



Community Justice Scotland
Ceartas Coimhearsnachd Alba

Academic Advisory Group
Annual Report 2020 - 2021

April 2021

Introduction

Purpose of this report

This report provides a summary of the activities of Community Justice Scotland's Academic Advisory Group in 2020-21.

Background

The Academic Advisory Group (AAG) was established in late 2017 with the purpose of providing an academic perspective to our strategic direction and leadership and supports CJS to maintain a position of championing the best quality policy, practice, and innovation from within Scotland, the UK and internationally, related to community justice. The AAG also offers an opportunity for academic experts to provide direct input into influencing and shaping the policy agenda, and provides a platform for an academic contribution to the national community justice agenda. Key focuses for the group include prevention and early intervention, community sentences, and pre- and post-release support.

The AAG aims to:

- Bring experts from around Scotland to advise and alert CJS to current and upcoming areas of interest
- Contribute to the knowledge base surrounding particular topics that are of interest to CJS
- Assist in deciding what the key topics are and bring research, knowledge and contacts to the attention of CJS and the AAG

The [AAG Terms of Reference](#) were updated in spring 2019 and are available on the Community Justice Scotland website.

See [Academic Advisory Group Annual Report 2019/20](#) for a summary of last years' activity.

Membership

Membership currently includes selected current and former UK-based academics with an interest in community justice in Scotland, reflecting a range of expertise, specialisms and organisations, that in turn reflects the diverse range of areas with relevance to community justice. This is reviewed on an annual basis.

Membership up to April 2021:

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| Karyn McCluskey, Chief Executive Officer, CJS | Elizabeth Gilchrist, Professor of Psychology, Programme Director for MSc Psychological Therapies, University of Edinburgh |
| Laura Hoskins, Head of Policy, CJS | Fergus McNeill, Professor of Criminology & Social Work, University of Glasgow |
| Samantha Reekie, Improvement and Analysis Lead, CJS | Mike Nellis, Emeritus Professor of Criminal and Community Justice, Strathclyde University Law School |
| Julia Clarke, Research Officer, CJS (to September 2020) | Beth Weaver, Professor of Criminal and Social Justice in the School of Social Work and Social Policy, University of Strathclyde |
| Emma Heffernan, Research Officer, CJS | Shumela Ahmed, Managing Director, Resilience Learning Partnership |
| Rose McConnachie, Policy Officer, CJS | Jamie Buchan, Lecturer in Criminology, University of Napier |
| Peter Conlong, Senior Economist, Scottish Government (to July 2020) | Rania Hamad, Professional Justice Social Work Adviser, Scottish Government |
| Catherine Bisset, Senior Social Researcher, Scottish Government | Nicoletta Policek, Head of Graduate School; Associate Professor in Policing & Criminology, University of Cumbria |
| Cyrus Tata, Professor of Law and Criminal Justice, Strathclyde University Law School; Director of the Centre for Law, Crime and Justice | Lindsay Thomson, Professor of Forensic Psychiatry, University of Edinburgh; Medical Director, State Hospitals Board for Scotland and Forensic Mental Health Managed Care Network |

AAG meetings

The AAG meets on a quarterly basis, and any relevant papers are circulated amongst members at least one week prior to the meeting.

The 2020-21 period saw disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic leading to the cancellation of the April 2020 AAG meeting and the change being made to conduct remaining meetings virtually, via Zoom. The agenda for meetings has remained flexible, in order to allow for reactive discussion depending on issues relevant at the time. However, this years' meetings have had a main focus on the impact of COVID-19 on the Scottish Justice System and possibilities for recovery and change.

| Academic Advisory Group Meetings 2020-21 | | |
|--|-----------------|---|
| Meeting | Location | Summary of discussion topics |
| Meeting 1 02/07/2020 | Online via Zoom | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Justice system recovery post COVID-19 |
| Meeting 2 01/10/2020 | Online via Zoom | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CJS Justice Process Map Scottish Advisory Panel on Offender Rehabilitation (SAPOR) links with community interventions Enhanced Combination Orders Recover, Renew and Transform (RRT) Team work |
| Meeting 3 18/01/2021 | Online via Zoom | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recover, Renew and Transform (RRT) Community Justice work streams Transforming Justice - Values and Principles Paper |

Conclusion

Outcomes achieved

The establishment of the AAG has again achieved a number of outcomes within the last year:

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 CJS Research and Ethics Committee (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.