

Reducing Reoffending Third Sector Advisory Group (RR3) Quarterly Meeting
Tuesday 7th December 2021
Via Zoom

RR3 Attendees

Jess Mullen, Clinks (Chair)
Noori Piperdy, Clinks (Secretariat)
Alasdair Jackson, Recycling Lives
Dez Brown, Spark2Life
Carolyn Houghton, Rethink Mental Illness
Ellie McNeil, YMCA Together
Emma Wells, Community Chaplaincy Association
Francesca Cooney, Prisoners Education Trust
Helen Dyson, Nacro
Khatuna Tsintsadze, Zahid Mubarek Trust
Laura Seebohm, Changing Lives
Martin Blakebrough, Kaleidoscope
Peter Atherton, Community Led Initiatives CIC
Pippa Goodfellow, Alliance for Youth Justice
Tina Parker, PACT
Vicki Markiewicz, Change Grow Live

Officials

Bettina Crossick, HMPPS
Claire Fielder, MoJ
Duncan O'Leary, HMPPS
George Barrow, MoJ
Matt Grey, HMPPS
Ruth Boyd, HMPPS
Thomas Scott, HMPPS

Apologies

Lisa Dando, Brighton Women's Centre
Paul Grainge, Recoop
Peter Dawson, Prison Reform Trust
Tracy Wild, Langley House Trust

1. Welcome and introductions

- 1.1. Jess Mullen, Director of Influencing and Communications, Clinks, welcomed the group.
- 1.2. Jess welcomed Pippa Goodfellow, Alliance for Youth Justice who has been appointed to the board through an open recruitment process for the Youth Justice seat.
- 1.3. Jess welcomed Carolyn Houghton, Rethink Mental Illness who has been appointed to the board through an open recruitment process for the Mental Health seat.
- 1.4. Jess welcomed Claire Fielder, Director of Youth Justice and Offender Policy, MoJ, Matt Grey, Executive Director, Reducing Reoffending, Partnerships and Accommodation, HMPPS and Duncan O'Leary, CEO of the New Futures Network, HMPPS and invited a round of introductions from attendees.

2. Discussion with Claire Fielder, Director of Youth Justice and Offender Policy, MoJ

- 2.1. Claire is new in post and previously worked at the Treasury in the Spending Review team and in other roles within MoJ.
- 2.2. She explained that her priorities for youth justice include joint-working with operational colleagues, the youth custody service, wider colleagues at HMPPS and the Youth Justice Board. The youth estate is a big priority for her department, and they

have been reflecting on recent high profile inspection reports and the complex needs that arise from the children in their care.

2.2.1. Dez referred to the recent report from the Youth Justice Legal Centre about the disproportionality of black and mixed heritage young people in contact with the criminal justice system, which commented on the intersections between the Home Office, Youth Justice Board, education system and local authorities and the lack of communication between these departments. He asked how this can be tackled to stem the flow of racially minoritised young people in the criminal justice system.

2.2.1.1. Claire agreed this is an issue that needs to be tackled, and has started to have conversations on this issue. She will ensure it is considered as a priority.

2.2.2. Pippa noted that on Sunday 12th December, it will have been 5 years since Charlie Taylor published his review of the youth justice system, which led to the government's commitment to roll-out secure schools and close secure training centres. 5 years later, we don't have a secure school and although secure training centres have closed, they've closed for the wrong reasons. She suggested that a clear strategy for youth justice is needed to better meet the needs of children. She added that although numbers are currently at a record low, we should not assume that this will stay the case, particularly due to the delays in courts related to Covid-19 and the recruitment of 20,000 more police officers.

2.2.2.1. Claire agreed that a clear strategy is needed for youth custody and will be a priority for the department to think on.

2.3. She explained that her work on probation policy involves joint working with HMPPS colleagues. The overall priority for the year is ensuring the major reforms of the past year are embedded. There will also be a focus on problem-solving courts and out-of-court disposals.

2.3.1. Dez asked if there is data looking at when electronic monitoring hasn't worked effectively, as he is aware of examples where kit failure has led to young people or young adults being brought back to court through no fault of their own. The failure of electronic monitoring kit is a continuing challenge and seems like a wasteful use of resources.

2.3.1.1. Claire agreed to raise this with the Electronic Monitoring team and report back.

Action: Claire Fielder to provide further information on data surrounding electronic monitoring

2.3.1.2. Claire said the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill (currently progressing through parliament), includes changes to the use of electronic monitoring and her team are working closely with operational colleagues to roll this out when legislated.

2.4. She explained that female offenders and offender health policy (previously known as vulnerable offenders), is a big priority area and the team are looking at how to best support women in the criminal justice system and those with drug and mental health issues. She referred to the Drug Strategy recently published and emphasised the focus on treatment.

2.4.1. Vicki welcomed that substance misuse and mental health is being flagged as a priority. She said though the substance misuse and mental

health sector often do provide feedback to government departments, opportunities for meaningful consultation are rare. Vicki also asked whether there's potential for substance misuse services in prisons and in the community to be commissioned and managed through local authority commissioners, to bring these services into line with other substance misuse commissioning and ensure continuity of care.

2.4.1.1. Carolyn mentioned that organisations often see papers come out with minimal meaningful consultation detailing the introduction of new drivers e.g. trauma informed care, with no real quantification of what this means from an implementation perspective, and often gets lost in the broad and overarching commissioning that occurs. She added local, bespoke procurement of services allows for expert voluntary sector organisations to be involved, who just do not have the infrastructure to take on the integrated commissioning models currently used by NHS England.

2.4.1.2. Claire said she would refer Vicki to Anna Lacey, who is the head of the team responsible for female offenders and substance misuse and drug treatments, to provide an expert view on these issues.

Action: Secretariat to facilitate contact between Anna Lacey and Vicki Markiewicz on substance misuse issues

2.5. It was noted that the Spending Review settlement represented a significant investment in reducing reoffending and other outcomes of interest to this group, many of which are set out in the Prison Strategy White Paper. The exact delivery plan will depend on the final internal allocations process, however the headline is that we have secured investment of £550m for reducing reoffending over a three year period.

2.5.1. Laura said there is a risk that people working on reducing reoffending programmes focus on producing the perfect programme. She suggested that it would be more effective to look at how resettlement and probation workers can be much more embedded in the community. She understands there's macro investment currently, but urges the MoJ to look at micro investment, involving the voluntary and community sector in a more place based approach. The sense of belonging and connection is valued by those leaving the criminal justice system and is often an afterthought when developing policies and programmes.

2.5.1.1. Claire agreed with Laura and noted work would focus on specific and local interventions rather than one overarching programme, and would want to work with local partners.

2.6. Claire asked about effective engagement, and how best the group can work with her department over the coming months. She asked if it would be useful for the group to feed back how these high level commitments can become a reality, and how they can be delivered in the best possible way to receive the best outcomes, with the reality on the ground.

2.6.1. Jess (chair) agreed that being able to feed into ideas is a useful role for the group and stressed that to be able to do this most effectively the group needs to be provided with information around the departments early thinking.

2.6.2. Alasdair said often things come through as fait accompli and it was refreshing to hear Claire offer to engage earlier.

2.6.3. Khatuna asked what the vision and strategy is for reducing racial disparity in the criminal justice system. She asked what tangible commitments are being made on equal access to services, education and employment. She referred back to the Lammy Review, and that the number of people from racially minoritised communities in prison is currently 1% higher than reported in the review, which suggests that reducing racial disparities should be a continued priority.

2.6.3.1. Claire explained that the MoJ will be publishing an update on what is being done to tackle racial disparity after the government response to the [Commission on Racial and Ethnic Disparities \(CRED\)](#) is published. She stressed that this issue hasn't been forgotten and hopes the MoJ will be able to publish its response soon.

3. Discussion with Matt Grey, Executive Director, Reducing Reoffending, Partnerships and Accommodation, HMPPS

3.1. Matt explained he was new in post and holds the brief for the relationship with the third sector within his portfolio. He said that reducing reoffending can only be done effectively when working in partnership with the voluntary sector.

3.2. Matt said the department received a generous settlement in the spending review. He reiterated that £550m was allocated for reducing reoffending over the next three years, and an extra £120m specifically focussing on substance misuse, as mentioned in the [drugs strategy](#).

3.3. Matt explained that the No.10 Criminal Justice Task Force has set three priority areas for the department; a stable home, a job and access to substance misuse treatments.

3.3.1. On accommodation, HMPPS aim to see a marked improvement in the number of prison leavers who manage to find stable accommodation shortly after release. This is being looked at through three areas. First, increasing the number of beds available at approved premises, and pledge to have 200 new spaces by 2024. Second, through accommodation support service contracts which have been going through procurement over the past few months and will be awarded in the New Year. And third, transitional accommodation, which launched this summer in 5 vanguard probation regions that provide accommodation for up to 84 nights post release. Matt explained that the forthcoming [prisons white paper](#) (which had not yet been published at the time of the meeting) would set out the departments further ambition.

3.3.1.1. Ellie asked how the department plan to ensure quality of accommodation both in terms of physical space, and psychologically informed support. There were previous concerns where accommodation provision had been done on a large scale which were lesser in quality and the type of accommodation hadn't been adequate to aid aims of resettling prison-leavers back into the community.

3.3.1.1.1. Matt explained there is a difficulty with obtaining planning permission for approved premises and they are often challenged by the local authority. The department needs to be pragmatic about what they can source and where. Investment has made a

difference and has improved the quality of the provision they are able to offer, and CAS3 accommodation provides an opportunity to establish better quality accommodation.

3.3.2. The department would like to drastically improve the quality of education provision across the estate, and want to work in partnership to drive the quality of teaching and training. Matt explained that there will be an increased focus on English and maths, as well as vocational and digital skills. They are also rolling out increased provision to help job matching and encourage businesses to work with prisons.

3.3.2.1. Francesca asked if more detail could be shared on the new Prisoner Education Service such as the schedule and when it will come into play.

3.3.2.1.1. Matt explained that there isn't a fixed schedule as there are many moving parts, such as the current prison education contracts and this was a programme of work that they will build over the coming years. Matt assured that they plan to take a whole systems approach to the Prisoner Education Service which will not only look at the contracts for teaching, but also the right environments and prison spaces..

3.3.2.2. Alasdair asked if Governors targets will be changing with this increased focus on reducing reoffending.

3.3.2.2.1. Matt explained that this will be outlined in the white paper, but in summary, Governors will be given more accountability for the quality of education, service provision and reducing reoffending with their prisons.

3.3.3. The department want to ensure much better access to substance misuse treatment, working closely with the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC). Matt explained that this would be discussed more broadly in the [prisons white paper](#).

3.3.3.1. Vicki asked if there are plans around the commissioning of these services and whether they could be commissioned through the local authority to ensure there is a continuity of care.

3.3.3.1.1. Matt understands the challenge with continuity of care. He explained that most of the work is commissioned via DHSC but they are currently reviewing their strategic partnership with DHSC and hope that they will be able to better influence once this is in place.

3.3.3.2. Vicki also commented on the balance of support and enforcement of substance misuse in prisons. She explained there are much larger treatment needs across the estate and voluntary sector agencies can plug this gap. Vicki also welcomed the use of Naloxone and hopes this will be taken forward.

3.3.3.2.1. Matt agreed there is a balance, and the use of methadone is also being explored, as well as abstinence treatments. Matt hopes prisoners will

soon be able to access a greater variety of treatments both in prison and post-release.

- 3.4. Matt explained that mental health is also an important area of focus, and they are currently working through their response to the recent [thematic inspection the criminal justice journey for individuals with mental health needs and disorders](#). Matt explained that they are taking a cross-government to ensure prisoners and prison leavers are able to access the support they need.
- 3.5. Matt explained that although there are three main priority areas, reducing reoffending encompasses so much more and hopes to work with prison staff, prisoners and their families, and the sector going forward on all areas of reducing reoffending. Matt explained that he understands the sector has been delivering impactful work for a long period of time and wants to gather insight on what works, and what could be used as good practice more widely, both at the national level and through local partnerships.
- 3.6. Matt wanted to hear from the group how they can continue to cultivate the right environment for partnership working and local engagement and what the department can do to help stimulate that. Matt discussed consultation with the group. He explained that within his portfolio he chairs the Third Sector Strategic Board, and urged the group to feedback on other big policy areas outside of reducing reoffending. He also explained that there are consultation questions in the white paper, and invited the group to respond to the consultation when available.
 - 3.6.1. Martin was unsure what proportion the white paper and new investment from the spending review would come to the Welsh justice system. Martin noted that it seems like the English strategy is being further embedded in Wales, but explained that the Welsh system does things differently. Jess (Chair) commented there are also questions on how the drugs strategy applies in Wales and how that will be rolled out.
 - 3.6.1.1. Matt explained that they have a good relationship with the Welsh Government, including through Chris Jennings, Director of HMPPS Wales. Matt explained that through the spending review settlement they are working to secure comparable investment to ensure we can drive better outcomes in Wales, whilst respecting devolution arrangements. He explained that they will work alongside the Welsh Government to help support better substance misuse and drugs outcomes in line with the Drugs Strategy.
 - 3.6.2. Khatuna asked if the White Paper acknowledges the importance of reducing racial disparity as part of the wider reducing reoffending ambition and if it provides a clear strategy on how it intends to address it.
 - 3.6.2.1. Matt explained that the white paper does not directly comment on racial disparity, but explained that this doesn't mean that it isn't a priority for the department.
 - 3.6.2.2. Jess (chair) expressed concern amongst the sector that the focus on racial disparity within the criminal justice system has been forgotten, and is disappointed that the White Paper didn't touch on this.

4. Discussion with Duncan O'Leary, CEO of the New Futures Network, HMPPS

- 4.1. Duncan provided an update on the New Futures Network.

- 4.2. The labour and skills shortages over the course of the pandemic have meant that many employers have approached the new futures network and have been open to conversations about prison leavers being part of their workforce in the future.
- 4.3. There has been a big cultural shift inside HMPPS to focus on employment outcomes for people when they leave prison, which includes ensuring the systems, process and resources are in place to work effectively with employers once they've agreed to hire prison-leavers.
- 4.4. A new Employment Advisor role (band 6) has been trialled in 10 prisons over the last 12 months. Their role is to look at who is leaving the prison in the next 12 weeks and what resources they have in order to find a stable job on release, such as, a CV, bank account, form of ID, as well as finding out which area they will be residing in, what type of job they want to do and whether there are prospects to introduce them to an employer brought in through the New Future's network. They have found this role to be really beneficial and has clearly improved employment outcomes, and they hope to roll this initiative out wider as soon as possible.
- 4.4.1. Alasdair said it's difficult for prisoners to get a bank account and often the voluntary sector need to get involved as there is no other provision, but the sector isn't always granted access to do this.
- 4.4.1.1. Duncan agreed to take this concern back to the team and look at long term solutions.
- 4.5. Duncan explained that they have been piloting employment hubs in prisons, which is essentially a job centre within a prison. The main feature is that it is a visible and identifiable place in prison that prisoners know where to go to discuss employment. The hub could include the Department for Work and Pensions Prisons Work Coach, the Information, Advice and guidance provider, the education provider, a CFO3 provider or a peer advisor. A prisoner would simply need to need to turn up to this identifiable place and receive the support of those available to help. This has been trialled successfully and they hope to roll this out across more prisons as soon as possible.
- 4.6. Employment Boards consisting of a group of employers and other key stakeholders forming an advisory board attached to a prison to provide advice and scrutiny on what it's doing on education and employment are also being trialled. This is to ensure that prisons have an understanding of what employers are looking for with a commercial frame of mind. This has been developing in conjunction with James Timpson (New Futures Network employer and chair of the Prisons Reform Trust), and established across many prisons.
- 4.7. Duncan explained that these three initiatives all have potential to work in collaboration with the voluntary sector. He gave an example of where Penny Parker, CEO of Standout, is a member of the employment board at HMP Wandsworth which has been valuable, and their Employment Advisor Lili has built a relationship with Penny which has helped them reach more prisoners. Duncan explained that partnership working can be easily integrated into these three initiatives, and although going well so far, there is still more to be done.
- 4.7.1. Khatuna asked if when extending this to other prisons, they will consider specialist organisations to sit on the board too.
- 4.8. Duncan welcomed comments from the group on the progress of the New Futures Network and stressed that the aim of the network is not to replicate or compete with the work being done in the sector, but to work in partnership and amplify the work of the sector.
- 4.8.1. Khatuna welcomed these initiatives. She asked whether there is data on who has access to these employment opportunities. She asked in

the context of the equalities monitoring tool, which is not effective at present, and asked if the network is considering alternative arrangements to monitor this data.

4.8.1.1. Duncan explained that the work on equality is something the team are currently looking into and that the central team have a responsibility to contribute to equal access. There are efforts to explicitly invite applications from people with different protected characteristics, but there is some work to do on improving monitoring and data. He offered to connect Khatuna with the member on his team leading this work.

Action: Clinks to facilitate contact with Khatuna Tsintsadze and Duncan O’Leary on monitoring access for those with protected characteristics.

4.8.2. Alasdair welcomed these initiatives and extended his support to the New Futures Network. He noted that there is currently a lack of communication from the network and join-up with the sector. Jess (Chair) agreed and offered support to the team to communicate and engage further with the sector.

4.8.2.1. Duncan agreed that the process is not perfect, and that the network has come a long way since its creation 4 years ago. He believes that with every work stream they are closer to having a system that is genuinely functioning with providing jobs and wraparound support. He welcomed the offer of support and agreed to take this back.

Action: Clinks to facilitate further communication and engagement between the sector and the New Futures Network

4.8.3. Alasdair noted that Release on Temporary License (ROTL) was extremely difficult in many of the prisons that his organisation are working in, he described it as a slow and costly process which needs looking at.

4.8.3.1. Duncan noted he had heard similar concerns. He noted staff shortages that could be impacting this, but agreed the process does need to be improved. He asked if the idea of a ROTL forum would be beneficial, considering there is now an operational lead for the open estate.

4.8.3.2. Alasdair agreed and will make contact with Duncan on this point.

Action: Alasdair and Duncan to explore mechanisms for feeding back on Release on Temporary License (ROTL) and the open estate.

4.8.4. Alasdair was concerned that though their access to employment has improved, there’s often not enough support once prisoners and prison leavers have got a job for them to maintain that employment which could lead to them entering the criminal justice system again. Employers need to understand that a prisoner often has complex needs that need supporting throughout their employment.

4.8.4.1. Duncan said the message does need to be moderated with employers to ensure they have realistic expectations. He

noted that initiatives such as providing an employee with a mentor or buddy that isn't their line manager has helped, or having a video-call of the workplace with their line manager before their first day. The network are due to publish guidance for employers on how best to integrate prisoners and prison leavers in their workforces and will include these concerns and ideas.

4.8.5. Francesca asked how Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) services commissioned through the Prison Education Dynamic Purchasing System were currently working with the network, and whether he thought those referral routes were in place and working well or not.

4.8.5.1. Duncan explained that the IAG services have been integrated with the employment hubs in the prisons that were trialling them. Duncan hopes this will be further integrated going forward.

5. Updates, Actions and Workplan

5.1. George Barrow (MoJ) explained that the government is currently at stable point with a new ministerial team following a comprehensive spending review. Senior officials and ministers are now cultivating their portfolios which will lead to an interesting two years with many policy initiatives looking to be implemented.

5.2. Bettina Crossick (HMPPS) agreed that the move for her team (HMPPS Third Sector Engagement and Corporate Grants Team) into the Reducing Reoffending, Partnerships and Accommodation Directorate is positive. She further explained that herself, Jess (Chair and Director of Influence and Communications at Clinks) and Chris Stacey (Director of Membership and Development at Clinks) have discussed a potential third sector strategy, and hopes to speak about this at the next meeting. Bettina also offered to engage members of the group with the relevant directors going forward should they wish to get in touch. Members should contact Noori if interested.

5.3. Jess (Chair) reviewed the actions from the last meeting. She thanked George for providing a MoJ organisation chart. She explained that there are a number of ongoing actions on the probation review programme that Noori is following up.

5.4. The group approved the minutes from the September meeting

5.5. Jess (Chair) explained that we have, recruited two new permanent RR3 members and renewed membership for another term FOR Khatuna Tsintsadze, and Lisa Dando, as well as recently refreshing the membership of the Covid-19 Special Interest Group.

5.6. Jess explained that we are still hoping to undertake activity on Commissioning, Race and Accommodation, but these have been postponed to the New Year and we are in dialogue with officials when best to convene.

6. Closing remarks

6.1. Jess thanked the members and officials for their attendance and brought the meeting to a close.