

Business Plan 2024/25: Mid-year update

The Sentencing Council's Business Plan includes a commitment to review the indicative timeline for preparation and publication of guidelines on a bi-annual basis and to publish updates as appropriate. While there are no major changes to the work plan, the timing of publication for some projects in this reporting year has changed.

The Council has completed its consultations on Blackmail, kidnap and false imprisonment, aggravated vehicle taking offences and non-fatal strangulation. Earlier in the autumn it launched consultations on guidance for ancillary orders as well as its annual consultation on miscellaneous amendments to guidelines. The Council is considering responses to these consultations, alongside the many detailed responses to its earlier consultation on a revised guideline on the imposition of community and custodial sentences. Publication dates for some of the definitive guidelines planned for later this reporting year have been pushed back by a few months. These are:

- the revised guideline on the imposition of community and custodial sentences
- new guidelines for immigration offences
- revised guidelines on aggravated vehicle-taking and other motoring related matters

The planned consultation on housing offences has been pushed back later into 2025 as research with sentencers will be undertaken with proposed new guidelines for unlawful eviction and harassment offences prior to consultation and more scoping work will be done with a view to include further offences in the project.

The Council has also taken the decision to postpone work on new guidelines for public order offences. After starting work to consider guidelines for these offences it became clear that more evidence of the types of offences being committed was required to inform the content of the guideline. In addition, data on current sentencing practice are required to enable the Council to fulfil its statutory duty to produce a resource assessment. As many offences were introduced in 2023 and court backlogs may have delayed proceedings concluding, there are limited data currently available. The Council is currently exploring how information and data can be obtained while also starting the evaluation of existing guidelines for other public order offences.

The provisional timetable for other projects remains subject to change dependent on factors such as the available resources, unforeseen complexities, consequential delays from other projects and legislative changes. For example, the Sentencing Review announced by the Government on 22 October may require evidence and advice from the Sentencing Council, and its recommendations may have implications for sentencing guidelines. The revised indicative dates are included in the table below.

The Business Plan provided target dates for publication of research and evaluation findings. The research report on effectiveness in sentencing was published as planned in September. The planned evaluations of the domestic abuse guideline, and the guidelines for intimidatory and breach offences have been delayed for a few months due to staffing changes

Sentencing Council Guideline Work Plan (at 1 November 2024)

Guideline	Consultation period	Publish definitive guideline	Definitive guideline in force
Imposition	November 2023 – February 2024	November 2024 March 2025	1 January 1 April 2025
Blackmail, kidnap and false imprisonment	January 2024 – April 2024	January 2025	1 April 2025
Aggravated vehicle taking etc	February 2024 – April 2024	January February 2025	1 April 2025
Immigration	March 2024 – May 2024	November 2024 March 2025	1 January 1 April 2025
Strangulation and suffocation	May 2024 – August 2024	December 2024	1 January 2025
Annual miscellaneous amendments	September 2024 – November 2024	March 2025 – publication of response to consultation	Amendments will come into force annually on 1 April
Ancillary orders	September 2024 – December 2024	Summer 2025	1 July 2025
Hare coursing	January 2025 – April 2025	Late 2025	1 January 2026
Housing	February 2025 – May 2025 June 2025 – September 2025	Late 2025 Early 2026	TBC
New public order offences	January 2025 – March 2025 TBC	Late 2025 TBC	TBC

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

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

Dates are subject to change