

MEETING OF THE SCOTTISH SENTENCING COUNCIL

RESEARCH COMMITTEE

28 AUGUST 2025, VIA TEAMS

MINUTES

Members present: Dr Jay Gormley (chair)
Sheriff Iain Fleming
Sheriff Louise Arrol KC (advisor)

Secretariat: Nicole Vidal (principal research officer)
Hannah Downey (senior research officer)
Jane Rice (senior policy officer)

Proceedings

Welcome and introductions

- 1) The committee noted and agreed that committee papers should be treated as private.

Item 1.1: Minutes of previous meeting [paper 1.1]

- 2) The minutes of the meeting held on 1 May 2025 were approved.

Item 1.2: Progress of actions since last meeting [paper 1.2]

- 3) An update on actions from previous meeting was provided. The Committee noted the update.

RESEARCH UPDATES

Item 2.1: Research update

- 4) Nicole Vidal provided an update of the current research projects. The committee noted the update.

Item 2.2: Publication strategy

- 5) Hannah Downey provided an overview of the new research publication strategy the Council had produced. The Committee discussed and noted the updated provided.

Item 2.3: Research publications

- 6) Nicole Vidal provided an update on expected research publications. The committee noted the update.

RESEARCH UPDATES

Item 3.1: Research project

- 7) Jane Rice provided an update of a proposed research project that the Scottish Government approached the secretariat about. The secretariat provided an update as to its feasibility including potential methodologies. The committee noted the update.

GUIDELINE DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW

Item 4.1: Sexual assault literature review

- 8) Jane Rice provided an update of the Council's intention to commission a new literature review on sexual assault offences, as an update to the Council's 2021 literature review.
- 9) The committee noted the discussed the update, noting that perhaps there may need to be consideration given to specific terminology on virtual offences.

Item 4.2: Sexual assault project initiation document and project plan

- 10) Jane Rice provided an update on project plans for developing the sexual assault guideline. The committee noted the update.

Item 4.3: Impact assessments

- 11) Nicole Vidal provided an update of the key changes to the final impact assessments for sentencing offences of rape and rape of a young child. The committee discussed that there may need to be future discussions on what methodology the Council can use to assess the impact of the sentencing guideline on current practice. The committee noted the update.

Item 4.4: Guideline reviews

- 12) Nicole Vidal updated the committee on progress of reviews of guidelines in force as per the Council's guideline review methodology. The committee noted the update.

FUTURE MEETING DATES

Item 5.1: Future meeting dates

- 13) The committee agreed to confirm next meeting date by correspondence.

ACTION POINT

AP1: Secretariat to liaise with committee regarding next meeting date by correspondence.

AOCB

Item 6.1: AOCB

14) No further business discussed.

Scottish Sentencing Council Secretariat

August 2025