



**Maynooth
University**
National University
of Ireland Maynooth

**Social
Sciences
Institute**

MUSSI Working Paper Series No – 24 December 2024

Learning from Crime and Policing Research Partnerships in England and Scotland

Dr. Ian D. Marder
Assistant Professor in Criminology, Maynooth
University School of Law and Criminology

Learning from Crime and Policing Research Partnerships in England and Scotland

Dr. Ian D. Marder

Assistant Professor in Criminology, Maynooth University School of Law and Criminology

Chair, Criminal justice Open Research Dialogue Partnership

Contents

1. Introduction and summary of recommendations	2
2. Administration, Governance, Funding.....	3
2.1 N8PRP	3
2.2 VPRC	4
2.3 SIPR	5
2.4 SCCJR	6
3. Research Co-Production and Small Grants Schemes	6
3.1 N8PRP	6
3.2 VPRC	7
3.3 SIPR	7
3.4 SCCJR	8
4. Practitioner Fellowships.....	8
4.1 N8PRP	8
4.2 VPRC	9
4.3 SIPR	9
4.4 SCCJR	9
5. Implications and Recommendations for the CORD Partnership	10



1. Introduction and summary of recommendations

The Criminal justice Open Research Dialogue (CORD) Partnership involves over 130 persons from more than 50 organisations who work in research, policymaking and practice. It aims to embed a culture of interdisciplinary open research in criminal justice in Ireland.

CORD is funded by the National Open Research Forum (NORF) from 2023-2024.¹ One of the goals during this time was to explore and learn from the work of research partnerships internationally, including, but not limited to, those in criminal justice contexts. This part of the project involved:

- a workshop for CORD partners with speakers who shared their experiences of working on research partnerships in policing, big data, and health and human services ([Kenny, 2024](#));
- a scoping review of literature exploring criminal justice research partnerships around the world (an article is currently under review; see [Marder, McCormack and O’Duill, 2024](#), for a summary of the findings and a response from the Department of Justice); and,
- a two-week study visit to research partnerships and centres in York and Leeds in England, and Edinburgh and Glasgow in Scotland, taking place in November 2024.

This briefing summarises the learning from the two-week study visit, during which I met 19 people to discuss their work. In York and Leeds, I met current and/or former leaders and staff from:

- The N8 Policing Research Partnership (N8PRP – n8prp.org.uk/), a collaboration involving 8 universities and 11 police forces in Northern England which ‘work together to champion, enable, and support policing research and its impact’. The N8PRP is primarily a structure to encourage and facilitate collaboration and co-production of applied policing research. This was first funded by a large grant from HEFCE and in-kind contributions from partners, and now operates with a smaller budget funded by policing and university partners.
- The Vulnerability and Policing Futures Research Centre (VPRC), hosted by the Universities of York and Leeds (<https://vulnerabilitypolicing.org.uk/>), exists ‘to reshape how the police and other organisations work together in order to reduce harm among vulnerable people’. The VPRC differs from the N8PRP because it is primarily a programme of research. It was established by some of the same people however, and shares some activities. The Centre is funded by a five-year [UKRI](#) grant, with host universities providing some match funding.

In Edinburgh and Glasgow, I met current and former leaders and members of a policing research partnership and an inter-university collaboration:

- The Scottish Institute for Policing Research (SIPR – <https://www.sipr.ac.uk/>) is ‘a strategic collaboration between Scotland’s universities, Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority’, which facilitates ‘internationally excellent, multi-disciplinary policing research to enable evidence-informed policy and practice’. SIPR primarily provides infrastructure and funding to support collaboration on knowledge exchange and policing research. SIPR is funded through a collaboration agreement between policing and 14 university partners.
- The Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Studies (SCCJR - <https://www.sccjr.ac.uk/>) is ‘a collaboration between the Universities of Glasgow, Edinburgh, Edinburgh Napier, Stirling and Strathclyde [which] aims to produce research that informs policy and practice and advances our understanding of justice.’ It is primarily a forum to connect and support the research community. SCCJR began with external grants but is now funded by its partners.

¹ This project received funding from Ireland’s National Open Research Forum (NORF), under the 2023 Open Research Fund. NORF is funded by the Higher Education Authority (HEA), on behalf of the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS). This funding lasted fifteen months, from October 2023-December 2024. I am very grateful to all the persons who helped organise and host my visit, and who contributed their time towards this working paper.

This briefing summarises the learning from these meetings, supplemented by further information from secondary sources (e.g., partnership websites). It explores their administration, governance and funding, research co-production and small grants schemes, and practitioner fellowships that allow professionals to spend time working with researchers. It demonstrates how they developed infrastructure and allocated resources to achieve their goals. Finally, it considers the implications for the development of research co-production and research translation in Irish criminal justice.²

I make five recommendations regarding how CORD can develop infrastructure and use resources to achieve its aims in Ireland, based on the learning from England and Scotland:

1. That CORD seek funding for a two-year Research and Administrative Assistant to support the organisation of events and other activities, and to document and evaluate its actions.
2. That CORD obtain funding for and develop a small grant scheme, to which academics can seek two-year grants of around €25,000 for research and translation projects, co-created with policy and practice partners and modelled on the N8PRP, VPRC and SIPR schemes.
3. That CORD explore the willingness of partners to make in-kind contributions towards the co-production of research; for example, universities contributing 'free fees' for public and third sector CORD partners to complete a research degree on a co-produced topic.
4. That CORD maintain a governance structure which includes persons from a diverse range of organisation type as equal partners in overseeing its activities and direction, while also maintaining the flexibility to respond quickly to requests for support and opportunities.
5. That CORD develop a programme which enables policy and practice partners to work with researchers on mutually and socially beneficial activities, and which is co-designed with prospective participants, managers and administrators from a range of partners to ensure it is viable, suitable for our national context, and meets the needs of all parties.

The context in Ireland differs significantly from both England and Scotland. For example, research co-production in criminal justice is at a nascent stage here in Ireland, with relatively few projects involving or co-funded by the statutory sector. The funding landscape is also different: there is no obvious funder to which we might propose a significant programme of work at this time. Still, this report asks us to aim high by exploring how we might fund and organise a programme of research co-production and translation in Ireland, without precluding other activities (such as small grants of €2,000-€5,000 for seed funding, dissemination, events or visiting fellow support) if necessary.

2. Administration, Governance, Funding

2.1 N8PRP

The N8 Research Partnership is a collaboration of research-intensive universities, pre-dating the N8PRP. This meant there was already an infrastructure through which the vice-chancellors spoke.

The [Central Team](#) includes Police and Academic Co-directors, a Director of the New Researchers in Policing Network and a Project Manager. There are also policing and academic leads from each police force and university partner. This structure has changed over time. In the first funding cycle, there was a single director from an academic institution who had applied for a grant on which the N8PRP was established. When this grant finished, the director sought funding from university and

² I write this report conscious of my connections to these partnerships. I was a PhD student (2013-2018) of Prof. Adam Crawford, who established the N8PRP. I was a Research Fellow at the University of Liverpool, funded by the N8PRP (in 2018). Since November 2023, I am Research Affiliate at the VPRC, which Prof Crawford also established. Finally, I was Visiting Fellow at SCCJR during my visit (Sept-Dec 2024) and, in November 2024, I was nominated by Prof. Liz Aston, Director of SIPR, to join Edinburgh Napier University as a Visiting Associate Professor.

police partners to extend the partnership. A co-funding model continues, led by co-directors from a policing and academic partner; the funding sits with the institution of the academic co-director.

The move from a national grant to partner contributions corresponded with a greater focus on the contributing organisations as the primary beneficiaries. Another change was that, during the first grant, academic leads held a specific thematic responsibility for N8PRP work, which is no longer the case. An Annual Innovation Forum, held in a neutral venue on a topic co-produced with police partners, provides access to the N8PRP's knowledge for a broader range of public and third sector organisations whose work relates to policing, but are not formally N8PRP partners. The N8PRP's structures provide the scaffolding to enable partners to identify modes of collaboration.

2.2 VPRC

The VPRC [Academic Leadership Team](#) consists of two Co-Directors and two Deputy Directors. Its Core Academic Team comprises 22 co-investigators from 11 universities, the Police Foundation, and a communications consultant. VPRC staff include a Centre Manager, a Centre Coordinator, a Communications and Engagement Officer, data scientists and nine researchers (11 from 2025). Six researchers joined at the outset of the programme (2022-27) on five-year contracts. Under co-investigators' supervision, researchers work on multiple projects in teams. This level of funding and staffing means that the Centre retains the freedom to undertake a coherent and coordinated programme of research relating to its mission, both academically oriented and applied, identified by PIs and Co-PIs during the grant drafting. Researchers are co-located across the Universities of Leeds and York and work on projects with Co-PIs, but are line managed in house.

VPRC research is place- and problem-based and thematic, involving [several two-year projects](#) in particular places (e.g., Blackpool, Leeds, Bradford) and on particular vulnerabilities (e.g., modern slavery, homelessness, domestic abuse, online child sexual victimisation and mental health). An Annual Centre Event presents the findings of specific projects and enables discussions on wider issues. Another element of the VPRC work relates to public engagement.

This structure is conducive to co-production with a wide range of police and non-police partners. The Centre is funded by UKRI (~£10m); the Universities of York and Leeds both also provide some match funding towards staffing and facilities.

In terms of governance, the VPRC has:

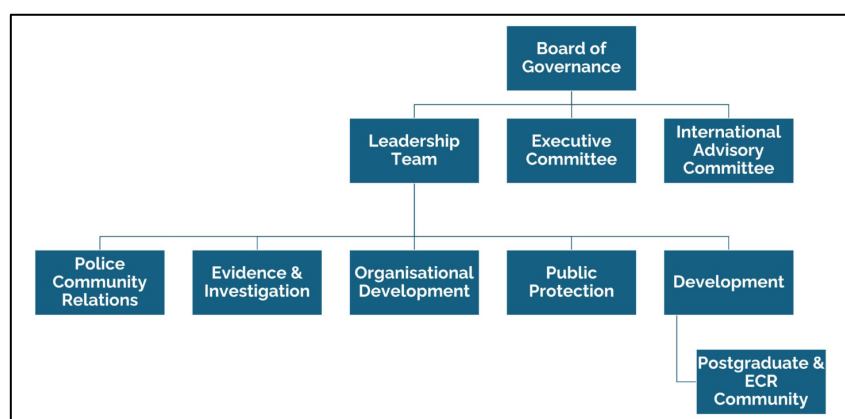
- An [Ethical Oversight Panel](#), which 'brings together experts who advise the Vulnerability & Policing Futures Research Centre on ethical issues that arise in its work'.
- An [International Advisory Board](#) to help the Centre 'forge new collaborations and share innovations in theory and methods through global academic networks and communities of practitioners [and] shares key opportunities with the Centre and helps to embed international best practice in the Centre's research'.
- A [National Engagement Group](#), with 'experts from government departments, universities, charities and policing', supports the VPRC to 'connect with key stakeholders and provides advice on policy, practice and research developments and opportunities across multiple sectors [...] implement its communications and impact strategy and ultimately reshape how the police and other organisations work together in order to reduce harm among vulnerable people in society.' This group also 'fulfils the role of an advisory board and has responsibility for overseeing the activities of the Centre outlined in its ESRC funding bid'.

At the time of writing, the VPRC approaches the halfway mark of its initial five-year funding period. The VPRC has just commenced an interim review, with two external researchers commissioned to assess the Centre and provide feedback and evidence on its work and progress.

2.3 SIPR

SIPR is funded by its 14 partner universities, Police Scotland, and the Scottish Policing Authority, through a combination of financial and in-kind contributions. It recently started a new, three-year funding cycle, governed by a collaboration agreement. About half these funds come from policing partners and half from universities. This pays part-time communications and administrative staff, a full-time knowledge exchange and business manager, and a set of grants and PhD scholarships. SIPR operates with approximately £280,000 funding annually plus in-kind contributions, such as towards the Director's time and the bulk of associate directors' costs for 10-20% of their time and university venues. Sponsorship from a trust funds an annual conference. With this funding model SIPR combines independent, PI-led and critical research with projects co-produced with policing partners. SIPR's goals include supporting knowledge exchange, generating policing research and developing the next generation of researchers. It has been running for 17 years and was previously funded by the Scottish Funding Council and the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland.

The SIPR governance structure is illustrated in the following image, taken from its website:



The Board of Governance Terms of Reference can be found [here](#), its purpose being 'to review and support the SIPR Director and the Executive Committee by ensuring that the optimum business structure and operational priorities are in place to deliver the strategic and operational objectives of SIPR'. The Executive Committee has a Director, a Knowledge Exchange and Business Manager, the five networks' leads, two representatives each from Police Scotland and the Scottish Policing Authority, and a SCCJR representative. The International Advisory Committee Terms of Reference are [here](#). SIPR also hosts a database of government, academic and postgraduate members [here](#).

The associate director roles are competitive and open to academics to apply to run one of the five networks. This helps build networks with people with similar interests at different institutions and focus energy on the five network themes (police-community relations, evidence and investigation and so on). The associate directors help researchers write grants and access data and help SIPR's policing partners connect with researchers and knowledge to prevent 'reinventing the wheel' and retain institutional memories when people change positions. Research has played at least some role in Scottish police reform in recent years, most notably in terms of stop and search policy. An [Impact Review](#), which was undertaken after ten years, indicates SIPR's main areas of impact.

The leadership team's experience is that sustained and routine interactions with policing partners improved their perceptions of academics as 'critical friends', and as people with complementary

skills with whom they can collaborate – even if people change position, or when research findings are negative. It is valuable to identify ‘quick wins’ that demonstrate action, and to enable partners to identify challenges they wish to discuss and help get academics around the table to do so. The bulk of the work SIPR supports relates to knowledge exchange and embedding research in police partners’ work. For example, there are efforts underway to build a requirement for an evidence-base into business cases and to expand the number of external evaluations of reforms. Relatedly, Police Scotland’s Academic Research Team collaborates with many academics, ‘supporting over fifty live collaborations between Police Scotland and external research practitioners’ ([see here](#)).

2.4 SCCJR

SCCJR’s [management team](#) includes a Director, twelve Associate Directors, a Communications Officer, a Knowledge Exchange Officer, and an Administrator. Its members include research staff, associates and postgraduates. SCCJR has published a statement on the support of early-career researchers in which its management team make specific commitments ([see here](#)). For example, they encourage grant applicants to include at least one early-career researcher or PhD student in projects and, increasingly, for newer researchers to take leadership roles.

SCCJR began with large grants from the Scottish Funding Council and the Scottish Government’s Justice Analytical Services to undertake programmes of research and provide consultation services and research-based advice. Now, their funding model is that the five university partners provide around £14,000 annually over a three-year funding cycle. The source of the funding within each university depends on its administrative structures: it might be paid from a dean of research office or from a college account, for example. The funding sits within the University of Glasgow as the administrative hub, and is supplemented by in-kind contributions (e.g., event space). SCCJR is not a legal entity, meaning that there is an ongoing, but manageable, challenge to navigate each university’s administrative system – a task supported by Associate Directors.

Funding pays for the three staff, who each work part-time, and for small grants (discussed below). Partner universities differ in terms of whether they recognise SCCJR leadership roles in their staff workload allocations. Still, the funding supports a significant amount of activity. One challenge is in collecting qualitative data to enable SCCJR to demonstrate to universities the (often intangible) impact of networking and early-career researcher support – although it has been possible to show connections between their funded events and seed grants, and larger bids and publications.

3. Research Co-Production and Small Grants Schemes

3.1 N8PRP

The N8PRP’s small grants scheme, through which partners could jointly apply for funding of up to £25k per project, was funded initially by a HEFCE catalyst grant. HEFCE required at least matched in-kind funding; the initial project fund of ~£7.4m included £3m from HEFCE and £4.4m of in-kind contributions. Among the in-kind commitments sought from the partner universities was to fund a PhD student in each institution, the cost of which sat in the university commitment to the grant. Institutions costed this in different ways, and topics for projects were co-produced with partners. Summaries of these projects can be found [here](#).

The HEFCE grant ended in 2020. Ever since, universities and police forces have contributed some funding to maintain a small grants scheme. After considerable negotiation, this co-funding model is currently operating on a three-year cycle.

Small grants provided important learning on delivering value for money. The small amounts drew in other resources, with institutions providing match commitments, such as people's time (often, 2-3 times the value of the £25k). Projects were highly valuable and fed back into the partnership, with all partners playing a role in the process by which the grants were allocated, supporting buy-in to funded research projects from partners who were not directly involved in a given study.

The theme for each year's scheme was agreed at a partnership meeting, of which there were four, one-day meetings per year. Themes and calls were launched at the annual innovation forum, with the closing date three months later. One university was in charge of the initial sift and shortlisting process against criteria. Up to 12 applications were sent out for peer review to people not involved in the N8PRP, providing some objectivity to the process, before the Director also reviewed them.

External reviewers were paid, given the scale of the work and the quick turnaround (three weeks) expected. A report, in which all projects received comments and scores against the criteria, was circulated to the partnership before a meeting to decide on the funding. Scores were not the only consideration if, for example, proposals duplicated work already taking place. Often, 3-5 projects were funded, but fewer projects were funded in some years than in others depending on quality.

Projects need at least one university and policing partner; other relevant parties were encouraged to be involved. Co-production was important: non-academic partners must be involved in project construction and in co-producing outcomes. Examples of recent awards and reports from funded projects can be found [here](#). In 2024/25, the small grants scheme has transitioned into the Policing Priority Grant scheme, which can be found [here](#).

3.2 VPRC

The VPRC has an [Early Career Researcher Development Fund](#): its main small grants scheme. Like the N8PRP scheme, this permits researchers to apply for up to £25k for a one-year project. Four funded projects commenced in each of [its first and second rounds](#), and VPRC aims to fund four additional projects in the open (at the time of writing) round. Unlike N8PRP, however, applicants must be early-career researchers, the fund does not cover the full economic costs for universities and principal investigators can use up to 50% of grants to cover their time (e.g., teaching buyout). The Centre also provides a package of development, training and support for grantees, as well as supporting dissemination. Grants are administered in a similar way to those of the N8PRP.

3.3 SIPR

In a typical year, SIPR organises a [main grant scheme and several smaller schemes](#). SIPR has built an extensive programme of both academic-led and co-produced research funding. Grants aim to balance the needs of different partners, and are kept relatively open so that applicants can mould applications in ways that meet their needs and encourage investing time in substantial projects.

The themes for the main grant scheme are decided each year it is to run, and have included future policing, policing systems capacities and seldom-heard communities. These are researcher-led, although letters of support are required if they involve seeking access to police personnel or data. Many applications are co-produced with police and related partners including, but not limited to, Police Scotland. Other large grant schemes are necessarily co-produced, such as the responsive research scheme, which aims to be responsive to the needs of policing partners. Recent subjects have included anti-discrimination in policing, and applications can propose knowledge synthesis as well as primary research. Institutions are encouraged to waive overheads as part of the grants, with value for money sought from the applications.

A PhD scheme is co-funded by SIPR and participating universities. Academics express an interest to SIPR to supervise a PhD on a specific topic. SIPR plan to award up to two scholarships this year and contribute half the funds toward the stipend and fees; universities must contribute the rest.

Smaller grant schemes include the ‘leverage fund’ of around £2,000 aiming to support academics with seed funding that leads to larger grant applications, an early-career research fund, and funds that aim to support dissemination of existing research. Some calls have deadlines and others are rolling, with SIPR’s grant agreement permitting the reorganising of funding during a term whenever there are unspent monies in certain schemes. Partners can also contact SIPR to seek small funds or match funding for other events and knowledge exchange activities.

3.4 SCCJR

SCCJR funds a number of knowledge exchange and research development projects ([see here](#) for the 2024/25 announcement of projects funded). Development grants are around £2,000 and can cover a pilot research project or small study, literature reviews, and other activities. They support the hiring of research assistance and the organising of academic conferences, including a [recent conference](#) for early-career researchers on penalty – the networking from which has led to larger funding bids. It has also funded projects to develop a new theoretical framework around deviance and videogames, and a project looking at the experiences of Catholics in Scottish prisons.

The knowledge exchange grant, also for around £2,000, enables dissemination and other creative research communication and engagement activities. For example, SCCJR has funded a podcast series, work with people who have prison experience, a suite of learning resources on criminology for schoolteachers, and workshops with government and other policy and practice partners.

Funds aim to accommodate innovative methods or creative ideas, such as plays and storytelling. Projects can be as much about the methodology they are using as their content. Given that SCCJR aims to encourage inter-institutional collaboration the involvement of people from more than one university is typically the core criterion for projects. This provides relatively quick and easy access to small amounts of money, with a short application form, for collaborative academic work.

In 2024, SCCJR also [sponsored](#) the prize for the best postgraduate paper at the British Society of Criminology Conference at Strathclyde University in Glasgow. Until recently, SCCJR was a partner (alongside the Scottish Government and SIPR) in administering the government-funded Scottish Justice Fellows. This grant allowed recent PhD students to apply for up to £5,000 to turn their PhD findings into a policy briefing. Fellows had academic mentors, and SCCJR supported Fellows with organising the launches of their policy briefings.

SCCJR also has associate members who are permitted to be project partners on applications for SCCJR funds, although they cannot lead a bid.

4. Practitioner Fellowships

4.1 N8PRP

The N8PRP developed a Knowledge Exchange Fellowship Scheme enabling practitioners in police forces to obtain funding for a small research-related project. This operated throughout the HEFCE grant funded period, but there was a consistently low level of demand. In [one notable example](#), a member of a police force’s professional staff undertook a fellowship that led to them completing a PhD on a related topic, before pursuing a career in research. However, this was one element of the N8PRP’s work which did not take off, and on which the VPRC is trying to improve.

The N8PRP also delivered a CPD programme in data analytics for partner forces. An evaluation of this programme can be found [here](#).

4.2 VPRC

The VPRC Translational Fellowships [funding programme](#) enables ‘practitioners and policymakers to undertake research that addresses particular vulnerability and policing problems or solutions in their work.’ The programme provides grants of around £10k to support projects led by policy or practice partners, supported and mentored by academic researchers.

The programme provides funding for employers ‘to release the Fellow for a period or a proportion of their time’, such as a day per week for six months, or two weeks. Costed travel and subsistence can also be funded; payments can be used to backfill positions. As VPRC aims to use its ‘funding to leverage additional investments [...] to maximise potential benefit for the public good’, the call encourages employers to provide co-funding through matched commitments (cash or in-kind) as part of the fellowship. Funds can be sought by employees of public, third-sector and international organisations. The Centre supports prospective applicants with project design; Fellows receive a dedicated mentor during their projects. The fund operates as a rolling call.

A small number of projects have been successful thus far. Applicants are encouraged to discuss potential applications with the Centre to clarify how projects complement the Centre’s mission and enable projects to suit the applicant’s needs. Not every discussion will lead to an application. Reasons for this might be that the project doesn’t fit with the Centre’s mission, or the applicants (or applicants’ organisations) struggle to find the capacity to undertake the fellowship. The Centre is also considering rebranding the programme in order to better attract prospective applicants.

4.3 SIPR

SIPR hosts a [Practitioner Fellowship Scheme](#), through which ‘police staff and other practitioners with interests in policing’ can ‘engage in a piece of policing related research under the supervision and guidance of an academic member of staff’. Fellowships can run for different time periods and lead to briefing papers or other outputs, with funding available for research-related expenses. At least 15 projects began: listed on the [website](#), these explore topics like special constable training, adults and children in care, asset-based approaches to community policing, domestic abuse and others. However, not all of these have been completed, and it represents the cumulative demand for this programme since it was established over 15 years ago.

The scheme is current being revamped to make it more attractive and practical. Challenges have included that practitioners may not always have time to complete a project they begin, even when it relates quite closely to their roles. The revamped scheme will aim to improve the recognition of the scheme within police promotions or CPD, work with senior leaders to ensure practitioners do get dedicated time (e.g. 20%) to complete projects, and maximise the visibility of the outputs.

4.4 SCCJR

SCCJR does not organise fellowships involving persons from policy or practice. However, SCCJR’s [Visiting Fellowship](#) scheme allows ‘active researchers’ to ‘visit SCCJR for the purpose of research and collaboration, and to participate in the wider intellectual life of SCCJR’. Fellows can apply for a maximum of £750 to cover travel and accommodation. Visitors must be hosted and supported by a member of academic staff at one of the five partner universities. Increasingly, this scheme is funding visits for PhD students and academics from universities who do not have access to funds

for professional travel. One ongoing challenge is to provide support for Global North-Global South partnerships with the small amount of funding available.

5. Implications and Recommendations for the CORD Partnership

The N8PRP, VPRC, SIPR and SCCJR demonstrate what could be achieved through partnership and collaboration. Each organisation has developed an appropriate level of governance, and obtained funding to hire staff, provide small grants, and host some form of fellowship. Sources lauded the potential to stimulate research, to facilitate knowledge exchange and policy/practice impact, and to support networking and collaboration.

Based on their accomplishments, I recommend:

1. That CORD seek funding for a two-year Research and Administrative Assistant to support the organisation of events and other activities, and to document and evaluate its actions.
2. That CORD obtain funding for and develop a small grant scheme, to which academics can seek two-year grants of around €25,000 for research and translation projects, co-created with policy and practice partners and modelled on the N8PRP, VPRC and SIPR schemes.
3. That CORD explore the willingness of partners to make in-kind contributions towards the co-production of research; for example, universities contributing 'free fees' for public and third sector CORD partners to complete a research degree on a co-produced topic.
4. That CORD maintain a governance structure which includes persons from a diverse range of organisation type as equal partners in overseeing its activities and direction, while also maintaining the flexibility to respond quickly to requests for support and opportunities.
5. That CORD develop a programme which enables policy and practice partners to work with researchers on mutually and socially beneficial activities, and which is co-designed with prospective participants, managers and administrators from a range of partners to ensure it is viable, suitable for our national context, and meets the needs of all parties.

Any efforts to learn from the work of others must account for local contexts. Ireland benefits from a level of informality and professional autonomy within universities and other organisations that makes our working environment quite different to that of the UK. There is every chance that efforts to organise formal infrastructure would take away from this informality and flexibility, creating an administrative burden that exceeds our capacity to manage it and retain institutional support. We also lack an obvious funder to which we might apply for a collaborative research programme. Our partners will understand that these recommendations all require extensive further consideration regarding their viability in Ireland.

At the same time, CORD has nourished partners' intrinsic motivations to contribute, and benefits from a level of goodwill that is likely to endure, irrespective of whether we build infrastructure and obtain resources in the manner outlined in the above recommendations. These partnerships and centres show what could be achieved with resources, co-produced structures and collaboration. Given our positive relationships and growing interest in partnership research, it time is to explore how we might use resources and structures to maximise the social benefits of our joint activities.