

Confidence and Communication sub-group

Sub-group meeting:

24 May 2019

Lead official:

Phil Hodgson 020 7071 5788

Meeting note

Attendees

Council: Julian Goose (Chair), Sarah Munro, Rob Butler

OSC: Phil Hodgson, Kathryn Montague, Gareth Sweny

Aim of meeting

To consider:

i Preparations for 10th anniversary activities:

Anniversary event

Publishing opportunities

Sentencing competition

ii Proposals for reaching young people

iii Risk register, items 4 and 6

i Preparations for 10th anniversary activities

1 Anniversary event

Sub-group members were content with the proposed:

- venue, budget and two-part structure of the event, and
- A&R sub-group suggestions for research projects to provide content for the event.

Rob raised a concern as to whether there would be enough content for a whole-day event.

Phil agreed that this would be consideration in the planning, as final decisions are made on content.

Julian suggested the Council could also conduct research to investigate the impact of the guidelines on appeals, and whether there is any evidence of a change of pattern. The project could look at the number of sentence appeals each year and the proportion of those that were successful.

Actions

Phil to refer the suggestion for research on sentencing appeals to Emma Marshall, Head of A&R.

2 Publishing opportunity

Phil confirmed that:

- discussions were taking place with David Ormerod in relation to dedicating an issue of Criminal Law Review to sentencing to tie in with the anniversary, and
- other opportunities for anniversary features would be explored, for example with New Law Journal, Magistrate, The Times law pages.

Kathryn also recommended that we use the opportunity to pitch targeted interviews with Council members to regional press.

3 Sentencing competition

i Prizes

The sub-group agreed that a suite of prizes should be offered that would be relevant to both BPTC and LPC students. The winning student would select one option.

The suite would comprise:

- the mini-pupillage at Red Lion Chambers,
- a work-experience placement at a firm of criminal solicitors, and

- a marshalling opportunity.

Members agreed that:

- there should be a judicial contribution to the judging of entries before the semi-final stage
- certificates and a written record of the judging panel's comments should be given to the finalists,
- the Communication team should seek coverage for the finals event and, if possible, film it for use on the website and potentially elsewhere

The marshalling opportunity will, if possible, be arranged locally to the student. Phil proposed (post-meeting) that judges be approached nearer the time of the finals, when locations of potential winners are known.

Action

The Communication team will identify and approach likely donors for the work placement, for example the Criminal Law Solicitors' Association.

Communication team will:

- ensure the structure of the competition includes judicial input at an earlier stage
- provide certificates and make arrangements to record comments from the judging panel
- find out whether we will be permitted to film the finals event.

ii Judging panel

The group agreed that the judging panel should comprise:

- Lord Chief Justice or PQBD
- Tim Holroyde
- Maura McGowan

Action

Phil will discuss the makeup of the panel with Tim (proposed post-meeting).

ii Proposals for reaching young people

Rob stressed the importance of the Council having a clear aim for its work to reach young people, which would be to increase their confidence in the fairness of sentencing and the criminal justice system, including for young people.

1 Sentencing competition for schools/You be the Judge

The sub-group were content with the proposal that our approach to schools should be more focused, targeting areas of higher deprivation.

The group discussed which groups and organisations the Council might work with to take its competition and/or other materials into schools. Suggestions included the Home Office, police, youth groups, YOTs and, potentially, others outside the criminal justice system, eg the City livery companies.

Rob also suggested that the Home Office might be a potential source of funding, particularly if our approach focuses on knife crime.

It was agreed that the priority should be to create a package of appropriate materials, including, if possible, You be the Judge, after which a strategy can be developed on how we use the whole Council to reach young people.

Action

The Communication team will identify and approach individuals and organisations, for example the YJB Young People's Council, who can advise us on what materials would most resonate with young people.

Phil will continue to investigate the options for taking or sharing ownership of You be the Judge and the technical and financial implications.

Social media

The sub-group agreed that we should focus our efforts on Instagram.

Action

Phil will continue to assess the cost and resource implications of developing content for and running an Instagram account, and report back to the sub-group.

University competition

It was agreed that the Council could make its competition materials available to universities but that engaging further with university students should not be a priority.

School visits

It was agreed that this work would not be pursued for the time being.

iii Risk register, items 4 and 6

The sub-group discussed the risks identified on the register, and the action being taken by the Communication team and other teams in the OSC to mitigate the risks.

Rob recommended, with reference to risk 6, that the OSC should include the media when building relationships with stakeholders.

Rob also suggested that the likelihood of risk 4 could be reduced and the impact of risk 6 could be raised. The sub-group agreed changes as follows:

Risk 4

Likelihood reduced from 2 to 1, which will reduce the risk to “Low”.

The sub-group considered that the likelihood of this risk has been considerably reduced following the successful implementation of the Crown Court digital guidelines. The group will re-assess Risk 4 at its next meeting in light of the results of the Crown Court user survey being conducted in early June.

Risk 6

Impact raised from 4 to 5, which will increase the risk to “High”.

The sub-group agreed that loss of confidence in the Council and the sentencing guidelines among judiciary and/or government could have very serious consequences. The group will review this risk following the 28 June sub-group meeting, which will consider the implications for the Council of the ComRes public confidence research.

Action

Phil will make the necessary changes to the risk register, and refer them to the Governance sub-group.

The Communication team will include the media in the stakeholder strategy, and consider creative ways in which we can engage with them and improve their understanding of sentencing and the CJS.

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