

MEETING OF THE SCOTTISH SENTENCING COUNCIL
RESEARCH COMMITTEE
06 NOVEMBER 2023, VIA TEAMS
MINUTES

Members present: Dr Hannah Graham (chair)

Sheriff Iain Fleming

Apologies: Susan Fallone, JP (member)

Secretariat: Ondine Tennant (secretary)

Nicole Vidal (interim principal research officer)

David Ross (principal policy officer)

Julie Duran (senior policy officer)

Tom Hughes (senior research officer)

Item 1 - Proceedings

Item 1.1: Introduction and welcome

- 1) The Chair opened the meeting and noted that apologies were received from Justice Susan Fallone.
- 2) The Committee noted and agreed that Committee papers should be treated as private.

Item 1.2: Minutes of previous meeting

- 3) The Committee approved the draft minutes of the meeting of 08 August 2023.

Item 1.3: Staffing update

- 4) The Committee noted the recruitment of Tom Hughes as temporary researcher, and Nicole Vidal as Interim Principal Research Officer, replacing Andrew Bell who left post on 18 August.

2. RESEARCH PROJECTS

Item 2.1: Monitoring and evaluation of guidelines – Sentencing Young People one year evaluation update

- 5) Nicole Vidal provided an oral update on the progress of the one year evaluation of the Sentencing young people (SYP) guideline. The committee noted the update.
- 6) The Committee considered the proposal for qualitative research following discussions held during the October Council Meeting and agreed with the scope recommended in paper RC2.1.

Item 2.2: Update on current projects

- 7) Nicole Vidal provided an oral update on the progress of research projects currently underway.
- 8) It was noted that two new projects would be getting underway shortly. These were an exploratory study on unwarranted disparities in sentencing in Scotland and focus groups exploring views on sentencing for environmental and wildlife offences.
- 9) The Committee noted and considered suggestions of topics for commissioned literature reviews, with a view to informing the work of the Council in the future. The Committee agreed to recommend topics of interest to the Council by correspondence.
- 10) The Committee noted updates on the projects on victim-survivors' views of sentencing for rape and sexual assault, and domestic abuse; and the public perceptions work on sentence discounting.

ACTION POINT

AP1: Secretariat to circulate Research Committee recommendations of potential topics of interest to Council members.

Item 2.3: Judicial survey on mental health and sentencing

- 11) David Ross provided an oral update on the judicial survey on mental health and sentencing and paper RC2.3.
- 12) The committee noted the update provided in this paper and orally.
- 13) The committee considered and discussed the Secretariat undertaking research interviews with the judiciary on mental health and sentencing.

ACTION POINT

AP2: Secretariat to draft interview schedule to be circulated to the Committee for review.

Item 2.4: Collaborative PhD funding calls

- 14) Nicole Vidal provided an oral update on the proposal to collaborate on a joint supervisor-led PhD.
- 15) The Committee noted and discussed the proposal provided in paper RC2.4.

Item 2.5: Cross border public perceptions research

- 16) Ondine Tennant sought the Committee's views on carrying out research examining public perceptions of sentencing including outwith the Scottish jurisdiction.
- 17) The Committee noted and discussed the proposal provided in paper RC2.5 and agreed that the proposal should be explored further.

3: RESEARCH REPORTS

- 18) *There were no items under this section.*

4: PROMOTING AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING

Item 4.1: Research seminar

- 19) Tom Hughes provided an update on planning being undertaken for the Council's inaugural Research Symposium.

5: FUTURE MEETING DATES

Item 5.1: Future meeting dates

ACTION POINT

AP3: *Secretariat to canvass dates for the next meeting.*

6: AOCB

Item 6.1: AOCB

- 20) No further business was raised.