

Criminal Justice Committee

4th Meeting, 2021 (Session 6), Wednesday 15 September 2021

Roundtables

Note by the clerk

Introduction

1. The Criminal Justice Committee is holding a series of roundtable meetings about subjects within its remit.
2. Two roundtable evidence sessions will take place on 15 September 2021.
3. The subject of the first roundtable evidence session is **prisons and prison policy**.
4. The subject of the second roundtable evidence session is **reducing youth offending, scope for community justice solutions and alternatives to custody**.

Participants

5. The following people will be taking part in the first roundtable—
 - Teresa Medhurst, Interim Chief Executive, Scottish Prison Service
 - Allister Purdie, Interim Director of Operations, Scottish Prison Service
 - Wendy Sinclair-Gieben, HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland, HM Inspector of Prisons Scotland
 - John Watt, Chair, Parole Board for Scotland
 - Phil Fairlie, Assistant General Secretary, Scotland Prison Officers Association
 - Bruce Adamson, Children and Young People's Commissioner
 - Alan Staff, Apex Scotland

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- Professor Fergus McNeill, Professor of Criminology and Social Work, University of Glasgow, Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research
- Dr Katrina Morrison, Howard League Scotland, Committee Secretary

6. The following people will be taking part in the second roundtable—

- Ashley Cameron, The Promise Scotland Oversight Board member
- Superintendent Colin Convery: Partnerships, Prevention and Community Wellbeing, Police Scotland
- Fiona Dyer, Interim Director Children’s and Young People’s Centre for Justice
- Niven Rennie, Director, Violence Reduction Unit
- Diane Dobbie, Justice Standing Committee, Social Work Scotland
- Dr Hannah Graham, Senior Lecturer in Criminology, University of Stirling
- Professor Lesley McAra, University of Edinburgh
- Gemma Fraser, Senior Reporting Officer, Recovery, Renewal & Transform, Community Justice Scotland

Format

7. Members of the Committee will be attending the meeting in person. Everyone else will be participating in the meeting using a video link. This is due to the rules on social distancing.

Topics

8. The roundtable evidence session on prisons and prison policy will be a chance to discuss topics such as—

- The overall number of people sent to prison in Scotland, including the challenges of an ageing prison population and the likely future trends in prisoner numbers
- Remand levels and potential ways of reducing the number of those on remand, including the use of electronic monitoring/curfews as a condition of bail
- The need for modernisation of the prison estate and the capital budget of the Scottish Prison Service
- The status of reforms to the prison regime such as more single cell occupancy, greater provision of in-cell telephony, additional rehabilitation

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programmes, the development of a new health and wellbeing strategy for Scotland's prisons, and (more generally) the emphasis on human rights in prisons

- The various challenges which have been identified as facing the SPS, such as drug use and smuggling; the demand for education/purposeful work; demands on rehabilitation services and post-release support and co-ordination; and the activities of organised criminal gangs in prisons.
 - The budgets needed to implement improvements to the prison regime
 - Deaths of prisoners in custody and post-release
9. The roundtable evidence session on youth offending, community justice and alternatives to custody will be a chance to discuss topics such as—
- The definition of “youth”
 - The factors that contribute to youth offending
 - Scotland's approach to young people and offending behaviour
 - Alternatives to prosecution
 - Alternatives to custody
 - Effect of pandemic on community payback orders
 - The work and policies of Community Justice Scotland
 - Public Health Approaches, Youth and Violence Reduction

**Clerks to the Committee
September 2021**