

## MEETING OF THE SENTENCING COUNCIL

4 APRIL 2025

### MINUTES

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Members present:

Bill Davis (Chairman)  
Simon Drew  
Elaine Freer  
Tim Holroyde  
Jo King  
Stephen Leake  
Juliet May  
Stephen Parkinson  
Amanda Rippon  
Johanna Robinson  
Beverley Thompson  
Mark Wall  
Richard Wright

Representatives:

Director, Youth Justice and Offender Policy, MoJ  
for the Lord Chancellor  
Legal Adviser to the Head of Criminal Justice for  
the Lady Chief Justice  
Deputy Director of Policy, CPS for the DPP

Office staff:

Head of Office  
Members of the Office

## **1. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING**

- 1.1 The minutes from the meeting of 28 February 2025 were agreed with minor revisions.

## **2. MATTERS ARISING**

- 2.1 The Chairman noted that a member of the office had presented at two meetings with organisations which help bereaved families of road traffic accident victims and had explained the sentencing framework in England and Wales, the role of the Council and of sentencing guidelines. It is hoped that this will help equip them to explain the sentencing process to their service-users.

## **3. DISCUSSION ON HOUSING OFFENCES**

- 3.1 The Council considered the findings of road testing of draft versions of the individual and organisation guidelines covering the nine offences of unlawful eviction of occupier and unlawful harassment of occupier.
- 3.2 The Council considered a variety of amendments as a result of these findings, many of which the Council agreed to, such as increasing the number of culpability categories from two to three and minor changes to the aggravating and mitigating factors.
- 3.3 The Council considered whether to include offences related to selective licensing within the broader project on guidelines for housing offences and concluded they should be left out, given that licensing schemes do not run nationwide and were low in volume; where appropriate, the courts could rely by analogy on the guidelines for HMO licence offences.

## **4. DISCUSSION ON INTIMIDATORY OFFENCES EVALUATION**

- 4.1 The Council discussed the main findings of the evaluation of this guideline ahead of publication of the report next month. The Council concluded no major changes to the guidelines were necessary as a result of the evaluation, although it was agreed to consult on adding wording regarding some observed differences within the threats to kill offence.

## **5. DISCUSSION ON BLADED ARTICLES**

- 5.1 The Council discussed and agreed the scope of the next bladed articles project which is expected to commence in June. The project will include amendments to the existing guidelines and the production of several new guidelines.

## **6. DISCUSSION ON STRANGULATION AND SUFFOCATION**

- 6.1 The Council considered an issue which was highlighted in judicial training of the definitive guideline for Strangulation and suffocation offences following its recent publication. The point considered was a question asked regarding whether a formal medical diagnosis is required to find a victim is suffering a psychological 'condition' in the high harm factor: 'Offence results in a severe physical injury or psychological condition which has a substantial effect on the victim's ability to carry out their normal day to day activities or on their ability to work.'
- 6.2 The Council agreed it did not intend to impose a burden on victims to obtain a medical diagnosis of a psychological condition, although it is highly likely that a victim suffering such impacts would require medical attention.
- 6.3 The Council agreed that although testing of the guideline had not identified an issue with application of the factor during the guideline's development, reference to a 'condition' should be replaced with 'harm' to avoid too high a threshold being applied for a finding of the factor.
- 6.4 The Council will consult on this amendment in its annual miscellaneous amendments consultation.

## **7. DISCUSSION ON ANCILLARY ORDERS**

- 7.1 The Council considered the responses to the proposed ancillary orders guidance and agreed some changes suggested by consultees. It was agreed that the guidance should be published on the website in the summer, subject to final checks to the content and format.
- 7.2 The Council also agreed that any future updates that related solely to the factual content of the guidance could be made without consultation in order to ensure that the guidance is kept up to date and accurate.