[John Worboys](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/john-worboys)

**Court allows challenge to John Worboys' release**

Two victims and London mayor obtain review of Parole Board decision to free sex attacker

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Lawyers representing two victims of the serial sex attacker [John Worboys](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/john-worboys) have been granted permission to challenge the Parole Board’s decision to release him.

Worboys, 60, a former black-cab driver, will remain in prison pending a full hearing on 13 March, after the high court ruled that a temporary bar on his release should be extended.

The mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, who was also involved in seeking the judicial review, said Worboys’ victims and other Londoners would be relieved at the decision.

“I’m pleased that there will now be an opportunity for thorough scrutiny of this decision by the Parole Board,” he said.

Worboys sat between prison escort staff in the secure dock of court 5 in London’s Royal Courts of Justice for the hearing.

The judge Sir Brian Leveson explained that Worboys had been brought to court because earlier in the week a remote videolink to prison had repeatedly failed.

Worboys was not initially legally represented but his presence enabled the court to find him a solicitor experienced in prison law who will provide advice and representation at the next hearing.

Asked if he would consent to the disclosure of documents relating to his case, Worboys said: “That’s fine.”

Throughout the hearing Leveson addressed Worboys by the name he now uses, John Radford.

Worboys was convicted in March 2009 of 19 offences against a total of 12 women, including one count of rape. After his conviction police said they believed he had attacked up to 100 women, plying them with alcohol and drugs before assaulting them.

He was jailed indefinitely, with a minimum sentence of eight years. The decision by the Parole Board to release him on licence after less than a decade behind bars [emerged last month](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/01/04/taxi-rapist-john-worboys-released-prison/).

The Ministry of Justice did not resist the application for a judicial review.

In written arguments submitted to court, Phillippa Kaufmann QC, for two unidentified victims known only as DSD and NBV, said there were two distinct issues. These were whether Worboys should be released and whether rule 25 of the Parole Board proceedings, which bans publication of the reasons for release or detaining inmates, was legal.

Kaufmann argued that Worboys “remains highly dangerous” and that the Parole Board’s conclusion that he now presented not more than a minimal risk to women was unlawful.

A separate legal challenge to rule 25 is being brought by the Sun newspaper and other media organisations.

Harriet Wistrich, a solicitor with the law firm Birnberg Peirce who is representing victims, said after the hearing: “We are obviously very pleased that permission has been granted to proceed. We are looking forward to being able to understand and scrutinise all the material before the Parole Board, to consider how to bring forward a challenge.”

One of the victims was in court throughout the hearing. Wistrich said she had found it “very, very difficult” that Worboys was also present. “She felt it was really necessary to be there and to say she wasn’t going to be frightened of him being there, and to challenge his power. But obviously it is hard seeing him there in the flesh after all this time.”

Richard Scorer, a specialist abuse lawyer from Slater and Gordon, which represented 11 of Worboys’ victims, said: “Our clients are relieved that the court has ruled that this dangerous and manipulative man should have the temporary bar on his release extended.

“They are also pleased that the court has heard some of the turmoil, anxiety and uncertainty they have been living with over the past few weeks and that the serious issues in this case are being considered.”

A Legal Aid Agency spokesperson said: “Legal aid is available in judicial review cases. Decisions to fund are based on the applicant’s financial means and the merits of each case. Lawyers acting in a case must first submit an application for consideration by the Legal Aid Agency.

“The LAA awaits such an application in this matter and will endeavour to expedite this once received.”