

Circular 12/2002 [Revised May 2004]

Extracts Relating to Home Background Reports

2.4 Role of the Supervising Officer

2.4.1 There are several distinctive components to the role of the Supervising Officer. These include:

- Scheduled visits with the prisoner
- Home Background Report for parole purposes to be informed by such an assessment visit
- Increased contact where appropriate with the offender's family
- Community based social work participation in the sentence management of the prisoner. This is aimed at ensuring that work done following release is built more solidly upon work already undertaken with the offender while he/she is in custody. (This should be a reciprocal arrangement with work in prison building on work which may have already been started in the community prior to sentence.)

3. Importance of information exchange

3.1.1 In order for these new throughcare arrangements to be effective, all agencies and professionals involved will need to communicate effectively with each other. These will include:

- Social workers in the community (supervising officers)
 - Prison-based social workers
 - Prison psychologists
 - Personal officers
 - Other prison-based specialist staff
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- This communication will be a particularly important feature at the following stages
 - in preparation of reports for referral to the Parole Board or other pre-release planning

5.3.2 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

5.4 Pre-release

5.4.1 Preparation of Home Background Reports for referral to the Parole Board

The objectives, steps involved in preparation, and content of these reports is covered in detail in the Throughcare National Standards (paragraphs 140-156). In addition, the Supervising Officer must:

- Consider the assessed risk of harm posed by and to the prisoner, and relate this to any proposals regarding the suitability of a particular address or area.
- Ensure that the HBR is informed by a visit to the prisoner unless one has been made within the preceding 3 months.