



**Community Justice Scotland**  
Ceartas Coimhearsnachd Alba

Research and Ethics Committee and  
Academic Advisory Group  
Annual Report 2018-19

October 2019

# Introduction

## Purpose of this report

This report provides a summary of the activities of Community Justice Scotland's Research and Ethics Committee and Academic Advisory Group in 2018-19.

While the two groups meet separately and have distinct purposes, they are both overseen by the Community Justice Scotland (CJS) research function and for simplicity are both reported on within this document.

## Research and Ethics Committee

### Background

The Research and Ethics Committee (REC) was formed in January 2018, with its first meeting held in May 2018. It was established in order that:

- No research is carried out which may be detrimental to Community Justice Scotland in terms of ethical failings;
- An orderly and critical approach is taken to all research proposals, whether internal or external;
- All research proposals are considered by a group of professionals and are marked in a consistent way;
- Returns from the CJS Research Budget spend are maximised.

### Membership up to April 2019:

Emma Heffernan – Research Officer  
Samantha Whipp – Improvement Lead  
Rose McConnachie – Policy Lead  
Laura Hoskins – Head of Policy  
David Scott – Head of Learning, Development and Innovation  
Bill Fitzpatrick – Director of Operations  
Mairi-Clare Rodgers – Head of Communications

Committee membership may be reviewed in 2019-20.

### Committee meetings

The Committee meets quarterly, and the deadline for any research proposal submission is set two weeks prior to the meeting date. All submissions and queries are forwarded to Committee members for review by the Tuesday following the submission date. Comments are provided in writing by any Committee members that cannot attend in person.

Research and Ethics Committee Meetings 2018-19				
Meeting Dates	04/05/18	27/07/18	26/10/18	25/01/19

Notes from each meeting are recorded. Meetings include an update on any ongoing research supported by the REC, as well as a discussion of any recently submitted research proposals.

All proposals are scored according to a range of factors which reflect the fields contained within the original research proposal application form (available on the CJS website). Scores range from 1 (Low) to 5 (High). An average of scores across all Committee members is collated in order to produce a final proposal scoring.

<b>Research and Ethics Committee Overall Assessment</b>	
Very good project	(Mostly 5s, possibly with some 4s)
Good project	(Mostly 4s, maybe a 5 and up to one 3)
Marginal Project	(Mix of 4s and 3s, and up to one 2)
Not supported	(several 2s and/or a one for any of the criteria)

## Summary of external research applications funded, 2018-19

In 2018-19, CJS commissioned and supported research projects which covered a diverse range of topics. Research was undertaken by a mixture of academic researchers and independent research organisations.

Projects included an exploration of the nature and impact of the communication of sentencing decisions; escaping the persistent cycle of punishment; the potential application of nudge theory in community justice; and the support needs of people serving custodial sentences of under 12 months.

## Considerations for 2019-20

The Committee will continue to meet on a quarterly basis, in order to review any research applications and update the group on research developments within CJS.

Given the many shared aims of the REC and AAG in supporting, developing and informing research practice in the field, through 2019-20 any ways in which the groups could work more closely may be considered.

<b>Research and Ethics Committee Meetings 2019-20</b>				
<b>Meeting Dates</b>	13/05/19	26/07/19	25/10/19	24/01/20

## Academic Advisory Group

### Background

The Academic Advisory Group (AAG) was established in late 2017 with the purpose of providing strategic direction and leadership to support CJS to maintain a position of championing the best quality policy, practice and innovation in the field of

community justice. The Group's Terms of Reference are available on the Community Justice Scotland website.

Membership up to April 2019:

Karyn McCluskey  
 Rose McConnachie  
 Emma Heffernan  
 Andrew Coyle  
 Claire Lightowler  
 Peter Conlong  
 Cyrus Tata  
 Elizabeth Gilchrist

Fergus McNeill  
 Glenys Watt  
 Jackie Tombs  
 Monica Barry  
 Mike Nellis  
 Jana De Villiers  
 Beth Weaver

The AAG's Terms of Reference state that membership will be reviewed annually. This will be undertaken in spring 2019 to establish Group membership for the period 2019-20.

**Committee meetings**

The Group meets approximately quarterly, and any relevant papers are circulated amongst members at least one week prior to the meeting.

The agenda for meetings has remained flexible, in order to allow for reactive discussion depending on issues relevant at the time. However, meetings have tended to include an update from individuals within Community Justice Scotland on recent policy developments or research that may be of interest to the group. External members also share current or upcoming research in the area, and any other matters that may be of interest to the group.

<b>Academic Advisory Group Meetings 2017-19</b>		
<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Summary of items</b>
<b>Meeting 1</b> 20/11/17	University of Strathclyde, Glasgow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Future plans for the AAG and areas for development.</li> <li>• Implications of the potential extension of the presumption against short term sentences.</li> </ul>
<b>Meeting 2</b> 12/04/18	Saughton House, Edinburgh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update from Group members on research currently being undertaken/ on the horizon.</li> <li>• Discussion around the Management of Offenders (Scotland) Bill, including the effectiveness of Transdermal Electronic Monitoring and GPS Monitoring.</li> </ul>
<b>Meeting 3</b> 04/10/18	University of Strathclyde, Glasgow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update on the Management of Offenders (Scotland) Bill.</li> <li>• Discussion on remand – gaps in research; use of remand instead of bail; areas for research that CJS could consider.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scotland's Programme for Government – any implications for CJS.</li> </ul>
<b>Meeting 4</b> 08/04/19	Saughton House, Edinburgh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update from CJS on recent internal research activities.</li> <li>Update from Group members on research currently being undertaken/ on the horizon.</li> </ul>

## Considerations for 2019-20

In spring 2019, the AAG membership and Terms of Reference will be reviewed and revised. The resulting group will meet during the summer for a series of workshops to engage new members and agree the focus for the AAG in the coming year. Following this, dates for 2019-20 meetings will be set.

## Conclusion

### Outcomes achieved

The establishment of the REC and AAG has achieved a number of outcomes.

#### Formalisation and documentation of all research within CJS

- All research undertaken by, or commissioned by, CJS has to go through a formal application to the REC and is reviewed on quality and ethics prior to approval.
- All research undertaken by, or commissioned by, CJS is comprehensively documented and accounted for.
- All research undertaken by, or commissioned by, CJS is consistent in its approach, and does not replicate or contradict other research under the remit of CJS.

#### Commissioning and production of high quality research

- A number of research projects have been completed by CJS staff and individuals outwith the organisation, which have made significant contributions to the literature in the area of community justice.
- This research has in some cases played an important role in shaping and informing policy development and community justice practice going forward.

#### Knowledge sharing

- The AAG has enabled a valuable means of engagement with academics and professionals across the sector, in order to share relevant research, guidance, information and best practice.
- Research conducted by, or funded by, CJS is disseminated across networks where relevant for the benefit of all.

**Building and strengthening of relationships across the sector**

- The existence of both the REC and the AAG have allowed for relationship building with professionals across the community justice field through the commissioning, evaluation and discussion of research.
- Continued support for, and engagement among, the groups going forward will ensure that these relationships continue to prosper, ultimately supporting CJS to promote world-leading standards of community justice across Scotland.