

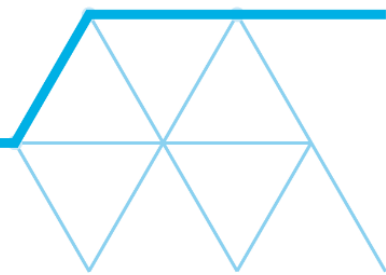


# Criminal Justice Board Minutes

Held on 27 May 2020 chaired by Robert Buckland QC MP,  
Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice

## Members

- Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice (Rt Hon Robert Buckland QC MP)
- Secretary of State for the Home Department (Rt Hon Priti Patel MP)
- Attorney General (Rt Hon Suella Braverman QC MP)
- Minister of State for the Home Department and Ministry of Justice (Kit Malthouse MP)
- Minister for Safeguarding at the Home Department (Victoria Atkins MP)
- President of the Queen's Bench Division (Rt Hon Dame Victoria Sharp DBE)
- Senior Presiding Judge (Rt Hon Lady Justice Thirlwall)
- Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police Service (Dame Cressida Dick)
- Assistant Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police Service (Nick Ephgrave)
- Director General, National Crime Agency (Lynne Owens)
- Chair, National Police Chiefs' Council (Martin Hewitt)
- Director of Public Prosecutions, Crown Prosecution Service (Max Hill QC)
- Chief Executive, HM Prison and Probation Service (Jo Farrer)
- Chief Executive, HM Courts and Tribunal Service (Susan Acland-Hood)
- Association of Police and Crime Commissioners Representative (David Lloyd)
- Director General, Policy, Communication and Analysis, Ministry of Justice (James Bowler)



- Director General, Crime, Policing and Fire Group, Home Office (Tricia Hayes)
- Victims' Commissioner (Dame Vera Baird)
- Chair, Youth Justice Board (Keith Fraser)

### **By invitation**

- Chair of the Bar Council (Amanda Pinto QC)
- President of the Law Society (Simon Davis)
- Chair, All Wales Criminal Justice Board and Director General of Probation and Wales (Amy Rees)

### **Senior Officials**

- Deputy Director, Criminal Courts and Criminal Law Policy Unit (Matthew Gould)
- Chair, CJSSC (Richard Vince)

### **Introduction**

1. The LORD CHANCELLOR thanked everyone for attending the first virtual Criminal Justice Board. He thanked Board members and colleagues for the huge efforts that were being made across the system to mitigate the impact of Covid-19 and maintain public confidence. Hard work was underway across the country and it was encouraging that the courts had continued to hear cases, with Jury trials now resumed at 7 locations. This was encouraging but we need to do more.

### **Agenda Item 1: Criminal Justice System Strategic Command Update**

2. RICHARD VINCE provided an update on the work carried out by the Criminal Justice System Strategic Command (CJSSC) over the last few weeks and thanked the Board for their continued support. The CJSSC would focus on the medium term now that the immediate response phase had passed. The CJSSC would work with the Senior Officials' Group (SOG) on the recover and restore phase of COVID-19.

### **Agenda Item 2: Senior Officials' Group Recovery Work**

3. MATTHEW GOULD outlined the Covid-19 recovery work of the SOG. Key focuses would be on increasing volumes and public confidence. A key area of work would be to consider how we want the system to look post-Covid-19, driving forward the positive changes, considering those we want to extend and those we want to leave behind. National and local partnership would be crucial to successful recovery.
4. The LORD CHANCELLOR asked the board to endorse the approach taken so far and also agree for officials to further their engagement with local partners through Local Criminal Justice Boards

### **Agenda Item 3: Operational updates / Impact of Covid-19 on the system**

5. The HOME SECRETARY, ATTORNEY GENERAL, MINISTER OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT AND MINISTRY OF JUSTICE and MINISTER FOR SAFEGUARDING AT THE HOME DEPARTMENT echoed the chair's thanks to the Board and sector for the efforts and collaboration of recent weeks. Public confidence in the system must be maintained. The most vulnerable people must be supported. As we restore the system, work to manage the backlog and support victims and witnesses must be at the forefront of planning.
6. Members of the Board provided verbal updates and comments on the previous items. These included operational reports on the state of the system, current concerns and actions being taken, and reports on impacts from members representing system users. The backlog was a key concern raised by members. SUSAN ACLAND-HOOD explained the measures that had been implemented to tackle the backlog including technological advances, innovation in estate usage and planning around 'Nightingale Courts'.
7. The Board agreed that national and local join-up would be crucial for recovery and ensuring that the local level is well equipped to carry out work is a priority. Quality data and data-sharing would be key within this partnership, alongside effective communication of central decisions. DAME VERA BAIRD noted the importance of including victims' representatives in all decision-making forums including the SOG. The Board agreed that all parts of the system should be represented in the work that is ongoing.

#### **Closing remarks from the Chair**

8. The LORD CHANCELLOR thanked the Board for the invaluable opportunity to discuss the ongoing response and look towards system recovery in a collaborative forum.
9. This Board set in motion work to tackle critical system issues last year. The sub-groups had continued to make progress over this period and the Forensics sub-group would report at the next Board meeting.

**Action 1: Ministry of Justice officials to undertake work to improve local engagement on Covid-19 recovery.**

**Action 2: Victims' Commissioner's Office to be invited to sit on the SOG.**