

RR3 Reference Group on Tackling Racial Disparities in the Criminal Justice System – Terms of Reference

Background:

The Reducing Reoffending Third Sector Advisory Group (RR3) has established a 2024-25 Reference Group on Tackling Racial Disparities in the Criminal Justice System.

It will be important that the Group, and how it operates, does not reflect the racial disparities within the CJS. Therefore, how power manifests within the Group will need to be constantly checked and reviewed by Clinks who provide the secretariat for the RR3, while working with the expertise and guidance of Black Men 4 Change.

The Group will focus specifically on racial disparities, wherever they exist, across the criminal justice system. It will begin with an exploration of the Government's Independent Sentencing Review, which will inform the production of an output feeding into the review. This is scheduled for January but will be dependent on the timeframe of the review's call for evidence. Potential further sessions could look at the work of the newly constituted Racial Disparities Unit, in order to provide sector feedback on this Unit's areas of focus. The remaining areas of focus will be suggested by the members of the Group and process for review outlined below.

This group's terms of reference sits alongside [the terms of reference for the main RR3](#).

Membership

An interim chair or rolling chair system for the Group will need to be established at its first meeting, consulting with those attending. Their role will be to agree meeting agendas with Clinks and Black Men 4 Change and to ensure the meeting is inclusive and effective in nature. A more detailed role description will be developed once they are in place.

Sam Julius (Clinks' Director of National Influencing & Networks) will provide Executive Support to the Group, and the sponsor of the Reference Group will be Josh Stunell (bethechange), in his role as the RR3 seat-holder for organisations led by and focused on racially minoritised people.

The membership of the group will be suggested and agreed by Clinks and Black Men 4 Change with input from Josh Stunell and the incoming other RR3 seat-holder for organisations led by and focused on racially minoritised people. Membership suggestions will draw on the existing voluntary sector members of the Q-Seed cohort (who will be working with Clinks to host a specific event on the Sentencing Review before the consultation for this review reports in Spring 2025) as well as additional members from the wider voluntary sector who will be co-opted for their specific expertise, as per the RR3 term of reference. These will be recruited through Clinks' communications channels, supported by the Group's sponsors and Black Men 4 Change.

Meetings will also be attended by relevant permanent members of the RR3, which will be confirmed through direct expressions of interest from RR3 seat holders. These will be confirmed in due course.

Purpose:

To advise the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) officials on the tackling of racial disparities across the criminal justice system. The Group will focus on the areas in which disparities exist and develop recommendations and share best practice to support in the eradication of these disparities.

The Group will seek to, initially:

- Input into the imminent Sentencing Review

There than may be further scope to:

- Develop guidance for the Racial Disparities Unit on the areas in which it should focus its attention on
- Provide sector feedback on a range of issues that will be established as the work of the Group develops. This could include (but will not be restricted to):
 - Influencing the proposed Race Equality Act
 - Disparities in youth justice
 - Tackling racial disparities in Wales
 - Exploring the experiences of the transition to adulthood cohort
 - Examining inequitable to services and inequitable outcomes
 - Further exploration of disparities and discrimination in prison
 - Staffing – including the staffing regime, the diversity of the workforce and staff training
 - The resourcing of equalities work

The session/s will produce outputs for publication and/or minuted notes to be shared with the relevant officials and statutory stakeholders once approved by Black Men 4 Change and Clinks.

Officials

The Group will include input from a range of officials from the MoJ/HMPPS that will liaise with the group on an ad-hoc basis, which will be subject to change based on the future direction of the Group, with additional officials to be invited depending on the topics being discussed. The named official involved in the ongoing work of the Group is Alana Ajani (Head of HMPPS Disparities Unit).

Frequency

Meetings to be convened when required. RR3 chair, sponsors and secretariat will update on the agreed schedule of meetings as early as possible.

Communication

Officials will be open with information when they can, with the caveat that some information shared with the group may not be in the public domain yet and must not be shared publicly. Products discussed will be subject to further development and senior official approval through the relevant HMPPS governance structures.

All group outputs will be published on the Clinks website, with comments from participants not attributed. Both group members and officials will have the opportunity to review outputs prior to them being published.