



**Association for Criminal Justice
Research and Development**

**Strategic Plan
2023 - 2025**



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FOREWORD FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

The Strategy Statement 2023-2025 of the Association for Criminal Justice Research and Development outlines plans, and activities identified by the ACJRD Council to best fulfil the organisation's mission to promote the constructive development of criminal justice policy and practice.

The Strategy Statement reflects the ongoing work of ACJRD and its emphasis on the active participation within the organisation of criminal justice professionals, community workers, researchers, and academics from a wide range of disciplines. Funding permitting, ACJRD aims to strengthen its structure and operation as outlined in this document. The Strategy Statement embodies our ambition to realise ACJRD's full potential through many and varied initiatives in the period 2023-2025.

As with all work of the ACJRD, the aspiration to realise the plans outlined in this document would not be possible without the support of our funders, the dedication of our volunteer Council members and the commitment of our part-time staff and volunteers.

Council, Staff and Volunteers are motivated in delivering our collective work for ACJRD by the participation and support of our members, the generosity and professionalism of our conference and seminar speakers, and the enthusiasm and effort of our student volunteers.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Maura Butler". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'M'.

Maura Butler, Chairperson

WHAT IS THE ACJRD?

The Association for Criminal Justice, Research and Development (ACJRD) is an independent, charitable organisation dedicated to the fair and effective operation of the criminal justice system. Established in 1996, and originally known as the Irish Association for the Study of Delinquency it seeks to promote the constructive development and innovative reform of criminal justice through dialogue, collaboration, and research.

ACJRD is a forum where professionals, legal practitioners, researchers, academics and others can discuss law, policy, criminology and practice in an open and inclusive environment. Working closely with community, voluntary and state agencies, it seeks to promote mutual understanding, cooperation, and the highest standards of professional practice in criminal justice.

ACJRD is also a hub for the dissemination of criminal justice research and education. It independently and in collaboration with other organisations hosts multi-disciplinary events, collaborates in research projects where a civil society organisation is a necessary partner and makes submissions to government on policy initiatives. The ACJRD website and its member newsletter, serve as a repository for evidence-based policy, research publications and up-to-date information on developments in the field.

The activities of ACJRD include three flagship annual events that have been greatly valued by its membership and beyond. They include the ACJRD Annual Conference, the Irish Criminal Justice Agencies Conference (established 2014), and the Martin Tansey Memorial Lecture (established 2008). The Association regularly hosts seminars and workshops (in an online seminar format introduced during pandemic restrictions) on topical issues and specialised aspects that include criminology, penology, law, and justice.

Each year, ACJRD engages with other organisations and institutions on diverse initiatives, activities, and events. Among its international collaborations, the organisation became actively engaged in the UK-Irish Criminal Justice Cooperation Network which analysed the implications of Brexit for criminal justice. The association aims to continue to include the members of that Network in its ongoing work.



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

Our Mission
To Inform the Collaborative
Development of Effective
Evidence-based Policy and
Practice in Criminal Justice

Our 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	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	Emphasize the practical application of the findings of the best available current research

ACJRD STRUCTURE AND OPERATION

ACJRD is a company limited by guarantee with charitable status (Charity number:15012) and registered with the Charities Regulatory Authority. It was established over 25 years ago and receives administration funding and support from the Department of Justice, the Department of Children Equality, Disability, Integration & Youth, the Irish Prison Service, and the Probation Service. In keeping with our value of inclusivity and acknowledging that an effective criminal justice response is a wider societal issue, we intend to proactively broaden membership and funding base.

Each year a self-nominated organisation/member of the ACJRD Council offers to lead and provide funding for the Annual Irish Criminal Justice Agencies Conference, whose theme they select. ACJRD aims to facilitate research activities and is actively involved in answering calls for submissions on law reform and policy formation. Members support the ACJRD through annual membership subscriptions.

ACJRD Organisational Chart

ACJRD comprises individual and organisational members and it operates through a Patron, Council, officers, sub-committees, part-time staff, and volunteers.



Patron and ACJRD Council Members

Patron: The Hon Mr Justice Michael Moriarty

Council Members with Director and Charity Trustee roles

Chairperson: Maura Butler, Solicitor

Company Secretary: Deirdre Manninger, Solicitor, Office of the DPP

Treasurer: Pauline Shields, Deputy Chief Inspector, Garda Inspectorate

Other Council Members: (in alphabetical order by surname)

- Sophia Carey, Senior Manager, The Policing Authority
- Donna Creaven, Director of Corporate Services, Irish Prison Service
- Una Doyle, Director of Effective Practice, Probation Service
- Yvonne Furey, Director, Department of Justice
- Claire Hamilton, Professor, School of Law and Criminology, Maynooth University
- Dr. Susan Leahy, Senior Lecturer, University of Limerick
- Aoife McNicholl, Solicitor, Garret Sheehan & Partners, Solicitors
- Tony O'Donovan, Child Welfare Advisor, Children Detention Schools Unit, Department of Children, Equality, Disability Integration & Youth
- Ian O'Donnell, Professor of Criminology, University College Dublin
- Ruth Penney, Criminal Reform and Innovation, Courts Service
- Rowena Toomey, Assistant Revenue Solicitor, Revenue Commissioners
- Vacancy, An Garda Síochána

Alternate Council Members with Charity Trustee roles

- Alywin Barton, Deputy Chief Inspector, Garda Inspectorate
- Dr. Lynsey Black, Lecturer and Assistant Professor, School of Law and Criminology, Maynooth University

- Deirdre Byrne, Solicitor, Office of the DPP
- Maeve Brett, Principal Officer, Criminal Justice Policy, Department of Justice
- Dr. Ger Coffey, Lecturer in Law, School of Law, University of Limerick
- Caroline Finn, Irish Prison Service
- Kevin Fidgeon, Manager, Criminal Courts of Justice
- Michal Hanley, Principal Officer, Policing Authority
- Dr. Deirdre Healy, Director of UCD Institute of Criminology and Criminal Justice and Associate Professor, Sutherland School of Law UCD
- Síle Larkin, Head of Employment Law, Office of Executive Director, Legal, An Garda Síochána
- Leah McGuire, Assistant Principal, Probation Officer, Probation Service

The following figure illustrates the organisations represented on the ACJRD Council.



Sub-Committee Structure

ACJRD has a Governance Sub-Committee, which includes the Company Secretary and the Chairperson and other Council members, which oversees the organisation's operation and activities to ensure full compliance with company, charity, health and safety, employment, data protection and other relevant legislation. The Governance Sub-Committee liaises with the Human Resources and Business Sub-Committee, as appropriate.

The Human Resources and Business Sub-Committee provides support to the Council in relation to its financial and human resource responsibilities by preparing policies and procedures that comply with relevant legal and regulatory requirements. Where appropriate, it makes recommendations to the Council on measures to be put in place to ensure compliance with these responsibilities.

A Strategic Design Sub-Committee, as a Standing Committee, oversees the creation of an implementation framework to deliver on the association's goals.

Standing Sub-Committees are formed by agreement between Council Members, as the need arises, to focus on discreet pieces of work. All Sub-Committees report to the Council, where their recommendations are discussed and decided upon.

As a charity, ACJRD must ensure full compliance with the Charity Governance Code. 2020 was the first year that registered charities were expected to implement the code and 2021 the first year that they were required to report on compliance to the Charities Regulator. All Council members and Alternate Council members and staff are offered training to meet the needs of ongoing compliance.

As a company limited by guarantee, ACJRD also has annual returns compliance and other duties determined by the associated legislation.

ACJRD has an outsourced bookkeeping facility and Browne Murphy & Hughes Chartered and Certified Accountants, 28 Upper Fitzwilliam Street, Dublin 2, act as the company auditors.

OPERATIONAL STRUCTURE

A part-time manager and part-time administrator run the Association. In addition to carrying out the day-to-day running of ACJRD, the manager and administrator responsibilities include the organisation of conferences and other events. ACJRD is also supported through the generous contribution of members and students who volunteer to assist with events and activities.

In furtherance of a strategic review in September 2022, ACJRD plans to develop the association that was established over 25 years ago. The main aims are to modernise and streamline operations to achieve best practice in the delivery of its vision, mission and values.

To realise the ambitious goals set, ACJRD aspires to enhance the organisation's IT capabilities, especially in a social media context, expand the promotion of its events and attract new members. To do so will require a new operating model with increased organisational capacity and capabilities.

The intended organisational development will also aim to alleviate the volume of operational tasks that currently fall to the altruism of Council members.

It is the intention of ACJRD to build that capacity using strategic reserves and increased funding, something that has remained unchanged for approximately 15 years.

MEMBERSHIP

The ACJRD independently represents the collective views of its members. Memberships are on an individual or organisational basis; student membership is also offered. Members may be serving personnel or retired and in possession of a lifetime's expertise. Individual members participate in a private capacity and do not represent their organisation in any way.

Benefits to ACJRD members include:

- Enrichment of learning through collaboration in matters relevant to their work and interests.
- Bringing the work of individual and organisational members to larger and relevant audiences via conferences.

- Special rates and priority booking on ACJRD conferences, seminars, and other events.
- Access to research publications, conference, and seminar papers.
- Membership of Working Groups focusing on specialist areas of Criminal Justice.
- Evidence-based research collaborations.
- Multi-disciplinary engagement in a range of peer networks.
- Collaborations between ACJRD and member organisations.
- Collaborations with non-members to meet the needs of members.
- The Association's Newsletter.

Organisational membership of ACJRD extends these benefits to all staff within a member organisation.

ACJRD Member Working Group

ACJRD members share their expertise and input into the activities of the association through the working group structure. Individual groups utilise members' knowledge and expertise to promote discussion, debate, and events. The ACJRD working groups established to date include Addiction; Education; Juvenile Justice; Mental Health; Reintegration, Restorative Justice and Economic Crime.



Development Plan for Working Groups

For many years, ACJRD was involved in specifically funded research. Following a strategic review in 2019 it decided to transition from the traditional organisational focus on doing research to create a Research Hub to provide a service to its members, where those members who commission research are 'matched' with members who are researchers. The Strategic Design Standing Sub-Committee has been tasked with working on the implementation of these initiatives, subject to reporting to Council for its approval.

As its title suggests, the Research Hub will be a dynamic home for ACJRD members' diverse research activities. It will provide a focal point for members to engage with the organisation and other members.

ACJRD will continue to engage in independent and collaborative projects and draft submissions to Government on proposals for criminal justice development and reform by 'speaking truth to power' through its various activities, as it shines a light in dark corners of the criminal justice system where all can 'do better'.



Technological Development

ACJRD has engaged in the recent past in strengthening its IT capacity and resources but needs to do more in a post-pandemic world where Council member and member expectations have changed.

The organisation commenced development of an interactive website to support the full range of its activities. The re-designed website currently serves as a portal through which members and the public can access publications and learn about criminal justice developments. The new website aims to facilitate other services for members, including social media, in the fulfilment of ACJRD's Mission and Vision.

The ACJRD embraced the delivery of online conferences and seminars during the period of the pandemic to carry out the strategic goals set for 2020-2022. Further development of online seminar software and the exploration of the feasibility of delivering its diverse events in a hybrid format if required.

From 2023, it is planned to deliver conferences in person and seminars online. The working groups interactivity mentioned above will be facilitated online, using a range of ICT and digital mediums to deliver blogs, podcasts, vodcasts and publications. The development of appropriate engaged social media platforms to support necessary communications, promotion and member engagement will require a suitably skilled staff member as outlined above in the Operational Structures section at page 11.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES, OBJECTIVES & PLANNED ACTIVITIES

STRATEGIC PRIORITY	OBJECTIVES	PLANNED ACTIVITIES
<p>1.</p> <p>Continue Delivering Events</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain events delivery at the heart of ACJRD's mission to support a forum for education, dialogue, and transformative debate. • Deliver events including conferences, seminars, workshops, and lectures on topical issues. • Publish conference reports and seminar or lecture papers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop capacity to enhance the delivery of online events as outlined at Strategic Priority 6. • The programme of events will include annual ACJRD Conference, annual Irish Criminal Justice Agencies (ICJA) conference, annual Martin Tansey Memorial Lecture, seminars, workshops, and member interest group events. • Publish the outcomes of Annual ACJRD and ICJA Conference Reports. • Maintain contact with the UK-Irish Criminal Justice Cooperation Network.
<p>2.</p> <p>Develop & Expand Working Group Structure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Augment ACJRD member input prioritising developments in criminal justice policy and other concerns identified by them. • Utilise members' knowledge and expertise, promoting discussion and debate. • Support member accessibility. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue during the development period to deliver seminars of interest to members and continue to profile members' work, linking events to identified members' needs e.g., Prevention, Diversion, Community Safety, Gender Based Violence and Abuse, Community Bail, Mental Health and Crime, Economic (White Collar) Crime, Detention, Penal and Prison Policy, Desistance, Accreditation of the Social Capital of ex-Offenders towards Employment and other key areas identified by Council. • Implement the member consultation about restructuring the Working Groups
<p>3.</p> <p>Raise Public Awareness of Issues relating to Vulnerable Individuals and Groups</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the perspectives of vulnerable individuals and groups are a permanent feature of ACJRD's work. • Promote dialogue and policy debate on the needs of vulnerable individuals and marginalised groups within the criminal justice system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure a juvenile justice perspective is represented in ACJRD activities, with a particular focus on the educational deficits of those who engage in criminal wrongdoing. • Include juvenile justice, mental health, and addiction as strands within the planned Research Hub.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY	OBJECTIVES	PLANNED ACTIVITIES
<p>4.</p> <p>Promote & Facilitate Research</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aim to facilitate research activity over the period 2023– 2025. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the Research Hub and related IT frameworks first conceived during the 2020-2022 strategic goals period. Facilitate independent and collaborative research projects. Support those who apply for independent research funding where a civil society partner is required by them. Make submissions to government and other relevant parties on policy proposals. Enhance engagement with universities and researchers, to involve criminologists of the future in our work. Explore the dissemination of research outputs through re-designed website and/or the Research Hub.
<p>5.</p> <p>Develop Strategic Communication Plan and Stakeholder Engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain current stakeholder engagement Bring Stakeholder requirements into the work of ACJRD through an enhanced and fit-for-purpose communication strategy that embraces technology and social media. Re-launch ACJRD to reach and augment new membership to expand outreach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Celebrate 25 years of ACJRD Acquire staff member with relevant expertise and experience to support extra work and outreach to increase membership. Engage in targeted promotion to support the strategic plan goals. Employ social media tools Plan the targeting of stakeholders not currently catered for e.g., legal community and the Judiciary Enhance focus on multi-agency inclusiveness. Identify and promote the added value for stakeholders who engage with ACJRD. Report on and promote upcoming ACJRD events, recent publications, member news and other non-ACJRD criminal justice events of interest to members in the in-house Newsletter and all our ICT platforms.
<p>6.</p> <p>Modernise our ICT Approach</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to deliver all outputs and explore and exploit all Information and Communication Tools to ensure we meet our Mission, Vision and Values for the benefit of our members. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance our interactive website to support a full range of the association’s activities, ensuring that our online delivery meets our needs assessment and establish a social media presence and online discussion spaces.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY	OBJECTIVES	PLANNED ACTIVITIES
<p>7. Engagement with students</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance engagement with students and academic organisations to establish relationships and further the association's educational and research objectives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue modest prizes in relevant university modules to reward academic excellence in the field of criminal justice and engage with other universities. Provide volunteering opportunities in connection with our events and submission writing, subject to Council approval. Accommodate volunteers where feasible and appropriate. Enhance social media and other IT tool functionality to engage with students. Set up Mentoring Programme
<p>8. Governance Compliance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue as a charity, to ensure full compliance with the Charity Governance Code. Meet as a CLG the relevant company law requirements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to implement the Charity Governance Code in 2023-2025 Report to the Charities Regulator annually on compliance with the code Meet registration and compliance requirements Training for Council members and Alternates and staff Explore the acquisition of software that streamlines necessary processes.
<p>9. Broaden our Funding to Support Organisational Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stabilisation of gaps identified in our organisational structure when long-term staff moved on. Streamlining of Council Member volunteering commitment that compensates for inadequate finance and staff resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Request extra funding from current funders approach other Criminal Justice agencies and identify other potential sources. Recruitment of replacement staff and of additional staff. Explore funding schemes that have a dual benefit for criminological scholars and ACJRD. Get and implement training and advice on organisational restructuring. Explore, train and introduce asynchronous meetings to augment Council meetings held in 'real time.'



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