

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **SENTENCING GUIDELINES COUNCIL & SENTENCING ADVISORY PANEL LAUNCH FIRST JOINT ANNUAL REPORT**

The Sentencing Guidelines Council and the Sentencing Advisory Panel, the independent bodies responsible for promoting clear, effective and consistent sentencing, today launched their first joint annual report.

The Council is responsible for framing and revising sentencing guidelines and guidelines on the allocation of criminal cases between magistrates' courts and the Crown Court. It relies extensively on the advice of the Panel, which is tendered after widespread consultation.

The Council, which was created following the Criminal Justice Act 2003, published its first definitive guidelines in December 2004, having taken into account feedback from the publication of draft guidelines three months earlier. They comprised guidance on: reductions in sentences for guilty pleas; assessing the seriousness of an offence; and on the new sentences introduced under the Criminal Justice Act 2003. In addition, a draft guideline on manslaughter by reason of provocation was published by the Council in May 2005.

Over the coming months, the Panel will deliver its advice to the Council on domestic violence and on recommendations for deportation following conviction of a criminal offence. It is also preparing consultation papers on assault and other offences against the person, drugs couriers, failure to surrender to bail, certain dishonesty offences (including shoplifting), criminal damage and sentencing of youths, and will develop new guidelines for the allocation of criminal cases in readiness for the implementation of new legislative provisions. The Council also expects to publish guidance in the autumn relating to the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

The Lord Chief Justice of England and Wales, Lord Woolf, chairs the Council while the Panel is headed by Professor Martin Wasik of Keele University. Together the bodies comprise judges (at all levels of seniority), academics and other members, who between them bring evidence of policing, prosecution, and defence, and the interests of victims. The Panel also includes people from outside the criminal justice system. **(cont...)**

Lord Woolf, Chairman of the Sentencing Guidelines Council, said, “These first guidelines produced by the Council have provided clarity and certainty to sentencers on a number of key aspects of criminal law. It is important to note that, while guidelines have to be taken into account by sentencers, they do not direct – they simply guide. Nonetheless, the Council is playing a vitally important role, alongside the Panel, and these guidelines represent the first step towards a comprehensive set of sentencing guidelines to cover the whole of criminal law.”

Professor Martin Wasik, Chairman of the Sentencing Advisory Panel, added, “The transition from working with the Court of Appeal to working alongside the Sentencing Guidelines Council has been a smooth one. The Panel is indebted to the invaluable and thoughtful responses it has received to all its consultations over the past year. All these responses have been considered in detail and they have greatly influenced the advice we have ultimately given the Council.”

Home Secretary Charles Clarke said, “I am grateful for the opportunity to welcome the work of the Sentencing Advisory Panel and Sentencing Guidelines Council set out in this excellent report. It has been a good first year of working together under the new arrangements brought into effect by the Criminal Justice Act 2003 and the SGC has embarked on its task with commendable energy and wisdom. I look forward to seeing draft guidelines in coming months on various offences or offence-types and having the opportunity to engage in the consultation process.”

*Details of guidelines can be found on the Sentencing Guidelines Council’s website, [www.sentencing-guidelines.gov.uk](http://www.sentencing-guidelines.gov.uk), together with the advice of the Sentencing Advisory Panel.*

**ENDS**

**For further information and for copies of the annual report**

Please contact Ben Frankel, Ben Rich or Victoria Moore (020 7618 9100) at Luther Pendragon.

## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

The Sentencing Guidelines Council and Sentencing Advisory Panel are independent bodies responsible for promoting consistency and transparency in sentencing. They work together to research, consult on, and publish guidelines for the courts on how to apply the law with regard to sentencing.

Created by statute, the Council and the Panel are independent non-departmental public bodies sponsored by the Home Office and the Department for Constitutional Affairs. They are independent of Parliament and the Executive in relation to the work that they have been created to do.

### **About the Council**

The Sentencing Guidelines Council is chaired by the Lord Chief Justice, with seven other members from the judiciary and four members who between them bring experience of policing, criminal prosecution, criminal defence, and the interests of victims of crime. Judicial members were appointed by the Lord Chancellor. The non-judicial appointments were made by the Home Secretary.

The other members of the Council are: Lord Justice Christopher Rose (Deputy Chairman), Lord Justice Paul Kennedy (appointed following the sudden death of Lord Justice John Kay), Mr Justice Peter Crane, HH Judge Peter Beaumont, HH Judge Michael Mettyear, Judge Timothy Workman, Ms Malathy Sitaram JP, Anthony Edwards (Solicitor), Kenneth Macdonald QC (Director of Public Prosecutions), Chief Constable Peter Neyroud, and Ms Teresa Reynolds.

Meetings of the Council are also attended by the Chief Executive of the National Offender Management Service, Martin Narey and by the Chairman of the Sentencing Advisory Panel, Professor Martin Wasik.

### **About the Panel**

The Sentencing Advisory Panel is chaired by Professor Martin Wasik, and has fourteen members in total. The members include judges, academics and criminal justice practitioners, as well as those from outside the criminal justice system. They have all been appointed by the Lord Chancellor, in consultation with the Secretary of State and the Lord Chief Justice.

The other members of the Panel are: Judge Peter Jones, Michael Morgan, Judge Howard Riddle, Christopher Woolley, John Staples, Professor Andrew Ashworth, David Mallen, Sir Rhys Davies, Anne Fuller JP, Joan Webster, Heather Harker, Lord Chan, and Professor Frances Heidensohn.