



Magistrates Association

Research Officer

Job description

Salary:	£30,750 pro-rata
Location:	Office-based at St George Wharf, London, SW8 2LE or work from home (some travel required)
Hours:	Part time (0.6 FTE) for five months

1. About the Magistrates Association

The Magistrates Association (MA) is a national charity and the membership body for magistrates in England and Wales. We work to promote the sound administration of the law, including – but not restricted to – educating and informing magistrates and others about the law, the administration of justice, the treatment of offenders and the prevention of crime. With 14,000 members, we are the independent voice of the magistracy.

Our policy team carries out an ambitious programme of work to ensure the fair and effective delivery of justice and support the development of the magistracy. This includes informing and influencing policy related to magistrates' courts and the magistracy, and producing and publishing research on key topics relevant to the magistracy and using this research to inform the development of training and development materials for magistrates.

2. Main purpose of the role

The main purpose of this role is to develop and carry out a research project looking at the impact of an offender's level of maturity in magistrates' courts.

Sentencing guidelines for adult criminal court include 'Age and/or lack of maturity' as a potential mitigating factor. However, previous research has indicated that magistrates would welcome more training on the issue of maturity, and how it should be taken into account when sentencing. This research project will provide an evidence base for the production of relevant training materials.

The research will look at magistrates' understanding of maturity, what information they receive in relation to whether a lack of maturity is a factor in any case, and if so how it influences sentencing decisions. The research will involve surveying magistrates and carrying out three focus groups to discuss sentencing decisions, and holding a roundtable event with stakeholders who work in probation.

The Research Officer will be expected to carry out a literature review of existing academic research and relevant case law. They will also lead the three focus group discussions, as well as the roundtable event with probation experts. The qualitative data from these events will form the

main research findings, along with the results of the survey. The results will be presented in the format of a research report.

The Director of Policy and Research will be overseeing the research project, and the MA's current Policy and Research Assistant will also be working on the project, but the Research Officer will be expected to project manage the research and work independently.

3. Position in the organisation

Reports to: Director of Policy and Research

4. Main areas of responsibility

This role will be required to carry out a research project looking at how the maturity of an offender impacts on sentencing decisions taken in magistrates' court. It will involve:

- carrying out desk-top research to summarise existing research and case law;
- drafting a survey for magistrates on the issue;
- conducting three focus groups to consider what impacts sentencing decisions;
- organising a roundtable event for stakeholders working in probation; and
- drafting a final report summarising the key findings of the research.

Person specification

Essential

- Degree level qualification or equivalent experience.
- Excellent qualitative and quantitative research skills.
- Project management experience.
- The ability to produce a clear research report.
- The ability to work effectively under pressure and to tight deadlines.
- The ability to organise and prioritise your own workload.
- Strong attention to detail.

Desirable

- Knowledge of the criminal justice system.
- Knowledge or understanding about maturity and how it affects decision-making.
- Knowledge of the workings of magistrates' courts.

How to apply

All applicants should complete the MA's application form (available from <https://www.magistrates-association.org.uk/staff/work-ma> or from 020 7387 2353 or info@magistrates-association.org.uk) and submit it to info@magistrates-association.org.uk or by post to: The Magistrates Association, 10A Flagstaff House, St George Wharf, London, SW8 2LE.

You are welcome to contact the MA's Director of Policy and Research, Dr Jo Easton, on 020 7387 2353 or jo.easton@magistrates-association.org.uk to discuss the position informally.

The closing date for receipt of applications is **5pm on Thursday 13 June 2019**.

Employment information

This section summarises basic information about employment terms and conditions. Full terms and conditions will be included in the contract of employment that will be offered to the successful applicant. This summary does not form part of a subsequent employment contract.

Location

The MA's office is at 10A Flagstaff House, St George Wharf, London, SW8 2LE. The Research Officer can work from home or at the office. The role will involve occasional travel.

Hours of work

This role is offered **part time**, 21 hours (the equivalent of three full days) per week.

Period of employment

A period of five months.

Benefits

The salary for this post is £30,750 per annum (pro rata for 21 hours per week, which equates to £18,450 per annum or £7,688 over five months).

The annual leave entitlement is 25 days per year (pro rata for 21 hours per week, which equates to 15 days per annum or 6.5 days over five months), plus statutory holidays.