



**Community Justice Scotland**  
Ceartas Coimhearsnachd Alba

Academic Advisory Group  
Annual Report 2019 - 2020

March 2020

## Introduction

### Purpose of this report

This report provides a summary of the activities of Community Justice Scotland's Academic Advisory Group in 2019-20.

### 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 [Research and Ethics Committee and Academic Advisory Group Annual Report 2018-19](#) 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.

Membership up to April 2020:

Karyn McCluskey, Chief Executive Officer, CJS	Fergus McNeill, Professor of Criminology & Social Work, University of Glasgow
Laura Hoskins, Head of Policy, CJS	Mike Nellis, Emeritus Professor of Criminal and Community Justice, Strathclyde University Law School
Samantha Reekie, Improvement and Analysis Lead, CJS	Beth Weaver, Senior Lecturer, Social Work and Social Policy, University of Strathclyde
Julia Clarke, Research Officer, CJS	Shumela Ahmed, Managing Director, Resilience Learning Partnership
Emma Heffernan, Research Officer, CJS	Jamie Buchan, Lecturer in Criminology, University of Napier
Rose McConnachie, Policy Officer, CJS	Rania Hamad, Professional Justice Social Work Adviser, Scottish Government
Peter Conlong, Senior Economist, 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
Elizabeth Gilchrist, Programme Director for MSc Psychological Therapies, University of Edinburgh	

In line with the AAG's Terms of Reference, a review of membership was undertaken in summer 2019 which saw subsequent recruitment for additional members to replace those who were no longer part of the Group, and to fill gaps that were found in members' areas of expertise.

## AAG 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.

Academic Advisory Group Meetings 2019-20		
Meeting	Location	Summary of discussion topics
<b>Meeting 1</b> 08/04/2019	Saughton House, Edinburgh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PASS research</li> <li>• Tribal Home project and evaluation</li> <li>• Structured Sentencing Court for Young People (North and South Lanarkshire) evaluation</li> <li>• Victims Taskforce</li> </ul>
<b>Meeting 2</b> 27/06/2019 & 25/07/2019	Saughton House, Edinburgh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop Session: Expectations for AAG membership, aims of the group and the nature of future meetings.</li> </ul>
<b>Meeting 3</b> 25/09/2019	Saughton House, Edinburgh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scotland's Programme for Government – priority areas and implications for CJS</li> <li>• Provision of information to Sheriffs to inform decision-making</li> <li>• Production of alternatives to prosecutorial action guidelines</li> <li>• Creation of the drug deaths taskforce</li> <li>• Mortality and morbidity rates of those involved in the justice system</li> <li>• Whole system change as a requirement to instigate meaningful change to the high rate of imprisonment</li> <li>• Potential future CJS work with partners on judges' decision-making in Scotland (recent study from England and Wales by Ipsos Mori)</li> <li>• LSCMI data is due to be merged with criminal history data in a piece of large-scale analysis by Scottish Government Justice and Analytics Service</li> <li>• The need for digital justice and risks associated with reinforcing inequality through the use of AI in processes such as risk assessment</li> </ul>

<b>Meeting 4</b> 16/01/2020	University of Strathclyde, Glasgow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Second Chancers campaign update</li> <li>• Forensic psychology in the community</li> <li>• Electronic Monitoring developments</li> <li>• Scottish Government remand research</li> <li>• Distant Voices</li> </ul>
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## Considerations for 2020-21

While the AAG will continue to prioritise topics that are pressing to the work of CJS, a multitude of topics were highlighted through the AAG workshop as being of interest for future meetings, a selection of these follow:

<b>Future topics for potential discussion at AAG meetings, as requested by AAG members</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Building sustainability for pilots and new initiatives;</li> <li>○ Domestic abuse and sentencing/rehabilitation;</li> <li>○ Remand;</li> <li>○ Parole, recall and the end of automatic early release;</li> <li>○ Drugs policy;</li> <li>○ Long sentences and life sentences;</li> <li>○ Reintegration and leaving prison;</li> <li>○ Community Custody Units for women;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Sentencing for sexual offences;</li> <li>○ Incorporation of mental health into community disposals;</li> <li>○ Robustness of community alternatives and how they are targeted; public awareness and trust in them;</li> <li>○ Fall in numbers of young people in custody;</li> <li>○ Social justice, poverty and post-release;</li> <li>○ Disclosure and employability;</li> <li>○ Victims and community justice.</li> </ul>

## 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.