



Director's Update

March '23 - May '23

Introduction

I am delighted to welcome three new staff to the CJA this quarter:

- Mark Blake, Policy Manager
- Holly Brooks-Burgin, Communications and Engagement Manager
- Eulina Clairmont, ELEVATE CJS Project Officer (P/T)

They bring a wealth of expertise and skills to the CJA, and you can read more about them [here](#). We now have five full time staff and two part-time staff, the biggest the CJA has ever been! We hope that by expanding our team, we can further grow our reach, profile and impact – once the new staff have learnt the ropes.

Our thanks also go to Molly Zoglowek, a social media consultant and Longford Scholar, who helped us out in the gap between communication staff at the CJA.

We have also been busy recruiting for a new Chair (or Co-Chairs), Treasurer and four trustees, and will announce the successful new Board members in due course.

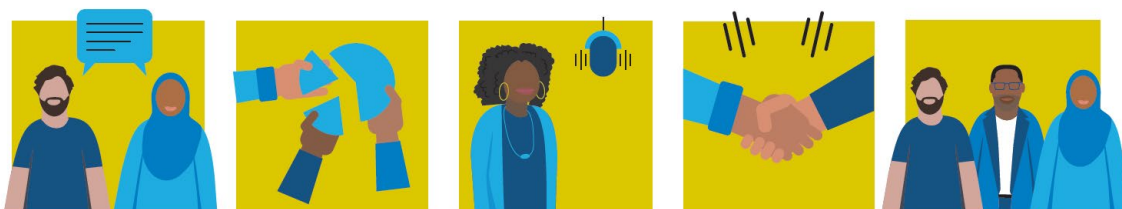
Below is my regular summary of how we have been progressing our strategic objectives over the last few months.

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

We have started to plan our second research symposium on the theme of a safe Criminal Justice System. We will explore topics including community safety, how the CJS can better protect the mental and physical safety and wellbeing of those in its care, and public perceptions of safety. We will also discuss what safe criminal justice research looks like. We are currently working to secure funding for this event, which will be held in a university outside of London next year.



Smart

Reducing the use of remand: We are delighted that the government have announced they will be rolling out court-based bail information services. This was set out in their response to the Justice Select Committee’s report, which included several of the CJA’s recommendations, including the urgent scale up of court-based bail information services. Following positive meetings with the Bail Team at HMPPS, we visited the two pilot sites in Ipswich and Cardiff, along with CJA members Innovation Unit and Hibiscus, to observe them in action. We have developed a project proposal to help ensure the scale-up reduces the disparities in the use of remand for Black, Asian, minority ethnic and migrant women, as well as young adults, and are currently seeking funding for this work.



Person-centred

Improving support for people leaving prison: We have continued to disseminate the research conducted by [Frameworks UK](#) on effective communication for people leaving prison to find employment and enhance positive relationships. We worked with media consultant, Phillipa Bugden, to test different ways of embedding framing into our media work and secured a number of pieces of coverage which have used framing to shift perceptions and build support for reform (see 'Change the narrative' section for more detail).



We [commented](#) on HMI Probation’s thematic report on the lack of help for people leaving custody, resulting in recalls to custody. I recently also [gave oral evidence to the Justice Select Committee](#) on the prison operational workforce, alongside Prison Reform Trust and Unlocked Graduates. The full transcript is available [here](#) and the recording of the Justice Select Committee meeting can be viewed [here](#).

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, but disappointed that the government refused to amend the Bill to include specific reference to restorative justice, as the CJA and the Committee recommended. I attended a meeting with Minister Argar to discuss the [Victims and Prisoners Bill](#) and he has indicated a willingness to discuss the matter further. [We produced a briefing](#) for parliamentarians in partnership with CJA members [Why Me?](#) and the [Restorative Justice Council](#) which sets out the value of Restorative Justice for victims and highlights areas where the Bill could be improved in relation to this issue. We will be holding a meeting with our wider membership on the Bill to discuss the bill and will support the putting down of amendments to improve the Bill as it makes its way through parliament.

Trusted

Improving equality monitoring in police and prison custody: The findings in response to our [super-complaint](#) into community scrutiny of stop and search and the use of suspicion-less searches will be published this summer. In the meantime, we have [co-signed a letter raising concerns about Serious Violence Reduction Orders \(SVROs\)](#) which gave new stop-and-search powers to police forces recently. The CJA and other members [raised concerns](#) about these powers during the PCSC Bill in 2021, and given Baroness Casey's recent call for a 'fundamental reset' of stop and search, we do not believe this is the time to introduce more powers. I also penned [a blog](#) with our Policy Manager Mark Blake about the Casey Review focused on a 'fundamental reset' of the use of stop and search by the Metropolitan Police. We also reflected on the need for urgent and radical action to improve outcomes and to ensure this becomes a landmark report for all the right reasons. We have called on the Met Commissioner to halt the use of discriminatory and ineffective suspicion-less searches in London.

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.

On 3 March, in partnership with the University of Westminster, we held our first academic symposium on the theme of improving trust in the criminal justice system and research. [Read our blog](#) summarising some of the key discussions.



We received some fantastic feedback and are in the process of preparing a compendium of research and discussions from the day.

'Such a vibrant and stimulating symposium.'

'The discussion was passionate, informed, moving. I learned so much.'

'Seeing the impact from different perspectives was eye opening.'

'The symposium itself modelled an ideal approach to building trust.'

- CJA Research Symposium participants, March 2023

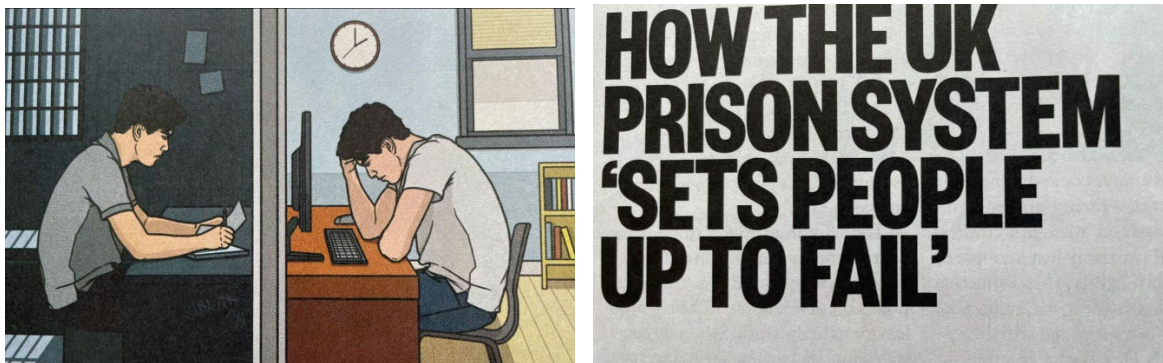
I am also thrilled that we have received a number of applications for individual academic membership to enable greater collaboration and shared learning between policy, practice and research. You can read about these new members [on our website](#).

Due to our staffing changes, we have taken the difficult decision not to hold the CJA Awards and Media awards this year. Instead, we will be running a series of events with our alumni to share their good practice more widely with our membership and beyond. We will be working with some of our award winners and runners up to co-produce these events. We plan to resume the CJA Awards and Media awards in 2024.

3. Changing narratives

We will promote and amplify constructive criminal justice journalism to shift narratives and build a more conducive environment for positive change.

We have been working with media consultant Philippa Budgen to try out the new [Frameworks UK](#) research on communicating about support for people to gain employment and develop positive relationships after release from prison, as we try to raise awareness of these issues with the public. For Mothers' Day we secured two pieces of coverage: [a letter in the Telegraph](#) about mothers in prison and the need for community solutions (which received a [wonderful reply](#) from a reader who was a foster carer) and a powerful piece on [Radio Five Live](#) with prison-based social worker Katia from Pact and Dr. Shona Minson which humanised the experiences of mothers and children separated by imprisonment and the need for greater support and data on this issue. We also secured coverage about the [need for criminal record reform](#) (as set out by the #FairChecks campaign) and the [need for greater digital access](#) in prisons, in two pieces in the Big Issue.



We also arranged for Sophie from Frameworks UK to deliver a workshop to communications staff from Police and Crime Commissioner offices, and I was also delighted to join the Law Society advisory group on framing communications to the public about access to justice and the rule of law.

4. Promoting power sharing

We will promote informed decision making by supporting lived experience leaders into positions of power and influence and by supporting sector employers to develop inclusive workplace policies, practices and senior leadership teams.

Our ELEVATE CJS lived experience leadership programme, and the participants, are going from strength to strength. The 16 leaders for change have been attending weekly online workshops on topics including social movements, consciousness of self, controversy with civility, campaigning and self-care. The monthly Saturday sessions have seen them go through the 'hero's journey' and be matched with their coaches from Spark Inside, as well as receiving training from Frameworks UK. Many of the cohort have had already seen the benefits of the programme, including gaining promotions, being nominated for awards, giving evidence in parliament, speaking at large events and securing an international secondment opportunity.

In April, ELEVATE CJS Project Manager Nola visited South Africa for two weeks as part of the inaugural Global Freedom Fellowship run by the Incarceration Nations Network. The fellowship brought together lived experience leaders from the USA, South America, Europe and Africa to learn and share.



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.

Following the launch of our toolkit to support the sector taking legal action to challenge discriminatory policies in January, we have continued to promote the film and toolkit and are in the process of arranging some regional events in the Southwest and North to disseminate it further afield. We are also continuing to promote changes that would give greater emphasis on cumulative and intersectional impact. In addition, our work as part of the Double Disadvantage coalition to ensure better outcomes for racially minoritised women has continued, and myself and Mark also attended a residential hosted by the Baring Foundation to connect and learn from others in the sector working on racial injustice.

Closing

This quarter we will say goodbye to one of our long-standing trustees, and former Vice-Chair, Lucy Jaffe. Lucy has been influential in ensuring our focus on promoting restorative approaches, externally and internally as an organisation. As a current Chief Executive herself of the charity Why Me? her advice and guidance on the Board, and to me personally, has been incredibly valuable. We thank her for her passion and support of the CJA.

Nina Champion (CJA Director)