

Vice-Chair

Appointment Brief

March 2025

Message from our Chair

Thank you for your interest in becoming a Trustee at Criminal Justice Alliance (CJA).

It is a privilege to be part of the CJA's work. The CJA is an incredible organisation making real change in the criminal justice sector. In 2022, we launched our five-year strategy, Reimagine, redesign, rebuild: Driving systemic change together. Working with our 200+ members, the CJA brings together a broad and diverse range of expertise across the sector, championing and elevating the voices of those directly impacted by the criminal justice system.

We are in an exciting time of growth and development as we continue our ambitious and much-needed work, focusing on systemic change, constructive criminal justice journalism, race equity and lived experience leadership.

As Trustees, our roles are to ensure that the CJA is able to draw on the collective strengths of our members to pursue our common goal of building a fairer and more effective criminal justice system that works well for everyone and leads to a more equitable society.

We are looking for a **Vice-Chair** and **four trustees** who share our values and ambitions. If you are interested in helping us improve the criminal justice system and feel that you have the commitment and experience for the role, we would love to hear from you.

Gemma Birkett, Chair

About the CJA

The Criminal Justice Alliance (CJA) advocates for a fair and effective justice system. Our insight come from our members: over 200 non-profit organisations and academics with expertise across the UK justice system. We **investigate key issues** in criminal justice, **co-produce evidence-led briefings and reports** with our members to **influence policy change**. We **connect practitioners, academics, the media, people with lived experience and policy makers** from across the justice system to hold the government and other institutions to account and to promote power sharing.

Our vision and mission

Our vision is of a fair and effective criminal justice system that works well for everyone and leads to a more equitable society.

Our mission is to achieve sustainable, systemic change, through the collective power of our membership network.

Our strengths

1

The ability to guide change through a whole-system view

As a broad network, our members enable us to visualise the whole criminal justice system (CJS), connecting dots that are impossible for most to see. In turn, we formulate sensible ways to drive forward systemic change. Our strong links to policy makers, the bodies overseeing the system and those experiencing the CJS ensure that our proposals are sensible and sustainable. We also identify and share innovation, good practice and policy solutions both nationally and internationally.

2

The depth and breadth of our membership

We represent members from across the full spectrum of the CJS. This includes charities, research institutions and staff associations. By hearing a wide range of voices we are well-positioned to navigate change on issues including prevention, policing, courts, prisons, probation and victims' services. Our insights garnered from our members also enable us to tackle cross-cutting and intersecting topics such as racial inequality and gives us an important understanding of related social justice issues like housing and mental health.

3

The freedom to take action and raise issues on injustices

We take action against unfair, harmful and ineffective policies and practices. We hold key decision makers and public bodies to account because we do not accept any public funding.

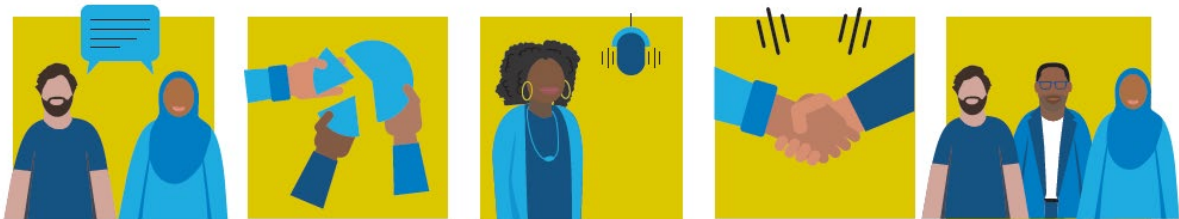
Our strategy

Our overarching aim is to influence and drive systemic change in the criminal justice system by removing barriers currently holding back progress.

In 2022, we launched our first five-year strategy, Reimagine, redesign, rebuild: Driving systemic change together. We continue to adopt an equalities lens in all our policy and influencing work and looked systematically at issues affecting people who are disproportionately discriminated against, ignored and mistreated.

We are undertaking five key approaches to reach our overarching aim.

1. **Articulating a shared vision for change** – a safe, smart, person-centred, restorative and trusted criminal justice system.
2. **Co-ordinating collaborative working**- between our members, policy makers, practitioners and academics to share good practice and evidence-led approaches.
3. **Changing narratives**- promoting constructive criminal justice journalism to shift public narratives.
4. **Promoting power sharing**- amplifying the voices of and supporting lived experience leaders into positions of power.
5. **Tackling race inequality**- challenging institutional and structural racism across the criminal justice system.



"I don't think there is any other organisation that is recognised for the way it collaborates with so many criminal justice organisations, to bring them together to help achieve the common goal of changing people's lives."

- Raphael Rowe, journalist and CJA Award winner 2022

The way we work

Our approach to work also ensures that our internal working reflects our external goals. We always aim to be:

Collaborative: We co-design and co-produce our work with members, people with lived experience and others in a meaningful and inclusive way.

Constructive: We find common ground, recognise positives, identify solutions and embed restorative principles.

Challenging: We take bold action against unfair, harmful and ineffective policies and practices. We challenge ourselves to reflect, learn and be ambitious.

Empowering: We build the capacity, confidence and influence of our members and people with lived experience to achieve positive change.

Evidence-led: We carry out research and draw on the expertise of our members, people with lived experience, academics and others to guide our work and inform the findings and recommendations we make.

Equitable: We embed principles of fairness, transparency, equality, diversity and inclusion in our work and organisation.



CJA Trustees

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| <p>Gemma Birkett, Chair Gemma is a Reader in Criminal Justice at City, University of London where she is Co-Director of the interdisciplinary Centre for Justice Reform. Gemma sits on the Executive Board of the British Society of Criminology.</p> | <p>Frances Lang, Interim Vice-Chair Frances is a qualified Chartered Accountant. She was a partner of a private equity investment fund before moving into the charity sector as Interim CEO of Media Trust and CEO of Variety, the children’s charity. Frances is also a trustee at Become, the national charity for children in care and care leavers.</p> | <p>Bernard Manson, Treasurer Bernard’s professional background is in financial management, including roles at Chase Manhattan and Barclays. His pro bono career includes being the chair of the Haemophilia Society and founding and chairing Number Champions, an educational charity supporting primary school children in numeracy.</p> |
| <p>Professor Alex Stevens Alex is a Professor in Criminal Justice at the University of Kent, a trustee of Harm Reduction International, and chair of the Drug Science Enhanced Harm Reduction Working Group.</p> | <p>Jason Grant Jason is a lived experience researcher and practitioner who works to improve outcomes for people within the mental health system. Jason currently chairs the CJA ELEVATE CJS advisory group.</p> | <p>Nick Linfoot Nick is a former prison officer with a background in policy, working across the adult male and female estates. He has lectured at the University of Law and is undertaking a PhD examining human rights in prison healthcare settings at the University of York.</p> |
| <p>Tom McNeil Tom McNeil is the CEO of The JABBS Foundation. Previously, Tom served as Assistant Police and Crime Commissioner for the West Midlands, and was a charity lawyer. He has held policy fellowships and visiting practitioner roles, including at Cambridge University, and has a PhD in Social Policy and Criminology from the University of Birmingham.</p> | | |

Role description

Location: We expect to hold two meetings in person in London and two via video conference per year.

Time commitment: Approximately one day per month (trustees) and two days per month (Vice Chair).

Board meetings are held four times a year, with dates agreed at beginning of every calendar year. Board meetings are split between afternoon and early evening time slots to accommodate the various commitments of Trustees and staff attending. We also hold an in-person annual staff and trustees away day- usually in the summer.

Board members are required to join a Sub-Committee (Finance and Resources Committee or Policy and Communications Committee), which also meets virtually three to four times a year, usually one or two weeks before the Board meetings.

The Chair and the Vice-chair also hold monthly meetings with the Director.

Trustees are also encouraged to attend CJA events, e.g. members meetings, CJA Awards and research symposium.

Term: Three-year initial term, renewable once. Trustees can serve for a maximum of six years.

Remuneration: This is a voluntary role without remuneration. Travel expenses as well as other reasonable and necessary costs incurred (including caring responsibility costs), as part of official Trustee business, will be reimbursed.

Induction: A thorough induction process is in place for new Trustees. There will be both formal and informal training available to the new Vice-Chair which will include on-going training ensuring Board members are up to date on good governance.

Role summary

The Vice- Chair acts for the Chair when the Chair is not available and undertakes other assignments when necessary at the request of the Chair.

Trustees have a collective responsibility for the strategy and work of the charity and for ensuring that it is accountable to its members, the Charity Commission and the public in general. In law, trustees have three particular duties- compliance, care and prudence. (See also the Charity Commission's Essential Trustee Guidance)

Key responsibilities

- Support the Chair and provide leadership for the Board in its role of setting the strategy of the organisation, and reviewing its risk management as appropriate.
- Chair Board meetings, by deputising if required.
- Monitor and ensure that decisions taken at meetings are implemented.
- Liaise with the Director to keep an overview of the organisation's affairs and provide support as appropriate.
- Appraise the performance of Trustees and the Board as appropriate from time to time and assist in the recruitment process for new trustees as appropriate.
- Led, if required, the appointment process for the Director.

General trustee responsibilities

- Contribute actively to the Board's role in giving strategic direction to the CJA, setting overall policy and defining goals.
- Safeguard the good name and values of the CJA.
- Ensure that the CJA complies with its governing document, charity law, and any other relevant legislation or regulations.
- Ensure the financial sustainability of the CJA and that the charity applies its resources exclusively, effectively and efficiently in pursuance of its objectives.
- Ensure that appropriate financial and administrative controls are in place and reviewed regularly.
- Ensure that there is an effective process in place for monitoring and managing risk.
- Devote the necessary time and effort to develop a good understanding of the CJA and its work.
- Ensure that any potential conflicts of interest/loyalty between the CJA and other positions held by trustees are handled appropriately and sensitively.
- Contribute to and help drive improvements in the Board's own performance ensuring an effective, high-performing team.
- Where appropriate, represent the CJA at meetings and events and act as spokesperson.
- Support the CJA Director and team in fostering relationships with external partners and potential funders/donors.

Person Specification

The CJA is committed to achieving greater diversity in its trustees and staff, particularly as there are issues affecting individuals from non-majority backgrounds across the criminal justice system. We actively encourage applications from minority ethnic communities and people with protected characteristics. We also welcome applications from younger people and from first-time trustees.

Essential- strong experience in at least one of the following:

- HR/people and culture; fundraising and/or grant-making; strategic communications (branding, marketing, digital); corporate partnerships and/or individual donor engagement; information/digital technology; legal; business management; project management.
- Policy, public affairs, advocacy and/or influencing; ideally in the criminal/social justice/human rights sectors in England and Wales;
- As a practitioner in frontline service delivery organisations in the criminal/social justice/human rights sectors.

Desirable

- Expertise of lived experience of the criminal justice system. The CJA adopts a broad definition of lived experience, and includes, for example, experience of people who have been over-policed, have served a prison/community sentence, have been a victim of crime, and/or have family members in prison. We would also be interested in people who have other lived experience which they believe is relevant- please explain in your supporting statement.
- Membership of the CJA directly, or of organisations which themselves are CJA members.
- Being based or working in Wales or otherwise outside of London and the South-East.
- Understanding of membership organisations; and/or experience of building partnerships and networks.
- Experience (voluntary or paid) within the criminal or social justice sector at leadership level.
- Solid understanding of good governance practices.

The following skills and attributes are needed:

- Strongly motivated and commitment to the CJA's aims and values.
- Honesty, integrity and commitment to always act in the best interest of the charity.
- Willingness to devote the necessary time and effort to the role.
- Sound independent judgement and strategic vision.
- Ability to think creatively and challenge constructively.
- A collegiate attitude and willingness to work with others.
- Willingness and ability to work in uncertain circumstances and be receptive to change.
- Demonstrable experience and a strong commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion and the ability to recognise and effectively challenge discrimination and bias.

Guaranteed Interview Scheme

As a second chance charter employer, we actively encourage applications from people with lived experience of the criminal justice system.

We guarantee to interview anyone with lived experience whose application meets the minimum criteria for the role. The minimum criteria means the Essential criteria outlined in the Person Specification and at least one of the Desirable criteria. Please indicate in your application that you wish to be considered under the Guaranteed Interview Scheme and provide us with evidence in your application which demonstrates that you meet the minimum criteria.

Key dates

- Application deadline: Sunday 11 May 2025, 11:59pm
- Interviews (online): w/o 26 May and w/o 2 June
- Finance and Resources sub-committee meeting (if applicable): 17 June 2025
- Policy and Communications sub-committee meeting (if applicable): 18 June 2025
- First board meeting 2025: 26 June 2025
- Trustee and staff away day: (in person in central London): 27 June 2025