



Supporting the voluntary sector
working in the criminal justice system

Member advisory forum meeting notes

Tuesday 16 July 2024, 13:00-15:00 via video call

Attendees

Emma Kidger	Clinks (chair)
Anna Fosse-Galtier	Restorative Justice for All (RJ4ALL)
Anne Fox	Clinks
Joni Emery	Clinks
Josh Stunell	bthechange CIC
LJ Flanders	Cell Workout
Louisa Wania	Clinks
Lynn Kelly	POPS
Matina Marougka	Together for Mental Wellbeing
Paul Wiltshire	Clinks
Riana Taylor	Circles UK
Sobanan Narenthiran	Breakthrough
Alison Lloyd	We Are Survivors

Apologies

Andrew Cass	Change, Grow, Live (CGL)
Bex Roberts	Junction 42
Christopher Leslie	Inside Out Support Wales
Dawn Harrison	Changing Lives
John Speyer	Hear Me Out
Laura Munt	Depaul UK
Lucy Ball	New Bridge Foundation
Maisie Hulbert	Clinks Trustee

1. Welcome and introductions

EK welcomed everyone to the meeting, apologies noted.

2. Fundraising

Anne Fox, CEO of Clinks, sought input from the forum regarding Clinks' plans for corporate fundraising and the ethical considerations involved. There was broad support for exploring formal corporate partnerships, with one suggestion being to collaborate with companies that could offer free or discounted meeting spaces for Clinks and its members. However, it was emphasised that any potential corporate partner must share Clinks' values and actively demonstrate them. Concerns were raised about companies that claim to prioritise diversity but do not visibly practice it. Transparency regarding any commissions received from these partnerships was also deemed crucial.

Some members shared positive experiences with existing corporate partnerships, such as with Scrutton Bland, and expressed confidence in Clinks' careful approach to these collaborations. There was recognition of the value in corporate partnerships for both cost savings and potential income generation, particularly in areas like energy and digital services. The possibility of exploring sponsorships was also suggested. However, it was recommended that Clinks exercise caution when partnering with companies that might compete with its members for government contracts.

In addition to the standard ethical considerations, members advised against forming partnerships with industries that could be harmful to individuals who end up in prison, such as those involved in alcohol or gambling. Overall, the consensus was that diversifying income streams through corporate partnerships is a sensible strategy, provided that ethical standards are rigorously maintained.

3. Clinks conference

Emma provided an update on the initial plans for the upcoming Clinks conference, scheduled for the last week of November or the first week of December in London. The aim of this year's conference, informed by feedback from the forum and our recent impact assessment, is to strengthen the connection between Clinks, its membership, and the broader sector, with a particular focus on internal engagement and achieving a more established understanding of the role of the RR3 and how members can influence the new government. Emma welcomed suggestions from members on what they would like to see included in the event.

One member expressed interest in hearing from the government about plans for early prison releases and the potential impact on probation services. Another member proposed having multiple themes at the conference, possibly under an overarching title like "Back to Basics," with specific topics such as race matters, early release, and probation. There was also a suggestion to review previous conference feedback and hold senior officials to account for promises made over the years, examining what has been achieved and what has not, and determining the way forward.

As the conference approaches, members hope to have clarity on the new government's strategy for the entire criminal justice system. The conference could serve as an opportunity to bring key government figures together and question them on the overarching strategy, from policing to the prison system to post-release. Additionally, there was a call for the conference to provide space for grassroots organisations to connect and share their work, ensuring that the voices of smaller voluntary organisations are heard and promoted throughout the event.

4. What issues / opportunities are we seeing facing the sector at the moment?

The forum expressed concerns about the government's efforts to reduce prison capacity, including the reduction of sentences to 40%. While these measures may alleviate pressure on prisons, there is significant worry that the burden is merely being shifted to probation services, which may not be adequately prepared for the increased demand. Additionally, community organisations are finding it challenging to engage with individuals before their release from prison due to the limited time available. Members noted that there has been no clear communication from the MoJ regarding plans to address these issues.

The discussion also touched on the increasingly competitive nature of fundraising and grant funding. Trusts and foundations are receiving a high volume of applications, making it difficult for organisations to secure necessary funds. Although this challenge is not new to Clinks or the group, it was highlighted as an ongoing concern.

6. Meeting admin

Next meeting: Tuesday 15 October 2024, 13:00-15:00