

Scottish
Sentencing
Council



1ST EDITION

Spotlight on Sentencing Circular

Welcome by Council member Summary Sheriff Amel Elfallah

Scottish
Sentencing
Council



As Chair of the Council's Communications Committee, I'd like to welcome you to the first issue of the **Spotlight on Sentencing Circular (SSC)**. We are launching this newsletter to share the work of the Scottish Sentencing Council with you, and to keep you informed of sentencing matters.

One of the Council's key roles is to prepare sentencing guidelines for the courts, but we also do much more than that. We raise awareness of how sentencing operates in Scotland, we contribute to policy development, and we conduct a wide range of research and engagement. We hope that you will find the circular of interest as we continue to grow and expand it. We are keen to hear any feedback that you may have, including suggestions for features.

We launch our first edition with a focus on our death by driving guideline, which has been finalised and will soon be submitted to the High Court for approval. We hope the guideline will promote consistency in sentencing and provide greater clarity on the sentencing of these complex and sensitive offences.

Over recent months, we have also appointed a number of new members to the Council and launched several research projects. Work is also ongoing on guidelines for offences such as rape, domestic abuse, indecent images of children and environmental and wildlife crime.



For more information on the Council, visit our website www.scottishsentencingcouncil.org.uk.

Latest News



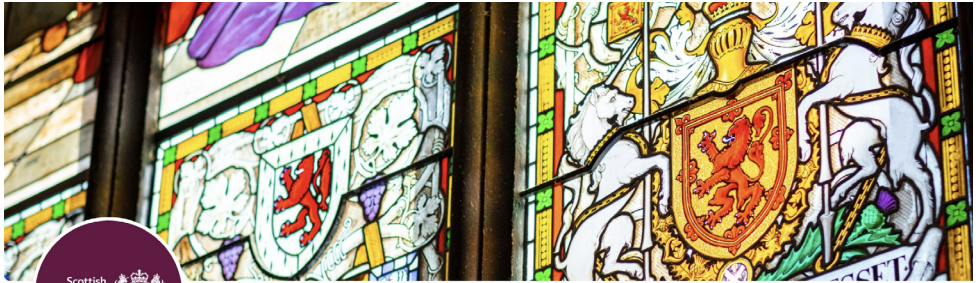
Scottish legal first as Council's death by driving guideline is finalised

The Scottish Sentencing Council has finalised its first ever offence guideline, covering the statutory offences of causing death by driving.

Subject to approval by the High Court, it will be the first guideline of its kind in Scotland, marking an important development for both the Council and Scotland's criminal justice system.

The guideline aims to bring greater consistency in sentencing and assist public understanding of how these highly complex and sensitive cases are dealt with by the courts.

[Read the full news story on our website...](#)



Scottish Sentencing Council

197 likes · 220 followers

Facebook launch

We recently launched a new Facebook page to help to educate and inform the public about sentencing in Scotland. This aligns with the Council's statutory function of promoting greater awareness and understanding of sentencing. Please follow and like our page for regular updates on the work of the Council, information on sentencing decisions, and facts and figures on sentencing.

[Find us on Facebook...](#)

Planned review of sentencing young people guideline

By law, all our guidelines are subject to periodic review. We agreed a methodology for reviewing guidelines in December 2022 and the one-year review of the sentencing young people guideline is currently underway.

The planned review will examine any impact on overall sentencing practice, analyse sentencing and appeal court data and scrutinise other data sources. The Council will consider the findings of the review in due course.

[Learn more about our review process...](#)



New victim information page

We have published a new, comprehensive information page for victims of crime and their families. It provides practical details on victims' rights and the services available across the justice sector.

Although victims' rights are outwith the Council's remit, we recognise the need for the right help, information, and support to be provided to victims of crime and their families. If you have any suggestions on how we can improve the page, please get in touch at sentencingcouncil@scotcourts.gov.uk

[Find out more...](#)

Council submits evidence to House of Lords inquiry

The Council has submitted written evidence to the House of Lords Justice and Home Affairs Committee inquiry into community sentencing.

[This is now available to read on our website...](#)



New Council members appointed

Three new members have been appointed to the Council.

Deputy Chief Constable Malcolm Graham is the Council's new constable member, Joanne McMillan takes on the role of solicitor member, and Lynn Burns has been appointed as our victims expert member.

Chair of the Council, Lady Dorrian, the Lord Justice Clerk, welcomed the new appointments and the knowledge and experience they will bring to the Council's continuing work programme.

[Read more about Malcolm Graham...](#)

[Read more about Joanne McMillan...](#)

[Read more about Lynn Burns...](#)

Research and Engagement



Community sentencing report

A [report by the Council](#) has captured the views of various justice professionals who attended a stakeholder event on community sentencing.

Participants were clear that a robust system of alternatives to custody is key to achieving the Scottish Government's aim of only using prison when there is no other option.

Chaired by Lady Dorrian, the Lord Justice Clerk and Chair of the Council, the event explored four main themes on community sentencing, including gaps in provision, monitoring and management, promoting awareness and understanding, and future developments.

[Read the report...](#)



Victims' views sought in research projects

Victims of sexual offences and domestic abuse are being asked for their views on sentencing as part of research projects commissioned by the Scottish Sentencing Council.

The research will gather data on victims' experiences of sentencing, how sentencing was communicated to them, and the factors they would like to see taken into account in sentencing.

Dr Oona Brooks-Hay, of the University of Glasgow, will lead research on sexual assault and rape, while Prof Nancy Lombard, of Glasgow Caledonian University, will explore domestic abuse sentencing.

A third project, led by Dr Jay Gormley, of the University of Glasgow, will also explore public understanding and perceptions of sentence discounting.

[Find out more...](#)

Latest blogs

Life sentences explained



Our blog on life sentences explains the different stages of the highest penalty available in Scotland's courts. It sets out what is involved in the punishment part (the minimum time spent in prison before being considered for release), the parole process, and release on life licence.

[Read the blog...](#)

Sex offenders register explained



When someone is convicted of a sexual offence, it's sometimes reported that they've been put on the 'sex offenders register'. But what does that mean? This blog, by the Council's principal legal officer David Dickson, explains how the register operates.

[Read the blog...](#)

Minutes from latest meeting

The draft minutes of the Council's meeting held in Edinburgh on 9 June 2023 are now available.

[Read the minutes...](#)

Guideline latest

Table of progress

Guideline	Stage 1: Initial consideration of the guideline topic	Stage 2: Development of a draft guideline	Stage 3: Seeking the views of judges	Stage 4: Consulting on the guideline	Stage 5: Finalising the guideline	Stage 6: Submitting the guideline for approval	Stage 7: Raising awareness about the guideline
Sentencing process	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sentencing young people	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Death by driving	✓	✓	✓	✓	In progress		
Sexual assault	✓	In progress					
Rape	✓	In progress					
Indecent images of children	✓	In progress					
Domestic abuse	✓	In progress					
Environmental and wildlife crime	In progress						
Discounting	✓	In progress					



For more information, visit the page on our website.

Scottish
Sentencing
Council



FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL:

