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ACJRD NEWSLETTER

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ACJRD News

Annual Conference

SAVE THE DATE

Join us on Thursday, 11 June at the Ashling Hotel, Dublin 8, for the ACJRD Annual Conference: **Prevention First: Designing safer communities from Systems to Streets.**

We are thrilled to launch this pivotal conference exploring how communities can prevent crime before it happens by integrating social supports, environmental design, and multi-agency collaboration.

Join us as leading experts share insights on shifting from reactive justice to prevention-first approaches that build safer, more resilient communities. **Registration opens for members on 20 April.**

The Conference will be launched by **Senator Lynn Ruane**, author of *Moving Towards a Public Health Approach to Violence* and Chair of the Canal Communities Public Safety Forum.

Speakers also include...

Dr Katharina Swirak, Senior Lecturer, School of Society, Politics and Ethics, UCC & **Gráinne Berrill**, CEO, National Office for Community Safety – Shifting focus from criminal justice to social justice: the case for prevention and early intervention.

Iain Brennan, Professor of Criminology, University of Hull – exploring the links between school exclusion and youth violence.

Karyn McCluskey, CEO, Community Justice Scotland and founder of the Scottish Violence Reduction Unit on how prevention-first approaches across health, social services, education, and justice reduce offending.

Graham Farrell, Professor of Crime Science, University of Leeds – Situational crime prevention: designing out crime and nudging behaviours, including the impact of security improvements on crime trends.

With more to be announced!



Martin Tansey Memorial Lecture

The 19th Annual Martin Tansey Memorial Lecture took place on Thursday, 26 February 2026. The Hon. Mr Justice White delivered a lecture exploring the importance of rehabilitation as a core sentencing principle and the vital role of the Probation Service in supporting this principle throughout the Criminal Justice system.

High Volume but Low-level Crime: A Dialogue

The annual December Seminar and Networking Event was held in the Law Society of Ireland on Thurs 11th December 2025 on the theme of High Volume but Low-Level Crime. It was moderated by Mary Griffin, ACJRD Chair. A summary of the dialogue is available [here](#).



Molly Kavanagh joined the ACJRD in March as our new Events & Communications Officer, having previously worked as a Communications & Campaigns Officer for the Irish Council for Civil Liberties.

Upcoming Sector Events

MAYNOOTH UNIVERSITY

15 April, 4.00pm-6.30pm: **Policing Technology, and Digital Surveillance in Ireland and Abroad**

TSI Building, Room 110, Maynooth University, North Campus

This panel discussion will examine the emergence of digital surveillance technologies and artificial intelligence, and their implications for policing and the rule of law. [Learn more.](#)

KING'S INN

11 April, 10:30am-3.00pm
King's Inns Academic Open Day

King's Inn Main Building

This event is for those interested in learning more about the Degree of Barrister-at-Law and Diploma in Legal Studies programmes. [Learn more.](#)

LAW SOCIETY OF IRELAND

22 April, 5.30pm-8.30pm:
The Power of Pro Bono – Justice & the Fight Against the Death Penalty

Law Society of Ireland, Blackhall Place, Dublin 7

This event is presented by Arthur Cox and Amicus, hosted by the Law Society of Ireland.

Keynote speakers include Margot Ravenscroft, Director of Amicus (an organisation that fights for people facing a death sentence in the US), Professor Raoul Shonemann, Clinical Professor and Co-Director, Capital Punishment Clinic at University of Texas School of Law, and Samantha Knight KC, Matrix Chambers.

The event runs from 5.30pm to 8.30pm, with a live stream from Blackhall Place available from 6pm to 7.30pm. [Learn more.](#)

Recent Publications

Hidden Voices: Marginalised Community Perspectives on Policing & Community Safety

UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK

A new report from Professor Gautam Gulati and Professor Colum P. Dunne, University of Limerick, explores the perspectives of marginalised communities that are over-represented in the Irish criminal justice system. The qualitative research found that community safety is not solely the responsibility of the police – it also relies on reciprocity and trust between communities and the police, social cohesion, connectedness and integration, a multifaceted approach to tackling intergenerational poverty and exclusion, and strong interagency cooperation. [Learn more.](#)

From Punishment to Prevention: Poverty, Inequality and Pathways into the Irish Criminal Justice System

IRISH PENAL REFORM TRUST

This report, externally commissioned by the Irish Penal Reform Trust (IPRT), examines how poverty, inequality and community-level deprivation influence engagement with the criminal justice system in Ireland. The report also explores justice reinvestment approaches, outlines relevant human rights obligations, and identifies evidence-led alternatives to imprisonment-focused responses, emphasising prevention and social investment. [Read here.](#)

Recent Publications

Compensating Victims of Crime

LAW REFORM COMMISSION

The Law Reform Commission has published a report to propose a new statutory basis for a new compensation scheme for victims of crimes and violence that is victim-centred, adopts a rights-based approach, and aligns with EU and Irish legal requirements. The Commission recommends a number of significant changes to the provision of State-funded victim compensation in Ireland. [Learn more.](#)

Irish Network of Legal Observers 2025 Annual Report

IRISH COUNCIL FOR CIVIL LIBERTIES

The Irish Network of Legal Observers has published its first annual report on the policing of protest in Ireland. Established in 2025 by the Irish Council for Civil Liberties and the Irish Centre for Human Rights at the University of Galway, the network observed 70 protests across Ireland in 2025. The report identified three emerging issues which it says require attention from An Garda Síochána, including awareness of relevant human rights standards, misuse of Section 8 of the Criminal Justice (Public Order) Act 1994 (failure to comply with a direction of a member of An Garda Síochána), and Gardaí not wearing their badge numbers when policing protests. [Read here.](#)

Criminal Justice News Round-Up

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT...

Detention centre for deportees may be considered

29 March, *The Irish Times*

A detention centre specifically for people facing deportation may be considered, after it emerged the Garda National Immigration Bureau (GNIB) is leaving detainees at overcrowded prisons without prior consultation. [Learn more.](#)

'Significant drop in serious crime - CSO figures

26 March, *RTÉ*

There has been a significant reduction in serious crime, according to the latest annual figures released by the Central Statistics Office. [Learn more.](#)

Northern Ireland

Views sought on Northern Ireland legal aid reforms

26 March, *Irish Legal News*

Northern Ireland's Department of Justice is seeking views on opportunities to simplify and speed up processes relating to legal aid. Justice Minister Naomi Long has published two public engagement papers as part of the 'Enabling Access to Justice' reform programme. [Learn more.](#)

Professor Kevin Brown: Northern Ireland's sentencing bill – an incremental punitive turn

20 March, *Irish Legal News*

Professor Kevin J. Brown of Queen's University Belfast examines the proposed sentencing reforms under the Criminal Justice (Sentencing, etc.) Bill in Northern Ireland. [Learn more.](#)

Rights watchdog to intervene in Shannon Airport direct action case

27 March, *Irish Legal News*

The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC) is to make submissions to the Supreme Court in a case concerning whether “necessity” is a valid defence to prosecution for direct action protests. [Learn more.](#)

Minister’s plan to reduce criminal legal aid fees will lead to solicitor ‘exodus’ – Law Society

14 March, *The Irish Times*

The Law Society has criticised the Minister for Justice’s proposal to introduce “one flat fee” for criminal legal aid cases in the District Court. The Law Society has warned that the proposal will lead to an “exodus” of solicitors and undermine the right to a fair trial. [Learn more.](#)

Northern Ireland

Domestic violence initiative from Northern Ireland to be piloted in Drogheda

20 March, *Irish Legal News*

“Operation Encompass” will provide for information sharing between An Garda Síochána and school authorities to strengthen protections for children impacted by violence in the home. [Learn more.](#)

New victims and witnesses strategy for Northern Ireland launched

13 March, *Irish Legal News*

Northern Ireland Justice Minister Naomi Long has launched a new strategy to improve the experience of victims and witnesses navigating the justice system. [Learn more.](#)

Research finds strong relationships with practitioners can help reduce youth offending

10 March, *Irish Legal News*

The Research Evidence into Policy, Programmes and Practice (REPPP) team in the School of Law at University of Limerick has identified how effective, trust-based relationships between youth justice practitioners and young people can play a significant role in supporting positive change and reducing offending behaviour. [Learn more.](#)

Plans for electronic tagging of criminal offenders delayed after tender attracts no bids

6 March, *The Irish Times*

Plans for the introduction of an electronic tagging for criminal offenders have been delayed again after a tender for the supply and management of monitors failed to attract any bids from prospective contractors. [Learn more.](#)

Podcast

The Bar of Ireland’s Voluntary Assistance Scheme (VAS), in collaboration with Community Law & Mediation (CLM), has announced a new three-part podcast series exploring the past, present and future of community law in Ireland. The podcast is jointly hosted by Aoife Kelly Desmond, CEO of CLM, and Gemma McLoughlin Burke BL, Co-ordinator of the VAS. [Listen here.](#)

Political failings leave women prisoners ‘warehoused’ in inhumane conditions

9 March, *The Irish Times*

The 2025 annual report from the Dóchas Centre visiting committee, submitted to Minister for Justice Jim O’Callaghan last month, says overcrowding at the prison “is the worst it has ever been”. [Learn more.](#)

Funding Opportunities

THE PROBATION SERVICE

The Probation Service provides funding to Community Based Organisations in order to develop and deliver services to offenders in their communities. The organisations support the work of the Probation Service in working with persons who are under supervision by the Probation Service or at risk of becoming involved in crime.

The Probation Service is inviting 3 separate Expressions of Interest to Community Based Organisations for the following:

1. A Drug Awareness & Education Programme based in Dublin to persons referred by the District Court to the Probation Service

2. A dedicated Restorative Justice project worker to deliver restorative justice services in the Waterford Area
3. Delivery of services to Probation clients in the Westmeath and Longford areas

The closing date for receipt of applications is Friday, 3rd April 2026 at 5pm. [Learn more.](#)



Student Essay

Fraud Surge 2026: Why Economic Crime is Ireland's New Crisis

By Dylan McClave, Maynooth University

The 12th Irish Criminal Justice Agencies (ICJA) Conference on October 9th 2026 will focus on economic crime.

Ireland's criminal sector went through a massive transformation in 2025. Traditional crimes have decreased while economic crimes have risen. Garda statistics reveal the real severity of the rise in economic crimes, with fraud reports increasing 137% year-on-year.

These reports included instances of online deception, investment scams and accommodation fraud, particularly involving vulnerable workers and students. The Garda National Economic Crime Bureau (GNECB) has warned of these escalating digital threats, raising urgent questions that policymakers must address to safeguard Ireland's cashless economy and those that engage with it.

In 2025, deception offences increased by 273%, money laundering by 164%, and online shopping or auction fraud by 183%. Cases of forgery and false instruments also increased by 160% [1], while accommodation fraud increased by 17%. Total losses exceed €160m in payment fraud alone, according to the Central Bank of Ireland. [2]

Accommodation scams were among the most damaging, with €385,000 stolen in the first half of 2025 across 160 cases. 66% of victims were under the age of 33, many of them students and young workers. [3]

Meanwhile, investment fraud has compounded economic pressures, with losses exceeding €8m, as victims are lured by promises of crypto returns that never materialise or property deals don't exist. Reports of rogue tradespeople have also increased by 160%, often targeting renters, while account takeovers – up 10% – quietly drain individuals' savings before they even realise what has happened. [4]

However, changes in reporting requirements have also contributed to the rise in reported fraud cases. Banks are obligated to disclose all instances of fraud, bringing to light cases that may have previously gone undetected. At the same time, An Garda Síochána has averaged 200 arrests per day, seizing €126 million worth of drugs and €6 million in cash – which demonstrates that there is strong enforcement despite the spike in volume. [5]

The shift in economic crime from traditional offences to digital offences reflects Ireland's predominantly online economy. AI deepfakes enable highly convincing impersonation scams, while fraudulent social media advertisements cost victims €1,500 on average. Initiatives such as Garda Operation eCycle targets crypto-related laundering, but the global nature of these crimes makes prosecution more complex, as offenders can operate across borders with relative ease. [6] It is also clear that vulnerable groups are disproportionately affected. Migrant workers are targeted by employment scams – accounting for €2.5 million in remittance fraud, up 220%— while gig economy participants risk losing wages to fraudulent platforms. [7]

The GNECB works alongside the Criminal Assets Bureau (CAB), and seized millions of euro from properties linked to organised crime groups – including the Kieran Keane Jr case in Limerick. [8] The Proceeds of Crime Act continues to prove effective.

Prosecutions led by the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) are also increasing, with sentences of up to eight years handed down in major VAT fraud cases involving €2.5 million losses. However, significant gaps remain. Investigations into financial crimes are hindered by underfunding, contributing to lower conviction rates for complex laundering cases. While cryptocurrency anonymity presents challenges, cross-border collaboration coordinated by Europol is beginning to mitigate these risks. Legislative reform is also underway, with the proposed Criminal Justice (Economic Crime) Bill aiming to strengthen corporate accountability.

Addressing economic crime requires a comprehensive and coordinated response. Technological regulation must evolve, including the introduction of AI watermarking standards and mandatory reimbursement frameworks for fraud victims in line with upcoming EU PSD3 rules. [9] Companies also play a critical role in enhancing [10] anti-money laundering (AML) training and reinforcing whistleblower protections. Increased government investment in the GNECB – including a €20 million funding boost – alongside public awareness campaigns such as “Stop. Think. Check.”, shows promise. [10]

Ireland now stands at a crossroads. As traditional crimes like burglary have declined by 75% over the past decade, economic crime has emerged as a significant threat to financial security and social cohesion. [11] Protecting workers and citizens from these evolving risks will require a proactive strategy – one that combines enforcement, education, and innovation in equal measure.

ACJRD Membership

BE PART OF THE MOVEMENT

ACJRD 2026 Membership Fees

- Organisations: €100
- Registered Charities: €50
- Individuals: €25
- Students (Associate Membership): €10

Why become a member?

- Join the leading Irish Criminal Justice Network
- Get priority access to events, seminars, conferences & news
- Connect with professionals and experts across the sector
- Gain insights through publications and policy discussions
- Help build a more informed, collaborative justice system

Be part of the movement. Become a member of ACJRD [here](#).

Our Mailing List

To submit notices for the ACJRD newsletter, please email admin@acjrd.ie.

We include notices of events, vacancies, research calls and articles of interest for our members and subscribers.

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