



Ministry of JUSTICE

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Dear Fabian

PETER SUTCLIFFE, BROADMOOR HOSPITAL

Thank you for your letter of 18 February to the Justice Secretary about the possible release of Peter Sutcliffe, a life sentence prisoner currently detained under the Mental Health Act 1983. I am responding on his behalf as the Minister responsible for these matters.

Firstly, let me assure you that despite newspaper coverage there has been no recent change in Mr Sutcliffe's prospects of release. Mr Sutcliffe is a life sentence prisoner who is also detained under the Mental Health Act 1983. All detained patients are entitled to regular reviews by a first tier tribunal (mental health), but the tribunal has no power to order the release of a life sentence prisoner. In the event that the tribunal was not satisfied that his detention in hospital for medical treatment remained lawful, he would return to prison to continue his sentence.

The decision on setting the length of the minimum term of imprisonment is entirely a matter for the High Court. Ministers now have no involvement in the process, or in their release. A life sentence prisoner's release can only be ordered by the Parole Board. A life sentence prisoner has no access to the Board while he remains lawfully detained under the Mental Health Act.

The Parole Board is an independent body whose decision on the release of a prisoner is informed entirely by the question of public protection. The Board will not direct the release of a prisoner unless it is satisfied that any outstanding risk he presents can safely be managed in the community.

Kind regards

Shahid

SHAHID MALIK MP
Justice Minister