

Sentencing Code unveiled in Parliament

- Judges, legal practitioners and academics welcome Bill
- Code will make sentencing simpler, quicker and more transparent
- Part of efforts to restore public confidence in sentencing

Some 1,300 pages of complicated and overlapping law currently occupy the statute book on sentencing – often making it difficult for judges to apply the law consistently and causing unnecessary delays to the justice process.

The Sentencing Code will ensure there is greater clarity in sentencing law, reducing the number of errors made, whilst improving the efficiency of sentencing hearings.

Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice Robert Buckland said:

It is vital that judges have complete clarity when sentencing, and the public has total confidence the law will be applied correctly.

By enacting the Sentencing Code we will simplify the statute book, reduce errors, and ensure better understanding of the sentencing process.

The Code will bring the sentencing procedural law that courts rely on into one place, with a clear and logical structure, making it more accessible for the public, judiciary and practitioners.

It follows a pre-consolidation Bill, introduced in January which makes technical amendments to existing legislation to pave the way for the Code.

This includes a ‘clean sweep’ of sentencing procedural law, to allow for all offenders convicted after the Sentencing Code comes into force to be sentenced according to the most up to date law, irrespective of when they committed the offence.

The Code does not introduce any new substantive laws or alter the maximum or minimum penalties available for an offence.

In 2014, the Government agreed that the Law Commission should undertake the ‘Sentencing Code’ project to consolidate sentencing procedural law. The project has been subject to four formal public consultations – receiving backing by judges, lawyers and academics.

Notes to editors

- In 2014, the government agreed that the Law Commission should undertake a project to consolidate sentencing procedural law.
- The Sentencing Code will present the law in one place, in a more logical order, and in simpler terms. These improvements will assist legal

professionals in applying the law, thereby reducing the risk of error, appeals and delay in the sentencing process.

- The Sentencing (Pre-consolidation Amendments) Bill, an essential paving measure for the Code, was introduced in the House of Commons on Wednesday 4 March following its passage through the House of Lords.