



Criminal Justice Board Minute

Held on 12 July 2023 chaired by the Rt. Hon. Alex Chalk KC MP, Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice

Members

- Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice (Rt. Hon. Alex Chalk KC MP)
- Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Ministry of Justice (Minister Mike Freer MP)
- Attorney General (Rt. Hon. Victoria Prentis KC MP)
- Minister of State for Crime and Policing (Rt. Hon. Chris Philp MP)
- Solicitor General (Michael Tomlinson KC MP)
- President of the King's Bench Division (Rt. Hon. Dame Victoria Sharp, DBE, PC)
- Senior Presiding Judge (Lord Justice Edis)
- Director of Legal Services, Crown Prosecution Service (Gregor McGill)
- Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service (Sir Mark Rowley QPM)
- National Police Chiefs' Council Lead for Criminal Justice (Rob Nixon)
- Director General, National Crime Agency (Graeme Biggar CBE)
- Executive Director Wales, HM Prison and Probation Service & Second Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Justice (Chris Jennings)
- Chief Executive, HM Courts and Tribunals Service (Nick Goodwin)
- Criminal Justice Lead, Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (David Lloyd)
- Interim Chief Executive, Office of the Victims' Commissioner (Madeleine Storry)
- Chair, Youth Justice Board (Keith Fraser)

By invitation

- Head of Justice, Law Society (Richard Miller)

- Chair, Bar Council (Nick Vineall KC)

Senior Officials

- Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Justice (Antonia Romeo)
- Director General of Performance, Strategy and Analysis, Ministry of Justice (Richard Price)
- Executive Director, Directorate of Security, His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service, Ministry of Justice (Richard Vince)
- Director, Courts, Criminal and Family Justice, Ministry of Justice (Ed Lidington)
- Director, Strategy, Capability and Resources, Home Office (Luke Edwards)
- Director, Strategy & Policy, Crown Prosecution Service (Baljit Ubhey)
- Director and Deputy Head of Office, Attorney General's Office (Kelby Harmes)

Apologies

- Chair, National Police Chiefs' Council (Gavin Stephens)
- Secretary of State for the Home Department (Rt. Hon. Suella Braverman MP)
- Chair, Criminal Justice in Wales Board (Amy Rees)
- Chief Executive, HM Prison and Probation Service & Second Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Justice (Amy Rees)
- Director of Public Prosecution, Crown Prosecution Service (Max Hill QC)
- Director General, Policy and Strategy Group, Ministry of Justice (Jerome Glass)

Agenda Item 1: Lord Chancellor's Welcome & CJB Terms of Reference

1. The LORD CHANCELLOR welcomed members to the meeting and recognised the importance of the Criminal Justice Board (CJB) and the value in building relationships between leaders from across the Criminal Justice System (CJS).

Agenda Item 2: Collaboration in the Criminal Justice System

2. The LORD CHANCELLOR said that the CJB was important to support collaboration, and it was important to acknowledge the work going on across the system to bring people together.
3. GREGOR MCGILL and ROB NIXON said that the Joint Operational Improvement Board (JOIB) had historically focussed on performance of disclosure across CJS, which had improved, and was now also focussed on specific work to speed up processes as well as a broader strategic view of CJS.

4. MINISTER PHILP said that the CPS-Police Operational Roundtable was another important forum, which had demonstrated the importance of close working relationships to tackle specific issues.
5. The SENIOR PRESIDING JUDGE said that the Crown Court Improvement Group (CCIG) was focussed on improving the efficiency of existing operations. It had a committed group of members and all parts of the CJS needed to work together to maximise the benefits of this work.
6. RICHARD VINCE said that the Criminal Justice System Strategic Command (CJSSC) was a forum to coordinate the operational response to system wide challenges, as it had done during COVID.
7. ANTONIA ROMEO said that the Criminal Justice Action Group (CJAG) had overseen the delivery of CJS Delivery Data Dashboard, launched a project on data improvement and supported local leaders to share best practice. It would continue to support delivery of the strategic objectives set by the CJB.
8. During the discussion, the following points were made:
 - The role of Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) at a local level was important but this needed to be balanced with operational and constitutional independence.
 - Local Criminal Justice Boards (LCJB) were key and the national CJB should consider how best to support them.

Agenda Item 3: Criminal Justice System Trends and Priorities

9. RICHARD PRICE said that improvements had been made in cross-system data sharing, and the CJS Dashboard had been developed to respond to feedback and user needs. This work on data would help to build a strategic picture at a national and local level.
10. ED LIDINGTON said that the CJS faced several systemic issues and CJAG was carrying out work to look at how to address these across the system. The CJB should shape and steer that work.
11. The LORD CHANCELLOR said the Dashboard was critical to improving transparency and this data would be important in supporting local engagement.
12. During the discussion, the following points were made:
 - The outstanding caseload in the Crown Court was a critical issue, where we needed to identify both short and long-term solutions.
 - Earlier guilty pleas (where defendants were guilty) were key to reducing outstanding caseloads.
 - The CJB should consider defining what good looks like across the system and better understand how action in one part of the system impacts more widely.
 - Data relating to children and young people, and how they experience the justice system, should be part of the CJB's future work.

AOB and Closing remarks from the Chair

13. The LORD CHANCELLOR said that while the meeting today and subsequent meetings were important, collaboration and relationships across Board members was just as vital to making progress.

Action 1: The Board agreed to explore how it could better support local groups and leaders to drive improvements.

Action 2: The Board agreed to explore the changes in the early guilty plea rate since COVID.