

FOI – 202500493858
SOCT meeting minutes

Minutes of the Serious Organised Crime Taskforce
09:00 Thursday 20 February 2025

Members Present:

Angela Constance MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Home Affairs (Chair)
ACC Stuart Houston, Police Scotland (for Chief Constable)
Kenny Donnelly, COPFS
Paul Carberry, Action for Children (representing the Third Sector)
Linda Pollock, Scottish Prison Service
[redacted - S38(1)(b)] on behalf of [redacted - S38(1)(b)] Border Force
Craig Naylor, HMICS
[redacted - S38(1)(b)] (on behalf of Miles Bonfield), NCA
[redacted - S38(1)(b)], HMRC
Cllr Maureen Chalmers, CoSLA
Julie White, NHS

In Attendance

Penny Curtis, Scottish Government
[redacted - S38(1)(b)], Scottish Government
Gillian Russell, Scottish Government
[redacted - S38(1)(b)], Scottish Government
[redacted - S38(1)(b)], Scottish Government
[redacted - S38(1)(b)], Scottish Government
[redacted - S38(1)(b)], Scottish Government
[redacted - S38(1)(b)], Scottish Prison Service
[redacted - S38(1)(b)], Scottish Prison Service
[redacted - S38(1)(b)], Scottish Prison Service
[redacted - S38(1)(b)], Police Scotland
[redacted - S38(1)(b)], Police Scotland
[redacted - S38(1)(b)], Police Scotland
[redacted - S38(1)(b)], CoSLA

Secretariat

[redacted - S38(1)(b)], Scottish Government
[redacted - S38(1)(b)], Scottish Government
[redacted - S38(1)(b)], Scottish Government

Apologies

Chief Constable
DCC Bex Smith, Police Scotland
Lord Advocate
Solicitor General
Donald McGillivray, Scottish Government
Amanda Hatton, SoLACE
Chris Ulliot, Private Sector

Item 1: Welcome, apologies, minutes and action points from previous meetings

1. The SOCT:

- noted apologies from the Chief Constable, DCC Bex Smith, Lord Advocate, Solicitor General, Donald McGillivray, Amanda Hatton and Chris Ulliot;
- thanked ACC Andy Freeburn, who has retired, for his contribution to the SOCT;
- welcomed ACC Stuart Houston, who has taken over the Organised Crime, Counter Terrorism and Intelligence portfolio, to the meeting;
- welcomed Julie White, Chief Executive of NHS Dumfries & Galloway and NHS representative on the group, to her first meeting since taking over from Professor Jann Gardner;
- welcomed [redacted - S38(1)(b)] within HMRC, to her first meeting since taking over from Joe Hendry; and
- agreed the minutes of the October meeting.

Item 2: Update on existing work

2. The SOCT noted:

- the written updates provided; and
- the update from Cllr Chalmers that the action around Landlord Registration has been completed.

Item 3: Update on SOC Threat

3. The SOCT:

- thanked [redacted - S38(1)(b)] for her presentation on the threat posed by organised criminals and emerging threats; and
- noted the update from members around OCGs potentially exploiting data requests from public sector organisations.

Item 4: Presentation on pressures across the prison estate including management of OCGs and illicit substances

4. The SOCT:

- thanked Linda Pollock and [redacted - S38(1)(b)] for their presentation on the management of OCGs in the prison estate, the illicit introduction of drugs, and drone activity;
- noted the update on the difficulties of the prison population and the increase of SOC nominals within the prison estate;
- discussed the issues around drone activity and [redacted - S35(1)(a)], grilles over cell windows and [redacted - S35(1)(a)];
- noted the impact of drugs in prisons on inmates, SPS officers and NHS staff. It was highlighted that local health care systems are undertaking a review of how relevant organisations work together and trying to improve it;
- [redacted – S35(1)(a)]; and
- noted that the Cabinet Secretary mentioned that SG Ministers are content to engage with UKG Ministers on the issue of a misconduct in public office offence and no-fly zones over prisons in Scotland, if required. It was highlighted that civil air space is a reserved matter but that there are

regulations that make airspace above prisons in England and Wales no-fly zones for unmanned aircraft.

Item 5: Update on CCE/Jay Review

5. The SOCT:
 - noted the update provided by the Cabinet Secretary on CCE and Scottish Government's response to the Action for Children commissioned Jay Review;
 - agreed the recommendations within the paper, including that the work on CCE will sit within the Human Trafficking and Exploitation space. It was noted that the refreshed HT&E Strategy is due for publication in Spring 2025 and a delivery plan will be drafted and published soon after; and
 - noted that the Public Protection Leadership Group is considering their workplan for the year ahead. It was highlighted that it would be worth engaging with the group and also ensuring that the Public Protection Ministerial Oversight Group, which is chaired by the Cabinet Secretary, is sighted on it to ensure the work is aligned and that the core principles of both groups are considered.

Item 6: AOCB, date of next meeting and agenda

6. The SOCT:
 - agreed that the next meeting will be on Thursday 12 June at the Scottish Crime Campus in Gartcosh and will include a further update on the work around prisons and an update paper from the communications subgroup, and any agenda items suggested by members of the SOCT or Steering Group.

Actions:

The Secretariat to close the action on Landlord Registration in the action log.

[redacted - S38(1)(b)] and ACC Houston to discuss whether the 'common travel area' should be a topic for discussion at the next SOCT meeting in June.

NHS and SPS to discuss the issue around drugs in prisons and engagement between both organisations.

[redacted – S35(1)(a)]

The Secretariat and SG Prisons Policy Unit to engage with the Ministry of Justice around no-fly zones over prisons and consider next steps for Scotland.

Cllr Maureen Chalmers to engage with SPS on their presentation and the issues around inmates being released into the community.

The Secretariat to engage with the Public Protection Leadership Group as they consider their workplan for the year ahead. It was noted that the work on CCE and consideration of the Jay Review recommendations might be worth sharing

to seek members views. The Secretariat to ensure that the Public Protection Ministerial Oversight group is sighted on discussions.

**Minutes of the Serious Organised Crime Taskforce
09:00 Thursday 12 June 2025**

Members Present:

Angela Constance MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Home Affairs (Chair)
Solicitor General
ACC Stuart Houston, Police Scotland
Stephen McGowan (for Kenny Donnelly), COPFS
Paul Carberry, Action for Children (representing the Third Sector)
Linda Pollock, Scottish Prison Service
[redacted - S38(1)(b)] (on behalf of [redacted - S38(1)(b)]), Border Force
[redacted - S38(1)(b)] (on behalf of Craig Naylor), HMICS
[redacted - S38(1)(b)] (on behalf of Miles Bonfield), NCA
Joe Hendry (on behalf of [redacted - S38(1)(b)]), HMRC
Cllr Maureen Chalmers, CoSLA
Amanda Hatton, SoLACE
Julie White, NHS Scotland

In Attendance

Penny Curtis, Scottish Government
[redacted - S38(1)(b)], Scottish Government
[redacted - S38(1)(b)], Scottish Prison Service
Sineidin Corrins, COPFS
[redacted - S38(1)(b)], Police Scotland
[redacted - S38(1)(b)], Police Scotland
[redacted - S38(1)(b)], CoSLA
[redacted - S38(1)(b)], Home Office Immigration Enforcement

Secretariat

[redacted - S38(1)(b)], Scottish Government
[redacted - S38(1)(b)], Scottish Government

Apologies

Chief Constable
DCC Jane Connors, Police Scotland
Lord Advocate
Donald McGillivray, Scottish Government
Miles Bonfield, NCA
Craig Naylor, HMICS
Chris Ulliot, Private Sector

Item 1: Welcome, apologies, minutes and action points from previous meetings

1. The SOCT:
 - noted apologies from the Chief Constable, DCC Jane Connors, Lord Advocate, Donald McGillivray, Miles Bonfield, Craig Naylor and Chris Ulliot;
 - thanked DCC Bex Smith, who has moved to DCC for Transformation, for her contribution to the SOCT;

- welcomed back DCC Jane Connors, who has taken up the role as DCC for Operational Policing;
- welcomed [redacted - S38(1)(b)], Home Office Immigration Enforcement, to the meeting for the discussion on the Common Travel Area; and
- agreed the minutes of the February meeting.

Item 2: Update on ongoing feud

2. The SOCT:
 - noted the update from ACC Houston on the impact the violence in the ongoing feud is having and the successful partnership work between organisations; and
 - thanked law enforcement partners for their work on disrupting this criminality.

Item 3: Update on existing work

3. The SOCT:
 - noted the written updates provided by the Secretariat;
 - noted the verbal update on the Communications Working Group provided by [redacted - S38(1)(b)];
 - endorsed the Communications Working Group refreshed Terms of Reference, which was circulated with the papers for the meeting;
 - agreed that the Communications Working Group consider what media activity could be generated on the threat from scammers, which would include engaging with Trading Standards Scotland on the Shut out Scammers campaign; and
 - agreed that the Secretariat should develop a draft newsletter with details of any relevant projects and information, and share with members for consideration at the next meeting in October.

Item 4: Update on prisons

4. The SOCT noted:
 - the update provided by Linda Pollock and [redacted - S38(1)(b)] on prisons and drone activity. The window grilles have been fitted in some establishments [redacted – S35(1)(a)].
 - that a delegation of the Council of Europe's Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhumane or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) have visited prisons in Scotland and picked up on issues around drugs, and the impact on prisoners and staff; and
 - the ongoing inquiry by the Criminal Justice Committee into drugs in prisons. The Committee started its evidence sessions in May and they are expected to continue until later this year.

Item 5: Abuse of the Common Travel Area

5. The SOCT:
 - thanked ACC Houston and [redacted - S38(1)(b)] for their presentation on the threat that the abuse of the common travel area poses;

- noted that the Causeway multi-agency hub has a Police Scotland embed. [redacted – S35(1)(a)].
- noted the work underway as part of the Domestic Organised Immigration Crime Taskforce, which supports the disruption of this type of criminality; and
- noted that the UK Government Border Security, Asylum and Immigration Bill includes provisions around Border Security and Immigration.

Item 6: Update on Child Criminal Exploitation and UK Government Crime and Policing Bill

6. The SOCT noted the updates provided by:
 - the Cabinet Secretary and Penny Curtis on the revised Human Trafficking Strategy and the CCE provisions in the UK Government Crime and Policing Bill;
 - the Cabinet Secretary on her recent meeting with the Chief Constable, where the issue of criminal exploitation was discussed. The Cabinet Secretary is keen that the SOCT is closely linked with the work on CCE that will happen as part of the delivery plan for the Human Trafficking Strategy;
 - Amanda Hatton on the partnership work Edinburgh City Council is doing with colleagues in Manchester on education and CCE. There will be an opportunity for Amanda and colleagues to hear more about the legislation and programmes colleagues in Manchester have available to disrupt CCE and support victims.

Item 7: AOCB, date of next meeting and agenda

7. The SOCT:
 - agreed that the next meeting will be on Thursday 2 October at the Scottish Crime Campus in Gartcosh and will include a further update on the work around prisons, the Common Travel Area and the UK Government Border Security, Asylum and Immigration Bill, and the Crime and Policing Bill.

The Communications Working Group to consider media activity around scammers including engaging with Trading Standards Scotland colleagues on the Shut out Scammers campaign.

The Secretariat and Communications Working Group to develop a draft newsletter for the SOCT to consider and agree whether it should be circulated with relevant organisations.

The Communications Working Group to draft an action plan of activity for this year.

Members to encourage communications colleagues in their own organisation to contribute to the SOCT progress report, which will be published in the coming months.

Linda Pollock to engage with [redacted - S38(1)(b)] around SPS representation on the Communications Working Group.

The Secretariat to engage with SG Police Division around the powers of search for constables provisions in the UK Government Border Security, Asylum and Immigration Bill and provide an update to Police Scotland.

The Secretariat to consider whether a small group should be set up with colleagues in Scottish Government, COPFS and other relevant organisations to consider what legislation is available in Scotland to safeguard children and young people from exploitation.

The Secretariat to engage with Amanda Hatton on her work with colleagues in Manchester around CCE.

**Minutes of the Serious Organised Crime Taskforce
09:00 Thursday 13 November 2025**

[redacted – S17(1)(b)]