An Agenda for the CORD Partnership

2025-2026

CORD | CRIMINAL JUSTICE OPEN RESEARCH DIALOGUE

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An Agenda for the CORD Partnership, 2025-2026

1. Introduction

When criminal justice policymakers, practitioners and researchers collaborate, this can both enhance our work and increase knowledge, safety, health and equity in our society. Working in partnership can help us to determine collectively what our engagement should look like, what our priorities should be and which actions would make the most of all our knowledge and expertise to achieve shared goals.

This document is one output from a year of collaboration which took place as part of the Criminal justice Open Research Dialogue (CORD) Partnership. As of December 2024,[1] the CORD Partnership includes **135 partners representing 59 organisations across seven categories** (see Appendix A):

1. Research: 63 persons from 15 organisations (including CORD's research assistants)
2. Criminal justice policy: 13 persons from 6 organisations
3. Criminal justice oversight: 6 persons from 4 organisations
4. Criminal justice agencies: 16 persons from 7 organisations
5. Non-state justice services: 18 persons from 14 organisations
6. Civil society and advocacy: 9 persons from 8 organisations
7. Research infrastructure: 10 persons from 8 organisations (of which 3 are also represented in other categories)

CORD | **135** PEOPLE | **59** ORGANISATIONS | **10** PRINCIPLES | **5** ACTION AREAS

From January-July 2024, CORD partners came together in three workshops, using processes from the fields of restorative practices and design thinking to determine collectively how to embed a culture of interdisciplinary open research in criminal justice in Ireland. At Workshop 1, attendees discussed CORD's purpose, principles and priorities. This led to an article, co-authored by 58 partners across 32 organisations, stating that CORD should aim to 'support positive social change by embedding a culture of interdisciplinary open research' and contribute to 'an Ireland in which everyone is safer from harm and can access inclusive justice services which meet their needs' (Marder et al., 2024: 173).

This article outlines **ten principles for the CORD Partnership**, which its authors suggest should guide partners' work together. These are to:

1. Connect and discuss criminal justice on an equal footing
2. Respect each other's skills and knowledge
3. Build a culture of trust and openness
4. Create a safe, inclusive space to share and learn
5. Understand each other's capacities and constraints
6. Maintain the highest ethical research standards
7. Create opportunities to share knowledge
8. Take actions that affect people's lives positively
9. Collaborate on shared activities
10. Contribute to evidence-based policy and practice.

This Agenda outlines **five action areas** that the CORD Partnership will work on in 2025-26. The actions are based on ideas proposed by partners during and after Workshop 2, which explored translational criminology and the experiences of research-policy-practice partnerships (R3Ps) in other countries (Kenny, 2024), and Workshop 3, at which partners discussed the findings of a scoping review on criminal justice research partnerships and used design exercises to develop problem statements and identify and vote on actions (Appendix B).

1 Share research findings

2 Understand each other

3 Collaborate on events

Action Areas for CORD, 2025-26

4 Pilot *Areas of Research Interest*

5 Build infrastructure for partnership research

Based on these ideas, on the sector's open research needs as outlined in Marder et al. ([2024: 179-80](#)),[2] on the scoping review exploring criminal justice research partnerships, and on several rounds of feedback when drafting this Agenda, we developed five action areas. These relate to sharing research findings, understanding each other, collaborating on events, piloting *Areas of Research Interest*, and building infrastructure for partnership research.

Specifically, the five action areas involve working with partners to:

1. **Share research findings:** Help researchers to share Irish and international research findings to build knowledge of research evidence, inform policy and practice, and develop greater capacity for research translation.
2. **Understand each other:** Establish a *Day-in-the-Life Programme* to help people working in research, policy and practice learn more about each other's professional lives and working environments.
3. **Collaborate on events:** Organise events to build relationships, learn, and co-create research ideas for research translation.
4. **Pilot *Areas of Research Interest*:** Pilot *Criminal Justice Areas of Research Interest* to help partners identify and publish the research questions in which they are most interested.
5. **Build infrastructure for partnership research:** Identify opportunities and build infrastructure to co-create and partner on research.

This Agenda will be overseen by an Implementation Group, with CORD partners from different partnership categories who self-nominate to participate. Their work will be governed by a Terms of Reference that will be discussed in their first meeting (see Appendix C for the draft Terms of Reference). The group will be chaired by Dr. Ian Marder (Maynooth University School of Law and Criminology) who will continue to coordinate and administer the CORD Partnership, supported by the Project Consortium (until Dec 2024), the Implementation Group (from Jan 2025), CORD's partners (on a voluntary basis), and administrative and research assistance (when funding permits).

This work aligns with public policies in areas including open government, open research, evidence-for-policy, research impact, design for government, and using research and data to support justice and penal reform (see Appendix D). It seeks to progress us from an *ad hoc* approach to research-policy-practice engagement to a more coordinated approach that makes the most of each of our knowledge and expertise, and combines the building of new interpersonal links with the cultivation of the long-term strategic and institutional support and structures needed for change ([Oliver et al., 2022](#)).

Nothing in this document may be taken to indicate that any CORD partner has agreed or committed to any specific activities. In line with the restorative processes by which this document has been developed, all actions relating to the CORD Partnership are entirely voluntary. Membership of CORD does not require partners to commit to anything other than *to receive invitations* to attend events, to be consulted, and to contribute to its work.

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[2] The sector's open research needs were discussed at Workshop 1 and subsequently divided into seven themes: collecting and using data; prejudice and social division; privacy in criminal justice; public attitudes, policymaking and criminal justice; the future of Irish criminal justice; understanding criminal justice practices; and, young people. Each theme is further subdivided into a series of research questions that can be found in Marder et al. ([2024: 179-80](#)).

2. Action Areas

Action Area 1: Share research findings – Help researchers to share Irish and international research findings to build knowledge of research evidence, inform policy and practice, and develop greater capacity for research translation

No.	Objective	Actions	Team	Timeline
1	Develop, publish, circulate and assess the impact of booklets of research briefings to make research findings more accessible for frontline practitioners. *Note: This action aims to contribute to the top-voted action from Workshop 3. It aims to mobilise existing knowledge, and takes into account practitioners' limited time and that the practical implications of research are not always clear in academic papers.*	1.1 Draft plans and structure for booklets with 1-2 page briefings and practice implications of studies (see Appendix E for draft protocol).	Chair, Research Assistants (RAs)	Q4 2024
		1.2 Develop pilot thematic booklet, with a focus on research that could help services meet the needs of victims. Invite partners to an online meeting to seek input on what types of research to include and how to publish and circulate to maximise value. Include a survey to help embed learning and assess impact.	Susan Leahy and Ian Marder to edit a pilot booklet on victims' research	Commencing Q1 2025, publish and circulate Q2 2025
		1.3 Assess usage and value of first booklet with the survey. Consider whether to continue and, if so, on what topics to focus, drawing on research priorities in Marder et al. (2024) and CORD engagements.	Implementation Group (IG)	Assess Q4 2025. If continuing publish two more booklets by Q2 2026
2	Invite and support researchers to present at practice, policy and public events.	2.1 Map prospective events.	RAs	Q4 2024
		2.2 Liaise with organisers and prospective speakers to encourage and support presenting and learning.	Chair, Partners TBD	All 2025-26
3	Invite and support researchers to write for practice, policy and public publications.	3.1 Map prospective publications.	RAs	Q4 2024
		3.2 Liaise with editors and prospective authors to encourage and support written contributions.	Chair, Partners TBD	All 2025-26
4	Invite and support Ireland's researchers, policymakers and practitioners to write articles together, outlining and discussing questions of shared and broader interest.	4.1 Solicit and support authors to contribute to Irish Legal News series – policymakers, practitioners and researchers ask and respond to research questions via jointly written articles.	Chair, Partners TBD	Throughout 2025-26. Piloted Aug 24 and Oct 24
5	Build capacity among (especially early-career) researchers for social impact.	5.1 Conduct training needs analysis that allows early career researchers' needs to be prioritised.	Chair, RAs	Q1 2025
		5.2 Organise annual training to support researchers to plan and achieve social impact (e.g. stakeholder analysis, media engagement, writing briefings).	Chair, Partners TBD	Q3 2025, Q3 2026

6	Support criminal justice training providers to use research in professional training.	6.1 Map the use of research in professional training.	Chair, RAs	Q1 2026
		6.2 Meet training providers to discuss how they can use research to enhance training delivery.	Chair, Partners TBD	Q2 2026
7	Engage with journalists to understand and inform public attitudes on criminal justice.	7.1 Map relevant journalists.	RAs	Q4 2024
		7.2 Pilot a 'Journalism-Criminology Forum' to share learning about crime and justice across the sectors.	Chair, Partners TBD	Q1 2026
		7.3 Organise for researchers to present about criminological research on journalism degrees.	Chair, Partners TBD	Plan Q2 2025 for delivery 2025-26

Action Area 2: Understand each other – Establish a *Day-in-the-Life Programme* to help people working in research, policy and practice to learn more about each other's professional lives and working environments

No.	Objective	Actions	Team	Timeline
8	Establish, coordinate and study *Day-in-the-Life Programme*.	8.1 Agree programme, protocols and learning agreement (see draft protocol in Appendix F).[3]	IG Subcommittee, Day-in-the-Life	Commence Q1, Finish Q2 2025
		8.2 Obtain ethical approval for study.	Chair, RAs	Q4 2024-Q1 2025
	Note: This aims to achieve the second-top voted action from Workshop 3.	8.3 Invite partners to participate; aim to coordinate 2-3 visits per month for 12 months.	Chair, IG, Partners TBD	Q3 2025-Q2 2026
		8.4 Write briefing on learnings from study; publish open access research article with findings.	Chair, RAs	Commence Q3, Finish Q4 2026

Action Area 3: Collaborate on events – Organise events to build relationships, learn, and co-create research ideas for research translation

No.	Objective	Actions	Team	Timeline
9	Organise small-scale engagement events that meet the needs of specific partners.	9.1 Invite partners to propose, co-organise or host targeted events on specific themes e.g. workshops, dialogues to share learning, study visits to discuss secondary data, communities of practice, training.[4]	Chair, IG, Partners TBD	Plan in Q2 each year for Q3-Q4

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[3] At the time of writing, partners from CDI, DCU, IASIO, MU and V-SAC have offered to host visits.

[4] CCJVS at University of Limerick (Susan Leahy) offered to host a networking and knowledge exchange event for regional stakeholders. Centre for Effective Services (Andy Bray) offered to organise a community of practice on translating and implementing evidence-informed practice and policy in criminal justice (with a co-hosting partner if in person). MU (Ian Marder) offered to host a community of practice on using and collecting data for academics and justice data professionals (e.g. on the *Data Catalogue for Key Criminal Justice System Datasets*

Action Area 4: Pilot *Areas of Research Interest* – Pilot a *Criminal Justice Areas of Research Interest* to help partners identify and publish the research questions in which they are most interested

No.	Objective	Actions	Team	Timeline
10	Support partner organisations to develop and publish research questions, topics or issues in which they are most interested.	10.1 Draft and agree structure, protocol (Appendix G) and how to publish the initiative to maximise its legitimacy and research.	IG Subcommittee, Areas of Research Interest	Commence Q1, Finish Q2 2025
		10.2 Work with partners to develop questions for publication	IG Subcommittee, Areas of Research Interest, Chair	Q3-Q4 2025
		10.3 Publish pilot initiative with at least ten organisations from four partner categories.[5]	IG Subcommittee, Areas of Research Interest, Chair	Q1 2026

Action Area 5: Build infrastructure for partnership research – Identify opportunities and build infrastructure to co-create and partner on research
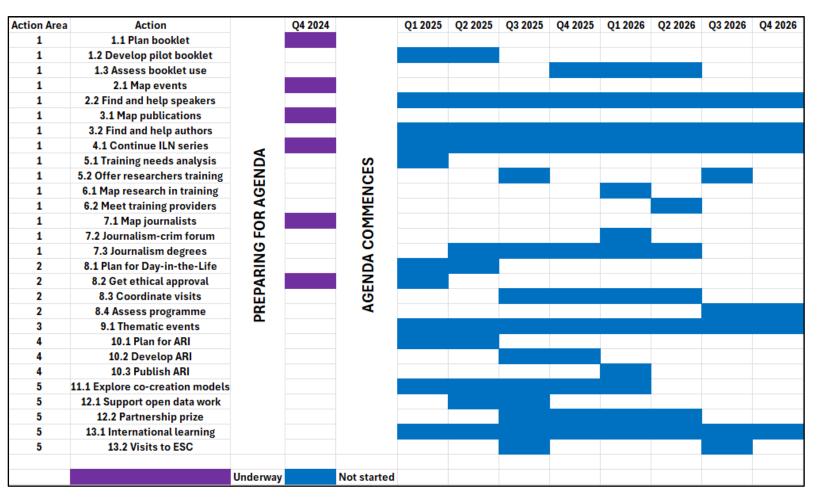
No.	Objective	Actions	Team	Timeline
11	Develop proposals for people in research, policy and practice to spend time working at each other's institutions on co-created research and translation projects.	11.1 Assess models (secondments, fellowships, placements, grants or PhDs), including how these might be funded by partners, external sources, in-kind contributions or a new small grant scheme.[6]	IG Subcommittee, Infrastructure for Partnership Research	Plan Q1-Q4 2025, report Q1 2026
12	Encourage and support all stakeholders to conduct partnership research and provide access to data for research.	12.1 Contact those involved in open government and analytics to offer support for, and propose a collaboration on, open data work.[7]	Chair, IG, Partners TBD	Q2-Q3 2025
		12.2 Identify funding and develop protocol for an Irish Criminal Justice Partnership Research Prize Public Criminology Prize, or similar.	Chair, IG, Partners TBD	Plan Q3 2025 for launch Q2 2026

(Department of Justice, 2024). We might explore an 'unconferencing' (participant-led) model (e.g. this unconference on drugs), a roleplay model involving research, policy and practice (e.g. this outline of a roleplay on climate change research and policy), and inclusive methods of science communication (e.g. Roche et al., 2023).

[5] The Policing Authority has expressed a willingness to participate in a pilot. The Department of Justice is already exploring the development of its own research priorities for publication.

[6] See, e.g., IRC Employment-Based Postgraduate Programme, SFI Public Service Fellowship Scheme, SIPR Practitioner Fellowship, Vulnerability and Policing Futures Research Centre Translational Fellowship (e.g. here), HRB Applied Partnership Awards, N8PRP PhD Studentships, SIPR ECR Small Grant Scheme, Studentships and other grant schemes, N8PRP Small Grants Scheme, Capabilities in Academic Policy Engagement Fellowships and Seed Funding (evaluation here), and structured professional doctorates.

[7] Explore e.g. ONS Secure Research Service (data access for accredited researchers) and Ministry of Justice Data First (linked administrative datasets for research); contact DPER Open Data Unit, Data as a Driver Subgroup, IGESS, Parliamentary Budget Office and Oireachtas Library and Research Service to explore collaboration.

| 13 | Promote and circulate opportunities for learning, funding and partnerships with persons and entities beyond Ireland. | 13.1 Engage with international partnerships and networks to learn and disseminate CORD's work. | Chair, IG, Partners TBD | All 2025-26 |
| | | 13.2 Promote partners' attendance at international events (e.g. European Society of Criminology 2025), including the potential for joint presentations. | Chair, IG, Partners TBD | Q3 2025 and Q3 2026 |

Action Area	Action	PREPARING FOR AGENDA	Q4 2024	AGENDA COMMENCES	Q1 2025	Q2 2025	Q3 2025	Q4 2025	Q1 2026	Q2 2026	Q3 2026	Q4 2026
1	1.1 Plan booklet		Underway									
1	1.2 Develop pilot booklet				Not started	Not started						
1	1.3 Assess booklet use							Not started	Not started	Not started		
1	2.1 Map events		Underway									
1	2.2 Find and help speakers				Not started	Not started	Not started	Not started	Not started	Not started	Not started	Not started
1	3.1 Map publications		Underway									
1	3.2 Find and help authors				Not started	Not started	Not started	Not started	Not started	Not started	Not started	
1	4.1 Continue ILN series		Underway									
1	5.1 Training needs analysis				Not started							
1	5.2 Offer researchers training						Not started				Not started	
1	6.1 Map research in training								Not started			
1	6.2 Meet training providers									Not started		
1	7.1 Map journalists		Underway									
1	7.2 Journalism-crim forum								Not started			
1	7.3 Journalism degrees					Not started	Not started					
2	8.1 Plan for Day-in-the-Life				Not started							
2	8.2 Get ethical approval		Underway									
2	8.3 Coordinate visits					Not started	Not started					
2	8.4 Assess programme										Not started	Not started
3	9.1 Thematic events				Not started	Not started						
4	10.1 Plan for ARI				Not started							
4	10.2 Develop ARI						Not started	Not started				
4	10.3 Publish ARI								Not started			
5	11.1 Explore co-creation models				Not started	Not started						
5	12.1 Support open data work					Not started	Not started					
5	12.2 Partnership prize					Not started						
5	13.1 International learning				Not started	Not started	Not started					
5	13.2 Visits to ESC						Not started				Not started	
			Underway		Not started							

Timeline for CORD Agenda Actions, Q4 2024-Q4 2026

Appendices

3. Appendices

Appendix A: CORD Partners' Organisations, December 2024[8]

Organisation	Category
Atlantic Technological University (Department of Social Sciences)	1 Research
Dublin City University (School of Law and Government; School of Psychology)	1 Research
Institute of Public Health	1 Research
Lucy Michael Research, Training and Consultancy	1 Research
Maynooth University (School of Law and Criminology; Department of Design Innovation; Department of Applied Social Studies; Department of Anthropology; Department of Education; Department of Biology; Research Development Office; Maynooth University Social Sciences Institute)	1 Research; 7 Research Infrastructure
National College of Ireland (Early Learning Initiative)	1 Research
South East Technological University (School of Humanities; Department of Law and Criminal Justice)	1 Research
St. Patrick's Pontifical University	1 Research
Technological University of Dublin (School of Social Sciences, Law and Education)	1 Research
Technological University of the Shannon (Department of Marketing, Enterprise and Digital Communications)	1 Research
Trinity College Dublin (School of Nursing and Midwifery; School of Law; Department of Public Health and Primary Care; Department of Clinical Medicine; Civic Engagement for Social Impact; School of Social Work and Social Policy)	1 Research; 7 Research Infrastructure
University College Cork (School of Sociology and Criminology; School of Applied Social Studies)	1 Research
University College Dublin (School of Law; School of Social Policy, Social Work and Social Justice; School of Sociology; Equality Studies Centre; School of Architecture, Planning and Environmental Policy)	1 Research
University of Galway (School of Law)	1 Research
University of Limerick (School of Law; Healthy UL; REPPP; Department of Sociology; European Centre for the Study of Hate; Centre for Crime, Justice and Victims Studies)	1 Research
Cuan	2 Criminal Justice Policy
Department of Justice	2 Criminal Justice Policy

[8] The 63 partners from research institutions include persons at all career stages and numerous disciplines (law, theology, sociology, criminology, psychology, biology, addiction studies, applied social studies, healthcare statistics, medicine, design innovation, anthropology, equality studies, social work, social policy, social care and sustainable urbanism), a national institute, and a research consultancy. The Project Consortium (Oct 2023-Dec 2024) drew from higher education because of the nature of the consortium agreement the funder required but, in practice, all partners were consulted throughout. The Consortium included two Deputy Chairs, Prof. Yvonne Daly (DCU) and Dr. Kevin Wozniak (MU), three members, Dr. Darragh McCashin (DCU), Prof. Jennifer Schweppe (UL), and Dr. Fionnuala Brennan (SETU), and the Project Chair, Dr. Ian Marder (MU).

Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform	2 Criminal Justice Policy
Department of the Taoiseach	2 Criminal Justice Policy
Judicial Council	2 Criminal Justice Policy
National Office for Community Safety	2 Criminal Justice Policy; 7 Research Infrastructure
Garda Síochána Inspectorate	3 Criminal Justice Oversight
Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission	3 Criminal Justice Oversight
Office of the Inspector of Prisons	3 Criminal Justice Oversight
Policing Authority	3 Criminal Justice Oversight
An Garda Síochána	4 Criminal Justice Agencies
Courts Service	4 Criminal Justice Agencies
Irish Prison Service	4 Criminal Justice Agencies
Oberstown Children Detention Centre	4 Criminal Justice Agencies
Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions	4 Criminal Justice Agencies
Parole Board	4 Criminal Justice Agencies
Probation Service	4 Criminal Justice Agencies
Ana Liffey Drug Project	5 Non-State Justice Services
Centre for Effective Services	5 Non-State Justice Services
Childhood Development Initiative	5 Non-State Justice Services
Crime Victims Helpline	5 Non-State Justice Services
Dublin Rape Crisis Centre	5 Non-State Justice Services
Extern	5 Non-State Justice Services
Foróige	5 Non-State Justice Services
Irish Association for Social Inclusion Opportunities	5 Non-State Justice Services
Irish Criminal Bar Association	5 Non-State Justice Services
Mandorla Psychology Services	5 Non-State Justice Services
Restorative Justice Services	5 Non-State Justice Services
Solas Project	5 Non-State Justice Services
Traveller Mediation Service	5 Non-State Justice Services
Victim Support at Court	5 Non-State Justice Services
Black and Irish	6 Civil Society and Advocacy
Eleanor Kelly and Company Solicitors	6 Civil Society and Advocacy

Irish Council for Civil Liberties	6 Civil Society and Advocacy
Irish Network Against Racism	6 Civil Society and Advocacy
Irish Penal Reform Trust	6 Civil Society and Advocacy
Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice	6 Civil Society and Advocacy
Powderly Solicitors	6 Civil Society and Advocacy
UISCE	6 Civil Society and Advocacy
Association for Criminal Justice Research and Development	7 Research Infrastructure
Central Statistics Office	7 Research Infrastructure
Health Research Board	7 Research Infrastructure
Irish Universities Association	7 Research Infrastructure
Research and Development Team for Youth Diversion Projects	7 Research Infrastructure

Appendix B: Problem Statements and Actions from Workshop 3

Table 1: Problem Statements Identified at Workshop 3
The CORD Partnership should deconstruct public perceptions of victims and offenders to change public discourse and policy in relation to crime to a more nuanced, evidence-based, proactive and trauma-informed approach, but policy is often reactive, one case can undermine evidence, it is difficult to change media coverage, and attitudinal change is slow.
The CORD Partnership should identify the research and information needs of victim support organisations to advocate for and sustain ongoing victim services, but the fragmented nature of funding and information accessibility across sectors might make this difficult to support.
The CORD Partnership should explore the types of information/data that can demonstrate the efficacy of interventions to create better outcomes for people in the criminal justice system and/or at risk of being impacted by crime, but can this be quantified, do we know what 'good' or 'better' desistance looks like, and will metrics drive actions?
The CORD Partnership should establish an evidence-based research repository to make information widely available and accessible to practitioners, but publishers might not agree, and it might obstruct commissioned research by justice partners.
The CORD Partnership should create a forum for everyone in criminal justice to co-create research and identify system research needs to drive focused knowledge generation and exchange, but academics have little time, resources and institutional support for engaged research, take on too much, and don't know who to connect with.
The CORD Partnership should review the operation of the adversarial court system, particularly how cross-examinations are conducted, to have fairer outcomes, cut delays, and avoid re-traumatisation and perverse outcomes, but the obstacle is the entrenched legal culture.
The CORD Partnership should conduct research to measure public understanding and attitudes to responses to crime to generate public support for and confidence in effective, evidence informed approaches, but finance and logistics may prove difficult to overcome.

Table 2: Actions Proposed at Workshop 3	Votes
Access funding to design, establish and operate a sustainable, state-of-the-art, online, open-access, user-friendly research repository	41
Shared rollercoasters: day-in-the-life experience of practitioners/academics to understand each other's contexts (maybe VR simulations)	25
'Pracademic': tinder-model of 'hook-ups' or matchmaking based on specific problem statements, or a shared internship model	22
Centre for a Better Future: Translating user/practitioner experiences into research evidence	19
Empathy-based training on creative, arts-based, participatory methods for legal professionals	16
Find ways to understand how people who use services define what is 'better'	14
Use storytelling to shift perceptions, and train journalists to reflect contexts (e.g. Aladdin's story)	14
Establish a trans-disciplinary, independent victim's ombudsman to provide oversight/strategic direction to the victim services sector	11
Turn off AI algorithms which affirm existing prejudice	10
Make addressing crime effectively everyone's concern	9
A unified funding and information system to support the victim services sector	8
Design court protocols for cross-examination based on the twin principles of kindness and fairness	8
Conduct sustainable, regular sense-checks of public attitudes to crime and responses to crime	6

Appendix C: DRAFT Terms of Reference, CORD Agenda Implementation Group

The Criminal justice Open Research Dialogue (CORD) Partnership was launched in January 2024 to embed a culture of interdisciplinary open research in criminal justice in Ireland. A Research-Policy-Practice Partnership (R3P), CORD understands that 'long-term, mutualistic, collaborative working may be central to addressing barriers to improving evidence use', and to enhancing 'the ability of engagement activities to provoke shifts in organisational cultures and routines' (Oliver et al., 2022: 698). Over three workshops in 2024, CORD partners collaborated to develop a purpose and set of principles, priorities and actions, the latter informed by a review of criminal justice research partnerships and by several rounds of feedback on a draft Agenda.

The CORD Partnership was funded by the National Open Research Forum (NORF) from October 2023-December 2024. During this time, NORF required the project to be managed by the Core Project Team whose organisations signed a Consortium Agreement, governing the project. Due to the nature of the Consortium Agreement, the Core Project Team included persons based in higher education institutions. From January 2025, the Core Project Team will be replaced by an Implementation Group (IG) chaired by Dr. Ian Marder (Maynooth University School of Law and Criminology) and bringing together a broader range of CORD partners to oversee and support the delivery of the *CORD Partnership Agenda 2025-2026*. A call for IG members launched in September 2024 asking CORD's partners to self-nominate to join the IG, to which 20 persons from 15 organisations responded.

The aim is for the IG to include as broad a representation of partners as possible. Ideally, no more than half the IG is drawn from the researcher category; currently, 9 out of 20 members are from that category. There is no upper limit on the number of IG members.

<u>Aims and Objectives</u>

The IG has two aims: 1) to ensure that the CORD Partnership's Agenda is delivered to the greatest extent possible, and in a manner that meets partners' and society's needs; and, 2) to provide direction on CORD's development more broadly. The IG will achieve this by providing support, ideas and critical feedback on the planning, delivery and monitoring of the Agenda during 2025-26, and on the general development of the CORD Partnership in line with its purpose, principles and priorities. Members commit to working together in alignment with the CORD Partnership's principles, as outlined in Marder et al. ([2024](#)). IG members will serve a two-year term (2025-26) in line with the Agenda.

<u>Processes and Activities</u>

IG members will be invited to at least three online meetings annually (e.g. February, May and September, 2025 and 2026). At the meetings, the IG will:

- Use restorative circles to ensure that all members present have an equal opportunity to speak and listen to each other.
- Be invited to provide support, ideas and critical feedback regarding the planning, delivery and monitoring of actions.
- Be invited to join one of three subcommittees to lead actions 8.1, 10.1 and 11.1. Subcommittees will nominate a Chair to organise meetings, provide feedback on their work to the IG and liaise with the IG Chair as necessary.
- Make decisions by consensus whenever possible, or by majority when a consensus is not reached.
- Consider how best to involve CORD's partners to deliver this Agenda, enhance systemic connectivity in relation to CORD's aims and determine CORD's future role, if any, in embedding a culture of interdisciplinary open research in criminal justice in Ireland.

IG meetings will be followed by an email to the Partnership providing an update on progress, seeking feedback on proposals and requesting support.

Appendix D: Alignment with Policy Directions

The CORD Partnership's Agenda aligns with many areas of Irish public policy, including open government, open research, evidence-for-policy, research impact, design for government, and research and data in justice and penal reform.

Open government: Ireland is a member of the [Open Government Partnership](#), for which [Justice](#) is a policy area. In the Government of Ireland's [Fourth Open Government Partnership National Action Plan](#) (2023-25) 'Establish an open research partnership and agree a framework for creating a culture of open research in criminal justice' is one of seven commitments, and the Department of Justice is the lead Department (pp. 17-19). Other commitments

are relevant to CORD's work, including those to support inclusive policymaking with the community and voluntary sector, and improve the quality and quantity of data published openly (p.11). This is complemented by the Open Data Strategy (2023-27), which states data should be 'open by design and default' (p.4) to underpin 'evidence-based decision making' (p.6). The actions include: 'facilitating increased publication of relevant data not currently available', 'building a community of practice through stakeholder engagement, training or support', and 'hosting opportunities for our network of users to share learning and experience' (pp. 8-10). Stakeholders include the research community who, this notes, 'play a key role in identifying the economic, social and democratic opportunities of open data' (p.11).

Open research: The National Action Plan for Open Research (2022-30) has, among three themes, 'establishing a culture of open research' (p.6). It uses UNESCO's definition of open research including 'to increase scientific collaborations and sharing of information for the benefit of science and society', and 'open the processes of scientific knowledge creation, evaluation and communication beyond the traditional scientific community' (p.7). This work is supported by the National Open Research Forum (NORF), which funded CORD from October 2023 to December 2024.

Evidence-for-policy: Among the five strategic pillars in Ireland's Research and Innovation Strategy is to maximise 'the impact of research and innovation on the economy, society and environment' including by 'improving social wellbeing' (p.8). This connects to the new Research Ireland, one objective of which is to 'strengthen engagement between the research and innovation system' and 'enterprise, government and public bodies, the voluntary sector and society'. A related theme in Better Public Services (2022-30) is 'Evidence-informed policy and services designed for and with our public', including a goal to 'enable accessible and shared public service data' (p.12). This is supported by the Civil Service Renewal Strategy, which calls for civil servants, higher education and research funders to collaborate to 'develop mechanisms [...] to exchange evidence and research insights [...] in relation to policy priorities and major societal challenges' (p.15; p.21 s.2). At the time of writing, we await a governmental response to a consultation aiming to contribute to a 'framework for engagement' which 'focused on enhancing connectivity between government departments and the research system' (p.5).

Research impact: A report prepared for the Royal Irish Academy and Irish Research Council argues for architecture to ensure research findings inform policy, calling for civil servants, government and research institutions to 'enhanc[e] modes of connectivity and dialogue across the research and policy communities' and create 'strong and profitable research-policy networks' (p.3). Ongoing work in higher education institutions aims to help academics contribute to this goal. For instance, the Irish Universities Association 'promotes and supports societal engagement as a core function of Irish higher education', developing frameworks, writing briefings and organising brokerage events under its engaged research and societal impact theme. Further work is underway, as a report by Ó Foghlú and Boyle states, to help Irish higher education institutions 'unlock research for policy'.

Design for government: Designing our Public Services (2022) invites public bodies to take a design approach to service development. This will involve deriving human insights through research and experimentation, embracing failure as a chance to learn and flexible, collaborative and inclusive working practices (p.4). Principles for service design include challenging assumptions and designing with evidence, designing services together and inclusively and sharing knowledge (p.8). This is supported by the Action Plan for Designing Better Public Services (2024-25), which emphasises co-creation and

warns against 'superficial recognition of design and its principles'. It argues for 'a fundamental shift in our current practices [...] involv[ing] prioritising people's needs through in-depth interviews and observations [and] testing, learning and iteration' (p.18).

Using research and data in justice and penal reform: The Criminal Justice Sectoral Strategy (2022-24) includes data as a driver, strengthening strategic collaboration, and increasing public understanding as three of its five pillars, the first aiming 'to ensure an evidence-based approach to policymaking' (p.5). This included publishing the Data Catalogue of criminal justice system datasets, and a workshop on evidence-informed policy in Autumn 2023. The Sectoral Strategy mentions the development of a Criminal Justice Operational Hub which can be accessed for research and linked datasets (p.19). The Strategy's implementation plan lists related actions, including to 'identify areas for research on cross-cutting sectoral issues', 'build partnerships with academics' and 'explore and develop options for data-sharing protocols and agreements' (p.14). This aligns with the Justice Sector's Innovation Strategy (2023), which commits to 'share knowledge and develop skills' and 'create clear pathways for the development and evaluation of ideas' (p.8). In relation to data, the Central Statistics Office, Irish Prison Service and Courts Service are among bodies publishing datasets on the Open Data Portal. In relation to penal reform, the Review of Policy Options for Prison and Penal Reform (2022-24) included actions that involved commissioning research, or were assigned to the Department's Research and Data Analytics team. These included, for example, work to reduce the use of short-term sentences of imprisonment (p.18) and remand in the District Court (p.19). The Department of Justice's Action Plan 2024 includes an action to 'continue to publish open data, facilitating academics and researchers to use information to support the development of key insights' (p.47).

Finally, many criminal justice agencies and related bodies have committed to investing in research or engaging with external researchers, including;

- The Garda Síochána Strategy Statement 2022-24 lists as a priority to 'enhance our capabilities by exploring and developing partnerships with specialists, thought leaders, universities and research hubs' (p.16).
- The Policing Authority conducts and commissions research, with actions in its 2022-24 Strategy including research on community engagement and the policing experiences of young people and diverse communities. It also lists actions to 'develop a multi-annual research strategy' (p.29), launch a second bursary scheme, and 'explore the possibility of operating the scheme collaboratively with An Garda Síochána' (p.29).
- One action in the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions Strategy Statement 2022-24 is to 'share our expertise and use our data to inform national and international criminal justice research, evaluations and policy development' (p.15).
- The Courts Service's Data Strategy 2021-24 seeks to improve data quality, integration and interoperability.
- The Probation Service's Statement of Strategy 2024-26 commits to 'build a data-driven and research culture' that supports 'evidence-informed practice, effective decision-making, and enhanced collaboration with criminal justice agencies and other partners' (p.18).
- The foreword to the Irish Prison Service Strategy 2023-27 says that the Strategy 'reflects our ongoing commitment to [...] standardised research and data management' (p.5). The Strategy also commits to 'explore partnerships and initiatives with external experts' (p.15).

- The Law Society proposes to 'establish the Law Society Centre for Justice and Law Reform to encourage evidence-based and future-focused debate on justice and law reform' in its Statement of Strategy 2024-28 (p.7).
- The Bar of Ireland seeks to 'undertake proactive research and policy development, and engage with stakeholders on areas of reform across the justice system' (p.3) as part of their 2021-24 Strategic Plan.

Appendix E: DRAFT Protocol, Research Briefings Booklets for Practitioners

Practitioners face significant challenges with keeping up-to-date with research that can assist their work. Much research is published behind paywalls. Even open access publications are often not circulated widely, too long or jargon-filled, and fail to foreground the practical implications to be digested and acted on by practitioners (Rojek et al., 2019). Research suggests that practitioners' perceptions of the credibility and utility of research can depend on the messenger's credibility and the local relevance and applicability of the research, and many practitioners report not having time to read research (Casey et al., 2020). In a study on the use of research findings by Intimate Partner Violence Practitioners, Casey et al. state that 'low-barrier educational resources regarding how to critically consume research evidence may be useful to practitioners and to their trusted research evidence intermediaries' (2020: 268; Sullivan et al., 2017: 900-902). For Taheri (2020: 31), drawing on Weiss et al (2005), researchers should undertake 'expansive dissemination of research evidence to those that will find it of most use – namely, the practitioners', if they aim to provide direction for practice.

Criminologists and others have made various efforts to communicate academic research in accessible ways. The Canadian periodical, *Criminological Highlights*, summarises empirical research papers on one page each, highlighting their conclusions. Recently, the open access journal *Applied Police Briefings* has sought to communicate international research to police professionals. Evidence hubs, such as the Youth Endowment Fund toolkit or the College of Policing crime reduction toolkit (both UK-based), summarise the impact, implementation and cost of different interventions. In Ireland, the Department of Children's What Works Ireland Evidence Hub summarises research on prevention and early intervention programmes for young people, allowing readers to sort information by whether or not a programme was implemented in Ireland. Still, work is needed to mobilise existing knowledge.

Meanwhile, there are differences between the needs of practitioners and policymakers in this regard. Oliver et al. noted that research on the outcomes of policy briefings, even if based on evidence syntheses, 'do little to address practical, cultural or institutional barriers to engagement' with evidence. They are 'valued by participants [but] demonstrate little impact on policy or practice' (Oliver et al., 2022: 697; see also Langer et al., 2016). People who work in policy might be 'bombarded' with evidence that fails to tell 'a simple and persuasive story' (Mayne et al., 2018: 2). Effective practice must have clear target audiences, and 'combines evidence with reasoned argument, strategic framing, and appeals to values, compassion and enlightened self-interest' (Mayne et al., 2018: 2) in ways that increase the salience of research for that particular audience.

This pilot project will test the merits of developing, circulating and assessing booklets of research briefings for criminal justice professionals in Ireland. At a design workshop in July 2024, hosted by the Department of Justice, CORD partners developed problem statements and ideas for actions that the CORD Partnership could undertake collaboratively to achieve its core aim of embedding a culture of interdisciplinary open research in criminal justice in Ireland. Participants voted on proposed ideas. Among the winning ideas was for CORD to 'design, establish and operate a sustainable, state-of-the-art, online, open-access, user-friendly research repository'. The idea to test a booklet of research briefings came from combining this with the common refrains that practitioners have little reading time, brevity is key to accessibility in practice, and the practical implications of research must be clarified.

The pilot booklet will:

- Focus on empirical research that can help practitioners working with victims of crime to meet victims' needs, given the foregrounding of victim issues at the third CORD workshop and the lack of an overarching authority to support victim services in Ireland.
- Be informed by engagement with people who support victims who will be asked which subjects they want the booklet to cover and how it might best be structured, published and distributed/circulated.
- Prioritise empirical research of the highest scientific rigour from Ireland and comparable settings.
- Clearly identify the implications of the research for practice, and include a 'practitioner response' which outlines their views on the applicability of the research findings in the Irish victim support sector.
- Include a short survey assessing the levels of use, and the extent to which those accessing the booklet consider it valuable to their work. Other outcomes, such as understanding and comprehension, could potentially be explored (Kim et al., 2024).
- Incorporate relevant pre-doctoral and practitioner-led research that has not been published (Bolton-King et al., 2019), where possible.
- Be co-edited by two researchers, Dr. Susan Leahy and Dr. Ian Marder, with expertise in the subject area of victimological research and contacts in the victim services sector, and with the support of research assistants who will review the relevant literature on this activity before beginning the process of developing briefings (e.g. Aguinis et al., 2010; Kim et al., 2024; USC Libraries, 2024).

Appendix F: DRAFT Protocol, *Day-in-the-Life Programme*

At a design workshop in July 2024, hosted by the Department of Justice, participants developed problem statements and ideas for actions that CORD could undertake to achieve the goal of embedding a culture of interdisciplinary open research in criminal justice in Ireland. After voting, one of the top two ideas was to establish a 'day-in-the-life experience' to help researchers, policymakers and practitioners better 'understand each other's contexts'. This is supported by research suggesting that research partnership members can learn much from observing each other's working environments.

The *Day-in-the-Life Programme* aims to help researchers, policymakers and practitioners working in criminal justice in Ireland better understand each other's working contexts. Participants will enter into a reciprocal arrangement where they agree both to visit and host another partner for a day to share and learn about each other's professional lives and working environments. Visits must be valuable, and not overly burdensome, for both parties.

The CORD Chair will coordinate the programme by identifying and connecting prospective participants, administering the development and signing of learning agreements, and undertaking preparatory and follow up work with participants to study their experiences and help them reflect on and embed their learning. Drawing on ideas of 'semi-structured shadowing' (Sirris et al., 2022; Nicolini and Korica, 2024), the *Day-in-the-Life Programme* will offer participants the chance to complete a short, online survey immediately before and after shadowing experiences and participate in a discussion shortly thereafter to discuss their learning. Participants will have the option of contributing their surveys and discussions as data to the programme's study.

Hosts are asked to arrange for a visitor to spend a working day shadowing and learning from one or more professionals who work in their organisations. They will need to consider how best this can be arranged in ways that maximise visitors' learning while also minimising the bureaucratic burden on the host organisation and its staff, and ensuring that their work is not compromised in any way. Hosts will set the agenda for the day, balancing constraints in what they can share with the need for visits to provide meaningful learning experiences. All visitors will complete a learning agreement that commits them to respecting the time and policies of hosts and not to jeopardise their host's work, nor the safety and security of any person or confidential data. They will also be asked to consider opportunities to share their learning with colleagues in their own organisation and with the organisation they visited, whether in writing or verbally. The idea is to maximise the potential learning for hosts and visitors, and for both their organisations.

The benefits for researchers, policymakers and practitioners who volunteer to visit and host each other include:

- Researchers will gain 'a deeper level of insight into the cultural environment, language, daily responsibilities and barriers faced by practitioners, and obstacles confronting the clients served' (Sullivan et al., 2017: 894), and improve their 'understanding of the policy world [and of] the ways in which evidence and knowledge can inform and interact with decision making', ensuring a 'realistic picture of decision-making contexts' with which they may seek to engage (Oliver et al., 2022: 703).
- Policymakers and practitioners will learn about research processes and how they might access research-related support or resources (Hansen et al., 2014; Kim and Lee, 2022; Rudes et al., 2014) to help them and their organisations meet the needs of the people they work with.
- Together, visitors and hosts can 'overcome sociocultural barriers [and spend] one-on-one face time vital for building trust' (Wurcel et al., 2023: 6), and learn about each other's 'protocols, pressures, workloads, capacities and resources [...] to foster mutual understanding of what is and isn't achievable' in partnership work (Crawford and L'Hoiry, 2015: 9-10).
- Together, visitors and hosts will reflect on how policy and practice needs can inform future research, and how they can translate evidence from existing research into policy and practice.

- For researchers and policymakers, Alejandro et al. ([2024: 379](#)) state that it is important 'to bridge the gap between political and scientific actors because their lack of understanding of one another's roles and constraints seems to hinder the effective governance of complex problems'.

The protocols and learning agreement necessary for this programme will be developed by a subcommittee of the CORD Agenda Implementation Group in the first months of 2025. The goal will be for the first visits to take place in Q3 of 2025 and for the programme to run for 12 months in the first instance, with two-to-three visits per month taking place in that time. Ethical approval for the study will be obtained from Maynooth University.

Appendix G: DRAFT Protocol, *Criminal Justice Areas of Research Interest*

An organisation's *Areas of Research Interest* (ARI) is a set of research questions, topics and issues that articulate what the organisation wishes to know in order to develop improved policies or services. They are neither a research agenda, nor a commitment to fund or conduct research or provide access to data. They indicate that the organisation is keen to hear about the existing research evidence or insights, or to consider supporting related research.

These exist in other countries – read the UK Ministry of Justice ARIs [here](#), the London Metropolitan Police's ARIs [here](#), and the UK Police Chief Scientific Advisor's ARIs [here](#). According to Oliver et al. ([2022: 697](#)), research suggests 'that greater support with thinking through the purpose and goal of formal evidence requests and associated activities would benefit governments by providing a more diverse and appropriate evidence base' (see Government Office for Science, [2024](#), for guidance on developing ARIs, and Oliver et al., [2022b](#), for more information on ARI production).

In Ireland DFHERIS has published 'areas of interest' that 'identify key research activity and expertise which may be relevant to policy development and decision making' (see [here](#)). The Department of Justice is also exploring the development of its own research priorities for publication.

The benefits of CORD partners being supported to develop and publish ARIs for their organisations include:

- Clarify and prioritise the questions, issues and topics about which you and your organisation is most interested in learning more.
- For policymakers and practitioners who submit ARIs, encourage people to contact you with information about the existing research addressing these topics, or to propose new research that could support you and your organisation's work and knowledge base.
- For researchers who submit ARIs, encourage policymakers and practitioners interested in supporting or learning from research to contact you.

All CORD partners are invited to seek support to develop ARIs for publication. The final protocol for the programme, and structure and location of the publication, will be established by a subcommittee of the CORD Agenda Implementation Group in the first months of 2025 with a view to publishing a pilot document listing ARIs in Q1 2026. The CORD Chair or nominees with relevant knowledge will support partners to draft their ARIs, where desired.