



Sentencing Guidelines Council

12th May 2008

Revised Sentencing Guidelines for Magistrates' Courts Published

The first revised magistrates' court sentencing guidelines in four years have today been published by the Sentencing Guidelines Council.

Copies of the guidelines are being sent to over 30,000 magistrates and District Judges in England and Wales ahead of their implementation on August 4th 2008. Their introduction is being supported by an extensive training programme developed by the Judicial Studies Board.

They have been developed following advice from the Sentencing Advisory Panel which consulted widely and commissioned research on the subject. At all stages the review work has been supported by an expert advisory group made up of practitioners, including magistrates, District Judges and justices' clerks.

Since October 2003 when the last edition of guidelines was published there have been significant changes to the sentencing framework, including the implementation of the Criminal Justice Act 2003 and the development of guidelines by the Council.

The revised guidelines deal with a greater number of offences and provide more detailed and clear advice on a range of issues such as compensation for personal injury, loss or damage suffered by victims, sentencing for road traffic offences, and the range and availability of ancillary orders. As further guidelines are developed by the Council they will be incorporated into this comprehensive source of guidance.

Their format follows other guidelines issued by the Council and includes both starting points and ranges into which sentences should usually fall in order to enhance consistency in sentencing in magistrates' courts.

Magistrates and District Judges are given additional guidance on the setting of fines, including dealing with offenders on low incomes and when there is insufficient reliable information about financial means.

Guidance is also included about the approach to offences committed for commercial purposes and sentencers are advised to take into account the sums taxi-touts, illegal fly tippers and other commercially motivated offenders have made from their illegal activity in calculating their fines.

Notes to Editors

The guidelines are available on the SGC website (www.sentencing-guidelines.gov.uk).

Printed copies are being sent to magistrates, District Judges and their legal advisers in the coming weeks.

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