International Fellowship of Restorative Justice Practitioners –

Approval Panel Terms of Reference (ToR)

Fellowship Objectives

The International Fellowship of Restorative Justice Practitioners (IFRJP) is an ambitious RJ4All initiative that aims to connect and empower individuals and services delivering restorative justice globally. Operating within the "restorative justice for all" spirit of our international NGO, **the Fellowship is a free global endeavour with the following objectives:**

1. To establish a diverse pool of approved restorative justice practitioners and services that RJ4All can assign case work,
2. To facilitate connections between restorative justice practitioners, researchers, and policymakers.

Purpose

The key purpose of the Approval Panel for the International Fellowship of Restorative Justice Practitioners (IFRJP) is to evaluate and assess applications from individual restorative justice practitioners who wish to join the IFRJP. The panel will ensure that applicants comply with RJ4All Restorative Justice Practice Framework and meet the necessary qualifications, experience, and ethical standards required by the organisation.

Composition

The Approval Panel will include **three** internal RJ4All members and a minimum of **three** and maximum of **ten** external experts. Although the panel will be meeting quarterly to make decisions, we are not expecting all external members to be engaged as often.

Additional members may be invited to join the panel as needed.

Responsibilities/Decision-making and voting process

The Approval Panel shall be responsible for the following:

1. Reviewing and evaluating applications from individual restorative justice practitioners aiming to join the RJ4All Fellowship.
2. Assessing applicants' qualifications, experience, and adherence to ethical standards in accordance with the organisation's criteria.
3. Providing feedback to applicants regarding the outcome of their application process. If an application is rejected, the Approval Panel should explain why and support applicants to progress aspects that may have led to their rejection.

Applications from practitioners are accepted on an ongoing basis independently of location or seniority.

While the panel convenes **quarterly** for decision-making, we anticipate varying levels of engagement among members. From the existing pool of Approval Panel members, the decision-making panel will consist of 2 RJ4All members and 2 external experts and will determine application outcomes with agreement from at least 3 members.

Towards the end of each quarter, all panel members will be contacted to ascertain their availability. The RJ4All Director will then compose the decision-making panel for that quarter ased on the provided availability. Each panel member will independently review applications and submit their decisions to the RJ4All Director. These decisions will be consolidated by the Director to determine the outcome.

Equal voting rights are granted to each panel member, ensuring fairness in the decision-making process. Transparency and accountability are upheld throughout the process.

Panel members are able to claim £50 compensation for their contribution each year. The honorarium will be paid at the end of each year.

Criteria for Evaluation

The Decision Panel shall evaluate applicants based on the following criteria:

1. Commitment to the values of RJ4All International Restorative Justice Pledge.
2. Alignment with the RJ4All Restorative Justice Framework, which defines who qualifies to be a "restorative justice practitioner", a "senior restorative justice practitioner" and a "restorative justice service".
3. Relevant qualifications and training in restorative justice principles and practices.
4. Experience in restorative justice interventions.
5. Capacity to work effectively within diverse communities and with individuals affected by crime or conflict.
6. Declared availability.
7. Ability to contribute positively to the mission and objectives of RJ4All.

The list of relevant documentation to take into account when deciding comprises primarily:

1. Application Form responses
2. CV

Additional documentation that can be requested later on, if needed:

1. Copies of RJ Training Certificates (e.g. series of short, CPD certified courses or a Level 4 Diploma in restorative justice practice – or equivalent)
2. DBS check
3. International Restorative Justice Pledge registration
4. Evidence of unsupervised practice for at least 6 months (if senior restorative justice practitioner, evidence of unsupervised practice for at least 2 months including managing complex cases)

Relevant casework evidence could be, but not limited:

a. Relevant Case Studies, Evaluation Reports or Publications
b. Participant Feedback or Testimonials
c. Professional references
d. Outcome Agreements
e. Referral Records
f. Case-work Notes

Access to all related documents for making decisions will be provided in advance, while general IFRJP-related information, including the application form itself, can be found in this link.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

Applicant data shall be securely stored.

Personal data shall be handled confidentially and in accordance with the RJ4All **Data Protection Policy** and relevant data protection legislation, including the **EU GDPR**.

Conflict of Interest

Internal and external Decision Panel members are expected to have direct or indirect conflict of interest whether potential or actual (see Annex A). This does not form a reason for disqualifying them. However, members are expected to declare such conflicts at their earliest convenience. Members are also expected to perform their membership duties according to the Nolan 7 principles of public life (see Annex B).

Annex A: Potential & Actual conflict of interest policy

Decision Panel members need to consider and declare any potential or actual conflict of interest which may preclude them from participating in decisions relating to this conflict.

The purposes of this policy are to protect the integrity of the Decision Panel decision-making process, to enable external stakeholders and restorative justice practitioners to have confidence in RJ4All integrity.

There are six main issues which could lead to real, or apparent, conflicts of interest. These are:

- Relevant pecuniary or other interests outside RJ4All;

- Relationships with other parties/organisations which could lead to perceived or real split loyalties;
- Creating an unfair personal advantage to people with allied business interests – for example access to privileged information – trade secrets;
- Perception of rewards for past contributions or favours;
- Membership of some societies or organisations
- Having in anyway engaged in public speaking, media or social media comments that would in any way be at odds with integrity or cause embarrassment to RJ4All.

In the case of a conflict of interests arising because of a duty of loyalty owed to another organisation or person and the conflict is not authorised by virtue of any other provision, the unconflicted members may authorise such a conflict of interests where the following conditions apply:

1. It is legal and within RJ4All's Memorandum of Articles;
2. The Decision Panel member who has declared the conflict of interest withdraws from a decision affecting that other organisation or person;
3. The Decision Panel member who has the conflict of interest does not vote on any such matter and is not to be counted when considering whether a quorum is present at the meeting;
4. The other Decision Panel members who have no conflict of interest in this matter consider it in the interests of the project to authorise the conflict of interest in the circumstances applying.
5. Any such disclosure and the subsequent actions taken will be noted in the minutes.

Annex B: Nolan's 7 principles of public life

Although membership does not lead to a public appointment, the Decision Panel adopts the seven principles of public life defined in 1995 by the Committee on Standards in Public Life. These are:

Selflessness
Members should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or other friends.

Integrity

Members should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.

Objectivity
Carrying out their duties including awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

Accountability
Members are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

Openness
Members should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

Honesty
Members have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

Leadership
Members should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.