

## Justice Committee

### Prisoners (Control of Release) (Scotland) Bill

#### Written submission from the Scottish Prison Service

Following the Scottish Parliament's Justice Committee request for views on the proposed amendments to the Prisoners (Control of Release) (Scotland) Bill in respect of the introduction of a minimum period of compulsory supervision for all offenders serving a sentence of 4 years or more and the extension of the ending of automatic early release to all categories of offenders serving 4 years or more, the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) views are as set out below.

#### **The introduction of a minimum period of compulsory supervision for all offenders serving a sentence of 4 years or more**

SPS supports the introduction of a minimum period of compulsory supervision for all offenders serving a sentence of 4 years or more. It is my experience that the first six to twelve weeks after release can be a challenging period for some offenders as they try to establish links and supports in their local community. Consequently during this period they may pose a risk to public safety. Therefore a period of compulsory supervision will help to support an offender's transition into the community whilst also mitigating the risk to public safety.

#### **The extension of the ending of automatic early release to all categories of offenders serving 4 years or more**

It is not for the SPS to comment on the scope of the proposed reforms, rather it is my responsibility to provide the Committee with information concerning the operational impact of this proposal.

The main operational impact of ending automatic early release for all categories of prisoner sentenced to 4 years or more will be the impact on prison numbers. It has been estimated by Scottish Government colleagues that the long-term impact of this proposal will be a requirement for SPS to provide an additional 410 places. SPS will have the capacity to cope with the relatively limited impact in the early years. However SPS will require the Scottish Government to ensure that the overall pressures on the prison estate arising from these reforms, and other legislative reforms, are met through future justice spending review settlements

Eric Murch  
Director of Operations  
Scottish Prison Service  
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