
ROLE DESCRIPTION

COMMUNITY JUSTICE SCOTLAND

Role	Research Officer
Reports to	Improvement Lead
Member of	Analysis and Improvement team
Supervises	N/A
Internal Liaison	Members of Management Team Communications Manager Commissioning Lead Learning, Development and Innovation Team
External Liaison	Statutory Community Justice partners Local area Community Justice partners Stakeholders from a range of organisations from the public, private, third and academic sectors
Salary	£28,891

Overview

Community Justice Scotland is the national body for community justice in Scotland. Launched on 1st April 2017 by the Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016, it aims to create a more robust and effective community justice system based on local planning and delivery by a range of statutory partners, supported and guided by national leadership and oversight. Community Justice Scotland is based in Edinburgh but is a national body working across the whole of Scotland.

Role of Research Officer

The Research Officer is a key role in the Community Justice Scotland Analysis and Improvement team, contributing to developing and influencing the direction of Community Justice activity to reflect local and national priorities. The post is both challenging and exciting and requires partnership working with a range of partners across private, public, third and academic sectors.

You will support a team of Improvement Leads, assisting in the gathering, managing and monitoring of community justice based data. You will contribute to strategic reporting and project management processes to inform colleagues and partners in making recommendations for improvements to community justice activities and processes at local and national levels.

The post requires the Research Officer to use a wide range of analytical, organisational and communication skills and to work at the appropriate competency level (see competencies section).

Main Duties

Data Management

You will support the development of effective and evidence-based community justice activity, such as the use of Community Payback Orders, ensuring that complex information from a range of sources is appropriately researched, collated and analysed for use at strategic levels to support and inform decision making.

You will support on the delivery of evaluations to effectively measure the outcome and benefit of interventions delivered to prevent and reduce the risk of further offending.

You will respond to unpredictable requests by senior staff or stakeholders to respond to immediate requests for support or urgent requests for information.

You will support the handling of highly complex analytical and statistical information problems requiring interpretation from a large number of reports across Scotland. You will use judgemental skills to derive alternative information sources and methods of analysis when appropriate.

You will report progress to the Head of Analysis and Improvement, recognising strengths in practice and performance, identifying areas that require development and making recommendations for practice.

Working with the Policy and Learning, Development and Innovation teams, you will provide support to projects in line with Community Justice Scotland priorities. The role will require the ability to manage multiple priorities at the same time and the ability to work effectively in collaboration with a range of colleagues.

Data Collection and Analysis

You will provide information that will enable a full understanding of community justice needs in an area, addressing needs, access to services, identifying good practice, determining priorities for action, assisting wider understanding of the characteristics of the population and actively disseminating the findings of a wide range of analysis.

You will contribute to the delivery of expert analytical advice to colleagues and other strategic partnerships; often there will be conflicting information which will require a high level of understanding.

You will advise colleagues and justice partners on the design, conduct, analysis and dissemination of justice-related data and projects. Your focus will be on providing evidence-driven insights and recommendations to the organisation and justice partners.

You will identify gaps in community justice information, working with multi-agency teams to agree and develop appropriate innovative ways of collecting or disseminating data and raising awareness of the need and importance of robust, accurate data.

You will advise the Improvement Team and Community Justice Scotland colleagues on a range of issues relating to the design, conduct, analysis and dissemination of research and information relating to a range of community justice activity.

You will ensure that all analyses, both internal and with external partners, is developed in line with data protection regulation and principles.

You will use data analysis tools and presentation software (e.g. Advanced Microsoft Excel, nVivo, Microsoft Visio, Tableau) to query and analyse large data sets and present findings to colleagues and partners.

Research Management

You will conduct research to the highest standards and in line with Community Justice Scotland objectives. You will monitor policy and legislative changes relating to justice that may require further research, including the Programme for Government. You will write proposals for research and, where appropriate, you will source the most appropriate external research agency for specific research projects. You will ensure that all research is conducted in line with data management and ethical principles, and is completed according to agreed deadlines. You will manage internal research projects and give specialist advice to colleagues on appropriate methodologies and ethics for their own research.

You will manage the Community Justice Scotland Research and Ethics Committee, including planning, arranging and Chairing quarterly meetings of the group, and formerly recording agreed decisions of the Committee. You will act as the single point of contact for research requests and requests for funding received by Community Justice Scotland Research and Ethics Committee. You will ensure that Community Justice Scotland colleagues follow agreed research principles and will drive ethical considerations for all Community Justice Scotland activity.

You will lead on the organisation of the Community Justice Scotland Academic Advisory Group. You will arrange meetings and plan agendas, being mindful of topical issues and themes for discussion. You will monitor the activity of the group and will progress partnership working where appropriate. You will act as the Community Justice Scotland liaison for academic activity.

Stakeholder Engagement

As part of the Improvement Team, you will engage with a range of justice partners and stakeholders, and you will identify opportunities for engagement and partner support in relation to community justice activity across Scotland.

You will arrange and attend meetings with colleagues to plan objectives and work commitments for multidisciplinary research and projects.

The role will require excellent communication skills, both oral and written, to engage with, persuade and influence a range of partners. You will present highly complex and sensitive information to specialist and non-specialist audiences and individuals.

Strategic Reporting

Working with the Improvement Team and partners, you will lead on the development and production of major reports, in line with CJS statutory obligations, e.g. the Community Justice Annual Report. This requires highly developed interpretation and report writing skills and the ability to explain complex and sometimes contradictory information, and the resulting implications, in appropriate and accessible language

You will compile reports, from informal summaries to detailed comprehensive reports, to enable Community Justice Scotland to make recommendations to Ministers.

You will compile comprehensive research reports on topical issues to inform Community Justice Scotland colleagues and justice partners with pertinent information. You will make recommendations for further research and analysis, and for developments to working practices.

Working with the Improvement Team and Community Justice Scotland colleagues you will plan and implement research projects to improvement community justice processes and activities at local and national levels. You will define research project scope, goals and deliverables and resources, and will create schedules and project timelines. You will monitor and report on project progress, both internally and to stakeholders. You will implement and manage change where necessary to meet project requirements, and will evaluate and assess projects. The role will involve critical thinking and problem solving, as well as negotiation and influencing skills.

General

You will attend meetings and events on behalf of Community Justice Scotland, and will identify opportunities to engage with partners, stakeholders and communities to garner support for the community justice agenda.

You will work co-operatively across teams as required in line with the wider priorities and aims of Community Justice Scotland

This job description is not meant to be exhaustive. It describes the main duties and responsibilities of the post. It may be subject to change in light of developing organisational and service needs and wherever possible change will follow consultation with the post holder.

Specific Tasks

1. Work collaboratively within the Improvement Team to design, implement, measure and evaluate research projects, with a range of community justice partners. Attend meetings with stakeholders to progress research projects in local areas.
2. Identify gaps in knowledge relevant to Community Justice Scotland's objectives and design research projects, being aware of resource and capacity, to address these gaps.
3. Provide specialist guidance to colleagues on research methodologies, including data management principles and ethical considerations.
4. Analyse and interpret large, complex datasets from a range of sources to make evidence-based recommendations and decisions.
5. Manage the Community Justice Scotland Research and Ethics Committee.
6. Organise and develop the Community Justice Scotland Academic Advisory Group.
7. Develop and maintain effective relationships with internal colleagues and external partners.

Competencies

Research Officer – Person Specification

Community Justice Scotland will use the professional competency framework as set out by the Scottish Government. The competencies for this role are:

- Delivering results
- Learning and Improving
- Critical Analysis and Decision Making
- Constructive Thinking
- Communicating with Impact

ATTRIBUTES

Essential

- Experience of working in a research role, including the management of research projects
- Experience of working with large, complex datasets and the use of software packages to analyse and present data findings (e.g. Advanced Microsoft Excel, nVivo, Microsoft Visio, Tableau)
- Experience in preparation and submission of strategic reports
- Experience of project working, including design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of projects in collaboration with partners
- Experience in stakeholder engagement with a range of partners
- Excellent attention to detail
- Excellent administrative and organisational skills

Desirable

- Understanding of Scottish criminal justice and community justice processes
- Experience of public sector and dealing with multi agency partners
- Experience of working at both local and national levels

PERSONAL QUALITIES

- Self-starter, accountable
- Articulate, approachable
- Excellent communicator
- Present good image for Community Justice Scotland

SKILLS AND ABILITIES APPLICABLE TO POST

- Communication skills
- Complex analysis and interpretation of information
- Report writing skills
- Negotiating and influencing skills
- IT skills