



Ministry
of Justice

Lord Ponsonby of Shulbrede
Parliamentary Under-Secretary
of State for Justice

Baroness Drake CBE
Chair Constitution Committee
House of Lords
London
SW1A 0PW

MoJ Ref: 118705

4 November 2024

Dear Baroness Drake,

MAGISTRATES' COURT SENTENCING POWERS

Thank you for your letter of 30 October regarding the increase to magistrates' court sentencing powers and your request for further explanation as to what effect this change will have on the backlog of cases in the Crown Court.

A full Impact Assessment of this change was carried out ahead of implementation which found that, in a steady state, 21% of cases committed to the Crown Court for sentencing will be retained in the magistrates' courts following the increase to magistrates' court sentencing powers. This is equivalent to up to c.2,000 Crown Court sitting days per year.

The diversion of sentencing hearings from the Crown Court to the magistrates' courts is estimated to lead to a Crown Court outstanding caseload that is up to 2,200 cases lower after 18 months than expected under current projections.

Kind regards,

LORD PONSONBY OF SHULBREDE