

**QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE HOME AFFAIRS COMMITTEE ON
TUESDAY 7th OCTOBER 2003, BY CONNETABLE A.S. CROWCROFT OF ST. HELIER.**

Question 1

Will the President explain the Committee's policy in relation to the early release from custody of persons convicted of offences which cause harm to other members of our community and sentenced to imprisonment?

Answer

Early release can take the form of outside work or home leave which can be either escorted or unescorted. Prisoners are currently eligible for consideration for the outside work scheme after having served half of the custody period. In the case of a sentence of three years this will be after 12 months (all prisoners are released after serving two thirds of the sentence with one third being allowed for remission). Where there is a clearly identifiable victim, contact is made with the victim by the Probation and After-care Service to inform them that the prisoner's application for early release is being considered. If prisoners who have offended are going to be successfully reintegrated into the community they need to have the opportunity to secure work and eventually accommodation prior to release. The outside work scheme has been doing this successfully since 1995. Following an incident when a prisoner escaped from his escort, both escorted and unescorted home leave in respect of adult prisoners was suspended on the 14th September 2003. The Committee discussed the matter again last Friday and decided that prisoners currently on the outside work scheme could continue but the Committee would review a list of those participating. No new applications would be approved for the time being. Home leave remains suspended.

Question 2

Would the President inform members at what stage of their sentence prisoners become eligible for the day work release scheme?

Answer

Prisoners become eligible for consideration for the outside work scheme after serving a half of their custody period subject to a ceiling of sixteen months. Prior to July 2002, when the scheme was reviewed, this sixteen month ceiling did not apply. The Committee will be reviewing the criteria prior to approving any further placements on the outside work scheme.

I shall be making a more detailed statement about temporary release and other matters concerning H.M. Prison, La Moye, following Questions.