

## Circular 14/98 – Statutory Visits

### 6.3 Schedules of Contact During Sentence

6.3.1 In Extended Sentence cases, the potential variation in both the length of the custodial period and the extended supervision itself is significant. During the custodial term the following schedule of prison visits is expected:

- ⟨ in cases involving short-term prisoners sentenced to less than 4 years, a visit to the prisoner should, where the length of the period in custody permits, be made on an annual basis and thereafter as required by existing National Standards relating to pre-release planning
- ⟨ in the case of prisoners where the length of the custodial term is so short that it does not permit this schedule, the prisoner must be visited on a 6 monthly or other basis, as required to fulfil the process required by existing National Standards relating to pre-release planning
- ⟨ for long-term prisoners sentenced to a custodial term of 4 or more years, a prison visit must be made on an annual basis, **with an additional visit as may be required to assist in the preparation of any report for referral to the Parole Board**, thereafter as required by existing National Standards for pre -release planning.

6.3.2 Unless otherwise assessed as inappropriate due to a breakdown in family relationships, each scheduled visit to the prisoner should be preceded by a home visit to the prisoner's family, to keep up to date with the family situation and to foster positive family support. Other than in exceptional circumstances, any Home Background Report on the prisoner, either for temporary leave or parole purposes, should be allocated to the Supervising Officer.

6.3.3 Arrangements to visit the prisoner should be made in conjunction with the social work unit in prison and include a subsequent two way meeting between the Supervising Officer and social worker in the prison. Before this meeting the views of the personal officer should be sought either by the prison social worker on behalf of the Supervising Officer or by the Supervising Officer. It may be appropriate for the personal officer to be invited to attend. The purpose of this meeting is to:

- ⟨ update one another as to current circumstances relating to the prisoner or his family
- ⟨ agree action points as necessary following the visit
- ⟨ facilitate eventual pre-release planning.