

# Sentencing Council

**Sub-group meeting:** 4 June 2015  
**Paper:** Revision of the Terms of Reference for the  
Communications and Confidence sub group  
**Lead official:** Helen Stear 020 7071 5788

## **1. Issue**

1.1 With a new chair, new members and the introduction of meetings by phone and papers available for download, it would seem a good time to review our terms of reference.

1.2 The Analysis and Research sub group are also revising their Terms of Reference and it would be helpful if the two documents were set out in a similar format, covering similar topics.

## **2. Recommendation**

2.1 The sub group members review the existing terms of reference at annex A, review the proposed terms of reference at annex B and compare with the draft terms of reference for the analysis and research sub group and the governance (formerly risk and audit) sub group at annex C.

## **3. Consideration**

3.1 Key changes to the terms of reference are listed below.

## **Reporting**

3.2 Instead of reporting to the Council twice a year, it is proposed that a brief update is given to Council after every sub group meeting.

*Q: Is the sub group in agreement that more regular feedback to Council as proposed above, will ensure that all members are better informed about the work of sub groups?*

## **Budget and risk**

3.2 It is proposed that sub groups provide assurance that the communications budget and risks are being reviewed regularly and managed effectively by the office and that

any procurement activity undertaken is appropriate, cost-effective and ethical. This will involve the office lead reporting on expenditure at every meeting and presenting the relevant points on the Council's risk register for regular reviews.

*Q: Is the sub group content to take on this role?*

### **Contacts and networks**

3.3 A new responsibility has been included, namely for sub group members to assist with finding and making contacts and networks in areas where they have influence.

*Q: Is the sub group content to take on this additional responsibility?*

### **Frequency of meetings**

3.4 It is proposed that we reduce the frequency of meetings. Currently the communications and confidence sub group meets eight times a year. The proposal is to move to six times per year, meeting every other month. It is proposed that the following dates be put in diaries for the remainder of 2015:

	<b>Current</b>	<b>Proposed</b>	<b>Council</b>
<b>June</b>	Thursday 4 <sup>th</sup>	<i>stet</i> : Thursday 4 <sup>th</sup>	Friday 19 <sup>th</sup>
<b>July</b>	Friday 24 <sup>th</sup>	-	Friday 17 <sup>th</sup>
<b>August</b>	-	<b>30/31<sup>st</sup> July or 6/7<sup>th</sup> August</b>	-
<b>September</b>	Thursday 10 <sup>th</sup>	-	Friday 25 <sup>th</sup>
<b>October</b>	Friday 30 <sup>th</sup>	<i>stet</i> : Friday 30 <sup>th</sup>	Friday 23 <sup>rd</sup>
<b>November</b>	-	-	Friday 20 <sup>th</sup>
<b>December</b>	Thursday 10 <sup>th</sup>	<i>stet</i> : Thursday 10 <sup>th</sup>	Friday 18 <sup>th</sup>

*Q: Is the sub group in agreement that the frequency of meetings can be reduced?*

*Q: Is the sub group happy to leave the October and December dates as they are?*

*Q: Could sub group members let the office know their availability for the suggested dates for the August meeting?*

### **Future dates**

3.5.1 For 2016, the chair and office lead will look for dates in February, April, June, August (late July/early August), October and December and share with the wider group in due course.

3.5.2 Meetings are currently held from 11am until 12:30pm on Thursdays or Fridays to suit general availability of group and team members. With new membership now in place it is proposed to revisit the best days and times for meetings. It has been suggested that meeting from 1pm or after 4:30pm may be more convenient for judicial members.

*Q: Could sub group members let the office know their preferred days and times for meetings? Please note that Helen does not work on Wednesdays.*

### **Format of meetings**

3.6 Meetings are currently held using the *PowWowNow* telephone conferencing tool. We are working on getting a video conferencing facility and if and when that is available, will switch to using that. We would plan to meet face to face only in exceptional circumstances.

### **Papers**

3.7 As with the main Council, sub group meeting papers will now be uploaded to the private members' area with an email alert sent at the time of upload. Members are then asked to download or print papers as they wish and to use this area of the site to register their attendance and keep up to date with other information concerning the sub group.

## **ANNEX A – EXISTING TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE SENTENCING COUNCIL COMMUNICATIONS AND CONFIDENCE SUB GROUP**

### **Membership**

Membership is comprised of Council members on a voluntary basis. One sub-group member will act as facilitator and chair sub-group meetings. Ideally, there should be at least one judicial member of the sub-group.

The work of the sub-group is supported by communications team staff.

### **Facilitator**

In addition to chairing sub-group meetings, the facilitator will also report back to the Sentencing Council on the work of the sub-group and achievements against the Council's statutory duties and work plan at least once a year.

### **Remit**

- Advise on the work programme for the communications team so that it aligns with the Council's statutory commitments and its work plan.
- Take an active role in the planning of communications projects and assist in the specification of these projects.
- Provide comments on draft plans and strategies.
- Assist in liaison with the wider communications community.

### **Meetings**

Sub-group meetings will be scheduled to occur approximately every six weeks, obviously avoiding clashes with Sentencing Council meetings. Meetings occur at Kingsley Napley (hosted by Michael Caplan) and last no longer than two hours.

Papers will be sent by email to sub-group members in advance – hard copies will be sent to those who request them.

Wherever possible, apologies must be received no later than the evening before a meeting as any decision to cancel or postpone a meeting will need to be taken in time to inform colleagues travelling long distances. Members who are unable to attend meetings should send comments on papers in advance so they can be fed in to the meeting.

**ANNEX B – PROPOSED REVISION TO THE TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE SENTENCING COUNCIL COMMUNICATIONS AND CONFIDENCE SUB GROUP**

**Membership**

- No fewer than three designated Council members, one of whom will act as facilitator and chair for sub group meetings;
- ideally, there should be at least one judicial member of the sub-group;
- secretariat provided by the office Communications Team staff who also attend the meetings.

**Role of facilitator:**

- assist with planning sub group meetings;
- chair sub group meetings;
- act as an ambassador for the sub group, linking in with other sub group members and encouraging participation and contributions between meetings; and
- report back to the Sentencing Council on the work of the sub group and achievements against the Council’s statutory duties and work plan after each meeting.

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The work of the sub-group is supported by communications team staff. ¶

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**Responsibilities of the sub group are to take an active role in:**

- advising on and steering the work programme for the communications team so that it aligns with the Council’s statutory commitments and work plan;
- planning communications projects and assisting in the specification of these projects;
- providing guidance, feedback and comments on draft plans and strategies;
- Providing assurance that the communications budget and risks are being reviewed regularly and managed effectively by the office and that any procurement activity undertaken is appropriate, cost-effective and ethical; and
- assisting with contacts and networks in areas where members have influence.

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**Meetings**

- Sub-group meetings will be scheduled to occur every other month, obviously avoiding clashes with Sentencing Council meetings.
- Meetings occur by telephone using the PowWowNow telephone conferencing tool and last no longer than an hour and a half.

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- Papers will be uploaded to the members' area of the website with an email alert being sent to members at the time of the upload.
- Wherever possible, apologies must be received no later than the evening before a meeting as any decision to cancel or postpone a meeting will need to be taken in time to inform colleagues.
- Members who are unable to attend meetings should send comments on papers in advance so they can be fed in to the meeting.

**ANNEX C – DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE  
SENTENCING COUNCIL ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH SUB GROUP AND  
GOVERNANCE (FORMERLY RISK AND AUDIT) SUB GROUP**

**ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH**

**Membership**

- Designated Council members, one of whom will act as facilitator and chair for sub group meetings;
- appropriate Council advisors;
- supported by the Analysis and Research team.

**Role of facilitator:**

- assist with planning sub group meetings;
- chair sub group meetings;
- act as an ambassador for the sub group, linking in with other sub group members and encouraging participation and contributions between meetings;  
and
- report back to the Sentencing Council the work and achievements of the sub group after each meeting.

**Responsibilities of the sub group are to take an active role in:**

- advising and steering the Analysis and Research strategy, including the budget and risks, so that it aligns with the Council's statutory commitments and work plan;
- the scoping, design and methodology of analytical projects, assisting in the specification of these projects;
- commenting on draft research reports, statistical bulletins and resource assessment, advising on the main implications for the Sentencing Council and how best to disseminate key messages, as necessary;
- providing assurance that the analysis and research budget and risks are being reviewed regularly and managed effectively by the office and that any procurement activity undertaken is appropriate, cost-effective and ethical;
- providing analytical advice to the Sentencing Council on equality and diversity issues, if relevant, to feed into any relevant Public Sector Equalities Duties work; and

- assisting in the liaison with the wider academic community, research bodies and other government departments.

**Sub group meetings:**

It is proposed that meetings are held once every two months, 1.00-2.30 pm and using video and phone links to a greater extent.

**GOVERNANCE****Membership:**

- One judicial member of the Council;
- One non-judicial member of the Council;
- One external member with relevant expertise;
- Council adviser, as appropriate;  
One of whom will act as facilitator and chair for subgroup meetings.
- Secretariat provided by the members of the Office's policy team, who will also attend meetings.

**Role of facilitator:**

- To assist with planning sub group meetings;
- To chair sub-group meetings and an annual strategy meeting with the Chairman;
- To act as an ambassador for the sub-group, linking in with other subgroup members and encouraging participation and contributions between meetings;
- To report back to the Sentencing Council the work and achievements of the subgroup after each meeting.

**Responsibilities of the subgroup:**

To support the Council in their 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. In particular, to:

- Assess the adequacy of accounting policies in place, review the management of the budget and accounts and the process for reviewing accounts to ensure Ministry of Justice standards are being observed;

- Provide oversight to processes for any appointment outside of the usual Ministerial appointment process, or any procurement process outside of the usual arrangements, to ensure the integrity of the Council is not compromised;
- Review the risks identified on the register with a view to ensuring that all risks to delivery of the Sentencing Council's objectives and wider operating environment have been identified;
- Review the mitigating actions in place for risks that are scoring in the black or have been identified as increasing for two consecutive months to ensure that effective action is being taken;
- Hold an annual meeting with the Chairman of the Council, to review progress of the Council over the preceding year, provide advice on effective governance, and contribute to setting the strategic direction for the Council by providing support and challenge to the Chairman and Head of Office.

**Sub group meetings:**

Meetings will be held quarterly, with an additional annual meeting with the Chairman, shortly before the start of the new financial and business planning year.