



**ACJRD**  
**ANNUAL REPORT 2024**

## Summary

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In 2024, the Association for Criminal Justice Research and Development (ACJRD) delivered a full programme of events and marked some important changes within the organisation.

Our events this year included:

- March: A webinar on Juvenile Justice with Dr Siobhán Buckley (Ulster University School of Law) and Caroline Rutherford and Michelle Kennedy (Extern).
- May: The 17th Annual Martin Tansey Memorial Lecture, delivered by Professor Maggie O'Neill (UCC), on *Women and the Criminal Justice System: Gender Matters*.
- June: The 27th Annual Conference on *Continuing the Conversation – The Future of Drug Policy in Ireland*.
- October: The 10th Irish Criminal Justice Agencies Conference on *Navigating Mental Health in the Criminal Justice System*, held in Dublin Castle.
- December: A networking event on *Towards research co-production in Irish criminal justice: lessons from recent projects*.



This year also saw a significant leadership transition. After 17 years as Chairperson and 20 years on Council, Maura Butler retired. Her outstanding contribution to ACJRD was recognised at the Annual Conference, where Mary Griffin was welcomed as the new Chairperson.

To keep members informed, we published four newsletters and issued four additional updates during the year.

We continued our commitment to supporting students by:

- Hosting three placements,
- Sponsoring a prize for the top Criminal Justice Law student at Maynooth University,
- Engaging eight volunteer rapporteurs to assist at our Annual and ICJA Conferences.

In October, our CEO left to take up a new role in the charity sector, and recruitment began for her replacement. While recent staff turnover has affected continuity and capacity, ACJRD remains focused on delivering high-quality events and supporting the development of Ireland's criminal justice community.

## 1. Legal and Administrative Details

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Association of Criminal Justice Research and Development CLG

### Directors

Deirdre Manninger

Pauline Shields

Sophia Carey

Ian O'Donnell

Aoife McNicholl

Ruth Penney

Ciairin De Buis

Una Doyle

James O'Mahony

Mary Griffin

Susan Leahy

Donna Creaven

Gerard O'Brien (Appointed 12 March 2024)

Lynsey Black (Appointed 2 October 2024)

Noella Carroll (Appointed 2 October 2024)

**Registered Office:** Coleraine House, Coleraine Street, Dublin 7 D07E8FX

**Company Secretary:** James O'Mahony

**Chairperson:** Mary Griffin

**Treasurer:** Noella Carroll

**Chief Executive Officer:** Katie Prendergast

**Auditor:** Browne Murphy & Hughes.

**Bank:** Bank Of Ireland, Glasnevin, Dublin 9

**Company Number:** 340129

**Registered Charity Number:** 20050573

**Chy Number:** 15012

## 2. Vision, Mission, Value and Objectives

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**Our Vision:** is The Fair and Effective Operation of the Criminal Justice System

**Our Mission:** is to inform the collaborative development of effective evidenced-based policy and practice in criminal justice.

### Values

- Independence: Seek, incorporate, and objectively represent the collective views of the membership.
- Inclusiveness: Embrace a broad multidisciplinary membership within and tangential to the criminal justice sector.
- Engagement: We deliver a multitude of events, facilitate expert groups, request member input at all levels and provide networking opportunities with a focus on sharing and disseminating.
- Collaboration: Work together with national and international actors and organisations on criminal justice initiatives and projects
- Evidence-Based: Emphasise the practical application of the findings of the best available current research.

### ACJRD Objectives

The main object for which the Company is established is to promote study and research in the field of criminal justice and related fields and disseminate results to advance education and benefit the community, by such means as conference, seminars, published papers, database of members' interests, and special interest study groups.

The subsidiary objects for which the Company is established are:

- to provide a forum where experienced personnel working in or having worked in the criminal justice system and associated professions can discuss, in an informal setting, problems and methods of working thereby assisting the advancement of community welfare, conflict resolution and reconciliation and, the integration of those who are disadvantaged;
- to develop a network of members who subscribe to these objectives;
- to promote the highest standards of practice by professionals working in and associated with the criminal justice system;
- to represent the collective views of its members; to build links with similar professional organisations in Ireland and abroad; and
- to raise public awareness of issues relating to children, young people and crime.

## 3. Strategy 2023- 2025

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The ACJRD Strategy can be viewed on our website. An interim review of the ACJRD Strategy 2023-2025 took place in 2024 which highlighted achievements and challenges. Developments in the external environment, such as the CORD Partnership led by Maynooth University meant ACJRD's objective to develop a research hub was no longer relevant. Due to staff changes it was agreed that ACJRD didn't currently have the capacity to manage a mentoring programme. Ad hoc Council subcommittees were established to review key areas including the governance structure and the Working Groups. The work was finalised in 2025.

## 4. ACJRD Events 2024

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Below is a summary of ACJRD events during 2024.

### Juvenile Justice Seminar March 2024

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ACJRD hosted an insightful webinar on **Juvenile Justice**, with Dr Siobhán Buckley, Ulster University School of Law, and Caroline Rutherford and Michelle Kennedy of Extern on 20 March 2024. A recording of the webinar and speaker presentations were made available for members.

- **Dr Siobhán Buckley** of [Ulster University School of Law](#) spoke on *"Juvenile Justice: From a 'difficult sell' to no 'controversy'? Young adults and transitions in the criminal justice system"*.
- **Caroline Rutherford** of [Extern](#) Northern Ireland spoke about the *"Keep Safe Stay Safe Interventive Tool"*.
- **Michelle Kennedy** of [Extern](#) spoke about *Extern's Justice Services*.

## 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Martin Tansey Memorial Lecture 2024

### MARTIN TANSEY MEMORIAL LECTURES

Each spring the ACJRD marks the contribution Martin Tansey made to criminal justice in Ireland, and to this organisation with a memorial lecture.

Martin Tansey grew up in Co Roscommon and began his career as a teacher before joining the Probation and Welfare Service in 1965 where he served until his retirement in 2002. He worked tirelessly to bring Government support and public recognition to the work of the Probation Service.

During his long and distinguished career, he guided the development of the Probation Service to the nationwide service we have today. Martin was a persistent advocate of community sanctions, where the justice system worked with the offender to give them a second chance. He believed the rehabilitation of offenders was a rational social objective. Martin also had a keen interest in promoting independent criminal justice research. He was a founder member and former Chair of the ACJRD.

Information and papers from the lectures which have taken place since the inaugural event in 2008 can be found at:  
[www.acjrd.ie/publications](http://www.acjrd.ie/publications).



*Pictured at the Martin Tansey Memorial Lecture 2024 (l-r): Maura Butler, former Chairperson ACJRD, Prof Maggie O'Neill, UCC and Katie Prendergast, CEO ACJRD.*

ACJRD hosted the **17th Annual Martin Tansey Memorial Lecture**, with Maggie O'Neill, Professor in Sociology & Criminology, University College Cork, speaking on '*Women and the Criminal Justice System: Gender Matters*' on the evening of **Thursday, 2 May 2024** in the Criminal Courts of Justice.

Prof. O'Neill spoke about '*Women and the Criminal Justice System: Gender Matters*'. The lecture drew upon a long history of research with women who come into conflict with the law, who engage with the criminal justice system as victims or offenders. In keeping with Martin Tansey's life's work and the values he promoted that underpin independent criminal justice research, the lecture highlighted the usefulness of interdisciplinarity and creative methods for centring the narratives of the actors involved and developing pathways to better knowledge and understanding, education and reintegration.

## ACJRD 27th Annual Conference 2024



The Association for Criminal Justice Research & Development are delighted to host the

### ACJRD 27th Annual Conference 2024

**'Continuing the Conversation – The Future of Drug Policy in Ireland'**

Wednesday, 12th June 2024  
9.30am - 4.30pm (registration 9am)  
Camden Court Hotel, Dublin 2

BOOK NOW

[www.acjrd.ie/news/events](http://www.acjrd.ie/news/events)



ACJRD's 2024 Annual Conference - ***Continuing the Conversation - The future of Drugs Policy in Ireland*** explored the rationale and implementation of Government Policy and the Citizens' Assembly Report recommendations in a multi-disciplinary manner. Speakers, many from among ACJRD's members, spoke about their efforts to balance the enforcement of relevant legal sanctions for the supply and use of illegal drugs, with a desire, through a welfare lens, to support non-criminogenic interventions of diversion, dissuasion, desistance and decriminalisation.

The Annual Conference Address was made by Minister Colm Burke, Minister of State at the Department of Health with special responsibility for Public Health, Wellbeing and the National Drugs Strategy.



Plenary sessions included presentations on: *Balancing Policing of Organised Crime & Drug Decriminalisation Policies; The Drug Treatment Court, a Community Court in Action; A Comprehensive Care Model - Prisoner Rehabilitation & Reintegration; An*

*International Perspective on the Decriminalisation of Drugs - the Portuguese Experience; The 5 Major Flaws in Current Drugs Policies – and How to Rectify Them; Recommendations to Balance Decriminalisation, Diversion & Dissuasion; Policing and Drug Offences; Addiction, Drug Use, Crime & Recovery.*

Plenary speakers included:

- Assistant Commissioner Justin Kelly, An Garda Síochána
- Judge Patricia McNamara, The Drug Treatment Court
- Dr. Emma Regan, Irish Prison Service
- Captain Filipe Correia Paulino, Information & Criminal Investigation Section, Portugal
- Prof. David Nutt, Imperial College London
- Kevin Byrne, Drug Related Intimidation & Violence Engagement (DRIVE)
- Paul Reid, Chairperson of the Citizens' Assembly on Drugs Use



*Pictured at the Annual Conference 2024 (l-r): Gerry O'Brien, Department of Justice; Mary Griffin, Kings Inns; Minister Colm Burke; Maura Butler, ACJRD; Judge Patricia McNamara; Dr. Emma Regan, Irish Prison Service; and Assistant Commissioner Justin Kelly, An Garda Síochána.*

Each year the annual conference is aimed at those working in government agencies and in the community, including policymakers, practitioners, academics and civil society from among a wide range of disciplines operating within or alongside the Criminal Justice System. ACJRD's events invoke the Chatham House Rule which encourages openness and sharing of information in a safe way. Delegates also attended one of three Thematic Sessions: 1) *Support Services for Drug Addiction - the Status Quo; Prevention - Policies & Practice and Moving Towards Decriminalisation & Desistance*, with three sub-topics in each session, presented information, research and shared lived experience, with generous time allocated for conference attendees to engage with the speakers.

Confirmed thematic session speakers included: Louise Mahoney, Red Door Project

- Eddie Mullins, Merchants Quay Ireland
- Dr Johnny Connolly, REPPP
- Dr Richard Healy, Service Users Rights in Action
- Rachel Fayne, Davina Project (SAOL Project)
- Orla Brennan, Wheatfield Prison
- Prof. Andrew Percy, QUB
- Dr Suzi Lyons, Health Research Board

ACJRD is grateful to Thematic Chairs, and student volunteer rapporteurs for their support.

## 10th Irish Criminal Justice Agencies (ICJA) Conference - 'Navigating Mental Health in the Criminal Justice System' 4th October in Dublin Castle.



This annual one day conference is a collaboration of the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, Department of Justice, Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, Irish Prison Service, An Garda Síochána, The Probation Service, Policing Authority, Courts Service, Garda Síochána Inspectorate, Office of the Revenue Commissioners, Parole Board, Maynooth University, University College Dublin, Limerick University, non-agency Criminal Justice System Actors and the Association for Criminal Justice Research and Development (ACJRD).

The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions was lead partner on the 2024 Conference.



Pictured at the ICJA Conference 2024 (l-r): Judge Mary Ellen Ring, Mary Griffin, Chair, ACJRD, Catherine Pierse and Deirdre Byrne, Office of the DPP.

The event addressed the current state of mental health care within the criminal justice system to promote open, constructive discussion on addressing existing challenges. Despite the significant challenges to Mental Health Care in the Criminal Justice system, including under-resourcing and gaps in care, there are opportunities for improvement, particularly in community mental health services and diversion schemes. Individuals with mental health difficulties can often find themselves within the courts or prison system rather than receiving appropriate support. Research has found strong links between mental health issues, substance use, and youth offending, highlighting the critical

need for accessible community services and effective diversion programmes especially when people encounter the criminal justice system.

The conference was launched by Oonagh McPhillips, Secretary General of the Department of Justice and Equality, with the opening address given by Catherine Pierse, Director of Public Prosecutions. Plenary speakers included: Judge Mary Ellen Ring, The High Court of Ireland; Fíona Ní Chinnéide, Deputy Director of the Probation Service; Dr Clare Kambamettu, Psychology Service, Irish Prison Service; Nuala Ward, The Ombudsman for Children's Office; Cíairín de Buis, The Parole Board; and Prof Ciaran O'Boyle, Centre for Positive Psychology and Health, Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland.



Delegates also participated in parallel Thematic Sessions covering the following topics: *The Impact of Mental Health within the Criminal Justice System*; *Supports for People with Mental Health Challenges Who Commit Offences*; and *Challenges for Practitioners*. Speakers included: Dr Conor O'Neill, National Forensic Mental Health Service Prison Inreach & Court Liaison Service; Tony McGillicuddy, SC; Denise Dunne, ADAPT Domestic Abuse Services; Maura Howe, The Courts Service; Conor Boksberger, Jigsaw; Melissa Di Pede and Michael Abbott, Irish Red Cross; Dr. Oghenovo Oghuvbu, Garda Chief Medical Officer; Danica Kinane, ME Hanahoe Solicitors; and Dr Colette Barry, UCD Sutherland School of Law.

## December 2024 Seminar and Networking Event: *Towards research co-production in Irish criminal justice: lessons from recent projects'*

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ACJRD hosted their winter seminar and networking event on the theme '*Towards research co-production in Irish criminal justice: lessons from recent projects*' on Tuesday, 3rd December 2024 in the Law Society.

Dr. Ian Marder organised and chaired the seminar to introduce the concept, benefits and challenges of research co-production in a criminal justice context. Attendees heard from researchers and practitioners involved in a wide range of research projects and on the potential to expand the co-production of research on crime and justice in Ireland.

Dr. Marder is Assistant Professor in Criminology at Maynooth University School of Law and Criminology. He is the Chair of the CORD Partnership, which aims to embed a culture of interdisciplinary open research in criminal justice in Ireland, including by supporting the translation of new and existing research findings into policy and practice and the development of new criminal justice research partnerships.

Mary Crilly spoke to the theme: *Words Matter: Promoting Best Practice in Media and Cultural Representations of Gender-Based Violence*. She is a founding member and CEO of Sexual Violence Centre Cork since 1983.

Dr. Niamh Maguire (Senior Lecturer in Law and Criminology, South East Technological University), Prof. Nicola Carr (Chair of Social Work and Social Policy, Trinity College Dublin) and Barra O'Duill (Research and Evaluation Unit, Department of Justice) spoke on: *Community or Custody? A Review of Evidence and Sentencers' Perspectives on Community Service Orders and Short Prison Sentences*

Andy O'Hara (Coordinator, UISCE) and Dr. Peter Kelly (Assistant Professor in Mental Health Nursing, Trinity College Dublin) spoke about: *A Peer-Led Toolkit: How to Increase the Participation of People Who Use Drugs in Service Delivery and Policy Design*.

## 5. Newsletter and Email updates

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The ACJRD Newsletter is delivered via email to members and subscribers and is also available on the ACJRD website. The newsletter includes information on past and forthcoming ACJRD and other events and relevant publications, news from members and developments in other agencies. It also includes calls for research/abstracts/articles, surveys and consultations, vacancies and tenders, university courses and studies information, volunteering opportunities and internships. There were 4 newsletters published and distributed in 2024.

Between newsletters, it is sometimes appropriate to update members and subscribers with information that is of interest. During 2024, there were 4 mailouts with updates.

## 6. Student Engagement

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ACJRD has an objective to support students engaged in criminal justice studies and during 2024 there were a few highlights:

**Student Placements** – students are given an opportunity to contribute to the work of ACJRD by helping with events and other office activities. It is hoped the experience will help them better understand the criminal justice environment and issues for those whose professional lives revolve around the systems:

- Alice Coady undertook a 6 week part-time placement as part of her Maynooth University Masters programme in Criminology.
- Erin Grealis, Maynooth University completed a one-month full time placement.
- Emma Canning from Carleton University, Ottawa completed a full time two-month summer placement as part of her BA in Psychology, Criminology and Criminal Justice.

**Prizegiving:** ACJRD sponsors a €100 prize for the Best Student in Criminal Law and in 2024 it was won by Eoin Carroll.

**Volunteer Rapporteurs:** each year ACJRD sends request to criminal justice schools seeking volunteer rapporteurs for the Annual Conference and ICJA Conference. The students take notes in plenary and thematic sessions which are written up and form part of the conference reports which ACJRD publishes on its website. During 2024, students from Maynooth University and Trinity College Dublin volunteered for the two events.

**Special Projects:** During 2024 the UCD School of Law *Adopt a Charity* project picked ACJRD to review its compliance with the governance and regulatory framework. As part of the project, the students met with ACJRD council members and staff. The report was completed in 2025.

## 7. Membership

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Three categories of ACJRD membership were on offer in 2024: Student €25.00, Individual €35.00 and Organisational membership €155.00. Organisational membership is based on a flat rate: this includes all members of that organisation, with up to five members able to attend any one ACJRD event.

80 individuals and organisations signed up for membership in 2024, including 34 organisations, 38 individuals and 8 students. Benefits to ACJRD members include special rates on ACJRD conferences, seminars and other public events, publications on research and conference/seminar proceedings, priority bookings at all ACJRD events, circulation of the newsletter, the option to become involved in the ACJRD working groups and access to a range of peer networks.

## 8. Governance

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The ACJRD is a company limited by guarantee and registered charity. It is compliant with the CRA Code of Governance. The company directors, called trustees under charity law are referred to as Council members within the organisation. In 2024 Council members included people from the Department of Justice and Equality, The Probation Service, the Irish Prison Service, the Office of the DPP, An Garda Síochána, the Garda Síochána Inspectorate, the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, the Revenue Commissioners, University of Limerick, the Policing Authority, the Courts Service, Maynooth University, University College Dublin, The Kings Inns and private legal firms.

Seven Council meetings were held during the year including a reflection day facilitated by an independent consultant who supported Council members to consider governance issues. Council Meetings were held on: 30th Jan; 12th March; 23rd April; 28th May; 30th July; 24th Sept; 12th Nov.

In May Maura Butler stepped down, having served on Council for 20 years including 17 as Chairperson. Mary Griffin was appointed Chairperson for a term of three years to the 2026 AGM. Maura's significant contribution to ACJRD was marked at a handover event at the Annual Conference in June. James O'Mahoney was appointed as Company Secretary in May for a term of three years – to the 2027 AGM. He succeeded Deirdre Manninger. In November, a new Council member, Noella Carroll was appointed as Treasurer, succeeding Pauline Shields.

The ACJRD Annual General Meeting was held online on Friday, 4th October 2024, following the close of the Annual Conference and the 2023 Financial Statements were laid before the members. The meeting included a presentation by the Auditors, Browne Murphy and Hughes.

### Council Subcommittees:

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The Council delegates some of its work to Council subcommittees for consideration and during the year the following were in operation: Governance Subcommittee; Strategic Design Subcommittee; HR and Business Subcommittee. Each subcommittee is chaired by a Council member.

### Association Memberships

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ACJRD is a member of The Wheel and the Irish Penal Reform Trust (IPRT). The Wheel is a support and representative body connecting community and voluntary organisations and charities across Ireland. The IPRT is Ireland's leading non-governmental organisation campaigning for the rights of people in prison and the progressive reform of Irish penal policy.

## 9. 2024 Financial Statements

The 2024 accounts were prepared and audited by Browne Murphy and Hughes Auditors and signed without qualification. The Financial Statements were accepted and signed by the Council members in July 2025. They will be laid before the members at the AGM in October 2025 after which they will be available on the ACJRD website. A summary is below.

### ASSOCIATION FOR CRIMINAL JUSTICE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

#### INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

|                                       | Notes     | 2024<br>€ | 2023<br>€ |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| <b>Income</b>                         | <b>3</b>  | 117,982   | 121,657   |
| Administrative expenses               |           | (107,779) | (113,462) |
| <b>Surplus before taxation</b>        |           | 10,203    | 8,195     |
| Taxation                              |           | -         | -         |
| <b>Surplus for the financial year</b> | <b>15</b> | 10,203    | 8,195     |

The income and expenditure account has been prepared on the basis that all operations are continuing operations.

There was income of €117,982 and expenditure of €107,779 giving a surplus of €10,203. This was added to a surplus brought forward to give a surplus carried forward of €109,978. ACJRD does not have any fixed assets, nor has it any long-term liabilities.

Income included €100,000 in grants from various agencies including: the Department of Justice (€30,000); the Irish Prison Service (€30,000); the Probation Service (€15,000); DCEDIY (€15,000); the Garda Inspectorate (€5,000), Policing Authority (€5,000). Membership fees were €6,590. Conference income was €11,334.

Expenditure of €107,79 in 2024 was lower than 2023 (€113,462), mainly due to lower costs of board training and office expenses. The bulk of the costs are for two part-time members of staff, office accommodation and other administrative costs, as well as costs of events.

ACJRD maintains reserves at a level considered sufficient to fund six months operating costs. Reserves of €109,978 are split into a General Reserve (€82,878) and Strategy Implementation Reserve (€27,100)

ACJRD is extremely grateful to its core funders for their support which is vital to the work of the organisation.

Should you wish to get involved with ACJRD and contribute to its work please contact us at [admin@acjrd.ie](mailto:admin@acjrd.ie) or visit our website [www.acjrd.ie](http://www.acjrd.ie)