 8th January 2025. She did not receive a fee during her membership under the One Person One Salary (OPOS) principle. Chief Superintendent Brian Sugrue, Mr Andrew Brennan and Ms Michelle Richardson did not receive a fee under the One Person One Salary (OPOS) principle.
 - c) Dr Brendan Rooney did not receive a fee under the One Person One Salary (OPOS) principle (E 109/274/74). A fee of €14,362 was incurred for 2025 and is transferred to his employer for the year 2025.

¹ Extract from the Parole Board's Draft Financial Statements 2025 which will be audited by the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General in 2026

CEO Remuneration

The CEO's salary for the year ended 31st December 2025 was €121,828 (2024: €113,179). 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 during the year include the cost of external advice to management and exclude outsourced 'business-as usual' functions.

Consultancy Services	€
Communication support	554
Recruitment	-
Board Evaluation	-
TOTAL	554

Travel and Subsistence Expenditure

Travel and subsistence expenditure during the year is categorised as follows:

	€
Board Members – Foreign Travel	-
Staff Members – Foreign Travel	477
Board Members – Domestic Travel	94,508
Staff Members – Domestic Travel (includes taxi costs)	32,154
TOTAL	127,139

The Parole Board has offset carbon emissions as per Circular 01/2020 in respect of foreign travel undertaken in 2025.

Hospitality Expenditure

Hospitality expenditure incurred during the year ended 31st December 2025 was €992.

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.

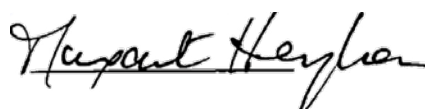
Both the Finance Audit Risk and Governance (FARG) Committee and the Parole Board conducted a review of effectiveness of the internal controls in 2025 and are satisfied with the controls in place.

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 2024 Financial Statements, and all recommendations were, or are, being addressed. 2025 draft Financial Statements were submitted to the Office of the Comptroller & Auditor General in March and will be audited later this year and published to the Parole Board's website accordingly.

I confirm that an Oversight Agreement is in place with the Department of Justice, Home Affairs & Migration 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 2025

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 1st January 2025 to 31st December 2025.

There were 7 Committee meetings held in 2025.

The Committee completed all of the actions set out in its Work Plan for 2025.

Looking ahead to 2026, the Committee will continue to monitor progress in relation to the development and implementation of a case management system for the Parole Board. The Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration's Internal Audit Team will conduct an audit on the Parole Board in Q1 and the Committee will consider any findings from that audit and ensure recommendations are implemented.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank my fellow Committee members for their work during 2025 and to the Chief Executive and staff of the Secretariat for their continued support.

I also wish to acknowledge the work and dedication of former Committee member Mr Paddy Richardson, whose term of appointment ended in August 2025. Dr Laura Mannion has been appointed to the Committee in 2026 and is a very welcome addition to the Committee.



Dr Shane McCarthy
Chair of the FARG Committee



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 Parole Board and its main objective is to assist the Parole Board in fulfilling its functions by providing independent and timely advice to the Parole 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 Parole 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 Parole 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 Parole Board, where possible.

2.3 Maintenance of an effective and efficient audit

To recommend to the Parole 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;
- maintain a risk appetite statement in line with its strategic objectives, for Parole 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 Parole 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 Parole Board;
- report to the Parole 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 Parole Board.

To perform or undertake on behalf of the Board any such other tasks or actions as the Parole Board may from time to time authorise.

To ensure that there are arrangements by which staff of the organisation and Parole 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 Parole Board comprising of 3 Board Members: Dr Shane McCarthy (Chairperson of the Committee), Dr Geraldine O'Hare, Mr Paddy Richardson (term of appointment ended in August 2025) 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 7 occasions in 2025. The Committee is scheduled to meet 6 times in 2026.

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 Parole Board meetings for information and discussion and matters of note are raised as specific items on the Parole Board meeting agenda. The Chair of the Committee provides an update to the Parole Board at each of the Parole Board governance meetings which are held at least 4 times a year.

Name	Meetings attended in 2025
Dr Shane McCarthy, Chairperson	7
Dr Geraldine O'Hare	7
Mr Paddy Richardson	4 out of 4 (term of appointment ended in August 2025)
Ms Noella Carroll	7

5. Reporting

Summary of work undertaken by the Committee in 2025

- The Committee reviewed a number of corporate documents including the Child Protection Policy, Risk Register, Risk Management Policy, Risk Appetite Statement, Procurement Policy and Climate Action Roadmap;
- Reviewed the Risk Register and had an in depth discussion on one high level risk item at each relevant meeting;
- Conducted annual budget planning and presented to the Parole 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 2024 were reviewed in advance of proposing to the Parole 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, Home Affairs & Migration Internal Audit Review of Internal Controls 2022 and 2025;
- Monitored the progress by the Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration on the matter of implementing a case management system for the Parole Board;
- Reviewed the adequacy and effectiveness of controls operated by management to mitigate regulatory, operational, financial, reputational and other risks.

Findings of the Committee

- C&AG audit of the Parole Board's 2024 financial statements was completed. The draft findings do not show areas for concern. At the time of writing, the C&AG audit of the Parole Board's 2025 financial statements was nearing completion and having reviewed the draft Management Letter there are no issues of concern indicated.
- A review by the Committee and Parole Board of the internal controls in place found that they are adequate. The Committee is satisfied with the financial reporting provided and with the quality of audits conducted to date.

Committee effectiveness review

The FARG Committee is satisfied with its own effectiveness in 2025. The Committee completed all of the actions set out in its Work Plan for 2025. The Committee will conduct a self-assessment in 2026 with a new Committee member in place to replace Mr. Paddy Richardson. No issues of concern have been raised by the Parole Board in relation to the conduct or effectiveness of the FARG Committee.

6. Planned work for 2026

The Parole Board will approve a Work Plan for the FARG Committee for 2026. Some of the tasks for inclusion in that Plan are set out hereunder:

- Approve draft Financial Statements 2025 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, Home Affairs & Migration Internal Audit (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 Parole Board's attention for further consideration;
- Monitor expenditure of the Parole Board's budget allocation;
- Continue to track progress on implementation of the recommendations from the GDPR compliance assessment that was carried out in late 2023;

- Continue to monitor progress by the Department of Justice, Home Affairs & Migration on the matter of implementing a case management system for the Parole Board;
- Conduct a self-assessment of the Committee;
- Review Chairpersonship of the Committee as the current Chair has been in place since the Committee was formed.

Summary of current 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, Home Affairs & Migration on this and a system has been developed and User Acceptance Testing is to take place in Q1 of 2026. The matter was monitored closely by the FARG Committee and the Parole Board in 2025 and this will continue in 2026. The Parole Board is reliant on the Department of Justice, Home Affairs & Migration to progress the matter to completion.
- Challenges with adequate resourcing of the Secretariat is a continuous risk. The Secretariat will continue to liaise with the Department of Justice, Home Affairs & Migration to attain the necessary resources and recruit additional staff.
- Staff and Parole Board member wellbeing is an ongoing challenge, given the nature of the work of the Parole Board. Staff and Board members are reminded of available supports on a regular basis.

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.



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