

Business Plan 2022/23: 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 some projects has changed.

Due to a high volume of publications in Spring 2022, some of the planned start dates for consultations early in the period were postponed. This has had a consequential effect on the planned dates for publication of definitive guidelines/revisions and their coming into force:

- the consultation for revised Animal Cruelty guidelines was launched in May rather than April. It closed in August and we now expect to publish the definitive revision in April 2023. These are planned to come into force in July 2023.
- the consultation on new guidelines for the Underage Sale of Knives was launched in June rather than May. This, and the complexity of the issues raised in responses, has resulted in a revised expected publication date for the definitive guidelines of January 2023. These would come into force on 1 April 2023.

There are some further changes to the published timetable for 2022/23 as planned timescales have become clearer:

- the definitive revised guidelines for motoring offences are now expected to be published in April 2023 rather than March: because of the need to ensure sentencers are familiar with the extensive updates to these guidelines before they come into effect, this would mean they come into force in July 2023;
- subject to consultation responses, the revisions to the child cruelty guidelines which follow on from the increased maximum penalties introduced by the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022, will be published and come into force alongside the annual miscellaneous amendments to guidelines (publication in March 2023, and in force in April 2023);
- the consultation dates for the revision to the Totality guideline are now confirmed as October 2022 to January 2023, having been slightly delayed by the period of National Mourning and extended to allow for the Christmas period. This means we expect publication of the definitive revisions in May 2023 rather than March.

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. The revised indicative dates are included in the table below.

The Business Plan provided target dates for publication of research and evaluation findings. Some of these publications have been delayed due to resourcing issues. Due to the action by criminal barristers, the data collection in courts has been delayed until early 2023.

Sentencing Council Guideline Work Plan (at 1 November 2022)¹

Guideline	Consultation period	Publish definitive guideline	Definitive guideline in force ²
Sexual Offences (partial revision)	May 2021 – August 2021	May 2022	1 July 2022
Terrorism: revision of SC guideline	October 2021 – January 2022	July 2022	1 October 2022
Burglary: revision of SC guideline	June 2021 to September 2021	May 2022	1 July 2022
Perverting the course of justice etc	March 2022 to June 2022	March 2023	1 April 2023
Animal Cruelty	April May 2022 to June August 2022	January April 2023	1 April July 2023
Underage Sale of Knives	May June 2022 to July August 2022	November January 2023	1 January April 2023
Motoring offences	July 2022 to October September 2022	March April 2023	1 April July 2023
Child Cruelty (partial revision)	August 2022 to October 2022	March 2023	TBC 1 April 2023
Annual miscellaneous amendments ³	September 2022 – November 2022	March 2023 – publication of response to consultation	Amendments will come into force annually on 1 April
Totality revision	Quarter 2 2022/23 October 2022 – January 2023	March May 2023	1 April July 2023

Guideline	Consultation period	Publish definitive guideline	Definitive guideline in force²
Aggravated vehicle taking	Quarter 4 2022/23	TBC	TBC
Immigration offences	Quarter 4 2022/23	TBC	TBC

¹ The dates shown in this work plan are indicative.

² In most instances we aim to bring definitive guidelines into force quarterly, on 1 January, 1 April, 1 July and 1 October.

