

Supervised Release Order – Identify Supervising Authority

Phase 3. Pre-Release

414. Governors are required to commence enquiries in relation to the designation of the appropriate supervising authority not less than 4 months before the prisoner's earliest date of liberation (EDL) (see paragraph 420 below for details of the role of social workers in the community in checking the suitability of the proposed release address). In some cases where there is no doubt about the prisoner's release address and where the sentence is relatively short, it may be possible to designate the supervising authority at an earlier stage. When such cases come to the attention of social workers in prisons they should offer advice to Governor on the desirability of early designation to assist the throughcare task. The tasks attributed here to the Governor will in most establishments be delegated to an Early Release Liaison Officer (ERLO).

415. Designation of the supervising authority must, by law, be completed not less than 30 days before the EDL. In many instances the prisoner may, by virtue of his/her offence or sentence, be unable to return to his/her previous home. In such instances the social work unit in the prison may already be working with the prisoner to resolve his/her accommodation difficulties on release. Where a prisoner subject to an SRO is unable to provide a release address, and is not already working with the social work unit in the prison to resolve this, the Governor will refer the case to the social work unit in the prison for advice.

416. When such cases are referred to the social work unit in the prison, the social worker should try to work with the prisoner to explore all possible accommodation options (including supported accommodation if available).

417. Where an address cannot be identified for a prisoner prior to his release, the Governor should designate as the supervising authority the local authority area the prisoner has indicated he intends to reside on release. Where a prisoner refuses to co-operate with the social work unit in the prison on this task, the Unit should advise the Governor accordingly and should note this in the social work case papers. In such circumstances the Governor may designate as the supervising authority either the social work authority in whose area the prisoner was most recently resident or, in the last resort, the social work authority in whose area the prison of release is located. The social work unit in the prison may be able to offer advice on suitability, based on available information and knowledge of the prisoner's circumstances.

418. Once the appropriate supervising social work authority has been designated, the social worker in the prison should liaise with the supervisor and must convene a pre-release meeting, as set out in paragraphs 177 and 213. Because of the timescales involved in the designation process, it may not always be possible to convene this meeting one month in advance of release. In all instances, however, the meeting should be convened as soon as possible following designation of the supervising authority. If the prisoner declines to attend a pre-release meeting the social worker in the prison and the Supervising Officer must jointly consider the way forward and, in particular, the implications of such a refusal for the management of the order.

