

CLINKS

Supporting the voluntary sector
working in the criminal justice system

Trustee Recruitment Pack

Welcome

from Mandy Mahil, Chair of the Board of Trustees

I am delighted you're considering lending your skills, passion, and strategic perspective to Clinks, the national charity that supports, promotes, and advocates for the voluntary sector working with people in the criminal justice system and their families.

Since our formation in 1998, Clinks has worked within criminal justice to ensure that voluntary organisations are well-equipped with the necessary tools, advice, and the support they need to thrive.

Our 500 members meet a range of complex needs, from offering housing, assisting with employment, and supporting addiction recovery, to providing financial and legal advice. This work fundamentally enables people to transform their lives and communities. Clinks exists to lead the voluntary sector every step of the way, ensuring they are best able to support people in contact with the criminal justice system.

Going forward, Clinks is becoming even more specialist in its focus, ensuring we are there for the organisations that need us most. Small and specialist organisations often lack resources and face urgent challenges with funding and capacity. They greatly benefit from infrastructure organisations like Clinks that are uniquely placed to support them. We passionately believe in the power and value of the voluntary sector to help people in the criminal justice system and their families, realise their potential.

This is an especially crucial time to join our Board, given the current state of our justice system. The system is under unprecedented strain, with chronic overcrowding in prisons, rising rates of reoffending, and concerns over the financial sustainability and reach of vital community-based services. The voluntary sector is an indispensable partner in fighting/advocating for a more humane, evidence-based approach that prioritises positive futures for people affected by the criminal justice system.

Our sector is a complex area to operate within, and to be best equipped to provide the highest quality infrastructure support possible to our members, Clinks needs dedicated trustees joining the board, to provide the strategic guidance for Clinks to continue its vital work.

Welcome

from Mandy Mahil, Chair of the Board of Trustees

Clinks has a committed and talented board of trustees who offer a range of expertise, experience, and knowledge to support the staff team. We strive to lead from the front and embody the values we hope to see represented across the sector, especially the value of lived experience. We are proud that 50% of our current trustees have lived experience of the criminal justice system. Furthermore, equity, diversity, and inclusion are at the core of Clinks' values, and we aspire to be an anti-racist organisation in all that we do.

We're looking for people passionate about our cause and in particular have some or a mixture of the following skills and experience:

- Exposure to Arts or Welsh organisations working in criminal justice
- Communications, digital and public affairs
- HR and Employment Law
- Business Development and fundraising
- Infrastructure, network and membership organisations

If you are ready to make a significant, tangible difference to the lives of people affected by the criminal justice system and help lead the sector's response to the biggest challenges in justice today, I warmly encourage you to apply.



Mandy Mahil

Chair of the Board of Trustees

About CLiNKS



[Clinks](#) is the national infrastructure organisation supporting voluntary organisations working with people in the criminal justice system and their families across England and Wales. Our aim is to ensure that organisations and the people they support are informed and engaged to transform lives and communities.

We coordinate, inform, connect and lead the [voluntary sector working with people in the criminal justice system](#) and their families - currently that is over 1,700 voluntary organisations working in England and Wales. Our over 500 members, which range from large organisations through to unstaffed community groups, work in prisons and the community in a variety of ways to help people turn their lives around and also offer support to their families.

Clinks has an unrivalled reach through our extensive network of over 15,000 voluntary sector contacts and stakeholders - through our weekly Light Lunch e-bulletin and our social media activity. Our database includes over 2,000 voluntary sector organisations and 900 practitioners and organisations working in the arts. We have established and trusted relationships within the voluntary sector and regular contact and influence with senior decision and policy makers in successive governments.

To realise our vision, Clinks coordinates, informs, connects and leads the voluntary sector to ensure it can provide the services people need.

Coordinate

We coordinate support for the sector, bringing organisations and leaders together in networks and through collaborative projects with others.

Inform

We inform the sector of evidence, developments, and sources of support. we will inform others of the role and value of the sector.

Connect

We connect organisations to one another in our specialist networks and in regional groupings.

Lead

We lead the sector following good practice and evidence in how to evolve to meet emerging need and achieve effective policy change.

Vision

Our vision is of a vibrant, independent and resilient voluntary sector that enables all people in the criminal justice system, and their families, to transform their lives.

Mission

Our mission is to understand the needs of the voluntary sector working in criminal justice in England and Wales and the people they support to enable us to engage, support, and achieve change with and on behalf of the sector, whilst challenging inequality across the criminal justice system.

Objectives

1. Policy and services nationally and locally will reflect the needs of the sector and those it serves, as a result of our advocacy with and on behalf of the criminal justice voluntary sector.
2. A well maintained and thriving network of networks, involving empowered voluntary organisations, especially those smallest and specialist in focus, who are engaged and helping one another based on where they work, who they work with, and how they work.
3. Voluntary organisations utilise our high-quality, visible support, information, resources and training to ensure those they serve have the right support to achieve their full potential.

Our Values

We believe in the voluntary sector

We believe in people's capacity for change

We are fair

We follow the evidence

We are approachable, accessible, inclusive and collaborative

We challenge inequality in all its forms

Anti-Racist Clinks

Inequality exists structurally and globally and there is over-representation of, and poorer outcomes experienced by racially minoritised people in the criminal justice system in England and Wales which forms a part of that injustice.

For too long, and despite numerous reviews including [the Young Review](#) and [the Lammy Review](#), despite the tireless work of dedicated organisations led by, and for racially minoritised communities, these injustices have sustained.

[Clinks thinks](#) all organisations working in criminal justice must acknowledge and work to tackle structural, as well as individual, racism and ensure that their services meet the needs of racially minoritised people.

Becoming anti-racist is essential to building a justice system which is fair and equitable so that our communities can become safer and stronger. People from some racially minoritised groups are overrepresented in the criminal justice system and experience poorer outcomes compared to people who are not racially minoritised, which impact their lives and communities. Clinks have made a commitment to be an anti-racist charity.

Our Strategy and Future Plans



Clinks' last strategy, [Creating Change Together](#) was intended to run until 2022. None of us could have predicted the pandemic and the scale and extent of change and challenge our sector and each of us in our own lives would face in that time. In 2022 we developed a 2-year delivery plan so that we could understand better what our sector needed as Covid recovery continued and the true impact and emerging needs were clearer. As an infrastructure organisation it is essential that while we are ambitious for our sector, but we do not run too far ahead of where the sector is at.

We are now ready to plan for the future together. Despite every challenge thrown at them, voluntary organisations remain committed to working to change the criminal justice system and support those in it and their families. Clinks is committed to being there for them, especially those which are smaller and more specialist in their focus. Our job is to help them do theirs, whatever it takes.

Our new strategy 'Leading for Change' 2025-2030, outlines our updated vision, mission and values, our objectives over the course of the next five years, and Clinks' overarching principles and ambitions we hold for the voluntary sector.

Principle 1 Recognise the role of the voluntary sector in supporting people in the criminal justice system to realise their potential

- Strengthen the sector's voice
- Ensure the voluntary sector is sustainable

Principle 2 Ensure criminal justice services have strong foundations

- Make all services person-centred
- Join up services
- Involve people with lived experience at all levels

Principle 3 Understand and meet the needs of people in contact with the criminal justice system

- Reduce the prison population
- Tackle racism
- Prevent the imprisonment of children
- Deliver an effective approach for young adults
- Improve health and wellbeing
- Support people to maintain and develop family and other significant relationships
- Implement an effective approach for women
- Encourage creativity and inspiration



How will we get there?

Clinks is only as strong as the voluntary organisations it serves: to be successful, we need to work together and alongside one another, harnessing our collective strengths, and learning where leadership best sits for different issues.

Clinks has worked over many years as a small expert organisation offering support where we Clinks has worked as a small expert organisation, offering as much support as we were able to provide. Over the next five years, we want to work in a new way: taking the lead where we are best placed to, and creating spaces and opportunities for others to take the lead when that is the best way forward. Clinks' belief in the sector's role and value is stronger than ever. We need to be agile, yet constant, so the sector always has a champion.

The context in which we operate has changed substantially, so, over the next five years, Clinks will focus on consolidating, refining, and finessing its work, ensuring the support it provides to the sector remains as powerful as ever. To achieve this, we will have a skilled staff group, who will connect, lead, inform, and collaborate with the voluntary sector.

We want to work increasingly in partnership joining together with organisations with complementary strengths to ours, for greater impact. We have not lost our ambition; we just need to work smart. We have a distinct role and working with others we can better respond to what the sector needs where we don't hold expertise. This includes in relation to ways technology can better enable the sector to work efficiently and effectively and to meeting the needs of by and for organisations

Our impact

Clinks' latest published [Impact Assessment\(2019\)](#) presents the views of a range of Clinks members and key stakeholders, including small and medium voluntary sector organisations, statutory stakeholders from local and national organisations, funders and those who have worked in partnership with us. Respondents fed back on what we do well, where we could do better and offered recommendations for our work. We gained valuable insight into how Clinks is perceived, as well as constructive criticism, which helped to shape our future work.

Clinks has recently reinvigorated its staff-led Impact Working Group, which now has representation from our Board of Trustees. Our newly developed Income and Impact Strategy outlines our vision and activities for impact, which will be worked on in collaboration with the Impact Working Group.

Role Description



The role of a Clinks Trustee

Clinks' trustees work with our Chair and the [Senior Leadership Team](#) to ensure that we adhere to all the necessary governance and legal liabilities, and to support the charity to achieve the highest level of support to voluntary organisations who work across the criminal justice system.

Responsibilities

You will:

- Be a key member of our board - maintaining input, communication and bringing your skills and experience to support the Chair in all aspects of Clinks' work. Helping to develop its future strategic plans.
- Share your knowledge and experience of criminal justice or your particular expertise, including any future policy directions. You will contribute to the development of Clinks' future strategic priorities through experience and understanding of the changing political landscape.
- Assist in building strong relationships between yourself, the board, the Chair, the CEO, and Clinks' executive team, to maximise the delivery of Clinks' strategy.
- Be committed to the values of Clinks and the voluntary sector. You will believe in the power of collaboration and collective action to achieve social change.
- Be an ambassador - showing understanding of and supporting the importance of Clinks' external relationships with a range of stakeholders. You will defend and promote the voluntary sector working in criminal justice at a time of challenge.
- Provide financial oversight including a formal review of the organisation's annual budget and supporting the Senior Leadership Team in financial management and organisation.

An effective Trustee:

- Upholds the highest standards of integrity and probity;
- Supports and contributes to Board discussions to promote effective decision-making and constructive debate;
- Promotes effective relationships and open communication, both inside and outside the Boardroom, between Directors and staff;
- Working with the Chair to initiate change and participate in succession planning and recruitment in Board appointments;
- Promotes the highest standards of governance;
- Ensures effective cascading of Board decisions;
- Provides coherent leadership of the organisation, including representing the organisation;
- Ensuring the organisation pursues its objects as defined in the Memorandum of Association; and
- Safeguards the good name and values of the organisation.

Person Specification: Trustee

To ensure we have a range of experiences, perspectives, and skills within our board, we are particularly interested in hearing from people with knowledge of or representative of Arts organisations, and/or of Welsh organisations operating within criminal justice. We are open to trustees with a wide set of skills and experience; we are interested in hearing from people with experience and knowledge of digital, fundraising, business development and acumen, HR and employment law, and exposure to infrastructure support.

Your pledge as a Trustee will be:

- Commitment to the organisation
- Devote the necessary time and effort:
 - 4 x Board Meetings/year - 2 of which will be in-person
 - 4 x Subcommittee meetings/year (if applicable)
 - Annual away day
 - Annual conference
 - Annual General Meeting (AGM)
 - Occasional in-person meetings and/or Clinks events
 - You will also be invited to provide ad hoc support for the Chief Executive Officer and Senior Leadership Team through emails, phone calls, and occasional in-person meetings (e.g. with funders or important stakeholders).
- Commitment to anti-racism
- Strategic vision
- Good, independent judgement
- Ability to think creatively
- Willingness to speak their mind
- Understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship
- Ability to work effectively as a member of a team
- Leadership skills
- Experience of committee work
- Tact and diplomacy
- Impartiality, fairness and the ability to respect confidences
- Adhere to our Trustee Code of Conduct.



Application and Appointment

Please prepare a personal statement (2 pages A4 max.), or a 5-minute video, setting out your motivations for wanting to be a Clinks Trustee, what skills, knowledge and experience you could bring to the role, and what you would like to achieve in the role.

Please share your application with Isha Sidique, Business Support Officer [isha.sidique@clinks.org] by **12pm noon on Monday 3 November 2025**.

Selection conversations will be held with a trustee recruitment panel in November 2025.

We would like for Trustee roles to be filled and onboarded ahead of Clinks' Annual General Meeting (AGM) on 10 December 2025.

Equity, diversity and inclusion are at the core of Clinks' values, and we aim to have a diverse board that is representative of communities' impacted by the criminal justice system. Clinks believes in the intrinsic value of lived experience and upholds the right of people with criminal convictions to take on paid and unpaid roles. If you are applying but may require a waiver from the [Charity Commission](#) due to their [automatic disqualification rules](#), Clinks would be happy to speak to you about this process, and how we can help to support you to acquire a waiver to become a Clinks Trustee.

Clinks is committed to becoming an anti-racist organisation and we are transparent about the work needed to achieve that. We especially welcome applications from racially minoritised people and those who represent Black and racially minoritised led organisations.

Additional Information

This is not a paid post, however out of pocket expenses will be reimbursed e.g. travel expenses.

You will be invited to attend as an observer to the first board meeting before committing to joining as a trustee to enable both sides to decide whether this is a role for you

You will be co-opted onto our board until you are elected, the timeframe for this is dependent on current board makeup. As a co-opted trustee you have the same voting rights as elected members, it just means that your term has not commenced until you are elected. Trustees typically serve a maximum of six years on the board (2 terms), renewable after three years.



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