

Sentencing Council

Business Plan **Financial year 2024/25**

Contents

Chairman’s introduction	1
Background and membership (as at 1 April 2024)	4
Appointments to the Council	4
Members	4
Sub-groups	7
Statement of Purpose	8
Statutory duties	8
Strategic objectives 2021-2026	9
Delivering the Sentencing Council’s work	9
Resources	18
Staff headcount (as at 1 April 2024)	18
Budget	18
Annex A: Rationale for the prioritisation of guidelines	19
Annex B: The Office of the Sentencing Council as at 1 April 2024	20
Annex C: Sentencing Council Guideline Work Plan – 2024-2025 (as at 1 April 2024) ...	21

Sentencing Council

Chairman's introduction



I am pleased to present the Sentencing Council's latest business plan, setting out the Council's aims for the financial year 2024/25.

In the coming year we aim to publish a number of new and revised definitive guidelines. Following consideration of responses to the consultation which ran between November 2023 and February 2024, we plan to publish a major revision to the guideline on the imposition of community and custodial sentences in Winter 2024. The revisions centre on ensuring courts have the most comprehensive information available to them about the circumstances around the offence, the offender and the available sentencing options in their area, encouraging courts to use the full breadth of options available to them and the importance of tailoring the sentence to the individual offender and their circumstances.

We consulted on new guidelines for blackmail, kidnap and false imprisonment between January and April 2024. These will be the first sentencing guidelines for these offences with the aim of providing the courts with a clear and consistent approach to take. Our aim is to publish definitive guidelines for these offences in early 2025.

Following consultation earlier this year, we will publish revised guidelines for aggravated vehicle taking offences, vehicle registration fraud and driver disqualification in January 2025. The guidelines for aggravated vehicle taking and vehicle registration fraud will replace those produced in 2008 by the Sentencing Council's predecessor body, the Sentencing Guidelines Council, and reflect updates to the law made since those earlier guidelines came into force as well as the revised motoring guidelines which were published in 2023.

We are also currently consulting on new sentencing guidelines for immigration offences, following changes to the law and increased maximum penalties in this area. The consultation closes on 12 June and, subject to the responses we receive, we intend to publish definitive guidelines in early 2025.

We also intend to launch a range of consultations on new proposals in 2024/25. We plan on consulting on offence specific guidelines for non-fatal strangulation following the introduction of a new offence under section 75A into the Serious Crime Act 2015. We will also consult on new guidelines for housing offences, public order and hare coursing offences, the latter of which were subject to an increase in maximum

penalties in 2022. We are also proposing a new overarching guideline to provide the courts with guidance on the use of ancillary orders.

We will conduct a fourth annual round of consultation on miscellaneous amendments in the summer and autumn, which would come into force in April 2025.

Miscellaneous amendments are changes and updates to guidelines, often technical in nature, which the Council proposes based on feedback received from guideline users and others, or to take account of changes to legislation. The third set of these amendments, including amendments on fraud, fly-tipping and expanded explanations, came into force in April 2024.

Consultation is a vital aspect of the Council's work, and one which we take very seriously. For guidelines to succeed they must be informed by the knowledge and expertise of those people who have legal or practical experience in the area we are examining, and by the views of those with an interest in our work or in the operation of the wider criminal justice system. We are always grateful to the people and organisations who give their valuable time to contribute to our consultations, and who help us to make improvements before publishing definitive guidelines.

In addition to publishing guidelines, the Council is required to monitor and evaluate their operation and effect. In the coming year we will be publishing a report from a review of the overarching domestic abuse guideline which came into effect in 2018. We will also be publishing reports from evaluations of the offence-specific sentencing guidelines on sentencing bladed articles and offensive weapons offences, intimidatory offences, breach offences, and manslaughter offences.

We continue to undertake qualitative work with sentencers during the guideline development process to ascertain whether draft guidelines will work in practice and whether they may have any unintended impacts. We are very grateful for all the time and input and sentencers give us as part of this ongoing assessment of how prospective guidelines will operate.

Throughout 2023/24 the Council has developed You be the Judge, an online, interactive guide to sentencing. You be the Judge is being launched in July 2024, and will use video stories to show the public how sentencing works in magistrates' courts and the Crown Court. We have developed the tool in partnership with the Judicial Office and will be promoting it to teachers for use in schools and to public audiences of all ages.

Throughout the year, we will continue to inform public audiences, including victims, witnesses, offenders and their families, about sentencing and sentencing guidelines by developing content for our website designed to reach non-expert audiences, seeking coverage in the mainstream and specialist media relating to key Council activities and working with other organisations that can help us reach a wider public.

The purpose of publishing our business plan is to make sure that everyone who has an interest in our work is kept informed of developments. The Council's priorities can, and do, change throughout the year and from one year to the next. We have a statutory duty to consider requests from the Lord Chancellor and the Court of Appeal to review the sentencing of particular offences. We may also need to consider

amending our work plan if we are required to undertake work on new or particularly complex areas of sentencing, for example as a result of new legislation.

Subject to other matters arising which may affect our priorities, the current workplan can be seen at Annex C. We will review the plan in the autumn and publish updates, as appropriate, on our website.

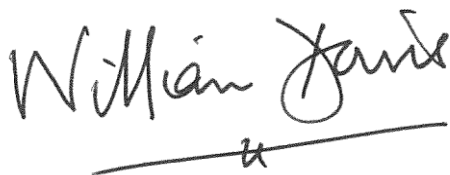
There have been a number of changes in Council membership over the past year. I am delighted to welcome on to the Council Chief Constable Rob Nixon. Rob formally started as the non-judicial member of the Council with experience of policing in December 2023, having served on an interim basis since May.

I also warmly welcome HHJ Simon Drew KC, who joined as a judicial member of the Council in June 2023. As well as being an experienced criminal barrister and judge, Simon also brings several years' experience as a course director at the Judicial College.

Johanna Robinson joined the Council in October 2023 as the member of Council with responsibility for promoting the welfare of victims of crime. Johanna has served as the National Adviser to the Welsh Government on Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence since 2022 and brings a wealth of experience of the criminal justice system and the perspective of victims.

Stephen Parkinson took up his position as the Director of Public Prosecutions on 1 November 2023 and therefore also took his place as a non-judicial member of the Sentencing Council at the same time. I would like to thank both his predecessor Max Hill, who served on the Council during his tenure as DPP, and Diana Fawcett who served as the Council member representing victims between 2019 and 2023, and wish them both the best for the future.

Finally, I would like to pay tribute to the staff of the Office of the Sentencing Council. They are the Council's most valuable resource and I am very proud of the high quality of the work which they produce. We operate within a limited budget and it is testament to the staff's ability and dedication that the Council continues to have the success that it does.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William James". The signature is written in a cursive style. Below the signature is a horizontal line with a small mark in the center, likely indicating where the signature was placed on a document.

April 2024

Background and membership (as at 1 April 2024)

The Sentencing Council is an independent, non-departmental public body (NDPB) of the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). The Council was set up by Part 4 of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 (“the Act”) to promote greater transparency and consistency in sentencing, whilst maintaining the independence of the judiciary. Our primary role is to issue guidelines, which the courts must follow unless it is in the interests of justice not to do so. The Council generally meets 10 times a year; minutes are published on our website.

Appointments to the Council

The Lady Chief Justice, the Right Honourable the Baroness Carr of Walton-on-the-Hill is President of the Council. In this role she oversees Council business and appoints judicial members, with the agreement of the Lord Chancellor.

The Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice appoints non-judicial members, with the agreement of the Lady Chief Justice.

All appointments are for a period of three years, with the possibility of extending up to a maximum of 10 years. Membership of the Council as of 1 April 2024 is as follows:

Members

The Council comprises eight judicial and six non-judicial members.

Chair: The Right Honourable Lord Justice William Davis

William Davis was appointed as Chairman of the Sentencing Council by the Lord Chief Justice, with the agreement of the Lord Chancellor, with effect from 1 August 2022. He was formerly a judicial member of the Sentencing Council between 2012 and 2015.

William was called to the Bar in 1976. He was appointed an Assistant Recorder in 1992, a Recorder in 1995 and QC in 1998. He was appointed to the Circuit Bench in 2008. During 2009 he was appointed a Deputy High Court Judge (QBD and Admin), a Senior Circuit Judge and Recorder of Birmingham. He was appointed to the High Court Bench in May 2014 and was a Presiding Judge of the Northern Circuit from 2016 to 2019. William was appointed to the Court of Appeal in October 2021.

The Right Honourable Lord Justice Holroyde

Tim Holroyde is a Lord Justice of Appeal and Vice-President of the Court of Appeal (Criminal Division). For many years he practised as a barrister on the Northern Circuit taking silk in 1996. In 2009 he was appointed as a High Court judge, covering a wide range of work including serious criminal cases. He was Course Director of the Judicial College’s Serious Crime Seminar from 2011 to 2015, and judge in charge of the list of terrorism offences from 2016 to 2017, when he was appointed to the Court of Appeal.

He became a member of the Sentencing Council for England and Wales in 2015, and was Chairman from 2018 to 2022.

Her Honour Judge Rosa Dean

Rosa Dean was called to the Bar in 1993. She was appointed as a District Judge (Magistrates’ Courts) in 2006, a Recorder in 2009 and a Circuit Judge in 2011. She was

appointed to the Sentencing Council on 6 April 2018; her term of appointment finishes on 6 April 2024.

Beverley Thompson OBE

Beverley Thompson has spent over 30 years working in the criminal justice sector initially as a probation officer in London. She was Director for Race, Prisons and Resettlement Services at NACRO for 10 years. She was appointed to the Sentencing Council on 15 June 2018.

Stephen Parkinson

Stephen Parkinson is the Director of Public Prosecutions. He was appointed by the Attorney General and took up post on 1 November 2023. He began his legal career in 1984 as a junior prosecutor at the Department of the Director of Public Prosecutions, which became the CPS in 1986. For four years from 1999, Stephen was Deputy Head of the Attorney General's Office. For the past 20 years, Stephen has been a practising defence lawyer. He became Head of Criminal Practice at the law firm Kingsley Napley in 2006, going on to become Senior Partner at the firm in 2018.

Johanna Robinson

Since September 2022, Johanna has served as National Adviser to the Welsh Government on Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence. Prior to this appointment, Johanna worked for four years as Head of Strategy for the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent. Between 2016 and 2018 she served as Head of Victims Services for Gwent Police, leading on the delivery of victims' services.

Johanna's was appointed to the Council on 5 October 2023, and she has specific responsibility for promoting the welfare of victims of crime

Jo King JP

Jo King was appointed to the Sussex Central Bench in 2002 and transferred to the Gloucestershire Bench in 2024. She has held a number of leadership roles within the magistracy at local, regional and national level. She has also served as a policy committee member and trustee of the Magistrates' Association and is a member of the Judicial Conduct and Investigations Office disciplinary panels. Jo is an Independent Member of the Parole Board and an Independent Panel Member for a number of major infrastructure project property hardship panels. Jo was appointed to the Sentencing Council on 8 October 2020.

The Honourable Mrs Justice May DBE

Juliet May was called to the Bar by the Inner Temple in 1988, becoming a bencher in 2010. She was appointed a recorder in 2001 and took silk in 2008, being appointed to the Circuit Bench later the same year. She was appointed to the High Court (Queen's Bench Division) in 2015. From 2017-2020 she was a Presiding Judge on the Western Circuit. Dame Juliet was appointed to the Sentencing Council as a High Court member on 8 October 2020.

District Judge (Magistrates' Courts) Stephen Leake

Stephen Leake was called to the Bar by the Middle Temple in 2002 and practiced mainly in criminal law. He was appointed as a Deputy District Judge (Magistrates' Courts) in 2019 and as a District Judge (Magistrates' Courts) in 2021. He is based at Medway Magistrates' Court. Stephen was appointed to the Council as the District Judge member on 23 May 2022.

Dr Elaine Freer

Elaine Freer is a Fellow and College Teaching Officer in law at Robinson College in the University of Cambridge, where she teaches Criminal Law, Criminal Procedure and Evidence, and Criminology, Sentencing and the Penal System, and writes on topics in those areas. She is also a practising barrister at 5 Paper Buildings, where she prosecutes and defends in criminal cases. In 2019 she worked as a Lawyer on the Criminal Team at the Law Commission of England and Wales, involved in the project to reform hate crime laws. Elaine joined the Council as the academic member on 1 July 2022.

Richard Wright KC

Richard Wright was called to the Bar in 1998 and took silk in 2013. He has practised from 6 Park Square in Leeds since 1998 where he has been Head of Chambers since 2013.

Since 2020 he has been Leader of the North Eastern Circuit, leading the professions' response to the Covid-19 emergency and, in 2022, was invited to join the legal team of the UK Covid-19 Inquiry.

Richard was appointed Deputy District Judge (Magistrates' Courts) in 2006, Recorder of the Crown Court in 2012 and Deputy High Court Judge in January 2023. He has been the defence representative on the Sentencing Council since 1 August 2022.

The Honourable Mr Justice Wall

Mark Wall was appointed a High Court Judge in October 2020 having previously been a Circuit Judge based at Birmingham Crown Court. Prior to his appointment to the circuit bench he was a Recorder and Deputy High Court Judge. He was called to the Bar in 1985 and took silk in 2006. He was leader of the Midland Circuit between 2011 and 2014. Mark was appointed to the Sentencing Council as a High Court member on 2 January 2023.

His Honour Judge Simon Drew KC

Simon Drew was appointed as a Circuit Judge in 2012, sitting in crime, based in Birmingham Crown Court. In 2015 he was authorised to try murders and, in 2020, was authorised to sit in the Family Court. In 2022 he was appointed to sit as a Circuit Judge sitting in the Court of Appeal Criminal Division. Simon has been a Judicial College criminal Course Director since 2015 and, in 2022, was appointed as the lead criminal Continuation Course Director. He was appointed to the Sentencing Council on 12 June 2023.

Chief Constable Rob Nixon QPM

Rob Nixon Rob has served with Leicestershire Police since 1993 and was appointed as Chief Constable in November 2022. He was appointed Assistant Chief Constable in April 2017, with responsibility for local policing, crime and intelligence and public protection, before being promoted to Deputy Chief Constable in February 2018. From 2009 to 2014, he was Chief Superintendent for the Leicester City Basic Command Unit. Rob was awarded the Queen's Police Medal (QPM) in December 2020 as part of the Queen's New Year's Honours list.

Rob was appointed as the non-judicial member of the Sentencing Council with experience of Policing from 1 December 2023, after having previously served on an interim basis from 5 May 2023.

Sub-groups

The Council has sub-groups to provide oversight in three areas: analysis and research, confidence and communication and governance. The sub-groups' roles are mandated by the Council, their membership reflects a broad range of judicial and non-judicial members, and all key decisions are made by the full membership.

Analysis and research: this group advises and steers the analysis and research strategy, including identifying research priorities so that it aligns with the Council's statutory commitments and work plan. Chaired by: Dr Elaine Freer

Confidence and communication: this group advises on and steers the work programme for the Communication and digital team so that it aligns with the Council's statutory commitments and work plan. Chaired by: Her Honour Judge Rosa Dean.

Governance: the Governance sub-group supports the Council in responsibilities for issues of risk, control and governance, by reviewing the comprehensiveness and reliability of assurances on governance, risk management, the control environment and the integrity of financial statements. Independent member: Elaine Lorimer, Chief Executive, Revenue Scotland. Chaired by: Beverley Thompson OBE.

The Council has also established a working group to advise on matters relating to equality and diversity and make sure that the full range of protected characteristics are considered in our work. The group also considers ways in which the Council could engage more effectively with, and take account of the views and perspectives of, representatives of people with protected characteristics, and with offenders and victims. Chaired by: the Honourable Mrs Justice May.

Where necessary, the Council sets up working groups to consider particular aspects of the development of a guideline or specific areas of business. It also sometimes invites contributions from people who are not members of the Council but who have particular experience and expertise in fields of relevance to the guidelines.

Objectives

Statement of Purpose

The Sentencing Council for England and Wales promotes a clear, fair and consistent approach to sentencing through the publication of sentencing guidelines, which provide clear structure and processes for judges and magistrates, and victims, witnesses, offenders and the public.

Statutory duties

The Council's objectives are informed by our statutory duties under the Act, including:

(Section 120) Publishing draft guidelines and consulting when preparing them (including consulting the Lord Chancellor and Justice Select Committee); publishing definitive guidelines after making necessary amendments.

In preparing guidelines, having regard to:

- the sentences imposed by courts
- the need to promote consistency
- the impact of sentencing on victims
- the need to promote public confidence in the Criminal Justice System
- the cost of different sentences and their relative effectiveness in preventing re-offending and
- the results of monitoring.

Under section 124 the Council may be asked to prepare guidelines by the Lord Chancellor or the Court of Appeal and when this happens it should consider whether to do so.

(Section 127) Preparing and publishing resource assessments for both draft and definitive guidelines. These resource assessments should assess the resources required for the provision of prison places, probation provision and youth justice services.

(Section 128) Monitoring the operation of guidelines and considering what conclusions can be drawn, including:

- the frequency with which, and extent to which, courts depart from sentencing guidelines
- factors which influence the sentences imposed by the courts
- the effect of guidelines in promoting consistency and
- the effect of guidelines on the promotion of public confidence in the criminal justice system

(section 119) Publishing a report on the exercise of the Council's functions during the year.

Under section 129 the Council may also promote awareness of matters in relation to the sentencing of offenders, in particular the sentences imposed, the costs of different sentences and their relative effectiveness in preventing reoffending, and the operation and effect of guidelines.

Under section 132, the Council has a duty to assess the effect, and prepare a report, where the Lord Chancellor refers any government policy or proposals likely to have a significant effect on resources for prison, probation or youth justice services.

The activities for 2024/25 to deliver these statutory duties are outlined in **Table 1**.

Strategic objectives 2021-2026

Following the Council's consultation on our future priorities, coinciding with our tenth anniversary in 2020, the Council set strategic objectives to help shape our work from 2021 to 2026. These objectives set out how we plan to deliver our statutory duties as detailed above, and outline specific actions that the Council will take during the period and from which the activities for the year covered by this business plan flow:

- promote consistency and transparency in sentencing through the development and revision of sentencing guidelines
- ensure that all our work is evidence-based and will work to enhance and strengthen the data and evidence that underpins it
- explore and consider issues of equality and diversity relevant to our work and take any necessary action in response within our remit
- consider and collate evidence on effectiveness of sentencing and seek to enhance the ways in which we raise awareness of the relevant issues and
- work to strengthen confidence in sentencing by improving public knowledge and understanding of sentencing, including among victims, witnesses and offenders, as well as the general public

For more information about these strategic objectives and how we are meeting them, you can visit [Sentencing Council strategic objectives 2021-2026](#). Alongside this business plan we are publishing [an update on the actions under each strategic objective](#) as set out on pages 7 to 14 of the strategic objectives document.

The Office of the Sentencing Council

In addition to the Council's statutory duties and strategic objectives, as with any successful organisation the Council depends on highly-skilled and well-motivated staff. To that end there are a number of specific objectives focussed on our people, with the goal of:

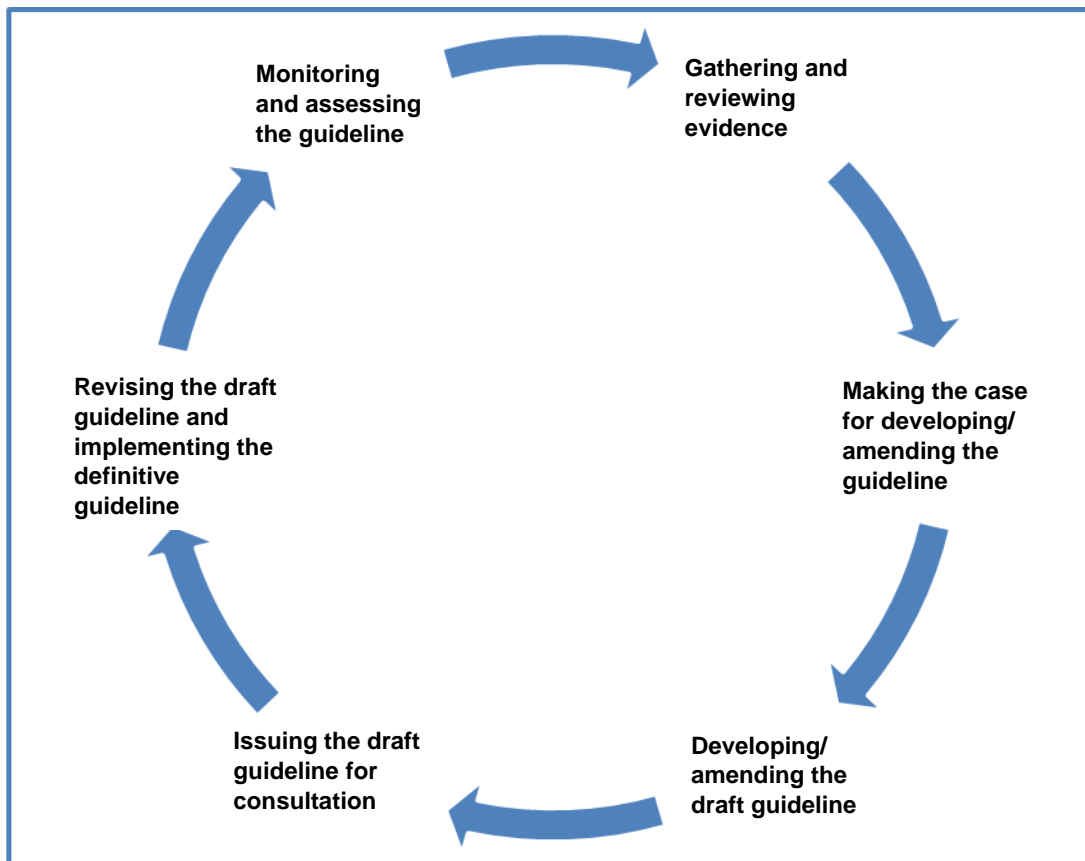
- delivering our objectives within the budget we are allocated
- ensuring that the Office has a motivated and collaborative team who feel valued and engaged, and have the necessary capability and autonomy to deliver clear objectives and
- working together to identify and implement more efficient ways of working and to ensure value for money.

These objectives are set out in section 3 of **Table 1**.

Delivering the Sentencing Council's work

The Council approaches the delivery of our guideline-related objectives by adopting a guideline development cycle. This is based on an adaptation of the Rationale, Objectives, Appraisal, Monitoring, Evaluation and Feedback (ROAMEF) policy cycle set out by HM Treasury in the 2022 Green Book and allows a culture of continuous improvement to be embedded within the development process.

Following this cycle, there are several key stages within the development of a sentencing guideline:



Making the case for developing/amending the guideline

Annex A outlines the Council’s rationale for prioritising which guidelines to produce (or which existing guidelines to amend), after which options for the actual guideline are considered. The work undertaken at this point may include conducting research, assessing options for the scope and remit of a guideline, its objectives, or whether there is in fact a need for the guideline. If the guideline has been requested by the Lord Chancellor, Lady Chief Justice or Court of Appeal or evidence of a sentencing-related issue is presented to us by an interested organisation, this would also be given due consideration.

Developing/amending the draft guideline

Once the Council has decided that a new guideline will be produced, or an existing one amended, and has agreed the objectives, work is undertaken to produce a draft guideline that will be issued for consultation. This involves a variety of different activities including consideration of relevant case law and existing sentencing guidelines or guidance; analysis of current sentencing practice; research and analysis to assess any practical, behavioural or resource implications of draft guideline proposals; stakeholder mapping and engagement and analysis of media reports. We may discuss relevant issues with experts in the field, and will always consider when preparing or revising a guideline whether to seek formal advice from experts. The guideline proceeds through a number of iterations of drafting in order to ensure that different options are fully considered. A monitoring and evaluation strategy is also drawn up to ensure that the guideline can be assessed and evaluated after implementation.

Issuing the draft guideline for public consultation

A draft guideline is issued for public consultation, alongside the analysis and research that supported its development and an assessment of its resource implications and any equality impact. The media and stakeholders are briefed about the main issues and the purpose of the consultation, in order to bring it to the attention of a wide audience and encourage responses. We promote our consultations on our website, via our email bulletin and on social media, and events are held with stakeholders to ensure that those with particular interest in the guideline are aware of the consultation and able to provide their input. Consultations are usually open for 12 weeks, to allow those who wish to provide a response the chance to do so.

Revising the draft guideline and implementing the definitive guideline

Further work is undertaken after the consultation to revise the guideline to take account of the responses received and to review and if necessary test changes to the guideline.

The guideline is published online on the Council's website. A response to the consultation is also published at this point explaining what changes have been made as a result of the responses we have received. Updated data on sentencing practice and a new resource assessment to reflect the final guideline are published at the same time, and a link to the guideline is emailed to stakeholders. The media are briefed, and we use a range of channels to ensure that the public is informed and that all key parties are aware of and able to access the guideline.

The Council works with the Judicial College to help facilitate training for sentencers on using the guideline. There will generally be an implementation period before the guideline comes into effect to allow for awareness-raising and any training to take place. In most instances we aim to bring definitive guidelines into force quarterly, on 1 January, 1 April, 1 July and 1 October.

Since 2021, the Council has also begun consulting annually on miscellaneous amendments to guidelines. The Council has built up a large body of sentencing guidelines that are in use in courts throughout England and Wales and there are inevitably issues that arise with existing guidelines over time. The annual consultation seeks views on a range of amendments which address those issues.

Monitoring and assessing the guideline

The Council adopts a targeted, bespoke and proportionate approach to assessing each guideline's impact and implementation. Where data is available, this work involves an assessment of whether the guidelines are having any impact on sentencing outcomes or incurring any implementation issues. This information will be set against our resource assessments for the guideline to examine whether there was likely to have been an impact on correctional resources, as well as the Council's intention for a particular guideline.

We use a range of different methods for evaluations, drawing on analysis of existing data on sentencing trends over time, collection of data from sentencers on the factors that influence their sentencing of different offences, surveys, interviews and focus groups, and content analysis of Crown Court sentencing transcripts; if possible data will be collected 'before' the guideline comes into force as well as 'after' in order to provide a comparison between the two time periods.

We use a variety of different methods of data collection and analysis, both quantitative and qualitative, as necessary.

Gathering and reviewing evidence

The outcomes of monitoring and evaluation, along with any stakeholder or media feedback, are assessed and considered by the Council. Following this assessment, the guideline cycle moves back into the phase of making the case for developing/amending the guideline, this time addressing the potential need to review the guideline and make improvements. If this is found to be necessary, the cycle begins again. The timescale for this process will vary, depending on a number of factors including the extent of monitoring and evaluation and the urgency for taking any action.

Timing and prioritisation

The Business Plan sets out an indicative timeline for preparation and publication of guidelines based on the Council's current priorities and our rolling work programme. The plan will be subject to bi-annual review and updates will be published, as appropriate, on the Sentencing Council website.

Cross-cutting work

The plan also includes timescales for more cross-cutting work that the Council undertakes in support of the whole range of its statutory duties. This includes, for example, publication of data related to sentencing, research on perceptions of guidelines, analysis of the risk that guidelines have unintended impacts on different groups, user testing of guidelines and ongoing work to maintain public confidence in sentencing.

Table 1: The main activities to deliver our statutory duties and planned timescales are as follows:

Work area	Key planned deliverables	Target (end of quarter)
SECTION 1: GUIDELINES		
Non-fatal strangulation	Publication of consultation, resource assessment and statistical bulletin	Quarter 1 2024/25
	Publication of definitive guideline, consultation response, and resource assessment	Quarter 3 2024/25
Bladed articles and offensive weapons	Publication of findings from guideline evaluation	Quarter 2 2024/25
Miscellaneous amendments to guidelines	Publication of consultation	Quarter 2 2024/25
	Publication of revised guidelines and consultation response	Quarter 4 2024/25
Ancillary orders	Publication of consultation	Quarter 2 2024/25
Domestic abuse	Publication of findings from guideline evaluation	Quarter 2 2024/25
Intimidatory offences	Publication of findings from guideline evaluation	Quarter 3 2024/25
Breach offences	Publication of findings from guideline evaluation	Quarter 3 2024/25
Imposition (revision)	Publication of definitive revised guideline, consultation response and resource assessment	Quarter 3 2024/25
Immigration	Publication of definitive guidelines, consultation response and resource assessment	Quarter 3 2024/25
Hare coursing	Publication of consultation, resource assessment and statistical bulletin	Quarter 4 2024/25

Public order	Publication of consultation, resource assessment and statistical bulletin	Quarter 4 2024/25
Blackmail, kidnap and false imprisonment	Publication of definitive guidelines, consultation response and resource assessment	Quarter 4 2024/25
Housing	Publication of consultation, resource assessment and statistical bulletin	Quarter 4 2024/25
Aggravated vehicle taking, vehicle registration fraud, disqualification etc	Publication of definitive/revised guidelines, consultation response, and resource assessment	Quarter 4 2024/25
Manslaughter offences	Publication of findings from guideline evaluation	Quarter 4 2024/25
SECTION 2: CROSS-CUTTING WORK		
Business Plan and Strategic objectives	Publish 2024-25 Business Plan and update on progress on strategic objectives 2021-2026	Quarter 1 2024/25
You Be the Judge – online tool	Relaunch 'You Be the Judge' – interactive sentencing tool on the Sentencing Council website	Quarter 1 2024/25
Annual Report	Publish 2023-24 Annual Report	Quarter 2 2024/25
Effectiveness in sentencing	Publish second research report	Quarter 2 2024/25
Digitisation of guidelines	Continue to maintain, refine and support online and offline versions of sentencing guidelines for magistrates (MCSG)	Ongoing
	Continue to maintain, refine and support online versions of sentencing guidelines for Crown Court Judges	Ongoing
References received from Lord Chancellor or Court of Appeal under section 124	Respond as required	Reactive only

External representation	Council members and office staff speak at external events throughout the year targeting the judiciary, criminal justice practitioners, academics and special interest groups.	Ongoing
	Promote sentencing guidelines and the Council using all channels, including via proactive and positive engagement with the media, to engage with Government, its arm's-length bodies, the Judicial College and organisations with an interest in criminal justice and sentencing.	Ongoing
	Promote public confidence in sentencing by tailoring and targeting our external communications, developing relationships with key advocates such as the police service, working with partner organisations and developing the public-facing content of our website.	Ongoing
	Provide assistance to foreign jurisdictions via visits, advice and support work.	Ongoing
SECTION 3: EFFICIENCY AND OUR PEOPLE		
Efficiency	<p>Publishing all guidelines and other documents online, with the exception of the annual report.</p> <p>Ensure value for money in the procurement of goods and services, making savings where possible and complying with departmental finance, procurement and contract management rules.</p> <p>Learn from lessons of each project, making improvements to future guidelines as a result; and improving efficiency on the basis of experience of what works.</p>	Review quarterly

<p>Capability</p>	<p>Enable the Council to operate digitally, through development and support of secure online members' area, digital Council papers and online collaboration tools.</p> <p>Ensure all staff undertake at least five days of targeted learning and development to develop skills, capability and career.</p> <p>Hold lunchtime seminars for staff to share knowledge and expertise about the work of the Council, the criminal justice system and Whitehall/ Government.</p>	<p>Touchpoint meetings every 2 months</p>
<p>Engagement</p>	<p>Implement an action plan arising from the findings of the people survey, based on priorities identified by staff.</p>	<p>Quarter 2 2024/25</p>

TIMELINE OF PUBLICATIONS AND GUIDELINE EFFECTIVE DATES 2024 to 2025		
April 2024	Miscellaneous amendments to guidelines	Revisions in effect
May 2024	Non-fatal strangulation	Launch of consultation
May 2024	Business Plan	Publication of Business Plan
July 2024	Annual report and accounts	Publication of statutory annual report to the Lord Chancellor
August 2024	Miscellaneous amendments to guidelines	Launch of consultation
August 2024	Ancillary orders	Launch of consultation
September 2024	Effectiveness in sentencing	Publication of research review
September 2024	Domestic abuse	Publication of evaluation
November 2024	Imposition (revision)	Publication of revised definitive guideline
November 2024	Immigration	Publication of definitive guideline
December 2024	Non-fatal strangulation	Publication of definitive guideline
December 2024	Intimidatory offences	Publication of evaluation
December 2024	Breach offences	Publication of evaluation
January 2025	Imposition	Definitive guideline in effect
January 2025	Immigration	Definitive guideline in effect
January 2025	Non-fatal strangulation	Definitive guideline in effect
January 2025	Blackmail, kidnap, and false imprisonment	Publication of definitive guideline
January 2025	Hare coursing	Launch of consultation
January 2025	Public order	Launch of consultation
February 2025	Aggravated vehicle taking, vehicle registration fraud, disqualification etc	Publication of new and revised definitive guidelines
February 2025	Housing offences	Launch of consultation
March 2025	Miscellaneous amendments to guidelines	Publication of guideline revisions

Resources

Staff headcount (as at 1 April 2024)

Area of activity	FTE (Full Time Equivalents)
Head of Office and support	2
Policy	4.6
Analysis and research	9.7
Legal	0.7
Communications	3
Total	20*

*Due to rounding, the total FTE may not appear to correspond with the sum of the individual FTE figures as presented.

Budget

Summary of budget and resource allocation

	2023/24 (actual) £000s	2024/25 (budget) £000s
Total funding allocation	1,918	1,901
Staff costs	1,598	1,648
Non staff costs	239	254
Total expenditure	1,837	1,901

Annex A: Rationale for the prioritisation of guidelines

Under section 120 of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 the Sentencing Council must prepare sentencing guidelines on:

- the discharge of a court's duty under section 73 of the Sentencing Code (reduction in sentences for guilty plea); and
- the application of any rule of law as to the totality of sentences.

Section 120(4) provides that the Council may prepare sentencing guidelines about any other matter.

The overarching aim of the Council in publishing guidelines is to promote a clear, fair and consistent approach to sentencing. In agreeing its rolling work plan, the Council will prioritise the publication of guidelines that will fulfil that aim.

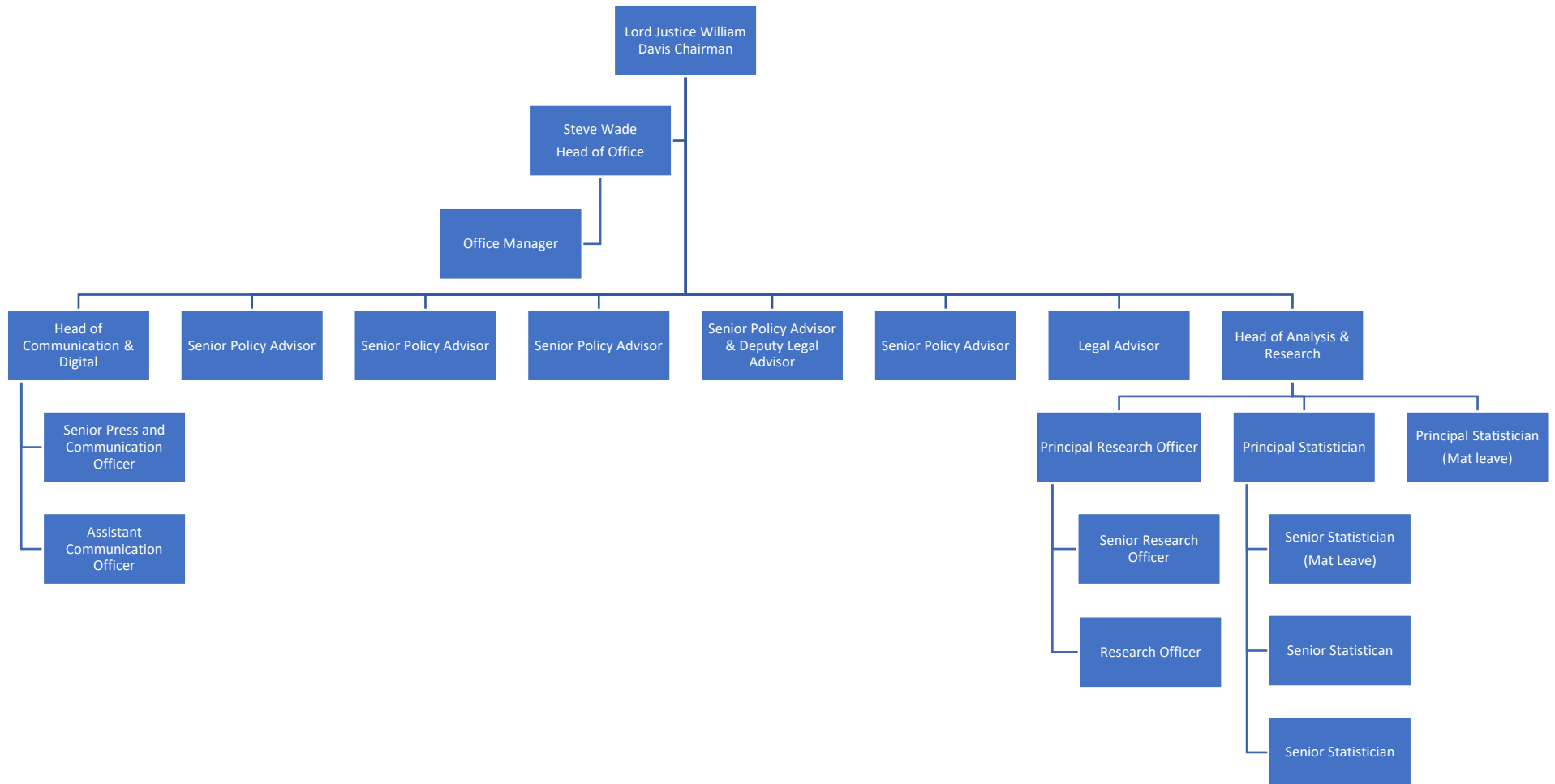
The Sentencing Council will schedule guideline production on the basis of one or more of the following factors:

- The Lord Chancellor or the Court of Appeal formally requests the review of sentencing for a particular offence, category of offence or category of offender and the Council considers that the production or revision of one or more guidelines is justified;
- Existing guideline(s) have become significantly out of date because of amendments to legislation or other external factors;
- New legislation or other external factors have created a demand for new guideline(s) among court users, and the Council considers that the necessary evidence is available to develop such guideline(s);
- There is evidence (from the Council's own research or evaluations, interested groups or other sources) of issues relating to sentencing that the Council considers could be addressed by the development or revision of one or more guidelines. Such issues may include but are not limited to:
 - evidence of inconsistency in the sentencing of an offence or group of offences;
 - evidence of inequality in sentencing between different demographic groups;
 - evidence of sentencing being too high or too low for a category of offence or category of offender; and/ or
 - evidence relating to the effectiveness of different sentences.

A further factor that the Council will take into account in all cases is the resource available to produce or revise guidelines. The Council is unlikely to undertake the development or revision of a guideline at a time when legislative changes that would affect that guideline are pending.

Annex B: The Office of the Sentencing Council as at 1 April 2024

The Sentencing Council is supported in its work by a multi-disciplinary team of civil servants, as shown below.



Annex C: Sentencing Council Guideline Work Plan – 2024-2025 (as at 1 April 2024)

Guideline	Consultation period	Publish definitive guideline	Definitive guideline in force
Imposition	November 2023 – February 2024	November 2024	1 January 2025
Blackmail, threats to disclose, kidnap and false imprisonment	January 2024 – April 2024	January 2025	1 April 2025
Aggravated vehicle taking etc	February 2024 – May 2024	January 2025	1 April 2025
Immigration	March 2024 – June 2024	November 2024	1 January 2025
Non fatal strangulation	May 2024 – August 2024	December 2024	1 January 2025
Ancillary Orders	August 2024 – October 2024	Early 2025	TBC
Annual miscellaneous amendments	August 2024 – November 2024	March 2025	1 April 2025
Additional public order offences	January 2025 – March 2025	Late 2025	TBC
Hare coursing	January 2025 – April 2025	Late 2025	TBC
Housing offences	February 2025 – May 2025	Late 2025	TBC

The dates shown in this work plan are indicative.

In most instances we aim to bring definitive guidelines into force quarterly, on 1 January, 1 April, 1 July and 1 October.

This is an annual rolling programme of updates and corrections to guidelines the content of which will vary from year to year