

The logo for CLiNKs, featuring the word "CLiNKs" in a bold, white, sans-serif font on a blue background. The letter "i" in "LINKS" is lowercase and has a dot above it.

CLiNKs

Supporting the voluntary sector
working in the criminal justice system

A photograph of a diverse group of people sitting in a meeting or conference. In the foreground, a Black man with a beard, wearing a white shirt, is looking towards the right. Behind him, a woman with dark hair, wearing a blue patterned top and a pearl necklace, is also looking towards the right. Other people are visible in the background, slightly out of focus. The overall atmosphere is professional and collaborative.

Creating change together

Our strategy for 2019-2022

Our vision is of...

A vibrant, independent and resilient voluntary sector that enables people to transform their lives.

Our mission is...

To support, represent and advocate for the voluntary sector in criminal justice, enabling it to provide the best possible opportunities for individuals and their families.

Our values...

Our members / Voluntary organisations play an essential role at the heart of our criminal justice system.

Using evidence / In order to improve the system we must amplify the voices of voluntary organisations working in criminal justice.

Involving service users / We are committed to supporting the effective involvement of people with lived experience of the criminal justice system to inform policy and practice.

People's capacity to change / We believe that every individual should have the right support so they can transform their lives.

Equality / We proactively identify and tackle disadvantage, discrimination and inequality in our criminal justice system.

Inclusivity / We strive to be approachable, accessible, inclusive and collaborative.

How we do it

We provide the backbone to the voluntary sector working with people caught up in the criminal justice system. We provide information, support, voice and resource. We regularly engage with our membership to identify and understand their needs and work with others, wherever possible, to respond creatively. We focus on those organisations who most need our help – organisations which are often smaller or work with people who fare the worst within our criminal justice system.

What makes us different

We exist to provide the additional support that organisations need specifically because they work with people in the criminal justice system. This is always our starting point. Through understanding what makes voluntary organisations working in the criminal justice system different from other charities and social enterprises, we provide responses to their needs which add to the offer of others. We're keen to do this in partnership where we can, and without duplicating the work of others.

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Building on solid foundations

Clinks seeks to provide support and advocacy for all voluntary organisations who in turn support people in the criminal justice system (CJS) and their families across England and Wales. We do this regardless of whether they were founded to work with people in the CJS specifically or otherwise. The organisations we support help people to turn away from crime and improve their experience of the CJS. They change people's lives by helping with the specific needs and issues they have because of their experience of the CJS. Amongst a range of support, they help with accommodation issues, substance misuse, mental health problems and the impact of adverse childhood experiences.

Clinks is 20 years old. We started out as a project supporting the organisations working in five London prisons. We have 20 years of experience of bringing organisations together, listening to them and developing support to help them to do what they need. We work with organisations supporting people and their families at every stage of their journey through the CJS. We work with organisations aiming to prevent long-term contact with the CJS through the development of alternative support, as well as preventative services to tackle the causes underlying a person's actions which may bring them into contact with the CJS in the first place.

The reasons why people are in the CJS, and the support they need to leave it behind, are wide and varied. There is no one-size-fits-all approach and so there's no one-size-fits-all voluntary organisation. The work of the sector is diverse and multifaceted. Because of this we want our offer to be open to all who identify as supporting people in the CJS and their families.

"We have 20 years of experience of bringing organisations together, listening to them and developing support to help them to do what they need."



RSVP, Birmingham / www.rsv.org.co.uk

Access to our support might at times need to be restricted when we have limited resources. In those instances we will focus our efforts on those who are small and specialist. We will do this because our evidence tells us that the voluntary organisations most in difficulty in these times of austerity and change are those:

- With the lowest incomes
- Who focus their services and support on people with protected characteristics
- Work in ways which are less often attractive to funding, including:
 - » Organisations providing a trauma-informed gender-specific service for women
 - » Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME)-led and -focussed organisations
 - » Organisations founded and staffed by people who have first-hand lived experience of the CJS
 - » Organisations using arts with people in the CJS.

Looking to the future

We are ambitious about the future and potential of the sector we serve. We want to build and support a movement of organisations who play an essential role in helping people to desist from crime and turn their lives around. These organisations also provide essential support to the families of people caught up in the criminal justice system.

We will aim to have an offer for every organisation in England and Wales working with people in the criminal justice system and their families. We will aim for everyone who can benefit from our services to know we are here for them and know how they can get involved – regardless of their specific focus or levels of funding.

As we launch this strategy, people in the criminal justice system and their families face huge challenges in getting the support they need to have the futures they deserve. Successive political and administrative changes to the structures in criminal justice, coupled with reducing resources, mean that many people are unable to get the help they need.

Community sentences are underutilised and prison sentences are too often given to people who need care not custody. There are high numbers of people recalled to prison. Prisons are overcrowded, understaffed and conditions are often dire. Incidents of prisoner self-harm and suicide are increasing.

BAME individuals are disproportionately imprisoned and unfairly treated in the system. Statutory community services are falling far short of what people really need to stay out of prison and build better lives. People

“We will aim to have an offer for every organisation in England and Wales working with people in the criminal justice system and their families.”



LifeCycle UK, Bristol / www.lifecycleuk.org.uk

increasingly face multiple and complex needs which traditional services can't effectively meet. There is a lack of suitable safe accommodation for people on release and effective mental health and substance misuse support.

The voluntary sector's role could not be more important as it is presently. Clinks needs to be here to help enable the sector to be at its best so that everyone who needs their help can get it.

Anne Fox
Chief Executive Officer

Roma Hooper
Chair

Our goals for 2022

Over the next three years we'll continue to do what we do now, because the organisations we support have told us it is what they need. Where resource and capacity allows, we will aim to provide additional support where the need arises. We will prioritise small and specialist organisations at all times. **By 2022:**

1 We will increase and improve the knowledge and understanding of the role and value of voluntary organisations, especially small and specialist ones, among criminal justice system practitioners.

2 We will have established thematic and location-based networks for voluntary organisations and practitioners supporting people in England and Wales with specific needs or protected characteristics. Organisations across the country working in a range of ways will have improved access to Clinks' offer.

3 We will build on our established reputation as a trusted advocate and work with a range of UK and Welsh Government departments, national and local agencies. We will be widely known for our ability to connect people with practical expertise, in an impactful way, with those developing policy and services.

4 We will have worked with the sector to identify emerging issues and provide effective responses. We will champion coproduction, women-specific support, effective solutions to multiple and complex needs, and reducing the health inequalities of people in the criminal justice system. We will advocate for the value and the specific needs of organisations working in prisons, and for small and specialist organisations to be funded to do the work best suited to their skills and ways of working.

5 We will grow our membership and the number of paid and voluntary practitioners we have regular contact with. We will be effective users of digital technology to reach and support small and specialist organisations with limited resources. We will retain a valued core staff team with the skills and expertise to meet the needs of our sector. We will continue to generate income in a way that supports our core functions without compromise.

Our strategic objectives and activities 2019-22



“We believe in the role and value of the sector we support. We hear regularly of their achievements and the changes they’ve helped people to make in their lives.”

1 / Promote the work and value of the voluntary sector in the criminal justice system, with a particular focus on smaller specialist organisations.

Why this matters to us

Voluntary organisations working with people in the criminal justice system and their families have a 200 year legacy of providing support, improving outcomes and tackling the multiple needs people face. Though it is difficult to get an up-to-date accurate figure, there are an estimated 1,750 organisations whose primary beneficiary group is people in the criminal justice system, or 4916 who say that criminal justice is one of their areas of work. Thousands of voluntary sector organisations don’t specifically target people in the criminal justice system, but include them within their clients because of the nature of their work.

We believe in the role and value of the sector we support. We hear regularly of their achievements and the changes they’ve helped people to make in their lives. We cannot imagine a society without voluntary organisations playing their part. In criminal justice this is particularly important because many of the things that people need to turn their lives around are not provided by public services. Charities and social enterprises have a role in filling these gaps. They build the relationships of trust on which transformation

is often founded. They improve the conditions in which people are held, and the way people are treated, through research and campaigning work.

Through our work over the past 20 years we have developed a unique understanding of the state of our sector and what it needs to better achieve its own goals. We understand the pressure organisations are under to meet increasing and more complex levels of need, to find sustainable sources of income which allow them to develop and provide the services that best respond to the needs of the individuals they support.

There are a disproportionate number of small organisations in the criminal justice system and these face particular challenges. There can be further challenges for organisations working with people who are not valued in society and who suffer discrimination and stigmatisation.

By 2022 we will increase and improve the knowledge and understanding of the role and value of voluntary organisations, especially small and specialist ones, among criminal justice system practitioners.

What we'll do to get there

- **Continue to champion the work of the sector and its value:**
 - » Collaboratively champion the work of the sector and its value through targeted communications campaigns.
 - » Promote the sector and its work through the media, especially social media, criminal justice, and voluntary sector media.
- **Support the sector to promote their own work:**
 - » Promote a good understanding of the sector and its work by those who commission services and support for people who may be in contact with the criminal justice system.
 - » We will be clear about the key stakeholders we need to engage with. We will target our communications so that audiences can better understand the voluntary sector's role and contribution and how best to engage with the sector.
- **Equip the sector to promote their own work:**
 - » Equip the sector, especially smaller and specialist organisations, with tools to promote their own work to a range of audiences.
 - » Explore how to best support the work of the campaigning organisations within the sector in challenging negative stereotypes and attitudes which are a barrier to change.
- **Seek out and disseminate good practice examples through case studies and communications:**
 - » Seek out, promote and disseminate good practice examples of work with a focus on small and specialist organisations, including those working with BAME people, families and women.
- **Connect the sector to funding:**
 - » Continue to undertake specific work to encourage funding of the sector's work by charitable trusts, foundations and major donors.
 - » Make the case for funding and support of the sector through communications activities which showcase good practice and impact.



LifeCycle UK, Bristol / www.lifecycleuk.org.uk

2 / Support voluntary organisations working in the criminal justice system with individuals and their families.

Why this matters to us

We exist to help voluntary organisations working with people in the criminal justice system and their families to provide effective support creating lasting change in people's lives. We believe in the sector's potential to do this but we are acutely aware of the challenges it faces.

We understand the specific struggles that organisations working with people in the criminal justice system experience by virtue of their size, function and target client group which may mean they face acute challenges in finding secure and lasting income streams and in reaching everyone they may have an offer for.

The majority of organisations are small and under resourced. They have committed and often overburdened staff and volunteers. They are often time poor and under funded. At times of increasing demand for their services and high levels of complex need, it is even more essential that they are equipped to give people the support they need.

The majority of organisations in the sector do not have a national reach and focus. The context in which they operate has a significant impact on them. Those organisations who use a specific approach, or work with a specific group of service users, often have limited access to public sector contracts or to core funding. They often have distinct information and support needs.

By 2022 we will have established thematic and location-based networks for voluntary organisations and practitioners supporting people in England and Wales with specific needs or protected characteristics. Organisations across the country working in a range of ways will have improved access to Clinks' offer.

What we'll do to get there

- Continue to assess our information and communications offers. We will ensure timely, accessible information delivered to the sector – aiming to create and offer user focussed communications products.
- Maintain a regional presence where possible and grow our area development team. We will aim to have a staffed presence in Wales and in areas in England where we can secure funding. We will also consider how our area development team enables local and regional joint working.
- Assess the need for, and then establish and maintain, up to six distinct specialist networks to support organisations working with people with protected characteristics, or working in ways which are often harder to fund and get support for (for example women, BAME people, older people, people with lived experience in organisational leadership, families, and arts organisations).
- Review our training and events offer and coproduce programmes of support with the sector, connecting the sector to available evidence and good practice.
- Increase support provided to networks and staffed areas to extend the offer across Clinks' membership.



1625 Independent People, Bristol / www.1625ip.co.uk



Niluari, Bristol / www.nilaari.co.uk

3 / Represent and advocate for the voluntary sector and its service users.

Why this matters to us

The voluntary sector has shaped and reformed the criminal justice system for over 200 years. Throughout its rich history the sector has used its knowledge and expertise as a driver for positive change. It has done this through early steps to reform prison conditions in the 1800s to more recent developments pioneering distinct services for women in the criminal justice system, developing support services for families of prisoners and championing service user led approaches.

The voluntary sector should be encouraged to play a full role in criminal justice reform. To do that it must be allowed and encouraged to advocate, campaign and speak out on behalf of the people it exists to support.

The sector has a rich body of evidence from its experience of building relationships with, and delivering services to, people who trust its staff and volunteers. In recent years funding restrictions, capacity issues, and a fear of the impact of speaking out on their ability to generate income and access to criminal justice institutions and service users, has created a situation whereby voluntary organisations can be less challenging of the system.

Yet the criminal justice system continues to operate under real pressure. It disproportionately has contact with people with distinct and critically unmet and complex needs. Although there are areas of good practice, the criminal justice system largely does not make sufficient use of the expertise in the sector, and that of people with lived experience, to ensure policy and services are better designed.

By 2022 we will build on our established reputation as a trusted advocate and work with a range of UK and Welsh Government departments, national and local agencies. We will be widely known for our ability to connect people with practical expertise, in an impactful way, with those developing policy and services.

What we'll do to get there

- **Continue to engage the sector in developing and contributing to our policy work:**

- » Develop a programme of learning to support more organisations to: understand the role of influencing in their work; be competent and confident in using their voice where they have expertise to offer on behalf of their service users.
- » Continue to identify ways in which our policy work can be based on the needs and priorities of our sector. Provide opportunities for coproduction of priorities and positions. Run consultations on key issues to ensure that our responses to the government are informed by up-to-date sector information.
- » Keep the sector informed on and engaged with policy developments. Offer opportunities for organisations to influence and to select the priorities for our policy work.
- » Ensure a focus in our policy work on those groups of people who experience poorer outcomes in the criminal justice system to improve their ability to affect change through their own service and advocacy work. These groups include women; BAME people; people facing multiple and complex needs; people who experience mental health difficulties; people with

substance misuse issues; young adults; families of people in the criminal justice system; as well as small and specialist voluntary organisations.

- **Continue to work collaboratively with the UK and Welsh governments, building on our existing relationships and developing new ones to seek out and create opportunities for our sector to engage:**

- » Grow the influence of the Reducing Reoffending Third Sector Advisory Group (RR3) across relevant government departments in England and Wales and provide increased and improved opportunities for more organisations to be involved.
- » Reach beyond criminal justice and establish effective relationships with the wider range of departments and agencies relevant to our key focus areas. We will deepen our Welsh connections. We will widen our relationships with agencies who can affect change for families and children of people in the criminal justice system; and those agencies whose policies can create or remove barriers for people in the criminal justice system including in access to accommodation and healthcare services.

- **Influence local structures:**

- » Working primarily through our area development team, we will maintain effective working relationships with Police and Crime Commissioners and regional and local criminal justice agencies and authorities. This will enable us to provide better opportunities to influence local structures, which in turn influence the operational context for our predominantly locally-based sector.

- **Maintain our respected policy voice:**

- » We will continue to support the sector and stakeholders' understanding of the evidence and recommended positions on a range of issues through accessible tools and resources including briefings and blogs.



RSVP, Birmingham / www.rsvp.org.co.uk

4 / Identify challenges and opportunities facing the voluntary sector and its service users, and work together to find and implement solutions.

Why this matters to us

Our sector has faced many challenges over the last 20 years. However, it continues to be resilient and flexible in its response to them and its innovation means that it is able to take advantage of opportunities. Clinks is committed to supporting the sector to continue to do this. The sector needs continued support to meet the needs of service user groups whose specific vulnerabilities are less well served by the criminal justice system. Clinks is committed to tackling any form of racism and inequality of outcomes in the criminal justice system.

Many individuals in the criminal justice system experience significant health inequalities and face multiple challenges such as homelessness, substance misuse, disability and mental health difficulties. The complexity of their needs cannot be met through traditional service models and often these needs can be exacerbated by repeated exposure to ineffective services.

The often unrelenting pace of changes in the criminal justice system means that there is a crucial role for Clinks working with the sector in helping identify challenges and opportunities and to develop responses and solutions.

By 2022 we will have worked with the sector to identify emerging issues and provide effective responses. We will champion coproduction, women-specific support, effective solutions to multiple and complex needs, and reducing the health inequalities of people in the criminal justice system. We will advocate for the value and the specific needs of organisations working in prisons, and for small and specialist organisations to be funded to do the work best suited to their skills and ways of working.

What we'll do to get there

- **Gathering intelligence from the sector to identify trends, challenges and opportunities:**
 - » Continue to undertake and refine the methodology for our annual State of the sector research to act as a continuous feedback loop to learn and share as much as we can about the unique work of the sector, and the context in which it works, to inform its optimum working.
- **Continue to develop our service user involvement managers network, providing access to tools and resources to support effective service user involvement across the voluntary sector working in criminal justice.**
- **Aim to evidence the benefit of the sector's work on behalf of its service users.**
- **Explore the potential for a programme of work to effectively support volunteer recruitment and retention specific to the criminal justice system to better enable voluntary organisations to have consistent access to the workforce they need.**
- **Support the sector with access to evidence and provide support to develop and utilise evidence.**
- **Promote the principles of the Good prison voluntary sector model across the prison estate and champion voluntary sector coordination as an enabler of rehabilitation.**
- **Continue to promote good practice in commissioning to enable the sector to engage with commissioning.**
- **Explore ways to support partnership working within the sector and provide access to resources and opportunities for organisations to work more effectively together.**
- **Continue to work collaboratively with others and explore opportunities to develop new programmes as required to respond to emerging needs.**



The Rees Foundation, Redditch / www.reesfoundation.org

5 / Clinks being effective, efficient and professional in its work and operations. Ensuring we have the systems, resources and processes to achieve maximum impact.

Why this matters to us

We are an ambitious organisation, with a strong belief in the potential of the sector we support. Throughout our 20 years of providing quality services to meet sector need, we have faced many similar challenges to those organisations we serve.

Our ability to support the sector to the best of our ability is reliant on our ability to generate sufficient levels of appropriate funding and spend it in the best ways to achieve the optimum results we can hope to achieve. The greater the challenges for the voluntary sector, the more important the role of infrastructure in supporting the sector to be strong and effective.

The environment in which we work is constantly changing and presenting challenges as a result. We need to be able to forecast and plan sufficiently for the future while remaining flexible to respond to opportunities or challenges when required by the sector.

We are wholly committed to meeting the needs of all voluntary organisations working in criminal justice as well as providing membership to enable the development of a movement that connects people and builds strength.

By 2022 we will grow our membership and the number of paid and voluntary practitioners we have regular contact with. We will be effective users of digital technology to reach and support small and specialist organisations with limited resources. We will retain a valued core staff team with the skills and expertise to meet the needs of our sector. We will continue to generate income in a way that supports our core functions without compromise.

What we'll do to get there

- **Continue to be a strong and well run organisation, with access to resources to meet emerging needs in an impactful way.**
 - **Keep our membership offer and recruitment and retention approaches under constant review. We will aim to grow our membership so that more organisations can access our support and join our movement. We will do so without pressuring voluntary sector organisations' income and without restricting access to our support to those who need it most but can afford it least.**
 - **Continue a focus on attracting multi-year funding for core activity to allow us to concentrate efforts on priorities as we identify them.**
 - **Ensure we understand our own impact and how to measure it, looking at what we do and what we achieve.**
 - **Ensure we are transparent and open so that organisations can see the benefits of working with Clinks.**
 - **Offer equal opportunities for organisations working with Clinks.**
- **Explore the potential of technology to deliver our services and to add value to what we can offer:**
 - » Explore the potential of digital tools to promote the services on offer in the sector.
 - » Make the most of technology to help people get the help they need from the sector, taking into account barriers to access.
 - **Replicate support provided to networks and staffed areas to extend the offer across Clinks' membership through the use of digital support.**
 - **Model excellent working practices:**
 - » Recruit and retain a skilled staff team, equipped with the tools they need to best support the sector.
 - » Ensure that our internal processes are following guidance and good practice standards so that we are making the most of every penny we generate.
 - » Develop ways to prioritise the allocation of our human and financial resources to match need and provide equity of support.
 - » Model responsible governance and partnership working between a committed and skilled staff and trustee team.
 - » Seek out the widest pool of talent to support our work and remove barriers to full participation for those who most appropriately represent the diversity in our sector.

How we'll work in 2019-22

We are committed to being flexible in how we meet the needs of the sector we are here to serve, though the core of our work has been deemed of value to the sector and will not change. Faced with the constant and cumulative impact of change, the sector may need us to change in positive ways and to meet needs in different ways so our support can benefit all who need it. We will work guided by these approaches which are underpinned by our values at all times.

Accessible

We want every voluntary organisation who can benefit from our support to be able to access it. We will fully explore the potential of technology to do this as well as working collaboratively with other infrastructure organisations to improve reach and reduce duplication which takes up organisational time.

We will continue to grow our membership, deepening our understanding of the sector's needs and strengthening our ability to be a voice for this essential sector.

We will bring organisations together based on their location and the nature of their work.

“We are committed to being flexible in how we meet the needs of the sector we are here to serve.”

Connected

We will provide opportunities for organisations to work together, and with Clinks, to provide feedback on how they are faring and what they need to reach their own aims.

We will listen and we will learn. We will share that learning with others, making it easier for the experiences of the voluntary sector in criminal justice to affect the change needed in policy and services so that people in the criminal justice system can achieve better outcomes.

Targeted

We will aim to grow our area development team across England and Wales. We will continue to look for opportunities for funding to ensure that parts of the country with a lack of support, and a high presence of sector organisations, are prioritised for support.

We will provide bespoke support for organisations working with particular service user groups. Across our range of work we will look at how people experiencing inequality might be better served. We will continue to advocate for holistic person-centred services and policy responses which recognise and tackle the multiple and complex needs people face.

We will target our work at organisations who work in specific ways or use specific service approaches to improve outcomes. We will do this because we recognise the particular challenges they face.

Informed

Our work will involve and be informed by the organisations we support. We will continue to focus on learning from and about them, what they do, how they do it, and what their experiences and needs are. We will continue to learn about the ways in which the people they support might be better served, engaging with existing evidence as well as developing new evidence of what works and what's needed.

Pragmatic

We will do what we can with the resources available to us. Our policy and influencing work will seek to find workable solutions to problems faced by the sector and those they serve. Our resources and training will aim to give people tools they can access and use in a range of ways suited to what they need.

Collaborative

We will be a good partner and work collaboratively with others where shared effort is what will reap the best rewards. We will continue to be partners in the Making Every Adult Matter Coalition, modelling system change responses to the multiple and complex needs people face who are caught up in the criminal justice system often repeatedly. We will add our voice to those who advocate for funding reform to support small and specialist charities through grants and forms of investment which do not overburden. We will play our part in the Monument Fellowship, taking forward the proud legacy of the Monument Trust to keep young people out of prison, and to ensure that those who offend and are sent to prison never go back.

Vocal

We will be a critical friend to the UK and Welsh governments, their departments and agencies. We will seek, take and share opportunities to coproduce policy and services which break down barriers to desistance. We will be constructive but not afraid to challenge when needed. Will we be a critical friend to the sector itself, identifying and providing support in areas where they can improve how they work.

Independent

We will fiercely maintain and defend our independence, regardless of how we are funded. We will be unwavering in our support for voluntary organisations' role in speaking up and out on behalf of people who are too often overlooked and left behind.

We will provide the backbone to an essential sector, not duplicating what our members do but supporting them to be at their best. To do this we will seek to generate income in a way that supports our core functions.

What change do we want to see?



The Rees Foundation, Redditch / www.reesfoundation.org

“Clinks thinks the voluntary sector’s role as a forward-thinking designer and provider of services needs to be recognised.”

A valued voluntary sector

Clinks thinks the voluntary sector’s role as a forward-thinking designer and provider of services needs to be recognised. Voluntary organisations should be pro-actively engaged as a valued partner by policy makers and service providers throughout the criminal justice system at a local, regional and national level.

A strong sector voice

Clinks thinks the voluntary sector’s role as a campaigner should be protected, allowing it to speak freely on behalf of service users and communities.

People at the heart of services

Clinks thinks the government and local services should do more to put people in the criminal justice system at the heart of policy making and service delivery. Policy and practice should be person-centred, acknowledge that people need long-term support, and that relapse can sometimes be part of the journey to rehabilitation.

Fewer people in prison

Clinks thinks the Ministry of Justice should develop a clear strategy for reducing the number of people in prison by increasing investment in preventative services, diverting people away from the criminal justice system and expanding the use of alternatives to custody.

A distinct approach for women

Clinks thinks that women should be diverted away from the criminal justice system at the earliest opportunity. To do this the Ministry of Justice should increase the use of gender-specific community sentences and adequately invest in specialist voluntary organisations, including women's centres.

Equality promoted and discrimination tackled

Clinks thinks all sectors working in criminal justice must work to tackle racism, inequality and discrimination by ensuring they are using evidence and examples of good practice to meet the needs of people protected under the Equality Act (2010) or with particular vulnerabilities. The government should have a comprehensive strategy which gives race equality a central place in all policy making and should have ambitious aims for reducing the inequality across the system.

Minimal use of imprisonment of children and young people

Clinks thinks the youth justice system should remain focussed on reducing the use of custody, increasing the use of early intervention and diversion, and provide a locally-owned and multi-agency approach to all services. Concerted work is needed to both address the causes of over-representation of BAME young people in the youth justice system, and address the reasons why reducing a youth custody approach has failed this group.

A distinct approach for young adults

Clinks thinks the Ministry of Justice should utilise the evidence gathered by the Transition to Adulthood Alliance to produce a national strategy for the management of young adults aged 18-25 at all stages of the criminal justice system (as recommended by the Justice Select Committee). This needs to deliver a distinct approach for young adults and design services which support desistance from crime, based on evidence and service user consultation.

People's lived experience at the centre of the criminal justice system

Clinks thinks the Ministry of Justice, commissioners, and all service providers should embed the involvement of people with lived experience throughout the criminal justice system to inform policy and practice.

Joined-up services responding to multiple needs

Clinks thinks decision makers, commissioners and service providers should use learning from the Making Every Adult Matter coalition and the Big Lottery's Fulfilling Lives programme to develop new policies and better coordinated services which support people with multiple needs.

Healthy relationships valued and supported

Clinks thinks a clear government strategy is needed to advocate for consistent and specialist services which support positive social relationships for people in the criminal justice system in custody and post-release, and which support children's wellbeing.

Improved health and wellbeing for people in the criminal justice system

Clinks thinks commissioners and providers in the health sector and the criminal justice system should work together to prioritise improving health and wellbeing and continuity of care. This should include investment in prevention, early identification of people with health needs, diverting people into treatment where appropriate and ensuring continuity of care for people as they enter prison, move between different prisons, and are released back into the community.

Volunteering valued, championed and supported

Clinks thinks volunteering should be championed by the Ministry of Justice, courts, probation services and prisons. They should work with the voluntary sector to create a culture and operating environment which encourages and supports volunteers.

Creativity and inspiration recognised and encouraged

Clinks thinks the Ministry of Justice, commissioners, and all service providers should ensure access to arts activities for people involved in the criminal justice system. To this end the Ministry of Justice and Arts Council England should develop a joint strategy to support the arts within criminal justice settings.



Geese Theatre Company, Birmingham / www.geese.co.uk

How we've developed this strategy: you talked, we listened

We are incredibly grateful to everyone who has helped us look at what Clinks does and needs to do into the future. This strategy is based on what you told us, how things are and what you need.

Linking with and listening to the sector

The majority of our sector delivers services locally – what happens locally matters. We wanted to understand what it felt like in local communities, how things are changing, and explore solutions together. We heard from 154 people from 134 different organisations. Through these events we got a real sense of what's important now and what will matter over the next few years.

Tackling the big questions

We also held three thematic seminars on tricky issues facing the sector to inform our thinking and explore how we might best approach them. 32 people attended from 26 different organisations. These included voluntary sector organisations, academic institutions, Clinks' partners and think tanks.

At these sessions we considered:

- How a sector where staff and volunteers are primarily non-BAME might best work to meet the needs of a disproportionately BAME service-user population. We listened to the concerns of BAME-led and -focussed organisations increasingly squeezed out by commissioning, contracting and funding practices.

“This strategy is based on what you told us, how things are and what you need.”



Anawim, Birmingham / www.anawim.co.uk

- The issue of evidence, how to develop it, how to disseminate it, how to work with it, what evidence might be needed and how to ensure it is used.
- The lived expertise and experience of men and women who had access to voluntary sector support services while they were in contact with the criminal justice system. We learned what worked and what more could have been done to help organisations give them what they needed.

Thank you

We are grateful to those who invested time in helping us to develop this strategy and look forward to working collaboratively to deliver on it. We would like to express our heartfelt thanks to all those organisations who took part in the roadshows and our expert seminars. Your openness and honesty was refreshing, invigorating and powerful and we hope you'll hear your voice in this strategy for the future. We look forward to working with you to make it happen. We can't do it without you.

2 Make It	Be
A Little Something Back	Birmingham Voluntary
A Way Forward Foundation (AWFF)	Service Council (BVSC)
A Way Out	Brighter Futures
Accord Group	Black Training and Enterprise
Actes	Group (BTEG)
Addaction	Cambridge Women's Resource Centre
Adfam	Catalyst Stockton on Tees Limited
Age UK North Tyneside	CDA Herts
Anawim	Cell Workout Enterprise
Apex Charitable Trust Ltd	Centrepont - Youth Educators
Association of Members of	Centrepont Soho
Independent Monitoring	Certitude
Boards (AMIMB)	Changing Lives
Back on Track	Changing Tunes
Barrow Cadbury Trust	Choices Advocacy
Bath Spa University	Circles South West

"We look forward to working with you to make it happen. We can't do it without you."

Citizens Advice (Newcastle-upon-Tyne)	Khidmet Centre Bradford
Clean Break	Kingston WelCare
Code4000	Koestler Trust
CoLab Exeter (Formerly Exeter CVS)	Langley House Trust
Criminal Justice Alliance	L CVS (Liverpool Charity and
Derbyshire Borderline Personality	Voluntary Services)
Disorder Support Group	Leap - Confronting Conflict
Derventio Housing Trust	Life Cycle UK
DISC (Developing Initiatives for	Lincolnshire Action Trust
Support in the Community Limited)	Lloyds Bank Foundation
EDP Drug & Alcohol Services	Maslaha
FirstLight Trust	Mayday Trust
Futures Unlocked	Middlesbrough Voluntary
Golden Key	Development Agency (MVDA)
Greater Manchester	Mind (The National Association
Community Chaplaincy	for Mental Health)
Hackney CVS	MMU
Halow (Birmingham)	NCVO Charities Evaluation Services
Hibiscus Initiatives	Nepacs
Hideaway Youth project	New Bridge Foundation
Humanists UK	Northern Learning Trust
Inspired Women Oldham	NPC
Inspirit	Nurture/St George's Crypt
Irish Chaplaincy	Offplay CIC
Keele University	One2One Maths

Open Road
 POPS (Partners Of Prisoners and Families Support Group)
 Prison Advice and Care Trust (Pact)
 Prison Reform Trust
 Prisoners Abroad
 Prisoners' Advice Service
 Prisoners' Education Trust
 Probation Institute
 Prodigal Bikes
 Progressing Prisoners
 Maintaining Innocence
 Race Equality Foundation
 RECOOP
 Restorative Justice Council
 RIFT Social Enterprise
 Rise Up CIC
 Run For Your Life CIC
 Safe Ground
 Samaritans
 Shannon Trust
 Shekinah Mission
 Shelter (England)
 Social Enterprise Research & Innovation Foundation (SERIF)
 Sova
 Spark2life
 SSAFA – The armed forces charity
 St Giles Trust

Step One Charity
 Switchback
 The Clink Charity
 The Footprints Project
 The Forward Trust
 The Irene Taylor Trust
 The Lucy Faithfull Foundation
 The New Leaf Initiative CIC
 The Prince's Trust
 The Reader
 The Traveller Movement
 The University of Sheffield
 The Upper Room
 Ubique Partnerships Ltd
 University of Cambridge
 University of South Wales
 Unlock (National Association of Ex-Offenders Limited)
 User Voice
 Veterans Change Partnership
 West Yorkshire Community Chaplaincy Project (WYCCP)
 Why me? Victims for Restorative Justice
 Wipers Youth CIC
 Women in Prison
 Youthink
 YSS LTD (formerly Youth Support Services Ltd)

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 Una Padel, Clinks founder
 Welsh Government

How you can help

Join Clinks: be heard, informed, and supported

Are you a voluntary organisation supporting people in the criminal justice system? Join our network of over 500 members. Clinks membership offers you:

- A voice to influence change
- Practical assistance to be effective and resilient
- Support from a community of like-minded professionals.

Membership starts at just £20 per year and is free for organisations with little income.

Visit www.clinks.org/membership



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