



House of Commons
Justice Committee

Draft Sentencing Council guideline on child cruelty offences

Tenth Report of Session 2017–19

*Report, together with formal minutes relating
to the report*

*Ordered by the House of Commons
to be printed 26 June 2018*

Justice Committee

The Justice Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration and policy of the Ministry of Justice and its associated public bodies (including the work of staff provided for the administrative work of courts and tribunals, but excluding consideration of individual cases and appointments, and excluding the work of the Scotland and Wales Offices and of the Advocate General for Scotland); and administration and expenditure of the Attorney General's Office, the Treasury Solicitor's Department, the Crown Prosecution Service and the Serious Fraud Office (but excluding individual cases and appointments and advice given within government by Law Officers).

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Powers

The Committee is one of the departmental select committees, the powers of which are set out in House of Commons Standing Orders, principally in SO No 152. These are available on the internet via www.parliament.uk.

Publication

Committee reports are published on the Committee's website at www.parliament.uk/justicecttee and in print by Order of the House.

Committee staff

The current staff of the Committee are Rhiannon Hollis (Clerk), Danielle Nash (Second Clerk), Gemma Buckland (Senior Committee Specialist), Nony Ardill (Legal Specialist), Claire Hardy (Committee Specialist), Christine Randall (Senior Committee Assistant), Su Panchanathan (Committee Assistant), and Liz Parratt and Simon Horswell (Committee Media Officers).

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Report

The Sentencing Council

1. The Sentencing Council for England and Wales is an independent non-departmental body of the Ministry of Justice, set up to promote greater transparency and consistency in sentencing, whilst maintaining the independence of the judiciary. Its primary role is to issue guidelines on sentencing, which the courts must follow unless it is in the interests of justice not to do so. The Council also assesses the impact of guidelines on sentencing practice and promotes public awareness of sentencing practice in the magistrates' courts and the Crown Court.

2. Under section 120 of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009, the Council is required to publish sentencing guidelines in draft before they are finalised. Section 120(6) of the 2009 Act lists the Justice Committee as a statutory consultee on draft guidelines. The Council must also consult the Lord Chancellor and any person that the Lord Chancellor directs should be consulted, together with such other persons as the Council considers appropriate. In setting guidelines, the Council is required to have regard to a number of factors, including the sentences imposed by courts in England and Wales for particular offences and the need to promote consistency in sentencing.

Our response to the Sentencing Council's consultation

3. On 13 June 2017, the Sentencing Council published for consultation a group of sentencing guidelines covering offences involving child cruelty, along with a consultation paper seeking views on the draft guidelines.¹ The Council also published a consultation stage Resource Assessment.² The offences covered by the draft guidelines are as follows:

- Cruelty to a child (section 1 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1933)
- Causing or allowing a child to die or suffer serious physical harm (section 5 of the Domestic Violence and Crime Act 2004)
- Failing to protect a girl from the risk of female genital mutilation (section 3A of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003)

4. The Sentencing Council aimed to seek a wide range of views to its consultation paper and received 42 responses in total. We are grateful to the Council for sharing these responses with us, and for producing a note which helpfully explains the background to the consultation and summarises the responses that the Council received. The Council's note is reproduced as Appendix 2 to this report. Given the assistance that we received from the Council, we did not consider it necessary for us to seek separate evidence, formally or informally, on the draft guidelines.

5. We responded to the Sentencing Council's consultation by way of a letter from the Chair, dated 27 March 2018, which was sent to Lord Justice Treacy, the Chairman of the Council. The letter appears as Appendix 1 to this report. Although it was submitted after the consultation deadline, the Council indicated to us that our response could still be considered and we are grateful for its flexibility in this regard. We have decided to publish this short report to draw the attention of the House and that of other interested parties to the draft guidelines on child cruelty offences, and to our own response.

1 Sentencing Council; [Child cruelty consultation, June 2017](#)

2 Sentencing Council; [Consultation Stage Resource Assessment: Child Cruelty Offences](#). June 2017

Appendix 1: Letter from the Chair of the Justice Committee to the Chairman of the Sentencing Council, dated 27 March 2018

Draft Sentencing Council Guideline on Child Cruelty

The Justice Committee thanks the Sentencing Council for giving it the opportunity of responding to the draft guideline on child cruelty, and in particular for permitting this response to be made after the thirteen-week consultation period has ended. Once again, we are grateful to the Council for agreeing to share with us the responses that it received to its consultation on this guideline, and for providing a helpful summary of its proposals and analysis of the consultation responses.

In the light of the resources available to us and the Council's own timetable for finalising the guidelines, our letter does not aim to provide a comprehensive response to each of the consultation questions. We have instead focused on particular themes where we felt that our observations could contribute most usefully to the discussion.

Failure to protect (Q1)

In its consultation document, the Council questioned whether, as in the current definitive guideline, a "failure to protect" a child (absent other factors) should carry the same level of culpability as actually inflicting cruelty. We note that respondents' views were divided. While some agreed that culpability should be the same, others argued that there was a moral distinction between inflicting cruelty and a failure to protect; or at least that active encouragement should be distinguished from a failure to act.

It was argued by some that a vulnerable person who fails to protect the victim might be less culpable; the draft guideline for these offences already lists vulnerability factors that indicate lesser culpability: mental disorder, learning disability, lack of maturity, or being a victim of domestic abuse. Respondents also emphasised the potential complexity of family dynamics and possible overlap between mental illness, domestic abuse and substance abuse.

We believe that a change is needed in this area of the guideline. We acknowledge that the guideline already contains a number of mitigating factors which might be thought sufficiently to account for the lower culpability in the case of a person who fails to protect a child from cruelty, rather than inflicting it. However, we believe that in cases where these apply, they do not fully capture the extent of the moral distinction between inflicting cruelty and allowing it to occur. Further, in cases where none of these mitigating factors apply, we consider that there is still an important moral difference between inflicting cruelty on a child and failing to prevent it taking place, even where that is for no other reason than indifference.

For these reasons, we consider that the definitive guideline ought to set a lower starting point for offenders who have failed to protect a child from cruelty, as opposed to inflicting it.

Definition of serious harm (Q3)

The consultation proposes an approach to the assessment of harm in which Category 1 (the most severe) includes “Serious psychological and/or developmental harm.” We note that several respondents to the Council’s consultation thought this level needed further explanation or guidance; and/or considered that emphasis should be placed on the need for expert evidence, particularly on psychological harm/developmental harm. We felt this assessment should be left to sentencers, as it depends so closely on the facts of the case. However, we agree with those respondents who argued that sentencers should be asked to consider obtaining expert evidence on the psychological/ developmental harm inflicted on a child. This is an area in which expert advice may be essential.

Aggravating factors (Q6)

The consultation proposes a range of aggravating factors. We agree with those respondents who felt that where an offender is a person in authority, for example a teacher or priest, this should be an aggravating factor.

Mitigating factors (Q7)

The consultation proposes a number of mitigating factors, including remorse and good character. We agree with those who argued that if remorse is taken into consideration as a mitigating factor, it is essential that it must be genuine. We note that good character is a mitigating factor, and that the consultation proposed that “the more serious the offence, the less weight which should normally be attributed to this factor”. We do not believe good character is always relevant in such cases, because a person of apparent good character can make use of it to inflict harm without being detected. We made a similar point in our response to your earlier consultation on the guideline on domestic abuse, where we made reference to the definitive guideline on Sexual Offences. This states, “Where previous good character/exemplary conduct has been used to facilitate the offence, this mitigation should not normally be allowed and such conduct may constitute an aggravating factor”. We think the same, or a similar qualification should be made in this guideline.

Causing or allowing a child to die or suffer serious physical harm (Q12)

As with the cruelty to a child guideline, the consultation explains that “a person failing to protect a child from certain actions is treated at the same level of culpability as the person who actually commits the action”. The document goes on to explain that this lack of distinction is “particularly important for this guideline” because a primary purpose of the legislation was “to close the loophole created if there is not enough evidence to determine who, when more than one person is present in the household, caused the harm or death”. Prosecutors do not have to show which of the people present caused the harm and which allowed it, and both are sentenced at the same level. The consultation says that in cases where the court does not know which of the people involved caused the harm, the result of a distinction between the sentences given for causing harm and for allowing it would be that both offenders “would have to be sentenced on the basis of allowing harm, rather than causing it”. We acknowledge the importance of avoiding this difficulty in cases where it is not known to the court who has caused the harm.

However, the consultation document then acknowledges that “there will be some cases where the court is aware which offender caused the harm, and which one allowed it”. It suggests that in such cases there will often be circumstances which prevented the person who only allowed the harm from being able to intervene, which “may on balance reduce their culpability or mitigate the seriousness” of the offence. Absent such circumstances, though, the offender who allowed the harm will be treated as having the same culpability as their co-defendant who caused the harm. We do not agree with this approach. As noted above in our response to Q1, we consider that there is an important moral distinction between causing and allowing harm which is not sufficiently captured by the possible presence of other circumstances.

In some jurisdictions, a “Good Samaritan” law applies, but this is not a feature of English law. We recognise that a person who is a member of a victim’s household has a close connection to the victim and a greater responsibility to protect them from harm. However, we do not feel this responsibility is enough to erase the distinction between causing and allowing harm.

We are of the opinion that this distinction should be reflected in a lower starting point in sentencing for offenders who have allowed harm. This will of course only be relevant in cases where it is known to the court which offender caused the harm.

Sentence ranges and starting points for the offence of failing to protect a girl from the risk of FGM (Q23)

This guideline related to Section 3A of the FGM Act 2003. The guidelines note that there have been no convictions for any of the offences under the Act. We note that some respondents to the consultation, including the National Crime Agency and the NSPCC, thought that sentencing for this offence should take into account the complex cultural and social context which leads parents to mistakenly believe that FGM is in a girl’s best interests; they argue that, rather than lengthy sentences, it would be better to challenge communities’ attitudes and beliefs through education. This would be broadly consistent with the approach advocated by the World Health Organisation (WHO). In contrast, other respondents felt that sentencing ranges for this offence should be as high as for other child cruelty offences, if not higher, and that proposed mitigating factors were too lenient. The Council is proposing a custodial starting point for all but the least serious cases.

We note that a Home Affairs Committee report on this topic, published in 2016, referred to FGM as a “national scandal” and lamented the lack of prosecutions for the “failure to protect” offence. The Committee called for an increase in the number of prosecutions, in line with other countries in Europe.

We support the Sentencing Council’s approach. We believe that a custodial starting point is appropriate for sentencing for all but the least serious cases. Challenging communities’ attitudes and beliefs, while welcome, should in our view go alongside offering support to people in affected communities who are trying to combat the practice of FGM; both are, of course, outside the scope of the consultation. We believe that is appropriate to confirm our opposition to this practice as a society by taking a firm line on sentencing, and would hope to see progress in prosecuting cases under this Act.

Inconsistency between sentencing decisions

As part of the consultation process, respondents were asked to use the draft guideline to consider three case scenarios, one for each of the offences, and to indicate their final sentences—detailing the culpability, harm, aggravating and mitigating factors. We note that the respondents' assessments vary widely. Although many respondents would not in practice be involved in sentencing, this divergence of views might be thought to suggest that the guideline gives too much scope for discretion, potentially undermining consistency in sentencing; on the other hand, discretion may be considered desirable.

We were doubtful of the value of this exercise. The cases described, and the sentencing decisions they give rise to, are by their nature very fact sensitive. It is therefore hard in an exercise like this to capture the subtleties of case scenarios in a meaningful way, without giving rise to red herrings. This means the varied responses will do little to help assess the clarity and consistency of the guideline. The Council should in its final definitive guideline acknowledge the broad range of circumstances that may arise in offences of these kinds. But we are unconvinced that the Council should continue to produce scenarios of this type for future consultations.

Equality impact

The consultation paper contains a brief paragraph acknowledging that more women than men are sentenced for these offences, but concludes that no equality impacts are anticipated (because the guidelines should promote consistency in sentencing); however, the Council 'would welcome views or any evidence on this issue'. A minority of respondents considered that the Council should conduct a more detailed assessment of equality impact in relation to gender. It was also suggested that the race equality impact of sentencing for FGM offences should be better understood. We consider that, in relation to all guidelines, the Commission should keep equality issues under review, especially around race in relation to FGM offences.

We hope you will be able to take our observations into account in preparing your definitive guideline, and look forward to your reply.

Appendix 2: Child cruelty guidelines— summary of consultation and responses

The consultation ran from 13 June 2017 to 13 September 2017. In addition to the consultation the Council has carried out research with judges to test the effectiveness of the guidelines and the likely effect on sentence severity. The results are being considered alongside consultation responses.

Background

There is an existing Child Cruelty guideline published by our predecessor body, the Sentencing Guidelines Council (SGC), in 2008. The Council has committed to revising all SGC guidelines in due course to bring them into the newer format used by the Sentencing Council which takes the user through a stepped approach to assess the seriousness of the offence.

The existing guideline is made up of a guideline for the offence of cruelty to a child and overarching principles on assaults on children. The Council made the decision to remove the overarching principles section when revising this guideline. This is because the existing definitive Assault guideline already considers some of the factors detailed, such as when a victim is particularly vulnerable, and the Council is planning to review the Assault guideline following its evaluation of that guideline that was published in October 2015.

The Council also decided to extend the scope of the existing Child Cruelty guideline, to include two further offences: causing or allowing a child to die or suffer serious physical harm, and failing to protect a child from the risk of female genital mutilation (FGM). Causing or allowing a child to die or suffer serious physical harm is an offence that is similar in its nature to the offence of cruelty to a child and so the Council felt it was appropriate to include such a guideline.

The Council has included the guideline for failing to protect a girl from the risk of FGM as FGM is a form of child abuse and it is an offence that applies solely to child victims (the other relevant FGM offences apply to victims of any age). This legislation was announced at the Girl Summit 2014, along with other measures designed to tackle FGM, and FGM remains a key topic across Parliament and Government. Due to the currency of such issues the Council felt it was appropriate to consult on such a guideline, despite there being no convictions to date for this offence.

Child Cruelty Offences

In 2016 there were 623 offenders sentenced for cruelty to a child contrary to **section 1 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1933**. Cruelty to a Child can be broken down into four separate types; assault and ill-treatment, neglect, abandonment and failure to protect. The factors included within this guideline therefore need to capture a wide spectrum of potential offending behaviour.

Under **section 5 of the Domestic Violence and Crime Act 2004** it is an offence to cause or allow the death or serious physical harm of a vulnerable adult or a child. In 2016 there were 6 offenders sentenced for causing or allowing death and 23 for causing or allowing

serious physical harm. For the offence to be made out, the prosecution does not need to prove whether the offender is guilty of causing harm or death, or guilty of allowing harm or death. One of the main purposes of this legislation was to address the problem that arises when a child or vulnerable adult suffers an unlawful death or serious physical harm and it can be proved that someone in the household caused it, but not which of them.

Section 3A of the FGM Act 2003 makes it an offence to fail to protect a girl from the risk of FGM. This means that if FGM is committed on a girl under the age of 16 then each person who is responsible for the girl at the relevant time is guilty of an offence. There have as yet been no convictions for this offence.

Summary of responses

The consultation asks specific questions about the approach taken in each of the three guidelines and invites comment on the application of the guideline to case studies. We received a total of 42 response from a range of organisations/individuals as follows:

Category	Total	Organisations	Individuals
Magistrates (inc Bench responses)	9	8	1
Agencies in the Criminal Justice System (Youth Justice Board, CPS etc)	6	6	0
Voluntary Sector	4	4	0
Local Government (including three Safeguarding Children Partnerships)	4	4	0
Individual members of the public	4	0	4
NHS bodies	4	4	0
Barristers	3	2	1
Solicitors	3	3	0
Police	2	2	0
Crown Court judiciary	2	2	0
District Judges (Magistrates' Courts)	1	1	0
Totals	42	36	6

Most respondents answered questions on all three guidelines, though some commented only on either the Cruelty to a Child, and Causing or Allowing, guidelines or the FGM offence guideline. Responses highlighted similar concerns/views across both the Cruelty to a Child and Causing or Allowing offences, and some of these will be considered together as the definitive guidelines are developed post-consultation.

Cruelty to a Child (1933 Act offence)

Responses were generally supportive of the proposed guideline. There was broad agreement on equality of culpability between cases where the offender had carried out the cruelty and where they had failed to protect, with some caveats. The majority of respondents also agreed with the culpability and harm factors, though suggested some changes to wording and some additional factors. Key points from responses were:

1. Whilst 25 of the 34 respondents answering question 1 agreed with the approach of equal culpability for failure to protect offences, many respondents were keen to remind the Council of the need to take other factors into account which may lessen culpability; this is what the draft guideline intends. Seven respondents felt that there could be different levels of culpability within failure to protect, depending on the role which the offender had played, for example in actively encouraging or supporting the offender rather than simply failing to protect the victim.
2. Although sentencers are expected to be familiar with the need to balance culpability and harm factors in different categories to arrive at an overall category of seriousness, some respondents expressed concern that further guidance on how to do this was needed, particularly in cases where there was serious harm, and some culpability Category A factors were present but there were also several Category C factors, such as the offender being themselves a victim of Domestic Abuse. The Council will consider this alongside the outcomes of road-testing of the draft guidelines to assess whether further guidance is needed.
3. On 'harm', again there was broad agreement on the factors, but several respondents asked for further guidance on how to assess/interpret some factors, particularly those relating to psychological and developmental harm. Some of these will be covered by the revisions to the overarching "Seriousness" guideline, which is currently in development, and Council will consider whether any further guidance within the Child Cruelty guideline is needed.
4. Although based on current sentencing practice, several respondents felt that sentencing starting points and ranges were too low for the most serious (Category 1A) offences, and compared them with other, not necessarily analogous, assault offences. However, two respondents also suggested that at the other end of seriousness, the ranges for Category 3C were too high. Many respondents made suggestions relating to statutory maximum penalties for these and other offences, which are beyond the scope of this consultation.
5. There was broad agreement with the inclusion of most of the aggravating and mitigating factors, but some respondents asked for additional information on how to assess some of these, especially relating to victims who are particularly vulnerable. Respondents also suggested additional factors which will be considered, including where the victim is targeted, and where the offender has a professional role in caring for the victim (such as in a young offender's institution or school).
6. There was also general agreement with the inclusion of the additional Step 5, an additional step added to be used in cases on the cusp of custody, to help sentencers in the application of *R v Petherick* in cases where the offender is the sole or primary carer for dependents. This is normally included as a mitigating factor, but it was felt that additional guidance was needed here as in the majority of cases the parent will be the primary carer for the victim(s) and/or other children. Whilst many supported the inclusion of this step, several questioned the need for the inclusion of the usual factor within the mitigating factors; Council will consider this and any necessary changes to wording.

Causing or Allowing (2004 Act offence)

Responses to consultation questions on this guideline were very similar to those for the Cruelty to a Child guideline, but there were some significant differences, and there were two additional questions for this guideline relating to vulnerable adults.

1. Of the 31 respondents to question 10, 24 agreed with the proposal to exclusively focus on child victims and not cover vulnerable adults. Of the 7 who disagreed, the three who gave reasons referred to the fact that the guideline should mirror the offence and cover vulnerable adults, and that in the absence of a guideline for vulnerable adults, judges would use the guideline for child victims anyway, so it should be drafted to cover both.
2. Of the 31 respondents to question 11, 26 felt that the Council should at least consider developing guidelines for offences committed against vulnerable adults, whilst 5 disagreed. However, in comments several respondents did not take into account the fact that the proposal was to cover a range of other offences, so there were very few suggestions for other offences to be covered.
3. Comments on culpability factors for this guideline were very similar to those for the Cruelty to a Child guideline. The differences mainly related to the particular problem in this offence of “failure to protect” cases where it could not be proved whether the offender had caused or allowed the harm, and the implications for assessing the level of culpability. This exacerbated the problems mentioned above relating to different types of failure to protect, and how to balance culpability factors.
4. In general, as this is a more serious offence than Cruelty to a Child, respondents were less willing to include something as a lower culpability factor or a mitigating factor.
5. Most respondents agreed with the approach to the assessment of harm. Three respondents suggested that some serious injury should be included in Category 1, but most agreed that this category should be reserved for cases resulting in death. Two respondents suggested the need to compare sentence levels and how harm was interpreted with the Cruelty to a Child offence, and we will take care to do this as sentence levels are considered post-consultation. As with Cruelty to a Child, there were several questions about how to assess harm, particularly long-term psychological or emotional harm which may be more serious with this offence.
6. Comments on aggravating and mitigating factors were very similar for this guideline as for Cruelty to a Child. Some respondents felt that mitigating factors should not be applied in Category 1 cases resulting in death, or should be applied differently.
7. Nine respondents felt that sentencing levels were too low, either in general or for the upper end, particularly upper end of culpability. As with Cruelty to a Child there were a few comments relating to statutory maximum penalties which are not part of this consultation. There were some helpful comments suggesting comparisons with manslaughter sentencing levels, and those for the Cruelty to a Child offence, and these will be taken forward as the guidelines are developed post-consultation.

Failure to protect a girl from the risk of FGM

In general, this guideline attracted fewer responses than the other guidelines in this consultation, and several respondents said that it fell outside their area of expertise. One respondent questioned why the Council was devoting time to this, as no cases have yet been prosecuted. However, there were several detailed responses from individuals and organisations with specialist knowledge in this area.

1. The majority of respondents agreed with the approach to assessing culpability and to most of the culpability factors. Specific comments included the need for more information on medium culpability, questions about what constitutes a warning or intervention, and how failure to respond to warnings, and other aspects of commission of the offence, may be linked with coercion and intimidation. There were also some comments that some factors (such as significant planning and involving others) don't seem relevant to a failure to protect offence, however, other respondents supported the inclusion of these factors. Some respondents to this question and others appeared to be considering other FGM offences, rather than solely this failure to protect offence.
2. Respondents were divided on the approach to assessment of harm, with several saying that only one category was necessary, while a smaller number of others suggested that additional categories were necessary to take account of the WHO definitions of FGM. The majority, however, agreed with the approach. Several respondents asked for guidance on, or offered suggestions for, the definition of "particularly severe" harm, especially in relation to psychological harm.
3. On sentence levels, several respondents were concerned that the levels appeared too low, and made comparisons with other offences. Some of these will be considered in development of the definitive guideline, however, several of the other offences, such as GBH, are more akin to other FGM offences than to this particular offence in this guideline.
4. When considering aggravating and mitigating factors, several respondents felt that the "standard" factors were not really applicable to this offence, as it is a unique offence often committed by otherwise law-abiding people, and by parents who are otherwise loving and caring.

Equality and Diversity

Perhaps surprisingly, there were not many comments under this heading. There were some comments relating to FGM, and the Prison Reform Trust made several comments in response to specific questions throughout the consultation relating to the role of women in the commission of these offences and the difficult circumstances offenders can find themselves in.

Next Steps

The Council will discuss the responses to the consultation at its meetings in January, March April and May 2018 with a view to publishing the definitive guideline in October 2018 as time permits. However, this timetable may change if the Council considers that more time is needed to refine the proposals.

Formal minutes

Tuesday 26 June 2018

Members present:

Robert Neill, in the Chair

Alex Chalk

Victoria Prentis

Bambos Charalambous

Ellie Reeves

David Hanson

Ms Marie Rimmer

Draft Report (*Draft Sentencing Council guideline on child cruelty offences*), proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 5 read and agreed to.

Two papers were appended to the Report.

Resolved, that the Report be the Tenth Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chair make the Report to the House.

Ordered, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available (Standing Order No. 134).

[Adjourned till Tuesday 3 July at 9.30am

List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

All publications from the Committee are available on the [publications page](#) of the Committee's website. The reference number of the Government's response to each Report is printed in brackets after the HC printing number.

Session 2017–19

First Report	Disclosure of youth criminal records	HC 416 (Cm 9559)
Second Report	Draft Sentencing Council guidelines on intimidatory offences and domestic abuse	HC 417
Third Report	Pre-legislative scrutiny: draft personal injury discount rate clause	HC 374
Fourth Report	Draft Sentencing Council guidelines on manslaughter	HC 658
Fifth Report	HM Inspectorate of Prisons report on HMP Liverpool	HC 751 (HC 967)
Sixth Report	Draft Sentencing guideline on terrorism	HC 746
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Third Special Report	The implications of Brexit for the justice system: Government Response to the Committee's Ninth Report of Session 2016–17	HC 651
Fourth Special Report	HM Inspectorate of Prisons report on HMP Liverpool: Government Response to the Committee's Fifth Report	HC 967