



The Lord Bishop of Gloucester
House of Lords
London
SW1A 0PW

MoJ Ref: SUB123153

14 April 2025

Dear Lord Bishop,

IMPRISONMENT FOR PUBLIC PROTECTION (IPP) SENTENCES

Thank you for your contribution to the Oral Question on IPP sentences on 24 March. Your continued commitment and engagement are so important in identifying areas to help IPP offenders progress towards a safe and sustainable release.

I recognise the important work that prison chaplaincy teams undertake to support prisoners across our prisons, and would welcome your ideas on how we can improve our communication with those serving IPP sentences.

I committed to provide further details in response to your question on what steps the Government is taking to ensure that those eligible to terminate their licence conditions understand their rights and are able to exercise them.

The Victims and Prisoners Act 2024 ('the Act') made significant changes to the IPP licence period and allows for the termination of the IPP sentence in a safe and sustainable way, ensuring that the public and victims are best safeguarded. We anticipate that the changes made, once fully implemented, will reduce the number of people serving IPP sentences in the community by around two-thirds.

On 1 November 2024, we commenced a provision to terminate *automatically* an IPP licence in cases where the individual was released from prison at least five years ago (or four years for those serving a sentence of Detention for Public Protection (DPP)) and has spent the last two on licence in the community without recall. Consequently, and without the offenders concerned being required to do anything, 1,742 of them saw their sentence end on this date.

On 1 February 2025, the qualifying period for the Secretary of State to refer an IPP licence to the Parole Board to consider licence termination was reduced from 10 years after first release to three years (or two for a DPP sentence). Of the IPP/DPP offenders currently in the community, c.600 are being referred to the Parole Board to consider licence termination following this change. Since the Act places a requirement on the Secretary of State to refer a qualifying offender to the Parole Board, there is no actual right which the offender needs to exercise, as such, though probation practitioners should certainly inform the offender that the referral is being made.

Following the Lord Chancellor's announcement on 5 September 2024 to commence the IPP measures in the Act, His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) issued notices to all prisons and probation regions, for prison and probation staff, IPP prisoners and those in the community, which explained the changes introduced by the Act. This included advice to staff on delivering the information to those serving the sentence. The Association of Prison Lawyers also produced a bulletin for its members and HMPPS has delivered a series of staff video sessions which explained the new legislative changes. The Howard League for Penal Reform also set up an IPP hotline to provide IPP offenders and their families a service through which they can discuss the changes, which HMPPS has widely publicised in prisons and the community. We will produce an updated letter to that originally issued to IPP offenders on licence, and will ensure staff in prisons and the community share this with those on their caseloads. This will provide a further opportunity to share and explain the changes made by the Act.

Every effort is being made to ensure that those serving the sentence are aware of the changes and understand how they are affected. In both the case of licence termination review by the Parole Board, and automatic termination, the Probation Service confirm the termination of the licence in a letter to the person serving the IPP sentence. The licence is legally automatically terminated on the eligibility date, irrespective of receipt of the letter. However, as I have explained, the responsibility for the process of licence termination is with officials on behalf of the Secretary of State, not the offender.

I am copying this letter to Baroness Burt and those who asked supplementary questions. I am also placing a copy in the House Library.



Lord Timpson
Minister for Prisons, Probation and Reducing Reoffending