

SCOTTISH CRIMINAL CASES REVIEW COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD ON FRIDAY 29 AUGUST 2025
10:00 AM, HYBRID MEETING (OFFICE & VIDEO CONFERENCE)
FOR DISCLOSURE VIA THE PUBLICATION SCHEME

In line with the Commission's Disclosure policy, various paragraphs may have been edited or deleted from these minutes as the information contained therein relates to specific case information and/or personnel-related matters. Where the summary of discussion has been edited or the names have been deleted, this is indicated at the start of the relevant paragraph or section.

Present:

Dr Vanessa Davies (Chair) – office
Miss Alyson Forbes – office
Mr Finlay Young – video conference
Ms Jacqueline Fordyce – video conference
Mrs Gillian Mawdsley – office
Dr Alex Quinn – office
Mrs Suzie Mertes – video conference
Ms Laura Reilly – video conference

Also Present:

Miss Frances McMenamin KC – video conference
Mr Chris Reddick, Director of Corporate Services (minutes) – office

Section 1: Governance Matters

1.1 Apologies

Mr Walker had submitted his apologies.

1.2 Conflicts of Interest/Declarations of Interest/Gifts & Hospitality

Members were asked to declare any known conflicts of interests or gifts and hospitality.

There were no conflicts of interest or gifts, and hospitality declared.

1.3 Minutes of Board meeting held on 25 July 2025

The Board approved the minutes of the Board meeting held on 25 July 2025, subject to minor amendment. The Board also approved the version of the minutes for the Publication Scheme, subject to minor amendment.

1.4 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

1.5 Chair's Report

Dr Davies provided the Board with updates on the following matters:

- She reported that she had attended her annual meeting with Catriona Dalrymple and provided a summary of matters discussed which included performance, resourcing and topical issues affecting the Commission. Dr Davies noted that Ms Dalrymple was very supportive of the Commission and agreed to provide her team's support in respect of a number of ongoing matters.
- Dr Davies noted that the Franco-British Lawyers Society conference was being held on 18-20 September 2025 and that she would be attending part of this event.

1.6 Chief Executive's Report

1.6.1 In Mr Walker's absence, Mr Reddick provided the Board with an update on the following matters:

- He reported that the Audit Committee had met on 27 August 2025 and following an unmodified audit opinion, he had been authorised to sign the 2024-25 Annual Accounts. He also noted that the 2024-25 Draft Annual Report was being considered later in the agenda, and the intention was to have these laid in Parliament by the end of September 2025.
- He reported that he and Mr Walker had attended a quarterly sponsor team meeting on 27 August 2025 and provided a summary of the main points considered.
- He reported that Mr Walker had attended a meeting with Amanda Pearce, interim Chief Executive at the CCRC, on 28 July 2025 where they had discussed matters of mutual interest.
- He reported that Mr Walker had been contacted by the interim Executive Director for the implementation group for the creation of Canada's CCRC seeking some input/advice from the SCCRC, which would be taken forward.

1.6.2 Mr Reddick provided an update on ongoing work in respect of an information sharing agreement with COPFS, noting that a few updates had been agreed in respect of limiting access to materials on a need-to-know basis.

1.6.3 Mr Reddick confirmed that Mr Walker had undertaken his annual reviews of both the Persistent & Repeated Applications Register and the Persistent & Vexatious Correspondents Register, noting the outcome of both. He also confirmed that both policies were under review and would be considered at the Policy meeting in September 2025.

1.7 Court Decisions

There were no court decisions.

1.8 Correspondence:

Mr Reddick provided the Board with a summary of the circulated correspondence in respect of the retention of forensic samples, noting the content and that an update would be provided at the September Board meeting.

2.1 Notification by Members of non-case related work

There was no non-case related work notified by Members.

2.2 Training & Development

The following training and development had been undertaken since the last meeting of the Board:

- All legal staff received risk management training.
- Admin staff received case management system training.
- Admin staff received website admin training.
- One member of staff undertook mental health first aid training.

Mr Reddick also confirmed that Dr Tunde Huszar from the University of Strathclyde would be providing all Members with DNA training as part of the Policy meeting on 19 September 2025. Dr Davies encouraged all Members to attend this in person.

2.3 2024-25 Draft Annual Report

2.3.1 Dr Davies reported that the Audit Committee had met on 27 August 2025, which she had attended as an observer, with the main business being the review and signing of the 2024-25 Annual Accounts. She asked Mrs Mertes, as Chair of the Audit Committee, to provide the Board with an update.

2.3.2 Mrs Mertes confirmed that this had been a constructive meeting, attended by both external and internal audit. She provided an overview of the draft accounts that were considered, including details of the performance and accountability reporting. She confirmed that the external auditors had provided the Commission with an unqualified audit opinion and that they had recommended the signing of the annual accounts by the Accountable Officer which had been done. She provided an overview of the external auditor's annual report and confirmed that other business had included internal audit progress reporting, a review of the strategic risk register and business continuity planning. She confirmed that a number of proposed changes to the risk register had been made and that these would be considered at the September Board meeting.

2.3.3 Mr Reddick provided the Board with a walk-through of the 2024-25 Draft Annual Report, confirming that he had received a number of helpful annotations and suggestion from Members. In respect of the format of the report, he confirmed that alternative ways of presenting tabular information would be considered although noted that this had been done previously and wasn't that successful given the type and volumes of data being reported.

2.3.4 Dr Quinn noted that the draft report read very well and queried the level of detail in respect of referred cases during the year and whether this was necessary. Mr Reddick confirmed that this replicated what was already issued within new releases and on the referred cases section of the website. Mr Young referred to the section on "Our People" and suggested an update in respect of the legal and lay representation on the Board and some biographical detail to set out the experience brought to the Board by Members.

2.3.5 After full discussion the Board approved the 2024-25 Draft Annual Report, subject to the agreed amendments. Mr Reddick set out the next steps in producing the report and having this laid in Parliament by 30 September 2025 along with the 2024-25 Annual Accounts. He confirmed that he would advise the Board when both documents would be laid. Dr Davies thanked all staff involved in the production of the Annual Report, which she agreed was very comprehensive and read well.

Section 3: Case Matters (Edited)

3.1 Monthly Case Summary:

Mr Reddick confirmed that a total of 22 new applications had been received in August 2025.

3.2 There was one case where a final decision had been issued since the last meeting of the Board, following the 28 days for submission of further representations expiring.

3.3 – 3.6 There were no cases in these categories.

3.7 Persistent & Repeated Applications:

Two former applicants had appealed against their registration on the Commission's Persistent & Repeated Applications Register. After full consideration the Board confirmed their agreement in both cases with the initial registration decision and did not uphold the individuals' appeals.

The Board noted that one former applicant had been placed on the Persistent & Repeated Applications Register.

3.8 Discussion Cases:

There was one cases in this category. The Board was provided with a summary of the case and an overview of the Legal Officer's recommendations. After full discussion the Board agreed to suspend the case.

Section 4: Proposed Referral Cases (edited)

4.1 The Board considered one statement of reasons in this category. After full discussion it agreed not to refer the case to the High Court.

(Ms McMenamin and Dr Quinn left the meeting for the discussion having previously declared conflicts of interest and therefore took no part in the consideration of the case.)

Section 5: Proposed Interim Cases (edited)

5.1 The Board considered one statement of reasons in this category. After full discussion it agreed not to refer the case to the High Court.

Section 6: Proposed Supplementary Cases

There were no cases in this category.

Section 7: Stage 1 Pre-acceptance Cases (edited)

7.1 – 7.14 A total of 14 new applications were considered, and the following decisions were made:

4 cases	Rejected: in each case there were no plausible or stateable grounds of review.
1 case	Rejected: it was not in the interests of justice to accept the case for review.
5 cases	Rejected: in each case the applicant had not appealed and there were no plausible or stateable grounds of review.
1 case	Rejected: the application was incompetent.
1 case	Continued for one month for more information.
1 case	Rejected: the applicant's grounds were a repeat of the unsuccessful grounds of appeal and there were no plausible or stateable grounds of review.
1 case	Rejected: the applicant had abandoned their appeal and there were no plausible or stateable grounds of review.

Ms Reilly left the meeting in respect of two cases, having previously declared conflicts of interest, and therefore took no part in their consideration. Ms Forbes, Mrs Mawdsley and Ms McMenamin each left the meeting in respect of one case, having previously declared conflicts of interest, and therefore took no part in their consideration.

Section 8: Concluding Matters

8.1 Any Other Competent Business

There was no other competent business.

8.2 Date of Next Meeting

- Policy Meeting – Friday 19 September 2025 @ 10:00
- Board Meeting – Friday 26 September 2025 @ 10:00

C Reddick
3 September 2025