

Research Activity – Review of the Year

Issue

This paper provides Management Committee with a review of the progress and activity of the research programme.

Timing

Routine.

Recommendation

The Management Committee is invited to note the content of this paper and the suggested objectives for the 2019-20 Business Plan

Background

The Management Committee supported the development of a research framework and provided a steer on the principles and priorities for the research agenda. Papers were presented to the Management Committee in September and December 2017.

At the December meeting the Management Committee:

- Approved the draft Research Framework
- Approved the establishment of a Research Governance Group
- Agreed the priority areas where research would be especially welcome

A further update was provided to the Management Committee in July 2018 ahead of the first meeting of the Research Governance Group (RGG).

The RGG has committed to providing the Management Committee with periodic reporting on progress with the developing research agenda.

Research Governance Group

A call for expressions of interest in the member vacancy on the RGG was issued to all members in June 2018. Nine applications were received, and one member was appointed.



The current membership is:

- Sir David Calvert-Smith, RGG Chair*
- Mary McMurran, Member Representative
- Cassie Williams, Representative from RADAR Group
- Faith Geary, Director of Business Improvement and Development
- Angela Colyer, Head of Member Development and Practice
- Glenn Gathercole, Head of Business Development
- External Academic Adviser (to be appointed)

** Sir David agreed to chair the group during its implementation and it has been agreed that Martin will assume the Chair from May 2019.*

An external academic adviser is still to be appointed; this was held pending the RGG becoming fully established and working. This will be reviewed as a priority when RGG meets in May 2019.

The RGG agreed to meet formally twice a year. In 2018 they met in July and October; and will meet early in the new reporting year (May 2019).

The Terms of Reference were formally adopted at the July 2018 RGG.

The Research Framework was amended at the July 2018 RGG and again in October 2018, following feedback from stakeholders within the wider research community.

The RGG also reviewed the draft Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notice to ensure it covered information handling related to research activity.

Information relating to the Board's research programme was cascaded widely across stakeholders, staff and members and a dedicated section was established on our web pages and within SharePoint.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/parole-board/about/research>

<https://digitalparole.sharepoint.com/sites/members/Pages/research.aspx>

Research Applications

One of the key functions of the RGG is to assess research applications received directly and comment on relevant applications referred to us by the MoJ National Research Council.

National Research Council (NRC)

The RGG now acts as a consultee to the NRC to offer views on research applications where there is a link to parole. During the reporting year the Board received eight applications, as set out below:

1. Research title: An examination of neuropsychological functioning and the progression of prisoners serving a sentence of Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP). *Our recommendation was that this should not be approved.*

2. Research title: The Impact of Circles of Support and Accountability. *Our recommendation was that this should be approved.*

3. Research title: An Exploration into the Experience of a Parole Board Hearing of Indeterminate Sentenced Prisoners with Learning Disabilities and Learning Challenges. *Our recommendation was that this should not be approved.*

4. Research title: Measuring the effectiveness of a semi-independent housing project on re-offending and recall rates following release. *Our recommendation was that further information should be requested.*

5. Research title: An exploration of perceptions of offence paralleling behaviour in IPP offenders who are recalled to custody. *Our recommendation was that further information should be requested.*

6. Research title: Understanding the experience of the Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) Sentence and Prisoner Progression. *We declared an interest in this application as we had met with the applicant and were supporting the study and already provided comments.*

7. Research title: A study of the recall of people serving Indeterminate Sentences for Public Protection. *Our recommendation was that further information should be requested.*

8. Research title: A qualitative evaluation of the Case File Review (CFR) process and wider Psychology Services consultancy model in relation to men with an IPP sentence within the East: Exploring stakeholders views on the impact of this work as well as any areas of improvement. *Our recommendation was to approve subject to further some clarifications.*

Direct Applications

Following the launch of the Research Framework the Board has received the following applications:

1. Research title: Going it alone: Why are prisoners unrepresented at Parole Board oral hearings. *Following discussions this application was withdrawn.*

2. Research title: Sex Offender Reconviction Rates: A further long-term follow-up of a small sample of long-term prisoners considered by the Parole Board in the 1990s. *This is still pending – an original funding application was unsuccessful.*

3. Research title: Exploring the experiences of new Parole Board members and factors that affect their decision-making. *This was approved.*

4. Research title: Exploration of whether there is a difference between Parole decisions made by a single member compared to pairs of members at MCA stage. *This was approved.*

5. Research title: Understanding the experience of the Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) Sentence and Prisoner Progression. *This was approved.*

6. Research title: A study of the recall of people serving indeterminate sentence for public protection. *This was approved.*

7. Research title: Decision-making around Perpetrators of Domestic Abuse: factors and frameworks affecting decision-makers. *This is still being reviewed.*

Business Plan objectives

There were three relevant objectives within the 2018/19 Business Plan:

- *Ensure research findings are shared and fed into policy development*

This objective has been achieved – there is a structured pathway now in place linking research, practice and development through the RGG and RADAR fora and close working between BIDD and MDP, and the COMPASS project.

- *Facilitate a research project on decision making in indeterminate cases and make recommendations to the management committee*

This objective has been achieved – Joanne Lackenby, the researcher (and Parole Board member) has now submitted her final thesis; a small research group comprising members, RADAR and RGG reviewed the findings, along with other recent studies undertaken, and agreed a way forward, which includes two of the above approved direct research applications.

- *Assess and manage research applications that relate to the Boards published Research Priorities. These priorities include a small-scale study of outcomes for BAME or other minority group prisoners.*

This objective has partially been achieved - the RGG is now the formal route for any applications received directly into the Board and we have a small network of Parole Board members who are willing to assess applications that come in from the NRC.

In terms of the small-scale study for BAME or other minority group prisoners we have linked this with work in response to the *Lammy Review*. We have networked with the MoJ team responsible for progressing the recommendations and also made contact with several academics who have already published papers in this area. In October 2018, the MoJ published some data relating to parole outcomes within their update on progress against the recommendations in the *Lammy Review*, although this was quite dated. The Board also published outcomes data in the 2017/18 annual report. This will be progressed via the Equality & Diversity Advisory Group but will require engagement with HMPPS to consider access and collection of relevant data.

Networking and Other activity

As part of marking the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Parole Board the May 2018 edition of the Prison Service Journal was focused on parole – there were a number of articles covering the history of parole and the Parole Board, as well as articles from Parole Board members highlighting their own studies.

The Board participated in a Cambridge University conference to look at the future of the Parole Board – “Parole, Law, Policy and Practice in 2018”. The conference focused on the *Worboys* judicial review and the Government’s review of parole and aimed to enrich the responses to the Government’s consultation. Martin was one of the panel members.

The Board has established a good working relationship with the MoJ NRC and is now an official consultee for parole relevant applications. We also receive updates on all applications they receive, which is shared with RGG.

The Board continues to foster links with a number of Universities either through individuals already known, current or former members, or other stakeholders we have met through the work of the Board. The current list includes: Cambridge, Southampton, Portsmouth, Cardiff, Coventry, Portsmouth, Bangor, Sussex, York, De Montfort, Reading, UCL and Royal Holloway.

The Board has forged links with the Research Evaluation Unit within HMPPS, particularly with accredited programmes and interventions; Prison Psychology; the MoJ Correctional Services Accreditation and Advice Panel (CSAAP); the Chief Social Researcher within the Family Justice Research and Analysis, (who has also recently been appointed to the ESRC Strategic Advisory Network).

The Board has established a good link with Russell Webster, a CJS commentator and researcher and Martin periodically uses his information cascade for blogs. Russell Webster is also undertaking a research study that we have recently approved.

The Board is currently in discussions with a former Parole Board member to consider a small-scale study in relation to Procedural Justice and it is hoped this will progress in the new reporting year.

The Board has met with colleagues at Barrow Cadbury, who run a CJS research programme, with a particular focus on young offenders, working with the Howard League and T2A.

Georgia Barnett from the HMPPS Evidence Based Practice team has given a presentation on debiasing decision-making and via RADAR will be presenting at the member conference in 2019.

The Board also has linked up with Sarah Smart, Reading University in reviewing her research into female IPP prisoners (sponsored by the Griffins Society). Both Caroline Corby and Sir John Saunders attended the launch round table discussion in March 2019.

The Board attended a round table discussion forum at the House of Commons hosted by Jo Stevens MP in relation to the work being undertaken by Dr Harry Annison and Dr Rachel Condry into the impact of indeterminate sentences on the families of offenders "The secondary pains for family members of IPP prisoners". Faith Geary and Lucy Gampell will be attending the "next steps" workshop in April 2019, work which is being funded by the Prison Reform Trust.

The Board has been in detailed discussions with Roger Hood and Stephen Shute, two academics that undertook studies in the 1990s, who proposed to do a longitudinal follow-up study on a cohort of sex offenders from their original study. This work was being led by Professor Martina Feilzer, Department of Criminology, University of Bangor, who was part of the original study team. Unfortunately, the funding application was unsuccessful and the study is being reviewed. However, we did complete a long-standing task of safely retrieving all the parole dossiers from the original study from a secure site in Birmingham University.

Recommendations for objectives within the Business Plan

RGG discussed the current objectives (as set out above) and what would be helpful to set for the next reporting period. Management Committee is asked to note the following, which have been incorporated into the draft Business Plan:

Task	Action related to research
Continue to make progress on the remaining IPP cases	1. Consider outcomes from 2 IPP research projects – by September 2020
Limit the Parole Board's role in recall cases	1. Use research to inform 2-3 pilots for managing recall cases differently – by April 2020
Use research to improve our understanding of, and approach to, risk	1. Support 2 research projects on IPP decision making and 2 small studies on MCA decision making – by September 2019 2. Ensure outcomes of relevant research are shared with members – by April 2020 3. Continue to build a research community and partner with external academics to support our research agenda – by September 2020

Glenn Gathercole
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June 2019