

Written Ministerial Statement

Ministry of Justice

Serious Further Offence Review

The Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice (Kenneth Clarke QC):

Following the recall to custody and subsequent conviction of Jon Venables for the possession of indecent images of children, I commissioned Sir David Omand GCB to undertake an independent review of the post-release period of the case, covering Jon Venables' supervision from release on life licence in June 2001 until 24 February 2010, when he was recalled to custody.

The review has encompassed the general principles of a Serious Further Offence (SFO) review but has also considered the wider lessons to be learnt for the future management of this and similar cases.

The terms of reference of the review were:

- to review the supervision of the subject, from his release on life licence until his recall to custody, in order to establish whether he was effectively supervised, having regard to national standards and guidance and to the particular circumstances/challenges of his case;
- in doing so, to consider the actions of his offender managers, their supervisors, the local police, the local MAPPAs meetings and the role of the National Management Board; and
- to establish whether everything was done which might reasonably have been expected of all agencies involved in supervising the subject to monitor his compliance with his licence conditions and to assess and manage any risk of harm which he presented.

Sir David Omand has completed the Review and submitted his report to me.

I have placed in the Libraries of both Houses a copy of his report, which has been redacted in a few places to comply with the terms of the injunction amended in the High Court on 23 July 2010 (commonly known as the Butler-Sloss Injunction), to take account of data protection and other confidentiality laws and to protect very sensitive operational policing information.

Sir David has concluded that Jon Venables was effectively and properly supervised at an appropriate level and frequency of contact, having regard to the particular circumstances of his case. Sir David also concludes that no reasonable supervisory regime would have been expected to detect his use of the computer to download indecent images.

I have accepted the Review's recommendations, which will be taken forward by officials in the National Offender Management Service. Officials will provide me with an update on the implementation of the recommendations in due course.