

Charter

Experts by Experience Global Group

Version: 1 May 2024

Introduction

This Charter contains background information and safeguarding ground rules of the newly formed Global Group of Experts by Experience. In 2023, PRI took important steps to fulfill its ambition of involving people with lived experience of being in conflict or contact with the law, to support the quality of criminal justice reform in the form of advocacy, research and practical programs. By involving people with lived experience, PRI wants to promote practical knowledge and lived experience in addition to theoretical knowledge. PRI started building the global group of experts by experience, to supplement the already existing PRI advisory council. The idea is to build the Global Group in a gradual and participatory manner, to accommodate the essential learning needs of PRI recognizing the novel, sensitive and emotional nature of this type of work. The Charter should be a continues evolving document reflecting our aim to improve and learn.

Why a Charter? First of all, we think a Charter explaining details of the functioning of the Global Group contributes to creating a safe and nurturing space including meaningful interaction. In addition, it can help in manage the expectation of the members as to what the Global Group is. To ensure that all members of the Global Group agree to the Charter, and to express mutual commitment to the Charter, all members including PRI are required to take note of and confirm the Charter by signing it.

Building this Charter, we have made use of valuable resourcesⁱ and studiesⁱⁱ and drew lessons from other organizations and projects working with people with lived experience such as Exchanging Perspectives/ Youthlabⁱⁱⁱ project from YOPE.

Early 2023, we started looking for and recruiting people and by the summer we established a group of 8 people from Europe, Africa, Asia and the US. The group officially kicked off in September. The required profile, requirements and gains are as follows:

Desired profile of group members:

Bring in personal and practical experience and knowledge of criminal justice systems. People that have themselves been in prison, have experience with probation or diversion measures and therefore have so called 'lived experience' with the criminal justice system.

Ways for members to contribute:

- Provide perspective on various subjects such as how to support people in criminal justice systems
- Share the priorities for better criminal justice systems
- Provide reflections on specific documents or activities: for example new strategies or policy positions of PRI
- Speak at an event or training with an international audience of criminal justice experts

Requested contribution and requirements :

- Be available around 4 to 6 times a year. Each session taking between 1 and 3 hours.
- Feedback session might have the shape of an online meeting or might involve written feedback
- Be ready to take part in meetings or conferences as a speaker or participant.
- That you can speak and write in English

Gains for the members:

- access to an organisation that helps structure and amplify your ideas on improving the criminal justice system.
- Opportunity to meet passionate and professional people working for criminal justice reform from around the globe and therefore opportunity to enlarge your network.
- Opportunity to participate in conferences and workshops, both offline and online to gain knowledge and experience.
- Compensation of costs regarding participating in activities.

Ground Rules

1. PRI's Safeguarding policy

In addition to the specific ground Rules for the Global Group, PRI has also developed a general Safeguarding policy^{iv} which applies to all people working for PRI including the members of the Global Group.

2. Informed consent

In the case of consultations, meetings, and assignments, PRI should provide contextual information, such as the objective, scope, durations, compensation, etc. PRI always needs to explain the aim of consultations, how information will be used, etc. PRI needs to verify that all participants understand the aim.

3. Confidentiality and privacy

In general, the default status of everything that is being shared as part of group or bilateral meetings is of a confidential nature. What's shared in the group, stays in the group. In case the group intends to share something outside of the group, then this will be explicitly mentioned and agreed upon.

Digital or hard-copy documents, notes, agenda's etc, that are being used or created for the group meetings are kept in digital folders that are safe both on the side of PRI (only accessible by members and PRI's Global Group Focal points) and on the side of the members.

Some members are comfortable, and others are not comfortable with public disclosure of their criminal record. Group members are aware of this.

Sharing contact information such as email addresses or telephone numbers between group members depends on the choice of every members and will be regularly checked by PRI. .

Members can opt to react or respond to consultations in an anonymous way, by expressing this to PRI prior to the activity.

4. Safe Space

Any Global Group interaction should be and feel as a safe and nurturing space to be in including high levels of trust. The Safe Space should be a place where people feel free and comfortable to share their experiences and opinions without being judged. Members are aware that building a Safe Space takes time and effort and can also be easily destroyed.

To create the Safe Space, the functioning of all Ground Rules are needed and interlinked.

5. Stimulating wellbeing

Recognising the diversity and potential vulnerabilities among the group, the Global Group wants to ensure that wellbeing of the members is well taken into account. Starting every interaction with a brief check-in on how everybody is doing besides work, can help foster the interaction and cohesion between the members.

The Global group aims for a 'trauma-informed' approach which represents a way of working across disciplines that first and foremost recognises the impact and acknowledges the impact of traumatic experiences on peoples' daily lives alongside their capacity for growth, healing, and resilience. Also it seeks to intentionally avoid re-traumatisation of people involved'. The collective set of Safeguarding Ground Rules are ways to mitigate the risk of re-traumatisation.

6. Diversity and Inclusion.

The groups want to ensure diversity within the group including gender, race, age, culture, socioeconomic status and actively promote inclusivity. The group recognizes the diverse and special interests and needs of these groups and values their unique contribution.

Inclusion can be stimulated by using inclusive language and communication, by avoiding stereotypes and by addressing biases. Also, of importance is recognizing intersectionality between different aspects of identity. At the same time, the group acknowledges that, even with the best of intentions, it takes a great effort to come – to quote one of the members- outside of our culturally encapsulated worldview.

7. Agency and learning

The spirit of the Global Group is one of joint exploring and learning. Also the aim is for everyone's voice to be heard and acted upon. Co-creation is an important value for the group which involves a joined responsibility to develop ideas, documents, etc.

PRI will seek regular feedback from the members to continuously improve the group's effectiveness and safety. Based on the feedback and input, necessary adjustments will be made.

8. Membership commitment, duration and exit strategy.

Members are expected to commit for a minimum of two years. Evaluations will be conducted annually, providing an opportunity for individual members and PRI to provide feedback. Active participation is encouraged, and failure to respond to meeting invitations on more than three occasions per year, may result in dismissal from the group.

Upon departure from the group, an exit interview will be conducted, and comprehensive notes will be taken.

9. Compensation

The members voluntarily take part in the general online meetings which will be 4 to 6 times a year.

There will be no compensation available for that. PRI's intention is to raise funds for additional assignments and consultations of the Global Group. In case there is financial compensation available, PRI will communicate this clearly to the group.

10. Complaints

PRI has a policy in place for complaints which can be accessed on PRI's website^{vi}

Signature

Member	
Name	
Date	
Place	
Signature	

PRI	
Name	
Date	
Place	
Signature	

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- ⁱ Angela Newton, Lived Experience Matters, Lived Experience: learning from, 2022, <https://beyondthestreets.org.uk/lived-experience-learning-from-others/>
- ⁱⁱ Gillian Buck, Philippa Tomczak, Kaitlyn Quinn, This is how it Feels: Activating Lived Experience in the Penal Voluntary Sector, The British Journal of Criminology, Volume 62, Issue 4, July 2022, Pages 822–839, <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azab102>
- ⁱⁱⁱ <https://exchangingperspectives.org/about/>
- ^{iv} https://cdn.penalreform.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/PSEA-Safeguarding-policy_ACTIVE-002.pdf
- ^v Kristine Hickie, *A Brief Introduction to Trauma Informed Practice*, University of Sussex
- ^{vi} <https://www.penalreform.org/about-us/governance/whistleblowing/>