

**Sentencing Academy**  
(Registered charity, number 1183958)  
**Financial statements**  
**for the year ended 31 March 2023**

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# **Sentencing Academy Trustees' annual report for the year ended 31 March 2023**

**Full name:** Sentencing Academy

**Organisation type:** Charitable Incorporated Organisation

**Registered charity number:** 1183958

**Principal address:**

Unit 4.02, 60 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8LU

**Trustees**

John Michael Hough, Chair

Ian Peter Brownhill

Umar Malik Al Azmeh

Bethany Currie

Orla Claire Myatt

Gregor Donaldson

Anna Draper, from 25/1/23

Peter Hungerford-Welch, from 25/1/23

Hannah Sian Quirk, until 25/1/23

**Independent examiner**

John O'Brien, employee of Community Accounting Plus, Units 1 & 2 North West, 41 Talbot Street, Nottingham, NG1 5GL

**Governance and management**

The charity is operated under the rules of its CIO Foundation adopted 18 June 2019.

The Dawes Trust nominates one trustee for the duration of our funding agreement and the other founding trustees were selected for their relevant expertise in our subject area. Subsequently, new trustees have been appointed following an open externally advertised recruitment campaign and an informal route where we have approached specialists to strengthen our skill set and expertise on the Board. The recruitment process took into account our commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion, positively strengthening the gender balance on the Board.

**Objectives and activities**

1. To promote the prevention of crime and the rehabilitation of offenders for the benefit of the public by promoting efficient and effective sentencing practices, including in particular (but without limitation) by conducting and promoting research into effective sentencing practices for offenders in England and Wales and publishing the useful results of such research.
2. To advance education on the subject of the sentencing of offenders for the benefit of the public, and to conduct and promote research for the public benefit in all aspects of that subject and to publish the useful results of such research.

## **Sentencing Academy**

### **Summary of the main activities undertaken for the public benefit**

We conduct and commission research into sentencing in England and Wales. We respond to consultations on draft sentencing guidelines with a view to improving these guidelines and engage in the policy-making process when opportunities arise. We use social media and our website to communicate with the public about sentencing issues and we also hold events that are available to the public. Our evidence-led approach informs our communications and activities to improve public understanding and awareness around sentencing.

Through responding fully to consultations on sentencing issues and engaging directly with the policy-making process we help shape sentencing policy and practice in a way that promotes the prevention of crime and efficient and effective sentencing practices. We conduct and commission research on sentencing issues which can further contribute to the prevention of crime through improved sentencing practices and this research also advances education on sentencing. Through our website, use of social media and bi-monthly newsletter, as well as the hosting of events that are open to all, we make this knowledge available to the public free of charge and in an accessible manner.

### **Public benefit statement**

The Trustees confirm that they have complied with the duty in section 17 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit, 'Charities and Public Benefit'.

### **Summary of the main achievements during the period**

This has been a busy and transformative year for the Sentencing Academy as it expanded and developed its strategic objectives and delivery outputs. A summary of our achievements is detailed below:

#### **1. Provide an open learning environment for those working at and for the charity.**

We have continued to support and offer two internship programmes in collaboration with the Kalisher Trust and with the University of Oxford enabling participants to attend knowledge exchange events; meet specialist researchers contributing to academic and practitioner debate, and to write and have published their own articles on our website under the supervision of the Deputy Director.

Recognition for students interested in sentencing issues has been fostered through our Thesis Award, which enables post-graduate students from those who have produced a dissertation relating to sentencing in England and Wales to share their paper with leading academics and researchers in the field alongside a monetary reward. This year's winning dissertation was entitled: 'Using the Sentencing Guidelines: How Criminal Law Practitioners Use Steps 1 and 2 to Achieve Consistent and Proportionate Sentences in a Retributive Framework'.

## **Sentencing Academy**

We have also successfully secured funding alongside the Universities of Leeds and Liverpool to support and work with two PhD students, one examining the effectiveness of community orders and the other exploring changes in sentencing severity over time. Both will be conducted over the coming years and provides the charity with an opportunity to grow and develop a talent pool of researchers with a passion for sentencing.

The charity has contributed to knowledge and development exchange sessions with practitioners, researchers, Involve, judges from Trinidad and Tobago and a delegation from the Singapore Attorney-General's Chambers, as the organisation acts as a hub of excellence and learning on sentencing issues.

### **2. Develop an 'Effective Sentencing' initiative.**

We developed a strong and persuasive proposal for the implementation of an Effective Sentencing (ES) workstream, identifying the gaps, suggested delivery model, and the difference and impact that this could have on sentencing practice. A targeted influencing programme of meetings secured support from key statutory and voluntary partners, enabling their feedback to inform the proposal which will be used in 2023/24 to secure future funding and collaborations.

We have incrementally revised our development plans, with an Effective Sentencing Toolkit lying at the heart of the initiative. The toolkit will be the initial major output from the workstream, and it will be developed, it is hoped, across the next two years in consultation with sentencers and other criminal justice professionals. It will be designed to match the information needs and expectations of its users and will detail transparent scientific criteria for inclusion into the toolkit alongside a peer review process.

Focus this year has been upon progressing the conceptualisation for the Effective Sentencing workstream and toolkit into a business plan proposal with tangible measures, outputs and support from partners and stakeholders. A recruitment drive to appoint a lead that would deliver the business plan for this service was unsuccessful but provided much learning and an opportunity for the charity to revise and refine its requirements for this role.

### **3. Strengthen sustainability.**

This year we have developed and enhanced the internal infrastructure of the charity, its policies, financial processes and procedures, governance, HR, risk, and reporting. Changes aligned to regulatory and legal requirements and good practice have been implemented, strengthening the day to day running of the organisation to ensure that it continues to be compliant, effective, and efficient in supporting the purpose and key strategic objectives of the charity.

## **Sentencing Academy**

We have inducted three new trustees who have now served a year's term with us, helping to shape and develop our communications and establish links with researchers. We have sadly thanked and said goodbye to a founding member of the charity and have recruited a legal practitioner (one of our former interns) and a leading academic to complement the existing skill set of members.

Alongside this we have doubled our staffing with the recruitment of the Director of Operations whose remit is to lead on the day-to-day operations of the organisation ensuring that it is compliant, financially viable and risk aware, creating a solid foundation for growth and delivery.

Capacity has been increased with additional consultancy contracts to help support and develop our communications work and research. The substantial consistent contribution to the charity from certain academics, experts and practitioners has led to the formulation of the "Advisers" group demonstrating the broader reach and influences that help to inform and shape the work of the charity.

External accreditation has commenced in many areas of the organisation in 2022/23, including Living Wage Employer status, data security with the commencement of our Cyber Essentials certification process, work towards a draft Carbon Reduction Plan, accredited by the Green Small Business, along with suppliers' approval to join the Crown Commercial Services Lower Value Procurement System. External validation evidences the safe, secure and ethical approach of the charity, supporting future sustainability and partnership and funding opportunities.

### **4. Improve pathways to engage with criminal justice system stakeholders and the public.**

Partnerships and collaborations have been strengthened this year with key stakeholders, charities, universities and with practitioners. Engagement with the general public and wider voluntary sector has increased alongside the events that we have delivered this year. The charity has reached out and engaged with 15 regional voluntary and community groups and local magistrates, introducing them to our work, offering opportunities to deliver bespoke awareness raising sessions, and acting as the bridge between those with expert knowledge and wider society.

We have successfully delivered six events this year, two of which were hosted regionally outside of London as part of our outreach and engagement work. All were collaboratively delivered alongside a number of key partners with two being hosted online. Approximately 450 delegates have attended from a range of different sectors helping to focus and raise understanding around key sentencing issues. Areas that have been covered at our events have included artificial intelligence, deferred sentencing, whole life orders, the sentencing of pregnant defendants, sentencing young adults and sentencing offences involving violence against women and girls, evidencing the broad impact and application that sentencing has.

## **Sentencing Academy**

### **5. Influence and inform policy and decision makers.**

Our primary function is to conduct and commission, and disseminate, research to inform policy makers around effective sentencing practices. It also enables us to share and make accessible expert knowledge to sentencers, practitioners and the public to help improve and increase understanding and awareness. We specialise in all types of research relating to sentencing issues, including qualitative, quantitative, and experimental research, literature, and other evaluative reviews. We are dedicated to the production and dissemination of research, staffed by people with substantial experience in sentencing matters and supplement this by working with colleagues across academia and the research community to draw upon their expertise. Across the last 12 months we have published five Issues Papers covering sentencing mentally disordered offenders, deferred sentencing, fines, sentencing historic offences, and pre-sentence reports alongside a research project looking in more depth at deferred sentencing, and also an examination of the Sentencing Council's guidance when sentencing offenders from an ethnic minority background.

This key area of activity has enabled us to work with eight specialist researchers in the field, distributing their findings and opinion to inform an evidence based approach. Our bimonthly newsletter has provided us with a useful platform to share our research findings, related reports, updates, and developments in the field with subscribers who have doubled in number this year.

We continue to strategically influence and take part in policy discussions and debates. We hosted an academic roundtable for the Sentencing Council to inform their consultation on a revised Totality guideline and our Executive Director was an invited speaker at the Victims Summit organised by the London Victims' Commissioner.

At the Parliamentary level, we work closely with the House of Commons Justice Committee, including co-hosting an academic roundtable at Parliament in December 2022 as part of their ongoing inquiry into public opinion and understanding of sentencing and participating in their public dialogue sessions in February/March 2023. Politicians from all sides continue to consult the charity, tapping into our expertise and evidence as a reliable and trusted central knowledge hub for sentencing.

An internal Communications Group, established this year, has provided a valuable steer and an opportunity to explore and discuss the challenges and risks involved as we develop and grow our communications work. The group has adopted a strategic approach, looking across the organisation to better understand and align key messages to ensure that we are consistent, are informed by the values of the charity and are aware of the impact of our work in this area.

## **Sentencing Academy**

### **Financial review**

A strong financial performance for 2022/23 reflects the efficient and effective management of the charity supported by clear procedures and processes that support delivery. The reporting and recording of the management accounts has been overhauled, providing additional financial information to support the scrutiny and overview functions of the Board and Directors.

The surplus at the year-end is £84,877 with income received of £222,500 against the total expenditure of £137,623 demonstrating value for money given the achievements delivered in the year and reflects a lean staffing and overhead cost.

### **The charity's policy on reserves**

The charity has approved and implemented a reserves policy that has been shaped and developed in accordance with the requirements of the Charity Commission and informs the financial management of the organisation. The secure financial position at the end of this year, coupled with limited expenditure and overhead exposure, have enabled the organisation to manage risk and effectively use the policy to help protect the funds of the charity.

### **Financial risks**

The same financial risks as were outlined last year continue moving forward around prioritising income diversification, securing multi-year funding from a broad range of sources including developing income generation activities to help sustain and support the growth plans of the organisation.

External factors such as the current economic crisis impact upon the availability of funding and the level of competition and demand. The budget for 2023/24 supports the activities and priorities below and is fully funded, which is pleasing to note, minimising financial risks and exposure of the charity in the new financial year.

All risks, including existing and new emerging financial risks are captured and monitored by Directors on a monthly basis to help monitor, mitigate, and manage this area of the organisation.

### **Plans for future periods**

The following proposed outputs align with the key objectives agreed in the draft Business Plan and will inform our delivery in 2023/24 alongside other day to day activities:

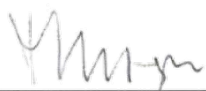
- Two large research projects looking at perceptions and knowledge of children on sentencing and work towards deferred sentencing focused upon women offenders.
- Delivery of three events including an event in Wales looking at contemporary issues in sentencing.
- Implementation of the Effective Sentencing workstream and commencing work on the design of an Effective Sentencing Toolkit in collaboration with key partners and stakeholders.

## Sentencing Academy

- Complete registration of the Research and Insight Crown Commercial Services procurement framework.
- Explore and secure grant/trust funding or contract/commissioning as part of our income diversification commitment, exploring opportunities to develop income generating activities.
- Expand engagement work with the public contributing to improved understanding and awareness around sentencing.
- Complete and use the Governance code self-assessment and associated actions as a tool for continuous improvement.
- Review and revise the charity's strategic and operational commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Strengthen existing partnerships, evolving collaborations, and exploring new connections to support the future sustainability of the charity particularly in our new Effective Sentencing workstream.
- Draft and deliver a Communications Strategy and three year Business Plan as our road map for the charity.
- Production of a range of additional Issues Papers.
- Develop and deliver Research Sounding Board knowledge exchange meetings acting as a hub for the sentencing research community.
- Complete Cyber Essentials certification and Carbon Reduction Plan.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees:

Signed



John Michael Hough, Trustee

Date 20/11/23



**Independent examiner's report to the trustees of  
Sentencing Academy  
for the year ended 31 March 2023**

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Sentencing Academy (the charity) for the year ended 31 March 2023.

**Responsibilities and basis of report**

As the trustees of the charity, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').


I report in respect of my examination of the charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

**Independent examiner's statement**

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed  Date 20/11/23  
John O'Brien MSc, FCCA, FCIE  
Employee of Community Accounting Plus

**Sentencing Academy**  
**Receipts & payments account**  
**for the year ended 31 March 2023**

2022				2023
Total		Unrestricted	Restricted	Total
Funds		Funds	Funds	Funds
£	Note	£	£	£
	<b>Receipts</b>			
94998	Grants & donations	2 203500	-	203500
-	Fees	19000	-	19000
<u>94998</u>	<b>Total receipts</b>	<u>222500</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>222500</u>
	<b>Payments</b>			
415	Advertising & marketing	1044	-	1044
65	Affiliations	562	-	562
39280	Consultancy	64162	-	64162
699	Equipment	-	-	-
8108	General & direct expenses	11102	-	11102
239	Insurance	384	-	384
813	IT	852	-	852
87	Memberships	-	-	-
896	Professional fees	774	-	774
28159	Salaries, NI & pensions	58211	-	58211
-	Entertaining	256	-	256
-	Training	276	-	276
393	Travel	-	-	-
<u>79154</u>	<b>Total payments</b>	<u>137623</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>137623</u>
15844	<b>Net receipts/(payments)</b>	84877	-	84877
<u>150776</u>	Cash funds at start of this period	<u>166550</u>	<u>70</u>	<u>166620</u>
<u>166620</u>	<b>Cash funds at end of this period</b>	<u>251427</u>	<u>70</u>	<u>251497</u>

**Sentencing Academy**  
**Statement of assets and liabilities**  
**at 31 March 2023**

2022			2023
£		Note	£
<u>166620</u>	<b>Cash assets</b>		<u>251497</u>
<u>166620</u>	Bank accounts		<u><b>251497</b></u>
	<b>Other monetary assets</b>		
<u>154</u>	Prepayment - Insurance		<u>192</u>
<u>154</u>			<u><b>192</b></u>
	<b>Assets retained for the charity's own use</b>		
	General equipment.		
	Computer equipment purchased 2019, £2,238.		
	Laptop purchased 2022, £699.		
	<b>Liabilities</b>		
<u>(773)</u>	Creditors	4	<u>(908)</u>
<u>(773)</u>			<u><b>(908)</b></u>

These financial statements are accepted on behalf of the charity by:

Signed  Date 20/11/23  
 John Michael Hough, Trustee

# Sentencing Academy

## Notes to the accounts

### for the year ended 31 March 2023

#### 1. Receipts & payments accounts

Receipts and payments accounts contain a summary of money received and money spent during the period and a list of assets and liabilities at the end of the period. Usually, cash received and cash spent will include transactions through bank accounts and cash in hand.

#### 2. Grants & donations

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total £
Dawes Trust	203000	-	203000
Barrow Cadbury Trust	<u>500</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>500</u>
	<b><u>203500</u></b>	<b><u>-</u></b>	<b><u>203500</u></b>

#### 3. Funds analysis

	Opening balance £	Receipts £	(Payments) £	Closing balance £
<b>Restricted funds</b>				
Deferred Sentencing	<u>70</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>70</u>
	<b><u>70</u></b>	<b><u>-</u></b>	<b><u>-</u></b>	<b><u>70</u></b>
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>				
General fund	<u>166550</u>	<u>222500</u>	<u>(137623)</u>	<u>251427</u>
	<b><u>166550</u></b>	<b><u>222500</u></b>	<b><u>(137623)</u></b>	<b><u>251427</u></b>

The specific purposes for which the restricted funds are to be applied are as follows:

Deferred Sentencing – to examine deferred sentencing regarding its current applicability for young adults through literature research and a case law review.

#### 4. Creditors

	£
Salaries, NI & pension (pension)	236
Professional fees (IE fee)	<u>672</u>
	<b><u>908</u></b>

#### 5. Trustees' remuneration

During this period, a total of £358.38 was reimbursed to 3 trustees for travel expenses incurred.

## Sentencing Academy

### 6. Related party transactions

There were no related party transactions in this period.

### 7. Glossary of terms

**Creditors:** These are amounts owed by the charity, but not paid during the accounting period.

**Prepayments:** These are services that the charity has paid for in advance, but not used during the accounting period.

**Restricted funds:** These are funds given to the charity, subject to specific restrictions set by the donor, but still within the general objects of the charity.