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CONFIDENTIAL

PRISONS ISSUES

Intra-UK Transfer of Prisoners

The Government remains committed to the policy of allowing prisoners to **serve their sentences close to their family** if possible and allows transfers, either temporary or permanent, between jurisdictions to facilitate this.

Since 1992 28 terrorist prisoners have been transferred from GB to NI; this includes 14 prisoners transferred permanently and 14 prisoners on temporary transfer.

Policy criteria provide that a prisoner will not normally be transferred permanently where such a transfer would result in a substantial reduction of sentence.

The Home Secretary recently agreed the temporary transfer of two further republican prisoners to Northern Ireland and this means that there is **only one terrorist prisoner** whose application remains under consideration.

Temporary Transfers

When the provisions in the Crime Sentences Act come into force these will remove the requirement for temporarily transferred prisoners to re-apply for transfer every 6 months.

The Act will allow prisoners to serve out their sentences in another jurisdiction without receiving a reduction of time to serve as a consequence.

Conditions of Detention

Prisoners are held in conditions appropriate to their security classification. Those prisoners held in Special Secure Units are Exceptional Risk prisoners, the escape of whom is assessed as being of great danger to the public. Important to remember that not all IRA prisoners are assessed as Exceptional Risk prisoners and held in SSU's. Nor are all prisoners in SSU's Irish prisoners.

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Holmes