STATUTORY RULES OF NORTHERN IRELAND

2026 No. 0000

PRISONS

The Parole Commissioners' (Amendment) Rules (Northern Ireland) 2026

Made - - - -	*xxx 2026*
Coming into operation	*xxx 2026*

The Department of Justice makes the following rules in exercise of the powers conferred by Article 100(5) of, and paragraph 4(2)(e) of Schedule 4 to, the Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 2008(**1**).

Citation and commencement

1. These Rules may be cited as the Parole Commissioners' (Amendment) Rules (Northern Ireland) 2026 and shall come into operation on xx 2026.

Amendment of the Parole Commissioners' Rules (Northern Ireland) 2009

2. (1) The Parole Commissioners' Rules (Northern Ireland) 2009(**2**) ("the 2009 Rules") is amended as follows.

   (2) In Rule 22(2), after "private" insert "except in so far as the chairman of the panel otherwise directs".

Transitional provision

3. (1) Where a case is listed under Rule 6 of the 2009 Rules before these Rules come into operation, the 2009 Rules shall apply.

   (2) Where the case of a prisoner is listed after these Rules come into operation, the 2009 Rules shall apply as amended by these Rules.

Sealed with the Official Seal of the Department of Justice on xxx.

([1]) S.I.2008/1216 (N.I. 1) as amended by the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (Devolution of Policing and Justice Functions) Order 2010 (S.I. 2010/976), Art. 6(2) and Sch. 5 paras. 30 and 31(2)

([2]) S.R. 2009 No. 82 as amended by The Parole Commissioners' (Amendment) Rules (Northern Ireland) 2021 (S.R. 2021 No. 138) and The Parole Commissioners' (Amendment) Rules (Northern Ireland) 2022 (S.R 2022 No. 65)

L.S.

Naomi Long
Minister of Justice

EXPLANATORY NOTE

(This note is not part of the Rules)

The Parole Commissioners' (Amendment) Rules (Northern Ireland) 2026 amend Rule 22 to provide that hearings shall be held in private except in so far as the chairman of the panel otherwise directs. This amendment responds to the decision of the court in *McGuinness's (Deborah) Application (No 2), McGuinness's (Deborah) Application (No 4)* Neutral Citation No. [2026] NIKB 57.

There is also a transitional provision which states that the amendment applies only to those cases which have not yet been listed for hearing.

No impact assessment has been prepared for these Rules.