The Good Friday Agreement in 1998 was a political concord that aimed to end thirty years of conflict and violence in Northern Ireland. One of the most controversial but critical aspects of the Agreement was a scheme for the early release of prisoners convicted of terrorist offences. Specific legislation (Northern Ireland (Sentences) Act 1998) was passed setting forth statutory criteria for early release, and providing for the appointment of Sentence Review Commissioners to determine whether they were met. The paper will describe how the early release scheme was implemented, review published data on the outcomes of the process, and reflect on some wider issues including challenges of risk assessment, prediction, and post-release resettlement.

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Thursday 12th February 2009, 5.30pm
Seminar Room B3, Institute of Criminology, Sidgwick Avenue, Cambridge, CB3 9DA