



ACJRD
ANNUAL REPORT
2023

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1. Executive Summary

The Association for Criminal Justice Research and Development (ACJRD) has hosted a wide array of events and seminars during 2023. These included our 26th Annual Conference entitled "*Accountability and Monitoring in the Criminal Justice System*" and the 9th Annual Irish Criminal Justice Agencies Conference entitled "*Penal Policy Reform: Putting Community at the Heart of the Criminal Justice System*," which was a collaboration of the ACJRD Department of Justice, Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, Irish Prison Service, An Garda Síochána, The Probation Service, Policing Authority, Courts Service, Garda Síochána Inspectorate, Office of the Revenue Commissioners, Parole Board, King's Inns, Maynooth University, University College Dublin and Limerick University. In April, the ACJRD hosted the 16th Annual Martin Tansey Memorial Lecture entitled "*Judicial Discretion and the Justice and Welfare Dichotomy: The Sentencing of Children in the Irish Youth Justice System*". The ACJRD also held a Seminar at which attendees had the opportunity to contribute their opinions and share perspectives.

The Association continues to further current and future Research opportunities, maintains a membership base and several Working Groups. It also contributes to the criminal justice community in Ireland through its newsletters and continued memberships and relationships with other not-for-profit organisations who share common ground with the objectives of the ACJRD.

All the above-mentioned activities have of course taken place during a challenging post-pandemic era where ACJRD has gone through a change in the staff structure. ACJRD staff have been developed a hybrid working model and some ACJRD meetings and events have remained online.

This report provides a summary of the events and activities for 2023 under the following headings: Events, Membership, Working Groups, Research Collaborations, Student Engagement, Newsletter, Commitment to Achieve Change, Governance, Strategy 2022 – 2025, Annual General Meeting and International Collaboration and Association Memberships.

Throughout the report are links to further information on the ACJRD website; www.acjrd.ie

2. Legal and Administrative Details

Organisation's Full Legal Name: Association of Criminal Justice Research and Development CLG

Title: Annual Report 2023

Dates of Reporting Period: 01/01/2023 – 31/12/2023

Company Number: 340129

Charity Number: 15012

Charity Registration Number: 20050573



Logo:

Directors:

- Maura Butler
- Deirdre Manninger
- Pauline Shields
- Yvonne Furey
- Tony O'Donovan
- Sophia Carey
- Donna Creaven
- Susan Leahy
- Ian O'Donnell
- Claire Hamilton
- Aoife McNicholl
- Ruth Penney
- James O'Mahony (appointed 17 April 2023)
- Ciairín de Buis (appointed 30 May 2023)
- Una Doyle (appointed 17 July 2023)
- Mary Griffin (appointed 3 July 2023)

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

Company Secretary: Deirdre Manninger

Chairperson: Maura Butler

Treasurer: Pauline Shields

Chief Executive Officer: Katie Prendergast (21st August 2023)

Board Committees Governance, Strategic Design and HR & Business

Independent Auditor: Jon Byrne, Browne Murphy & Hughes.

Principle Bankers: Bank Of Ireland, Glasnevin, Dublin 9

3. Vision, Mission, Value and Objectives

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 statement.

- **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**
 - Emphasize 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.

4. Strategy 2023- 2025

The Council approved a new strategy for 2023-2025. To view a copy on the ACJRD Website please [click here](#).

New Developments include the previously mentioned re-design of the Association's website, the planned restructuring and expansion of the Working Groups, plans to establish a Research Hub and the formation of a mentoring service for members.

The Vision, Mission statements were updated, and a Values Statement was created; see the Vision, Mission, Value and Objectives section of this report.

5. ACJRD Events 2022

Below is a summary of ACJRD events during 2023. Please note the following outputs do not include the ACJRD Working Groups outputs which are profiled separately.

MARTIN TANSEY MEMORIAL LECTURES

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

Information and papers from the lectures which have taken place since the inaugural event in 2008 can be found at:

www.acjrd.ie/publications

16th Annual Martin Tansey Memorial Lecture, 20th April, 2022

The 16th Annual Martin Tansey Memorial Lecture was presented by Dr John O'Connor, Judge of the Circuit Court, qualified solicitor, and Honorary Professor of Law at Nottingham Trent University. The lecture entitled "*Judicial Discretion and the Justice and Welfare Dichotomy: The Sentencing of Children in the Irish Youth Justice System*" took place online on Thursday, 20th April 2023. This event was exceptionally well attended, and Dr John O'Connor's lecture was very well received. The interesting lecture paper can be read [here](#).

He was subsequently linked with the editor of the Probation Journal, which published a version of his lecture. ACJRD would like to thank Dr John O'Connor and all who attended this event.



*Pictured above, Dr John O'Connor, Judge of the Circuit Court
via University of Galway*

ACJRD 26th Annual Conference, 9th June 2023:
"Accountability and Monitoring in the Criminal Justice System"

photo

This conference featured the following speakers:

- **Justice Mary Ellen Ring**, Judge of the High Court
- **Sinead Gibney**, Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC)
- **Commissioner Emily Logan**, Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission
- **Ellen O'Malley Dunlop**, Council of Europe's GRIEVO Committee
- **Professor Cyrus Tata**, Director Centre for Law, Crime and Justice, University of Strathclyde,
- **Ciairín de Buis**, Chief Executive Officer, Parole Board
- **Mark Kelly**, Chief Inspector of Prisons



*Pictured Left to right: The Hon. Ms Mary Ellen Ring, Emily Logan,
Ellen O'Malley Dunlop, Sinead Gibney,*

The conference programme also featured a number of Thematic Sessions. The '*Customised Accountability for Diverse Cohorts in the CJS*' was delivered by **Janice Hickey**, Bail Supervision Scheme, Manager and **Rachel Lillis**, Probation Service, and **Professor Eilíonóir Flynn**, School of Law NUI Galway.

The '*Management and Use of Knowledge, Data and Research*' Thematic Session was delivered by **Caroline Finn**, Irish Prison Service, **Andrew O'Sullivan**, An Garda Síochána and **Gurchand Singh**, Department of Justice Data Analytics.

The final Thematic Session titled '*Innovation in Supporting Accountability*' was delivered by **Professor Yvonne Daly**, DCU, **Dr Áine Kearns**, University of Limerick and **Emer Darcy**, The Courts Service (pictured below)



A Panel discussion title '*Building Trust and Improving Services through Transparent Monitoring and Accountability*' included **Helen Hall**, CEO Policing Authority, **Mark Toland** Chief Inspector at Garda Síochána Inspectorate, **Professor Ursula Kilkelly**, UCC, outgoing Chairperson of Oberstown and **Patrick Bergin**, Head of Service, Central Mental Hospital National Forensic Mental Health Service. This Panel with was chaired by **Maura Butler**, Chairperson of ACJRD. A report with the plenary speeches and summaries of the workshops will be uploaded on our website, when complete. The ACJRD would like to thank all the conference rapporteurs at this event.

ACJRD also thanks the workshop chair volunteers from the ACJRD Council.

9th Annual ICJA Conference, 10th October 2023:
*"Penal Policy Reform: Putting Community at the Heart of the Criminal
Justice System"*



Pictured: Catherine Pierse, Director of Public Prosecutions during her plenary session.

This one day conference was a collaboration of the Department of Justice, Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, Irish Prison Service, An Garda Síochána, The Probation Service, Policing Authority, Courts Service, Garda Síochána Inspectorate, Office of the Revenue Commissioners, Parole Board, King's Inns, Maynooth University, University College Dublin, Limerick University and the Association for Criminal Justice Research and Development (ACJRD). The collaborative lead partners for the 2023 ICJA Conference were The Probation Service.

Plenary speakers at the conference were:

- **James Browne**, TD, Minister of State at the Department of Justice
- **Catherine Pierse**, Director of Public Prosecutions
- **Judge Paul Kelly**, President of the District Court
- **Ben Ryan**, Head of Policy for Criminal Justice at the Department of Justice
- **Fergus McNeill**, Professor of Criminology, University of Glasgow
- **Paula Hilman**, Assistant Commissioner, An Garda Síochána
- **Katharina Swirak**, Deputy Head of dept Sociology and Criminology, University College Cork



Pictured: (L-R) Maura Butler, Minister James Browne, Ben Ryan, Judge Paul Kelly and Catherine Pierse.

The conference included a session titled 'Creativity in the Criminal Justice System' which featured **Tom Shortt**, Arts officer at the Irish Prison Education Service, **Pat Sheedy**, Author of 'A Hundred to One, 100 Convictions 1 Million Euro' and **Brian Hogan**, Deputy Director at Oberstown detention centre who showcased Oberstown's Bloom Garden. To complement this session ACJRD organised for an exhibition of artworks created by residents of Oberstown to be displaying in the foyer of the Conference.



Pictured: (L-R) Maura Butler, Brian Hogan, Tom Shortt and Pat Sheedy (speaking)

The conference programme also featured several Thematic Sessions. The 'Volunteerism in Criminal Justice' Thematic Sessions was delivered by **Michael Daly** and **Gerry Donohoe**, COSA, **Marie Vanasova** and **Donncha O'Donnchadha**, Le Chéile Mentoring, **Mark Wilson**, Mountjoy Prison and **Daniel Lambert**, Bohemian Football Club.

The '*Community Based Collaborations*' Thematic Session was delivered by **Dr Martina Moloney** and **Janine Bartley**, Longford Community Safety Partnership, **Garda Superintendent Andrew Lacey** and **James Harrington**, HSE, and **Emily Sheary**, Restorative Justice in the Community.

The '*International Perspectives on Justice in the Community*' Thematic Session was delivered by **Diarmuid O'Leary**, Barrister, **Gerry McNally**, The Probation Service and **Catherine Kenny**, Irish Council for Prisoners Overseas

A cross sectorial panel discussion on "*the Conference reflections and Discussions*" was chaired ACJRD's Chairperson, Maura Butler.

A report with the plenary speeches and summaries of the workshops will be uploaded on our website, when complete.

ACJRD would like to thank all the conference rapporteurs at this event (pictured below).



*Pictured: Jodie Chalkey, Katie Loughran, Jessica Ellen O'Brien,
Brendon Keane Morris and Niamh Costello*

ACJRD also thanks the workshop chair volunteers from the ACJRD Council.

Seminar on *"Heading towards a federal criminal justice system? Past, present and future of EU Justice"* – 11th December 2023



The ACJRD seminar and Networking event '*Heading towards a federal criminal justice system? Past, present and future of EU Justice*' was held on 11th December 2023. This was an in-person event in the Blue Room of The Law Society.

This seminar was chaired by **Maura Butler**, Chairperson of ACJRD and was held in collaboration with the European Judicial Network. The Speaker for this seminar was **Hugh Dockry**, Secretary to the European Judicial Network,

This was a very successful seminar with more than 20 participants in attendance. These included representatives from: The Department of Justice, Office of the DPP, Public Prosecutions Service N.I, Crown Prosecution Service, Office of the Attorney General, The European Commission, The British Embassy Dublin, The Scottish Government, The Romanian National Probation Directorate, The Probation Service, Office of the Parliamentary Council to the Govt, An Garda Síochána, An Garda Síochána Inspectorate, The Revenue Commissioners, HM Revenue Commissioners, the Irish Prison Service and legal practitioners from all jurisdictions.

The aim of this event was to present the development of the criminal justice system of the EU, from the early days when the European Judicial Network was established (1998), to the present when there are numerous legal and judicial cooperation entities with growing powers and rights provided by the surrender of some national sovereignty by the Member States.

To view the slide presentation from this seminar, please [click here](#).



6. Membership

Three categories of ACJRD membership were on offer in 2023: 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.

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.

37 Organisations, 39 Individuals and 4 Students held membership of ACJRD in 2023.

The Strategic Plan 2023-2025 envisioned the creation of a Mentoring Programme for younger members, matching with senior members acting as mentors. The Strategic Design sub-committee were charged with scoping a suitable structure.

7. ACJRD Working Groups



The ACJRD currently has the following working groups in operation:

- Addiction
- Education
- Juvenile Justice
- Mental Health
- Reintegration
- Restorative Justice
- Economic Crime

At the Strategy Discussion and Training Day in 2018 the highest priority goal identified was to *"Complete a rationalisation of the Working Group structure."*. During 2020 a Strategic Design Sub-Committee was established, and it has continued to take on responsibility for strategic implementation work to include and assessment of what works well in the current Working Group structure and what might work better. At the September 2023 Reflection and Review Day, the development of the Working Groups remained a goal of ACJRD and the Strategic Design Sub-Committee who made a decision to rollover matters not completed during the 2020-2022 strategic plan timeline.

8. Research Collaborations

Criminal Justice Open Research Dialogue (CORD) Partnership

In 2023 ACJRD became a partner of the new Criminal Justice Open Research Dialogue (CORD) Partnership partnered which is a new National Open Research Forum-funded project that aims to embed a culture of interdisciplinary open research in the field of criminal justice.

This project began in October 2023 and will continue for twelve months. The project aims and objectives highlight that there is great potential for interdisciplinary open research to inform criminal justice policy and practice in Ireland, and advance public safety, health and equality. At present, however, academics and external stakeholders have few opportunities to co-create open research and to exchange and apply knowledge openly across the sector. Partnership working is necessary to determine collectively how to coordinate and embed an open research culture in a locally appropriate and interdisciplinary way. This project will embed a culture of interdisciplinary open research among Ireland's criminal justice researchers and its criminal justice sector through a programme of research and engagement, specifically: Research – we will conduct and disseminate research that explores international best practice in open research partnerships in criminal justice, and use this to inform our work as a Partnership. Engagement – we will establish a diverse, national Researcher-Practitioner-Policymaker Partnership to decide collectively how to stimulate and advance the uptake of open research in this sector. Over three workshops in 2024, our Partnership will: 1) co-create our principles of engagement and investigate the sector's open research needs; 2) explore the research conducted on international best practice in open research partnerships; and 3) co-create a national sectoral open research agenda, priorities and action plan. The workshops will use restorative and design principles and practices to build relationships and maximise collaboration and creativity. All partners are invited to attend these workshops to consult on the above issues, and to contribute to and co-author documents to be published after the workshops.

Over twelve months, from October 2023, the partnership will involve three key categories of activities. All partners (both consortium and affiliate – see below) are invited to participate in all

activities: - Establishing a Criminal Justice Researcher-Policymaker-Practitioner Partnership, that will come together collectively to decide how to embed a culture of open research in the sector. - Organising three one-day workshops – provisionally, in January, April and July 2024 – to consult on this subject. Maynooth University will host Workshop 1, and partners may host 2 and 3. - Exploring on which principles, priorities and actions we can agree as a Partnership, and writing these up together for publication, future use and dissemination in Ireland and abroad.

ACJRD are excited to be partners in this project and look forward to achieving its aims and objectives.

9. Student Engagement

ACJRD Academic Sponsorship in Maynooth University

ACJRD continues its academic sponsorship with Maynooth University. Jessica O'Brien won the Maynooth University | ACJRD Prize for the Best Student in Criminal Law in 2023.

Other Student Engagement

Lara Kennedy Jones, a student from Maynooth University completed a six-week placement with ACJRD in 2023. She was a great asset to the organisation during her placement and we thank her and wish her well in her future career.

Shauna Becirovic also completed a one-month placement with the ACJRD office. Shauna is completing her degree with Maynooth University and was the Maynooth Access Programme placement student for 2023. She was a great asset to the organisation and we thank her and wish her well in her future career.

Students from Dublin City University, University of Limerick, Maynooth University and the Law Society of Ireland acted as rapporteurs at the ACJRD Annual Conference.

10. International Collaboration

In previous years ACJRD has collaborated with international organisations on areas of criminal justice. An example of this collaboration was '***The UK-Irish Criminal Justice Cooperation Network***' which commenced in 2018 and continued until 2022.

ACJRD is open to any further international collaboration projects moving forward.

11. Commitment to Achieve Change - Submissions

ACJRD makes appropriate submissions in satisfaction of its mission and vision in areas sourcing relevant researcher/report preparation expertise from the academy or legal profession and reviewed by Council members. The views expressed in ACJRD submissions are those of ACJRD in its independent capacity and are not those of the ACJRD members' organisations or their employers. All submissions made by the ACJRD are available on our website www.acjrd.ie/services/development.

In 2022 ACJRD made two submissions;

- In January 2022 ACJRD made a submission to The Garda Síochána Inspectorate on '*The inspection into the effectiveness and efficiency of An Garda Síochána's response to domestic abuse*'. This submission can be read [here](#).
- In April 2022, ACJRD made a submission to The Law Reform Commission on '*Compensating Victims of Crime*'. This submission can be read [here](#).

ACJRD did not make any submissions in 2023 but aims to continue to make submissions where appropriate in the future.

12. Governance

In 2023 the ACJRD Council was comprised of representation from the following: 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, Trinity College Dublin, the Policing Authority, the Courts Service, Maynooth University, University College Dublin, The Kings Inns and an independent Chairperson.

The following ACJRD Council meetings took place during 2023:

24th January 2023

7th March 2023

18th April 2023

30th May 2023

11th July 2023

26th September 2023

10th October 2023

12th December 2023

AGM 2023

The ACJRD Annual General Meeting was held online on Friday, 10th October 2023, following the close of our Annual Conference. At this meeting of ACJRD members the Association's Auditors, Browne Murphy and Hughes, presented the ACJRD audited accounts 2022 for adoption by members.

Council Training

Board Roles and Responsibilities training was undertaken by new Council Members and during 2023. All serving Council members have completed this training as of 31 December 23.

Council Sub-Committees:

Discrete aspects of Council work have been matched with individual Council Member expertise in the establishment of several sub-committees with a Council Member chairing each of them:

- Governance Sub-Committee
- Strategic Design Sub-Committee
- HR and Business Sub-Committee

Charities Regulatory Authority Governance Code

Significant work has been undertaken by the Council and the Governance Sub-Committee to ensure compliance with the Charities Regulatory Authority (CRA) Governance Code. In 2023, ACJRD was fully compliant with the code and all CRA Requirements

13. Financial Statements

The ACJRD engaged with Browne Murphy and Hughes Auditors for the purpose of preparing financial statements for 2023. The Statements can be viewed on our website.

Treasurers Report

ACJRD's total income for 2023 was €121,657, of which €100,000 was core funding provided by the Dept. of Justice, Irish Prison Service, Probation Service and Dept. of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. Membership fees and conference income were ACJRD's other main sources of income. ACJRD does not fundraise. Expenditure in 2023 was €113,462. This funded two part-time members of staff, office accommodation and other administrative costs, as well as costs associated with the delivery of ACJRD's mission and objectives as such as the annual ACJRD conference.

ACJRD maintains reserves at a level that is sufficient to fulfil its statutory obligations, in addition to funds equivalent to three months operating costs. Because of an increased level of reserve funding accumulated as a result of limited activity during the Covid pandemic, in late 2022 the Board approved the use of a portion of the reserve to fund future development of the organisation as described in the 2023-2025 Strategic Plan.

ACJRD would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thanks its funders for their ongoing support.

Pauline Shields

Treasurer

14. Association Memberships

ACJRD is a member of the following organisations:

The Wheel

The Wheel is a support and representative body connecting community and voluntary organisations and charities across Ireland. Established in 1999, The Wheel has evolved to become a resource centre and forum for the community and voluntary sector. The ACJRD maintained its membership of the Wheel in 2023.

The Irish Penal Reform Trust

The Irish Penal Reform Trust (IPRT) is Ireland's leading non-governmental organisation campaigning for the rights of people in prison and the progressive reform of Irish penal policy. Established in 1994, IPRT has a well-established role as an independent voice in public debate on the Irish penal system. IPRT is committed to reducing imprisonment, respecting the rights of everyone in the penal system, and progressive reform of the penal system based on evidence-led policies. The ACJRD maintained its membership of the IPRT in 2023. IPRT has reciprocal membership with ACJRD.

15. Newsletter

The ACJRD Newsletter is delivered via email to members and interested parties of the Association and is also available on the ACJRD website. The newsletter keeps members informed about current and forthcoming events and includes news from our members and developments in other agencies and relevant organisations.

As well as promoting the ACJRD, the Newsletter is designed to attract and encourage new members. This service is produced in-house and there are no printing or postage costs. It promotes the creation and development of an online community for the ACJRD.

A Winter newsletter was produced in 2023. Many "Items/Events of Interest" convened by agencies and organisations in the criminal justice and related sectors were also circulated to or membership during the year.

ACJRD aims to publish a Quarterly Newsletter moving forward in addition to news bulletins.

Should you wish to get involved with ACJRD and contribute to its work please contact us at enquiries@acjrd.ie or visit our website www.acjrd.ie.