



## **Introduction**

Victim Support Scotland (VSS) is the largest charity supporting people affected by crime across Scotland through the provision of practical help, emotional support and essential information. We welcome the opportunity to respond to the Scottish Government Consultation on Parole Reform in Scotland.

1. We recognise effective rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders is a vital component of the Parole Board's work and we are supportive of that core aim. However, any structural or process changes as part of the Parole Board reform programme must always consider the impact on victims and witnesses.
2. VSS is content that the Parole Board only grants parole when they are satisfied the risk presented by the prisoner can be managed effectively in the community and that the board continues to recommend the recall to custody of prisoners who have been released on licence, where such action is considered to be in the public interest.
3. We believe stating that the Parole Board is an independent body would reinforce public confidence in its operation. In seeking consistency and transparency, it would also be beneficial if any outputs (literature/websites) also contained information on how the Parole Board is governed.
4. As victims and witnesses are our primary concern, we remain open to the possibility of challenging authorities on any issues affecting them. The Parole Board should always take cognisance of the views of victims. As such, we are happy to assist where we can and would welcome discussions on how we can help facilitate certain aspects of the Parole Board's role.

**ENDS**