



Supporting the voluntary sector  
working in the criminal justice system

## Member advisory forum meeting notes

Tuesday 8 March 2022, 13.00 – 15.00 via video call

### Attendees

Chris Stacey	Co-Chair, Clinks
Helen Carter	Clinks
Ben Watson	Clinks
Beverley Brooks	The Recruitment Junction
Emily Giles	The Bell Foundation
Arron Owen	Cranstoun
Peter Merrifield	Support When It Matters (SWIM)
Matina Marougka	Together for Mental Wellbeing
Ian Merrill	Shannon Trust
Robert White	MayDay Trust

### Apologies

Rachael Byrne	Co-Chair, Clinks Trustee (HomeGroup)
Janine Alcantara	Employment 4 All
Lynn Kelly	POPS
Riana Taylor	Circles UK
Khatuna Tsintsadze	Zahid Mubarek Trust

### Introductions

- Chris welcomed everyone to the second meeting of the Clinks member advisory forum.
- All attendees introduced themselves for members who could not attend the first meeting.

### Actions from last meeting

- Clinks to publish details of the group and its members on the Clinks website - all photos have been received and sent to Clinks' communications team.
- Gaps in membership of the forum - HC has reached out to one applicant who expressed an interest that meets a gap.
- Ways of working - HC has sent a calendar invite to all members for a meeting in 6 weeks' time with a recurrence of every 6 weeks. Clinks to research and implement a space for members discussion in between meetings. CS introduced the idea of using Slack as this tool. HC will invite all members of the MAF to join and research a few instructional videos.
- Priorities of the group - CS has reflected on the discussion about the priorities of the forum and presented an initial framework. See next page.

## Commissioning /partnerships/ collaboration

challenge the procurement process bias to large organisations

Explore more opportunities for real collaboration across sector

Providing feedback to commissioners in design/contracting of services, recognising specialisms/themes

Equipping Clinks with intel and thoughts from the Member advisory forum. Today's chat for example on large scale commissioning can be very difficult if not impossible for smaller orgs.

Alternative, can smaller organisations collaborate, network and work together in a better way to then become an effective challenge to the larger organisations in obtaining funds to deliver

Information and influence in terms of grants

How to counter the marketisation of services

Support collaboration amongst providers with particularly smaller orgs

## Involvement of this forum's members

Potential for members of the group to take a lead on different themes

Attending meetings alongside Clinks to represent the membership

opportunities to sit alongside Clinks when representing the smaller orgs at key stakeholder meetings? (to have a dialogue rather than stats/survey results)

enable voices from smaller organisations - more concentrated and focussed voice

Themes:

1. Commissioning /partnerships/collaborations
2. Involvement of this forum's members
3. Focus on particular groups of people
4. Clinks strategy and approach to its support of the sector
5. Policy/influencing

## Groups

Ensure Black and other minorized organisations are at the heart of commissioning

Focus on young people and women

Focus on older prisoners

Ensure Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is at the heart of what Clinks does

Transition Accommodation into recovery focused homes

Better influence the work of resettlement workers in readiness for release

## Strategy (Clinks)

Taking the role of service users in this context

New Clinks strategy is the main priority - this group could play an important role in shaping this. Both the process and the content.

Capture the learning from COVID and changed and changing working patterns and how we deliver services. The sector has changed significantly as a result of COVID.

Strategy (Clinks), collaboration (smaller working with others) and representation (specific themes)

World has changed - still coming to terms with it - experimented with new ways of service delivery - what comes from the State of the Sector, what that means in practice

how do smaller orgs work within the system without losing their specialism or being dismissed by gov who focus on scale

## Policy/influencing

making policymakers understand the frontline landscape

dialogue that leads to action, rather than policy recommendations. (action that flows from policy)

## **Clinks' communications strategy**

We were joined by Ben Watson, Clinks' Communications manager.

Working out our Comms strategy will take a few months and will include forums and surveys. Members are very important, and the advisory forum is key.

## **BW shared presentation**

Working around the scaffolding (values, mission, objectives) that Clinks already has (without them being restrictive)

- What makes our sector unique?
- What makes Clinks unique?
- What is the difference between a Clinks member and a voluntary organisation working in the criminal justice system?

# Unique - sector

where we get funding from?

negative perceptions from general public/media - additional blame/guilt

Bridge between statutory and service user

**Not for profit**

The most impactful way of listening to people experiencing systems

Larger charities - are they less "unique" than smaller

agility, flexibility, "all hands on pump" in times of crisis, innovation

uniqueness - volsec in CJS vs other volsec. OR volsec vs private in CJS

having lived experience being part of the solution

**Ears close to the ground**

Challenging negative perception

Is it collaborative, or is there siloed working

fine line between being too close to statutory agencies and engaging with them

**Person with conviction vs victim**

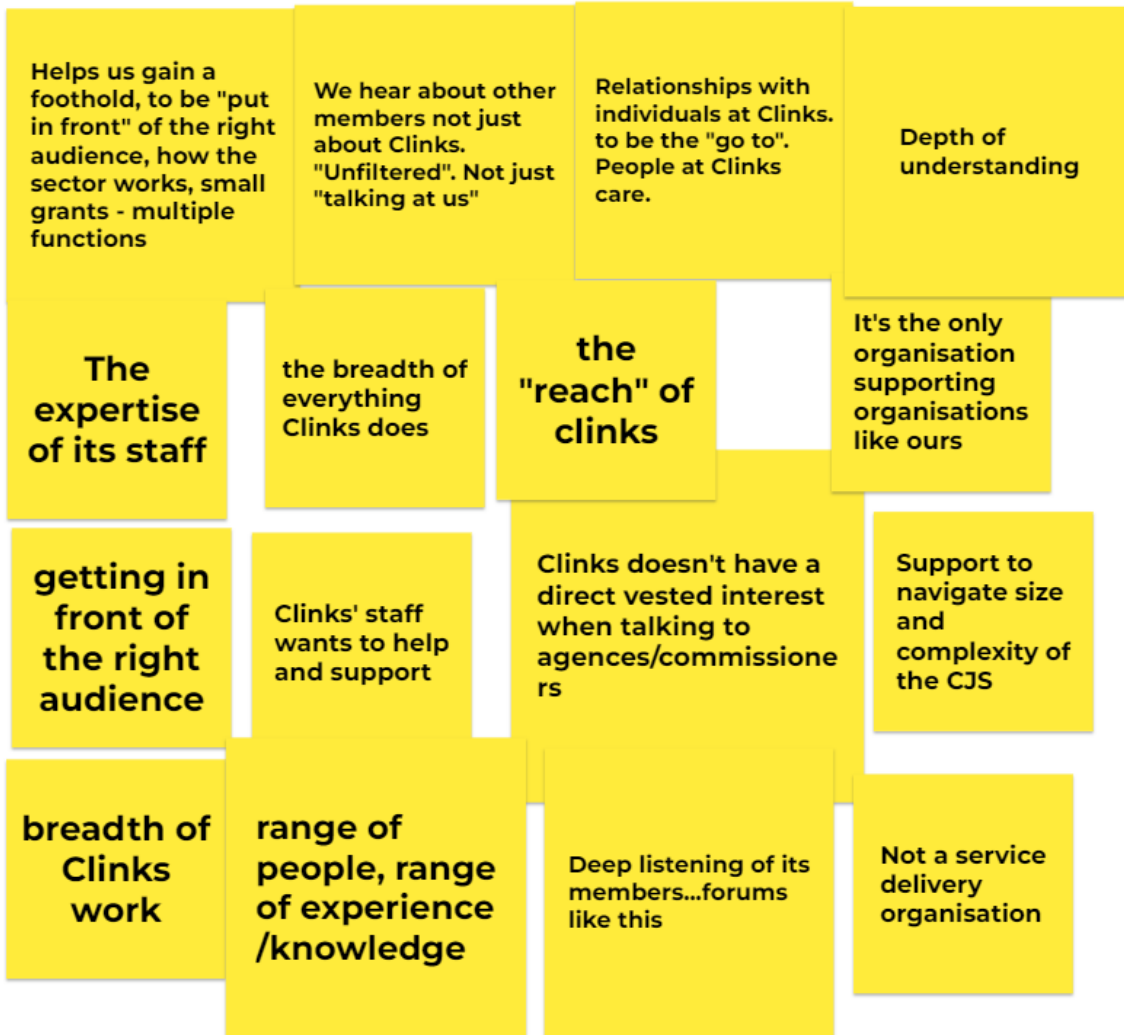
Trust of beneficiaries - between volsec and statutory. Engagement, differences between probation vs volsec.

careful relationships with our beneficiaries

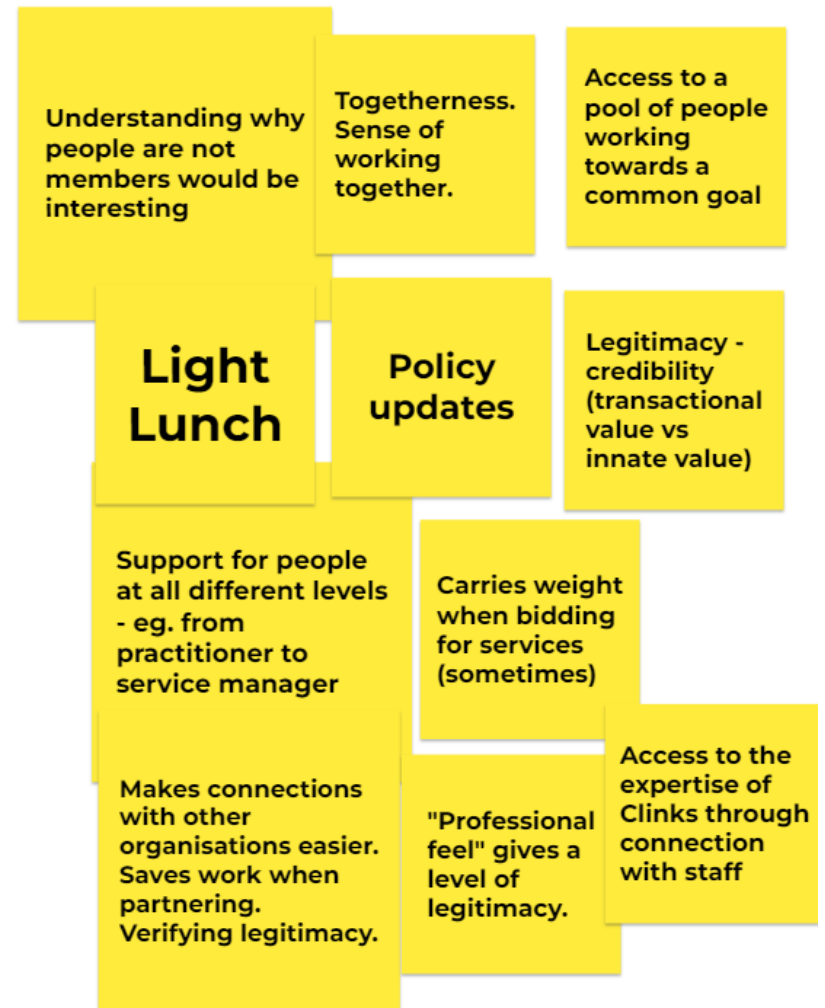
at the whim and mercy of ever changing Sec of State? - no longevity?

Lived experience of the issues facing beneficiaries

# Unique - Clinks



# Sector vs member



## **Overview on membership charging 2022-23:**

HC explained that Clinks will be returning to charging for membership from April 1<sup>st</sup>. HC and CS are writing a blog which will explain in detail and will be shared with the group before publishing on the website.

IM and BB questioned why Clinks is introducing charges and what a member receives as membership benefits which will inform the blog.

## **Reflections from discussion last time:**

All themes seem present – nothing missing. See notes above

## **Open space**

What issues/opportunities are members seeing facing the sector at the moment?

- **Social finance**
  - Highlighting new opportunities, recommendations of funding. Question around what section engagement has been done?
  - Examples of MoJ trying to stimulate innovation, but getting bogged down with bureaucracy, not in best interest of service users.
  - Would the MoJ talk to voluntary sector funders to learn from their experiences.
- **Prison Leavers Innovation Challenge**
  - PLIC about using tech for solving tricky challenges. Competition has been re-evaluated, winners announced April at the earliest.
- **Funding**
  - How will current world events affect the funding situation in government?
- **Regime in prisons**
  - Not hearing much on whether Covid regime is becoming a new normal, and should we be concerned. Prison staffing is also a concern. There are updates to the national framework in the next few weeks, and then we can see what is happening.

## **AOB:**

EG asked to promote an event: <https://www.bell-foundation.org.uk/training-events/detail/language-barriers-in-the-criminal-justice-system-research-and-practice/>

RW asked to promote a report: <https://www.nefconsulting.com/mayday-trust-a-new-way-to-respond-to-homelessness/>

## **Meeting admin**

Future dates – next meeting is **19<sup>th</sup> April 1pm - 3pm**

Communicating via Slack between meetings – see details above

**Action: HC to invite all members of MAF to Slack channel**

**Action: Helen to add member details on Clinks website – see details above**