



Director's Update

December '22 - February '23

Introduction

2023 is well underway and the Spring flowers are starting to bloom. It feels like things are blossoming at the CJA too as we embarked on several new areas of work set out in [our strategy](#), including our new lived experience leadership programme, ELEVATE CJS. In fact, at the kick-off dinner I gave all of our ELEVATE CJS leaders for change a bunch of daffodils to signify the start of a new chapter for them, as well as the CJA!

We were sad to say good-bye to our Policy Manager, Hannah Pittaway and Equalities Policy Officer, Kenya Lamb, but they left on a high with a fantastic event launching the Tackling Racial Inequality [toolkit](#) and [short film](#). We look forward to welcoming our new Policy Manager Mark Blake, 1 March. Mark has long track record of work across the racial justice and criminal justice sectors, and we are excited to be taking this important work forward with his expertise.



1. Articulating a shared vision for change

We will articulate and promote the sector's vision of a fair and effective criminal justice system to policy makers, commissioners, and the public.

Safe

- **Reform of drug policy:** We co-signed an [open letter](#) by CJA members Release and Transform Drugs calling on the government to re-think drug possession proposals. In April 2022, drawing on the expertise of our members, we submitted evidence to the Home Affairs Select Committee inquiry on drugs, and continue to await a response. We are looking to scope a new piece of work in this area in due course.

Smart

- **Reducing the use of remand:** After co-producing a response to the Justice Select Committee inquiry on remand with members of our expert group, we were pleased to see many of our concerns and recommendations [reflected in the Justice Committee's response](#). These include the urgent scaling-up of court-based Bail Information Services (BIS); increasing suitable bail accommodation, including

for women; strengthening alternatives to remand and improving prosecutors' communication of remand decisions, so bail can be reappplied for. We continue to push for court-based BIS, in addition to prison-based services, to ensure people are not sent to prison unnecessarily. We have developed a project proposal to improve access to court-based BIS to reduce the use of custodial remand with a particular focus on Black, Asian, minority ethnic and migrant women who are disproportionately impacted. We are now seeking funding for this work.

- **Promoting prevention and early intervention:** We held a roundtable with CJA members in January to bring together insights on how the Labour Party can promote prevention, early intervention, and trauma-informed services, as part of their end-to-end review of the criminal justice system. I attended a meeting in parliament with the Shadow Justice Secretary Steve Reed to contribute to the discussion and was also invited to submit [written evidence](#) to their review process.

Person-centred

- **Improving support for people leaving prison:** Following our last members' meeting on Employment Advisory Boards, I attended the launch of the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner Employer's Charter. The CJA is now a Second Chance Charter employer; we pledge to increase access and support for people with convictions to work at the CJA. I was also excited to contribute to the first meeting of the Fair Chance Business Alliance where plans were discussed to develop a National Fair Chance Employment Charter.
- **Framing:** The CJA are keen to support the dissemination of the research by [Frameworks UK](#) on effective communication about support for people leaving prison to find employment. We have been working to find opportunities to use and promote framing, including securing a slot to deliver a workshop to all the communications professionals working for PCCs across the country. We also responded to the [National Audit Office inquiry](#) on improving resettlement support for prison leavers.
- **Dragon's Den!** I had the pleasure of being part of a Dragon's Den for teams of MBA students to pitch their final proposals on how to support people leaving prison into employment, as part of a collaboration between the CJA and Central St. Martins / Birkbeck University over the past six months. I have learnt a huge amount about system-mapping and design thinking and look forward to taking forward some of their ideas!



Restorative

- **Increasing the use of restorative justice; improving access to victim services:** We were delighted that the [Justice Select Committee](#) took on board many of our [recommendations](#) from our response to their pre-legislative scrutiny of the Victims Bill. I have met with officials to emphasise the need for a right to be referred to a restorative justice service and for a national restorative justice action plan. I also presented at the national Victim Services Conference about the Victims Bill, and the importance of ensuring that the Bill adheres to the Public Sector Equality Duty and improves access to victim services for all victims, for example by ensuring a firewall between victim services and the Home Office for victims with unsecure immigration status. We will continue to work with our expert group when the Bill comes to parliament to lay down amendments and encourage further debate about these important issues.

Trusted

- **Improving equality monitoring in police and prison custody:** Our [super-complaint](#) into community scrutiny of stop and search and the use of suspicionless searches is ongoing, and we look forward to the published report (anticipated May 2023). I recently met with the investigative bodies (HMIC, IOPC and College of Policing), along with two CJA members, The Police Foundation and Growing Futures CIC and we provided our initial recommendations and suggestions.
- I also presented to the HMPPS Female Offender Minority Ethnic working group along with the IMB Secretariat about progress and next steps with our Towards Race Equality report. The IMB have been implementing some of the recommendations, including launch of a [new website](#) and improved training materials. We are also encouraged to see [ICVA working with Strawberry Words](#) to re-develop their resources and training in anti-racism to improve the monitoring of police custody, in line with our recommendations.

2. Co-ordinating collaborative working

We will enable greater collaboration, connection and learning. We will build a greater shared understanding of how to achieve systemic change together.



We have been busy organising our inaugural Research Symposium on 3 March in partnership with the University of Westminster on the theme of a 'trusted' criminal justice system and research. We have an exciting line up of speakers and workshops, along with some creative system-change mapping and Photovoice activities for attendees to get involved with. Register for the free event [here](#).

We have also launched our individual academic membership to enable greater collaboration and shared learning between policy, practice and research. Find out more [here](#).

5. Tackling racial inequality

We will identify and challenge institutional and structural racism across the CJS and promote adherence to the Public Sector Equality Duty by criminal justice agencies.

In January we launched our new PSED toolkit aimed at supporting the sector in legal actions to challenge discriminatory policies. The launch event was well attended by over 100 attendees, including equalities lawyers, civil society organisations and actors. We also showcased our short film, *Odds Stacked Against Us*, which highlights the cumulative impact of multiple discriminatory policies over time. In an [open petition](#), we called for the Ministry of Justice and Home Office to monitor, analyse and mitigate the cumulative impacts.



Closing

This quarter we said goodbye to one of our trustees Natasha Langleben. We thank her for her passion and support of the CJA.

We are planning to recruit new trustees over the summer, so please do get in contact with me if you are interested and want to find out more!
(nina.champion@criminaljusticealliance.org.uk)

Nina Champion (CJA Director)