

## CJI Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) Meeting Outputs

Thursday 16 April 2026 in Knockview Buildings

### Attendees:

<b>Independent member: (Acting Chair)</b>	Cathy Galway (CG)
<b>Independent Members:</b>	Gearóid Cassidy (GC) Julie Erskine (JE)
<b>DoJ Sponsor Division:</b>	Claire Robinson (CR) Barbara Hopps (BH)
<b>DoJ Internal Audit:</b>	Amanda Oliver (AO)
<b>AAB Accountants</b>	Suzanne Villiers (SV)
<b>NIAO:</b>	Suzanne Jones (SJ)
<b>FSD:</b>	Lindsay Peel (LP)
<b>Criminal Justice Inspection (CJI):</b>	Jacqui Durkin (JD) James Corrigan (JC) Meloney McVeigh (MMcV) David MacAnulty (DMacA)
<b>ARAC Secretary:</b>	Linda Boal (LB) CJI

### Agenda Description / Comments

#### No

- 1 **Introduction/acknowledgements.**
  - CG welcomed everyone to the meeting and extended a warm welcome to the two new Independent Members Gearóid Cassidy and Julie Erskine. Introductions followed. CG expressed her appreciation and thanks to Mandy Kilpatrick BEM, the outgoing Independent Member for her commitment and service to the CJI Audit Committee. Those sentiments were echoed by JD and JC.
- 2 **Apologies.**  
Catherine O'Hagan and Teri Foden NIAO and Teressa Campbell AAB Accountants.

- 3 **Declaration of interest/Conflict of interest.**
- None.
- 4 **Minutes of previous meeting – 15 January 2026 and matters arising.**  
The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed and signed.  
**Matters arising:**
- None.
- 5 **Review of Audit and Risk Committee Terms of Reference**
- The draft Terms of Reference had been shared with members in advance of the meeting. The document is reviewed at the start of each financial year to ensure it is still relevant. MMcV asked if there were any suggested amendments or additions.
  - CG suggested an addition at point 1.2 to state the Chair would rotate between the Non-Executive Members. Also, at point 8.1 to add that (as a Senior Civil Servant) she doesn't receive any remuneration for work on the Committee, this also applies to GC.
  - JD suggested that 8.1 should be amended to read remuneration would be paid when applicable and affordable.
  - MMcV will make the suggested changes to the document and send to the Independent Members for signature.
  - **Action: MMcV.**
- 6 **Report summarising any significant changes to CJI's Risk Register.**
- The CJI Risk Register was updated in March 2026 following a review by CJI staff and distributed to ARAC members in advance.
  - The three main risks remain as: Risk 1 Quality of Inspection product; Risk 2 CJI's Relevance to/within the CJS; and Risk 3 the Resilience and Sustainability of CJI.
  - Following the recent retirement of one Inspector and the resignation of another, MMcV highlighted loss of staff as a delivery risk, with the potential impacts on report publication timescales and the timely completion of the Inspection Programme.
  - JC advised that in relation to the Inspector resource risk, one vacancy has been filled and the business case to fill the second is being progressed.
  - CG asked about the Associated Inspector list and JC confirmed successful candidates have been advised of their inclusion on the list.
  - The planned closure of Knockview Buildings was discussed. CJI will need alternative accommodation that meets business need and does not impact on its actual or perceived independence or impartiality.
  - JE added that the perception of where CJI is accommodated is important.
  - MMcV advised that an exact date was unknown, however Knockview will close before the end of 2027; she committed to keep the Committee updated on developments.
  - JE suggested that this risk should be a separate item on the Risk Register and the Committee agreed.
  - **Action: MMcV.**

- CG agreed this risk would be kept under review and queried the process should CJI needed to escalate the risk. JD advised it would escalate through sponsor to the DoJ ARAC but she was confident a solution would be found.

7 **Internal Audit Plan 2026-27.**

- AO spoke to the plan which will include an audit of the Communication and Engagement with Internal and External Stakeholders.
- The audit will aim to provide assurance that CJI's communication and stakeholder engagement arrangements are effective, well governed and in line with the objectives and ethos of the organisation. The audit will take place during Q3/4.
- JD, JC and MMcV welcomed the planned audit.
- AO advised that the Annual Report and Opinion is currently being progressed and will be available at the June meeting.

8 **CJI Governance Statement.**

- MMcV shared the draft Statement which will be included in the 2025-26 Annual Report and Accounts in advance of the meeting. She asked the Independent Members if the Risk Appetite was still relevant and all Members confirmed it was.
- MMcV will finalise the document to include the highlighted sections as the information becomes available in the Annual Report and Accounts.
- **Action: MMcV.**

9 **Overview of preparation of the 12-month Accounts**

- LP gave an update on the financial position reporting that there were no issues and work was on course for the end of year.

10 **Report from management on whistle blowing, matters of concern and fraud issues.**

- JC advised CJI had received an email detailing a safeguarding issue in relation to an inspected organisation. After obtaining permission from the correspondent, he has shared the information with the organisation concerned and a response has been received.
- JD clarified that if a safeguarding issue arises during inspection fieldwork, in compliance with CJI's agreed policy and procedures, it is immediately communicated to the Head of the inspected organisation and assurance sought on what action they have or intend to take and the outcome communicated to CJI in due course.

11 **Report from management on any direct award contracts.**

- MMcV reported a nil return.

12 **Report summarising the expenses submitted by the Chief Inspector and the Deputy Chief Inspector.**

- The report detailing expenses incurred by the CI and Deputy CI and CJI Staff during the year was noted by all members.

13 **Review of CJI's gifts and hospitality register.**

- The reported information was noted by all members.

14 **AOB**

- The NIAO Report Partnership Working: Departments and Arm's Length Bodies (ALBs) was noted.
- CG asked if there was anything specific in terms of CJI. JC advised it was what he would expect to see for CJI and DoJ. JD advised there were no immediate impacts for CJI as its Partnership Agreement had been in place and working effectively for some time. However, the report is relevant in terms of DoJ ALBs inspected; strategy and governance is a core component of CJI inspections. CJI has previously recommended the need to finalise Partnership Agreements.
- AO advised that Hugh Widdis (DoJ Permanent Secretary) has asked Internal Audit to look at Sponsorship Arrangements and benchmarking and she will keep the ARAC updated if there is anything further that CJI need to consider.
- SJ clarified that the NIAO intended the report to provide a high-level view of Partnership Agreements in Department and Arm's Length Bodies.
- CG commented on the high quality of the ARAC papers and their timely circulation and thanked all those involved in their preparation.

15 **Dates of next meetings.**

The following dates are proposed for the next meetings:

Summer – Thursday 4 June 2026 at 10am.

Location: Knockview Buildings, Stormont Estate, Belfast BT4 3SJ.



4 June 2026

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**Cathy Galway**  
Chairperson

**Date:**