

Justice Committee

Prisoners (Control of Release) (Scotland) Bill

Written submission from South Lanarkshire Council

I write to advise that South Lanarkshire Council fully supports the general principles of the above Bill. As a Council, we previously forwarded our views in writing in September 2013, when there was a Call for Evidence from the Scottish Parliament, as the Bill was going through the draft process.

With reference to the Restriction of Automatic Early Release, the proposed principles will allow prisoners to have a more structured return into their community. This will enhance prisoner release arrangements and promote supported integration into the community through allowing time to establish required links within the community before the actual release date. Research and working knowledge inform that the hours following release from prison can be critical in determining whether a person desists from offending or re-enters criminality. It is essential that the work undertaken by prison staff is maximised in order to break the cycle of offending behaviour.

The Council supports the introduction of defined flexibility to prison release arrangements which should help to improve links to services in the community. This measure will allow the prisoner to re-establish links with family supports where available.

In conclusion, this Bill reinforces the principles of the work undertaken in Criminal Justice in challenging offending behaviour and making communities safer.

Harry Stevenson
Executive Director
22 December 2014