

MEETING OF THE SENTENCING COUNCIL

20 DECEMBER 2024

MINUTES

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

Apologies: Johanna Robinson

Representatives: Claire Fielder for the Lord Chancellor (Director,
Youth Justice and Offender Policy)
Jacqueline Beard for the Lady Chief Justice (Legal
Adviser to the Head of Criminal Justice)

Members of Office in
attendance: Steve Wade
Mandy Banks
Ollie Simpson
Ruth Pope
Jessie Stanbrook

1. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

1.1 The minutes from the meeting of 15 November 2024 were agreed.

2. MATTERS ARISING

2.1 The Chairman reported that he had met with Andy Slaughter MP, the new chair of the Justice Committee and that both sides were keen to continue the good working relationship established under the previous membership of the Committee.

3. DISCUSSION ON BLACKMAIL, KIDNAP AND FALSE IMPRISONMENT – PRESENTED BY MANDY BANKS, OFFICE OF THE SENTENCING COUNCIL

3.1 The Council discussed the findings of the final resource assessment ahead of publication of the definitive guidelines early next year.

3.2 The Council also reviewed all the changes made to the guidelines post consultation and confirmed that it was content to agree the final versions of the guidelines for publication.

4. DISCUSSION ON THE SENTENCING REVIEW – PRESENTED BY OLLIE SIMPSON, OFFICE OF THE SENTENCING COUNCIL

4.1 The Council discussed a draft of its evidence to the Independent Sentencing Review, led by Rt Hon David Gauke. Following a discussion, some amendments were noted for a revised version to be circulated to members, with the aim of submitting the evidence by the review's deadline of 9 January 2025.

5. DISCUSSION ON MISCELLANEOUS AMENDMENTS – PRESENTED BY RUTH POPE, OFFICE OF THE SENTENCING COUNCIL

5.1 The Council considered responses to the recent consultation on proposals to amend guidelines. It was agreed to adopt some of the changes suggested by respondents to: the guidance on setting a fine for those on variable income; the guideline for driving otherwise than in accordance with a licence; the Allocation guideline; guidance on assistance to the prosecution; sentencing very large organisations; standard wording in guidelines; and wording relating to community orders in guidelines.

5.2 Where respondents agreed with the proposals in the consultation the Council agreed to adopt those without amendment. The remaining topics consulted on will be discussed at the January Council meeting.

6. DISCUSSION ON IMPOSITION – PRESENTED BY JESSIE STANBROOK, OFFICE OF THE SENTENCING COUNCIL

- 6.1 The Council considered further proposed amendments to the Imposition guideline based on consultation responses. This paper included a proposed introductory paragraph and amendments to the purposes of sentencing, effectiveness of sentencing and deferment orders sections, the young adult offenders, female offenders and mothers with dependent children, pregnant and post-natal offenders sub sections, and other minor amendments.
- 6.2 The Council agreed to a variety of changes to these sections and sub sections including the introductory paragraph to the guideline, final drafts of the cohort sub sections and a final draft of the effectiveness of sentencing and deferment orders sections. Minor amendments were also agreed throughout the guideline, including new text on the requirements on a suspended order paragraph and a line on offenders with more complex needs in the adjournments paragraph in the pre-sentence report section.
- 6.3 The Council confirmed its intention to make final amendments and sign off the Imposition of community and custodial sentences guideline at the January Council meeting with a view to publication in March.

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