

MEETING OF THE SCOTTISH SENTENCING COUNCIL

RESEARCH COMMITTEE

08 SEPTEMBER 2026, VIA TEAMS

MINUTES

Members present: Dr Jay Gormley (chair)
Summary Sheriff Jo McDonald

Advisors present: Sheriff Louise Arrol KC

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

Apologies: Sheriff Iain Fleming

1. PROCEEDINGS

Welcome and introductions [Oral]

- 1) The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted that Sheriff Iain Fleming had tendered apologies.
- 2) The Committee agreed that papers should be treated as private.

Item 1.1: Committee membership [paper 1.1]

- 3) The Committee noted the update on the tenures of members and advisors.

Item 1.2: Minutes of previous meeting [paper 1.2]

- 4) The minutes of the meeting held on 2 June 2026 were noted as approved.

Item 1.3: Progress of actions since last meeting [paper 1.3]

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

2. DATA GOVERNANCE

Item 2.1: Data sharing agreement update [Oral Update]

- 6) The Chair introduced **item 2.1** and invited Nicole Vidal to speak to this item, which provided an update of the Data Sharing Agreement held between SCTS and the Council.
- 7) The secretariat is working with SCTS on updating the data sharing agreement.
- 8) The secretariat will provide further information to the Committee by correspondence following the meeting.
- 9) The Committee considered the updates provided.

ACTION POINT(S)

AP1: Secretariat to share relevant papers to the committee via correspondence.

3. RESEARCH PROJECTS

Item 3.1: Research projects update

- 10) The Chair introduced **item 3.1** and invited Nicole Vidal to speak to this item which provided an update of current and forthcoming research projects and priorities.

- 11) The Committee considered the updates provided in the paper and agreed the current and forecasted research priorities.

Item 3.2: SYP 3-year review

- 12) The Chair introduced **Paper 3.2** and invited Margaret Hardiman to speak to this item.
- 13) The SYP 3-year review is underway and qualitative data collection and analysis is in the mid to final stages, while quantitative data has not yet been provided.

AP2: Secretariat to continue with the research as agreed.

Item 3.3: Lived experience research

- 14) The Chair introduced **Paper 3.3** and invited Nicole Vidal to speak to this item.
- 15) The paper provided an update on proposals for the inclusion of lived experience research in the Council's ongoing and future work.
- 16) The Committee discussed the paper, including the potential application of lived experience research to existing guidelines and the appropriate contacts for further advice. Members considered the matters as have been discussed in other Committees about conducting lived experience research.
- 17) Members agree that the secretariat proceed with the ongoing work in accordance with the Research Committee and other relevant committee's considerations.

AP3: Secretariat to proceed with ongoing work in accordance with Committee considerations.

Item 3.4: PASS research

- 18) The Chair introduced **Paper 3.4** and invited the members to consider and comment on the findings from the pilot phase of the qualitative research.
- 19) The next steps are to carry out the remaining pilot interviews and analysis.
- 20) The Committee noted the update and provided comments on preliminary findings.

- 21) The Committee noted the intention to publish the findings from the qualitative pilot stage of research once completed.

AP4: Secretariat to finalise pilot study with a view to publish once complete.

4. RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM

Item 4.1: Research symposium

- 22) The Chair introduced **Paper 4.1** which outlined the initial planning for the third research symposium.
- 23) The Committee discussed the symposium and its potential themes, including whether adopting a broader, theme-free approach may be more beneficial in allowing for a wider range of topics and contributions.

AP5: Secretariat to continue initial planning in line with the committee's recommendations.

5. FUTURE MEETING DATES

Item 3.1: Future meeting dates [Oral]

- 24) The Committee agreed to confirm next meeting date by correspondence.

ACTION POINT(S)

AP6: Secretariat to liaise with committee regarding next meeting date by correspondence.

6. AOCB

Item 4.1: AOCB [oral]

25) No further business discussed.

Scottish Sentencing Council Secretariat

September 2026