

# Parole: a guide for families

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(0508 7 45 527)

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## What is parole?

Many people serving more than two years' in prison are released on parole. Parole is when a person is allowed to serve the last part of their sentence of imprisonment in the community.

Once eligible for parole, a prisoner will have a hearing before the New Zealand Parole Board. The Board makes decisions about who will be released into the community under the supervision of a probation officer. The New Zealand Parole Board makes these decisions, not the Department of Corrections.

## Where will they live?

To get parole a person must have somewhere suitable to live when they get out of prison. You may feel expected to provide that housing and feel happy about them coming home. Or you may have concerns about them living with you and the children. If this is the case you should let the prisoner or probation officer know so other accommodation can be found.

A probation officer will visit your house to check it is okay. They may also talk to anyone else who lives there. Depending on the nature of the offence there may be conditions around who can live there and who can visit. This particularly applies if the person is in prison for a sexual or violent offence. You may feel you have to choose between them and your children or grandchildren.

See *Preparing for Release* and the *Who can help?* section of this brochure for people you can talk to.

## Parole conditions

People on parole must obey certain rules or conditions until the whole sentence has finished.

Parole conditions include:

- Being of good behaviour and not breaking the law
- Reporting to the probation officer when told to do so
- Living in a place the probation officer has approved
- Not changing address without the probation officer's permission
- Doing work and attending courses approved by the probation officer
- Complying with electronic monitoring if it is imposed
- Keeping away from certain people
- Keeping away from certain places

There may be more conditions including rules about not drinking or taking drugs. Some people may be subject to rules around when they can and can't leave the house. The Parole Board can make any rules it thinks are important.

If the person breaks the rules of parole or breaks the law the probation officer can



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take action and the person may be returned to prison to serve their sentence.

You may feel under pressure if you know someone is breaking the terms of their parole while living with you and worry that they will return to prison.

If you feel you want to report something that has happened but are afraid of retribution you can call Crimestoppers without giving your name.

The probation officer's job is to make sure the person is obeying the rules and also to help the person resettle into the community. It's a good idea for the person on parole to have a good working relationship with their probation officer and take any help they may offer.

The probation officer is there to support the person to comply with their parole conditions and to help them transition back to the community.

## Who can help?

Pillars - Pillars has a range of services including a free and confidential helpline for anyone who is affected by the imprisonment of a close family member or friend. Ph 0508 PILLARS (0508 7 45 527) [www.pillars.org.nz](http://www.pillars.org.nz)

Crimestoppers - give information about crime without giving your identity. Phone 0800 555 111 or visit [www.crimestoppers-nz.org](http://www.crimestoppers-nz.org)

Department of Corrections - The website provides information for friends and families of people in prison, visit [www.corrections.govt.nz](http://www.corrections.govt.nz)

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