

Justice Committee**Prisoners (Control of Release) (Scotland) Bill****Written submission from the Prison Officers Association (Scotland)****Response to the Scottish Government response of 3 February 2015**

May I, in the first instance take the opportunity to thank the committee for hearing our evidence at the Justice Committee hearing held 20th January 2015.

Further to the response from the Scottish Government we have been asked to respond and I'm delighted to confirm that we welcome the response and in particular the extension to the scope of those covered by the Bill. We believe it is right and proper for all those prisoners serving over 4 years to be subject to close scrutiny on their suitability for release back into the community having taken account of their conduct and willingness to engage in the rehabilitation process and the extent to which they have recognised the impact of their crime on their victim(s).

The provision of compulsory supervision on release we believe is a positive step and may serve as a useful transition between long term custody and community reintegration which we believe prison officers have a role to play alongside our justice partners.

Given the likely impact on the level of prisoner numbers particularly in the short term we are content that whilst there may be sufficient capacity in the overall estate the approach adopted should be seen as one of a number of measures that addresses the wider issue of offender management and that alternatives to custody and other interventions amongst the short term offender and female population will reduce, or at least manage the prisoner population over time and release capacity.

I hope you find our response useful to the committee in its considerations of the Bill.

Andy Hogg
Assistant General Secretary
POA (Scotland)
17 February 2015