



Sentencing Guidelines Council



24 June 2009

SENTENCING GUIDELINES COUNCIL & SENTENCING ADVISORY PANEL LAUNCH FIFTH JOINT ANNUAL REPORT

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

The Panel and Council have enjoyed another productive year, tackling important and wide-ranging topics across their full remit.

Full consultation has been carried out by the Panel for three topics, one of which was supplemented by a major independent research study of public attitudes to principles of sentencing, and three advices were tendered to the Council.

Four definitive guidelines were published by the Council including the *Magistrates' Court Sentencing Guidelines*, the most comprehensive and widely distributed publication to date, which were implemented in August 2008 and have been twice updated to incorporate new Council guidelines. Other definitive guidelines issued in the reporting period were on offences of causing death by driving (including the two offences introduced in August 2008), theft and burglary of a building other than a dwelling, and breach of an Anti-Social Behaviour Order. Consultation guidelines have been produced for statutory offences of fraud.

Two current projects have involved detailed consideration of diversity issues that impact on sentencing decisions, relating to gender, age and mental disorder. The

Panel has consulted on issues regarding the sentencing of women offenders and offenders who are mentally disordered in its extensive project considering overarching principles of sentencing. Sentencing of young people under eighteen years of age was the subject of a separate consultation and involved examination of the new sentencing framework established by Parliament and consideration of how to balance the factors and principles to which courts must have regard.

Professor Andrew Ashworth, Chairman of the Panel, reflects in his foreword on the fact that the report marks the end of the tenth year of the Panel's work and that, "by the end of 2009, the Panel will have proposed guidelines covering not only the main aspects of magistrates' court sentencing (in the *Magistrates' Court Sentencing Guidelines*) but also the majority of offences in the Crown Court".

Having reviewed achievements from the reporting year in his foreword, the Council Chairman, Lord Chief Justice, Lord Judge foretells that "it is developments from outside the Council which are likely to have the most impact on its work in the coming year" as Parliament considers the Coroners and Justice Bill.

Notes to Editors:

For further information and for copies of the annual report please contact:

Sentencing Guidelines Secretariat,
8-10 Great George Street,
London SW1P 3AE
Tel: 020 7084 8130
Fax: 020 7084 8114
Email: info@sentencing-guidelines.gsi.gov.uk

The annual report, consultation and definitive guidelines published by the Sentencing Guidelines Council, and the advice and consultation papers of the Sentencing Advisory Panel, along with details of the current membership of both bodies can be found on the sentencing guidelines website: www.sentencing-guidelines.gov.uk.