

Sentencing Academy News

October / November 2022

Fines: A review of the sanction, its use and operation, and research evidence

We have published a new paper, by Dr Jay Gormley, that examines the use of fines in England and Wales. Despite fines being by far the most commonly-used sentencing disposal, little attention has been paid to their use in practice and the potential issues that arise when imposing financial penalties.

The report is available [here](#).

Sentencing Academy participation in House of Commons Justice Committee oral evidence session

On 29 November, our Executive Director, Professor Julian Roberts, and the Chair of our Board of Trustees, Professor Mike Hough, both participated in an oral evidence session of the House of Commons Justice Committee as part of their ongoing inquiry into public opinion and understanding of sentencing.

The evidence session is available to watch [here](#) and the Sentencing Academy's written submission to the inquiry is available [here](#).

Current issues in sentencing policy and research seminar

In collaboration with the Sentencing Council and City Law School, we are holding a one day in-person seminar that will explore research developments and current issues in sentencing policy and practice. This free to attend event is taking place on Friday 13 January 2023 and is hosted by City Law School.

Sign-up details for this event are available [here](#).

Other News

Sentencing Council Totality guideline consultation

Following research exploring sentencers' views of the Totality guideline published by the Sentencing Council last year, the Sentencing Council has launched a consultation on proposed revisions to this guideline. The consultation closes on 11 January 2023.

The consultation document is available [here](#).

The research into sentencers' views of the current guideline, published last year, is available [here](#).

Statistics on Women and the Criminal Justice System 2021

The Ministry of Justice has published its bi-annual statistical collection relating to the experience of women within the criminal justice system. In 2021, 21% of those sentenced were women – a reduction from 26% in 2017 – and 83% of female offenders were sentenced to a fine (compared to 72% of male offenders). Of those female offenders sentenced to immediate custody, a significant minority – 41% – were sentenced to three months or less.

Statistics on Women and the Criminal Justice System 2021 is available [here](#).

Other Publications

The Effectiveness of Sentencing Options on Reoffending

The Sentencing Council has published a new research report, authored by Dr Jay Gormley, Professor Melissa Hamilton and Dr Ian Belton, that examines how 'effective' the different sentencing disposals are in terms of reoffending. Covering literature published over the past 20 years, this review found that the evidence strongly suggests that short custodial sentences (less than 12 months) are less effective at reducing reoffending than any other sentencing disposal. Of particular note is the finding that certain requirements attached to community orders or suspended sentence orders may be more effective at promoting positive outcomes than other requirements. Further research is required in this area to enable greater understanding of how these sentences can be tailored in such a way to reduce reoffending.

The report is available [here](#).

Our own report on this area, published in January 2021, is available [here](#).



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