**Introduction**

Community Justice Scotland (CJS) holds a limited budget for the express purpose of research-related activities. This can be used for the resourcing of projects and activities identified by CJS as priority in order to inform the policy and practice of community justice in Scotland.

CJS is not a funding body, and lacks the resource to commission extensively in either academia or active research projects. Within the CJS staff, there is capability to identify the need for and to undertake research, and in instances where further work is required but is outwith our capacity and resources, we will work with external partners and research organisations to take forward and support research priorities. The majority of research and development activity will be delivered by in-house staff and resources, or in partnership with other agencies and stakeholders.

**Rationale**

It is essential that research is undertaken to ensure that CJS can fulfil its aim of *creating a more robust and effective community justice system based on local planning and delivery by a range of statutory and other partners, supported and guided by national leadership and oversight[[1]](#footnote-1)*. CJS is an outcomes focussed organisation that ensures all practice is trauma-informed, evidence-based and collaborative. In order to meet these aims, it is of importance that CJS is enabled to carry out research that relate to the aim and vision where appropriate and, as such, to draw on funds for this purpose.

It is imperative that CJS can become expert in all relevant subject areas and this can only be done by:

* Exchanging and building knowledge with subject experts and being informed of the latest national and international research in key areas;
* Horizon scanning;
* Identifying gaps or inconsistencies in knowledge;
* Gathering evidence of approaches that work, do not work, or do not work as intended;
* Being fully informed and knowledgably providing advice, support and understanding;
* Obtaining and piloting evidence-based solutions to issues.

It will, therefore, on occasion, be appropriate for CJS to:

* Commission targeted and defined research projects in line with identified CJS priority areas and themes;
* Work collaboratively with partners and stakeholders to develop and deliver research projects;
* Consider approaches from external sources for one-off funding and support for original research proposals.

The above have resource implications, both financial and for the overall workload of CJS. In order to ensure that resources are used appropriately, it is important that each proposal is considered in relation to the identified priorities and operational and strategic requirements of CJS.

**Desired Outcomes**

* Improve knowledge and understanding of policy and practice in relation to community justice;
* Facilitate development and dissemination of innovation and best practice;
* Ensure CJS and stakeholder’s policy is informed by the best quality local, national and international evidence base;
* Provide access to and a platform for research and researchers to champion their findings in relation to the above.

**Process Diagram**

The following is the CJS process for both internal research projects from identification to procurement, and external requests for funding of research proposals.

**Key themes/ topics**

Research proposals will be considered in relation to CJS identified priorities.

From Corporate Plan 2017-20:

*“We will work with others to contribute to longer term, effective and evidence-based outcomes on:*

* *an increased use of non-custodial/community-based interventions*
* *effective reintegration processes for those returning from custody to the community.”*

*“Together with our partners we will focus on the following key strategic themes to underpin our work:*

* *Prevention and early intervention*
* *Community sentences*
* *Pre- and post-release support”*

**Internal objectives**

In addition to topic relevance, all research proposals should be considered in relation to CJS internal objectives as identified in the Corporate Plan and the Communications Strategy. Proposals should be considered in relation to the contribution they could make to the below identified objectives, and in terms of alignment with other ongoing or previously undertaken work (both internal and external).

From CJS Corporate Plan 2017-20:

*“Community Justice Scotland’s own corporate outcomes for this three-year plan are as follows:*

* *to become a trusted source of expertise in community justice*
* *to improve the understanding of community justice with stakeholders and in the wider community*
* *to have tested and evaluated new approaches to community justice*
* *to have worked collaboratively to identify improvements and changes that can be made in the delivery of community justice.”*

From CJS Communication Strategy:

*“Communication Objectives*

*Objective 1: Establish and promote Community Justice Scotland as a trusted, world-leading expert in community justice.*

*Objective 2: Promote community justice as a vital and important part of the justice and crime-prevention landscape.*

*Objective 3: Shift perceptions and begin to create public support for community justice.”*

**Principles and criteria for funding**

All research activity must meet the following Terms and Conditions of Research:

* All research must involve and take into consideration the experience and needs of people with lived experience of the justice system, where appropriate;
* All research must inform and support improvement in the practice and delivery of services related to community justice, and for impact beyond academic research;
* All research must avoid duplication, either in terms of the purpose, focus, intended primary impact, or work that has taken place previously by CJS or other stakeholders and be addressing an identified research gap;
* All research must be aligned with and in support of CJS’s strategic aims and outcomes;
* All research must receive approval from CJS Research and Ethics Committee;
* Researchers must adhere to the General Data Protection Regulations[[2]](#footnote-2);
* Consent must be obtained by all participants prior to inclusion in any research;
* All participants must be made aware that they may withdraw their consent at any time, and, as per GDPR, their data can be withdrawn by them at any time prior to publication;
* Participants must be informed of the purpose of the study, and the uses that will be made of their data;
* Participants must be guaranteed that all information shared will be used confidentially, will be anonymised at the earliest time possible, all data will be held securely;
* All proposals must meet the standards described by the relevant codes of ethical considerations? (ie British Psychological Society Code of Ethics[[3]](#footnote-3) and Conduct or British Sociological Association Statement of Ethical Practice[[4]](#footnote-4) and and British Society of Criminology Statement of Ethics[[5]](#footnote-5));
* No research is carried out which may be detrimental to Community Justice Scotland in terms of ethical failings;
* All proposals will be considered by a group of professionals and are marked consistently;
* All proposals are considered together at specific periods and must be submitted electronically by the specified cut-off date;
* CJS Research Budget will be considered by the Research and Ethics Committee when reviewing any research proposal;
* CJS may agree, in principle, to fund research however this is pending approval from any other necessary parties that are relevant to the individual research;
* Prior to changes being made to the research (subsequent to initial CJS Research and Ethics Committee approval) this must be raised in writing with the Research Co-ordinator who may require to further raise this with the Research and Ethics Committee;
* CJS may terminate its involvement with a piece of research at any time with appropriate justification. All contractual obligations will be met;
* CJS has no liability for loss or damage to researchers property or personal injury that occurs whilst undertaking funded research;
* The researcher must submit updates to research and the agreed final work at dates agreed with CJS. Any changes to this must be submitted in writing to the Research Co-ordinator at the earliest possible time;
* CJS will co-own any funded research and may promote this work in its entirety or as a summary and use this work as part of an evidence base for CJS purposes.
* All final productions should feature the CJS logo and recognise CJS as co-funders of the work.
* Funded research will involve additional contractual obligations.

**Selection criteria**

The below elements of each Research Proposal Application form will be considered and scored by CJS Research and Ethics Committee:

* Summary capturing the essence of the proposal and its aims
* Clear articulation of why Community Justice Scotland should fund the proposed work, rather than another funding source
* What the expected budget is for this research and other information relating to potential match funding or funding source
* Does the research meet the needs of Community Justice Scotland and fit with our priorities and plans?
* Detail what the potential benefits and utility of this research will be to Community Justice Scotland and partners
* Are the research methodologies proposed valid and reliable?
* Can this work be completed within the timescales proposed?
* Will the research fill a gap in knowledge? Are we confident that similar work has not been carried out previously?
* Qualifications/capacity of applicant
* Risk assessment/Ethical considerations

**Evaluation**

An evaluation process should be built in to any consideration of a research proposal from the beginning. This process should include evaluation criteria compatible with the above strategic plan, identified methods of evaluation, and deadlines for evaluation. This aspect of the process requires further development.

**Research and Ethics Committee**

A Research and Ethics Committee will be formed and will consider all research proposals (both internally generated and externally requested) prior to a decision being taken on whether to move ahead with the research. All Research and Ethics Committee conditions must be met. (Link to Research and Ethics Doc here)

A note of the outcomes of discussion for each research proposal will be held, along with details as to the reasons behind these. The Research and Ethics Committee will publish an Annual Report detailing the output from the meetings that have taken place, the financial decisions that have been taken throughout the year, and what changes (if any) should be made going forward. All research approved will be disseminated by CJS upon publication.

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| **Version Control** | | |
| **Version** | **Date** | **Comments** |
| 1.0 | 20/12/2017 | Rose McConnachie |
| 1.1 | 22/01/2018 | Emma Heffernan |

1. Community Justice Scotland (2017) Corporate Plan 2017 - 2020 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <https://www.bps.org.uk/news-and-policy/bps-code-ethics-and-conduct> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. <https://www.britsoc.co.uk/media/24310/bsa_statement_of_ethical_practice.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. http://www.britsoccrim.org/documents/BSCEthics2015.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-5)