

MEETING OF THE SENTENCING COUNCIL

9 MAY 2025

MINUTES

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

Apologies: Johanna Robinson

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

Office staff: Head of Office
Members of the Office

1. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

- 1.1 The minutes from the meeting of 4 April 2025 were agreed.

2. MATTERS ARISING

- 2.1 The Chairman noted the progress of the Sentencing Guidelines (Pre-sentence Reports) Bill.

3. DISCUSSION ON UPCOMING PUBLICATIONS AND LEGISLATION

- 3.1 The Council discussed changes that would need to be made across sentencing guidelines on the assumption that the Sentencing Guidelines (Pre-sentence Reports) Bill is enacted in its current form.
- 3.2 The timings of future publications and the coming into effect of new or revised guidelines were discussed. It was decided to publish the Intimidatory offences evaluation and the response to the 2024 Miscellaneous amendments consultation in May.

4. DISCUSSION ON BUSINESS PLAN

- 4.1 The Council agreed its Business Plan for 2025-2026. In considering the Business Plan, the Council agreed that it was no longer necessary to have sentencing guidelines come into force on common commencement dates (1 January, 1 April, 1 July and 1 October).

5. DISCUSSION ON STRATEGY

- 5.1 The Council gave further consideration to its future strategy, with a particular focus on how it should prioritise creating and revising sentencing guidelines, as well as ensuring existing guidelines are evaluated in good time.
- 5.2 The Council acknowledged that its future approach needed to be informed by, for example, any work arising from the independent review of sentencing led by Rt Hon David Gauke, the recommendations of which were expected later in the month.

6. DISCUSSION ON PUBLIC ORDER 2

- 6.1 The Council considered the content of a draft guideline for public nuisance offences, specifically step one and step two factors and sentences. Consideration was given of whether specific issues should be assessed at step one or two.
- 6.2 The Council agreed that further consideration of the content of the draft guideline be undertaken to ensure proportionate sentences across the wide spectrum of public nuisance offences which can include protest and non-protest related activity.

7. DISCUSSION ON PLANS FOR TWO EVALUATIONS

- 7.1 The Council considered plans for two upcoming evaluations and discussed their broad scope, including any relevant issues that should be considered.

8. DISCUSSION ON MISCELLANEOUS AMENDMENTS

- 8.1 The Council considered various suggestions from guideline users and agreed to consult on the following: amending the harm assessment in the fraud guideline to address the situation where there is no loss to any victim; a small amendment to the guilty plea guideline to align it with the recent disqualification guidance; adding disparities wording to the Handling stolen goods guideline.