



Supporting the voluntary sector in
criminal justice

Stronger together.
Changing lives.
Improving justice.

Q1 Impact Report

People. Communities.
Opportunities. Change.

2026/27



Amplifying
voices



Building
connections



Driving
change



Strengthening
impact

clinks.org

QUARTER AT A GLANCE

A snapshot of our engagement,
influence and impact this quarter.



Your feedback. Our impact.

Clinks strengthens confidence, connection, and coordinated influence. And in a sector where fragmentation can easily occur, that collective anchor makes a meaningful difference.

Member Survey Response



8

EVENTS AND TRAINING

Bringing members together to share knowledge and advance priorities.



190

1:1 ENGAGEMENT

Provided 1:1 support across areas and our thematic networks.



20

NEW MEMBER APPLICATIONS

Growing our membership of criminal justice voluntary organisations.



8

BLOGS AND PUBLICATIONS

Providing information and responding to CJS developments



22

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES SHARED

Supporting our members to be sustainable through sharing funding.

You said. We did.

Following the launch of our State of the Sector Research 2025 report in March 2026, we held discussions with members to help us test, refine and build on the initial findings. In response, we have begun to expand and sharpen the priorities set out in our final report. Our focus is both on strengthening the work we already deliver and committing to new areas of development directly shaped by what you told us.

This is categorised under three key themes:

1. Deepening and Diversifying Engagement - strengthening how we connect with members across England and Wales, with a specific focus on ensuring that smaller, area-based and specialist organisations are better represented and supported.
2. Enhancing Tools and Practical Support for Members - improving how members access information, advice and connection, including a new Clinks Directory of Services and enhancing the accessibility and visibility of member tools, benefits and resources in the development of a new Clinks website which will be launched in Q3.
3. Showcasing and Celebrating the Sector - amplifying the work of voluntary organisations and increasing visibility of member organisations through regular 'showcase' opportunities at our events, strategic forums and across our communications, alongside strengthening and expanding our area-based and thematic networks as platforms for visibility and collaboration.

Over the course of 2026–27, our focus will be on ensuring that we meaningfully deliver against these priorities. We will monitor progress, remain responsive to member feedback, and continue to adapt as the needs of the sector evolve.

CEO Roadshow

Listening. Connecting. Strengthening the sector.

Our CEO roadshow brings Clinks closer to members and partners across England and Wales. It's an opportunity to listen, learn and hear directly from organisations about the challenges they face and the opportunities ahead.



Meaningful
conversations



Stronger
connections



Shared
insights



A more inclusive
Clinks

Across the network

Our CEO visited local areas across England and Wales, meeting with members, partners and key stakeholders. These visits provided valuable insight into local priorities and helped strengthen relationships with the voluntary sector.



North West



North East, Yorkshire &
Humber



Wales



East





MEMBERSHIP OVERVIEW

Headline figures and key trends

**519****Clinks Members**

*Includes one member based in Scotland.

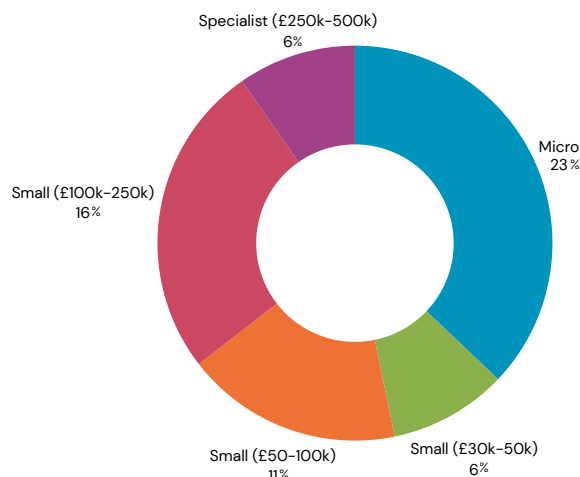
**20****Q1 New Member Applications**

Join Clinks!

Connect with like-minded organisations, stay informed, and help influence positive change across the justice system.



BURSARY MEMBERSHIP BREAKDOWN



Micro (income level £30k)
Small (income level £30-50k)
Small (income level £50-100k)
Small (income level £100-250k)
Specialist (income level £250-500k)

IMPROVED ACCESS FOR SMALLER ORGANISATIONS

48% of 1:1 support was provided to organisations with an income of less than £500K.

This support has included:

- Engaging with and supporting [Strengthening Fathers](#) to deliver a session providing support to young fathers in HMP ISIS. The success of this resulted in a further 3 sessions being delivered and commitment from the prison to enable further delivery of a set programme from September.
- Providing intensive support to [V-Aid](#) to increase their understanding of the criminal justice system and connecting them with His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) and the Welsh Government Learning and Employment team.



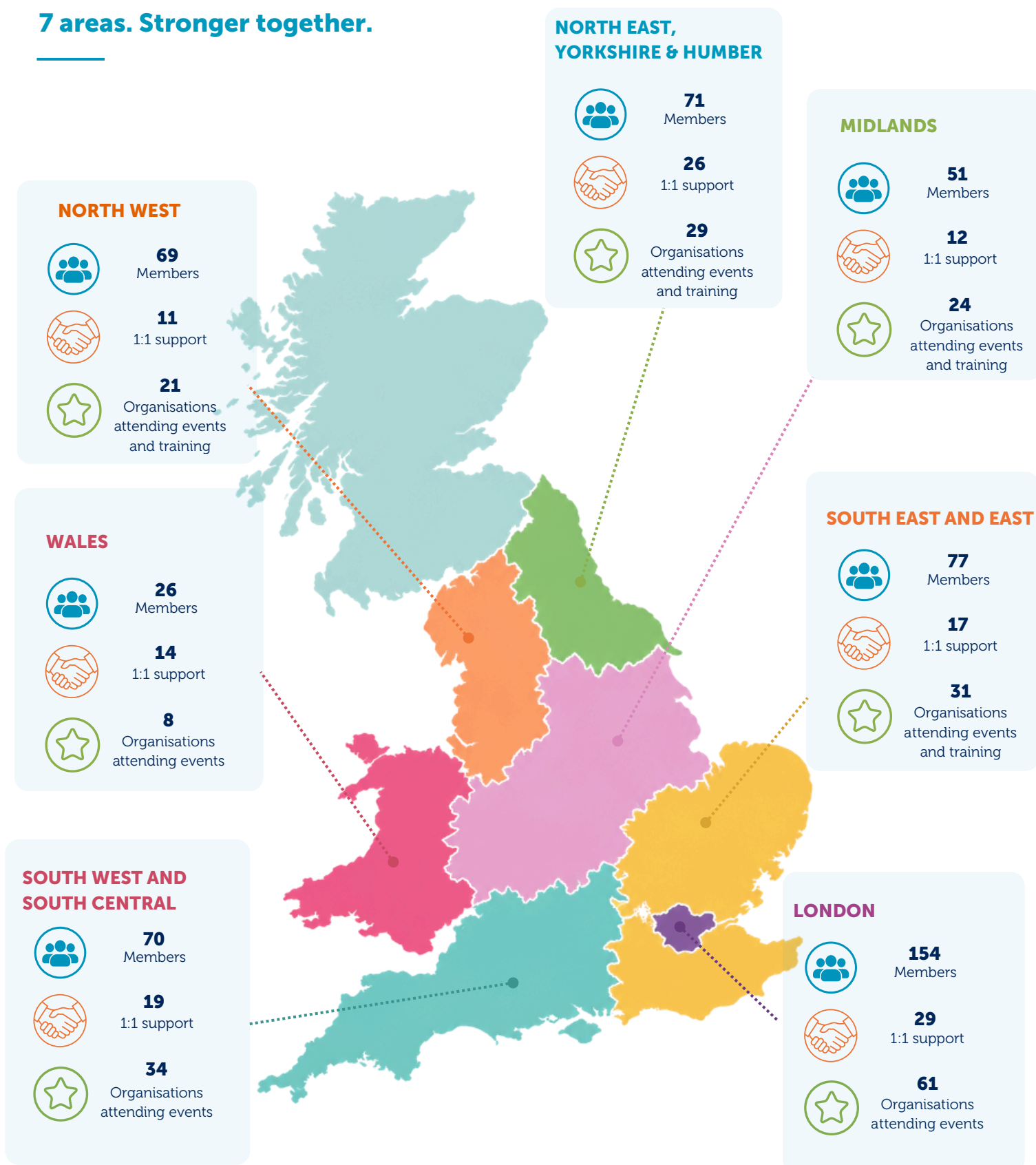
EMERGING TRENDS REPORTING ACROSS REGIONS

- Smaller organisations continue to face barriers entering criminal justice structures and remain vulnerable to funding uncertainty.
- Demand for facilitated introductions and brokerage remains high. Our strengthened relationships and regular meetings with HMPPS Area Leads will provide improved routes and stronger platforms to support collaboration and capacity building.
- Growing demand for Clinks' convening and influencing role as major reforms are implemented



AREA ENGAGEMENT

7 areas. Stronger together.



AREA ENGAGEMENT

In May we were delighted to welcome Sarah-Jane Richens to the Clinks team as the Midlands Area Engagement Officer. This concluded our previous recruitment in the South East & East and South Central & West, ensuring that we have a dedicated single point of contact in each of the HMPPS areas across England and Wales.

Through our Area Engagement and Partnerships team we will provide area-specific information through increased communication, engagement and support and create more opportunities for connection and collaboration through networks and partnerships. Ensuring that more locally-based smaller and specialist organisations are involved and represented in regional and local policy and practice development that impacts them and the people and families they work with.

More information and contact details for each of the Area Engagement Officers can be found on our [website](#).

SPOTLIGHT - SOUTH EAST AND EAST

**77**

Member organisations

**17**

1:1 support

**1**

Area CJ Forum

**31**Organisations attended
events and trainings

This quarter, we welcomed 55 attendees to our East and South East area CJ forum, which focused on employment, a key issue consistently raised by Clinks members and partner organisations. A guest speaker from Prison Construction & Employment provided valuable insights, generating strong engagement and discussion. The event also helped strengthen connections across the area.

A significant theme emerging from the discussion was the impact of homelessness on people in the criminal justice system and those supporting them. In response, homelessness has been chosen as the focus for next quarter's forum, with a local speaker already confirmed. We were also pleased to see strong attendance from HMPPS colleagues, several of whom have since requested follow-up meetings to continue conversations.

For more information on our work in the East and South East contact:

Charlotte Howell, Area Engagement Officer charlotte.howell@clinks.org



IMPACT IN ACTION

For us, the value is not only in the information shared, but in the relational infrastructure Clinks sustains - the introductions made, the forums facilitated, the connections strengthened across regions and specialisms. That infrastructure quietly but powerfully increases coherence across the voluntary sector.

Member Survey Response



THEMATIC NETWORKS

OUR NETWORKS



Women's Network

351 individuals
161 organisations
9 instances of 1-1 support



Families Network

144 individuals
113 organisations
7 instances of 1-1 support



National Criminal Justice Arts Alliance

129 organisations
35 instances of 1-1 support



NETWORK DEVELOPMENT

Clinks are re-establishing the Small Organisations Network in September 2026, which will include a series of capacity training sessions.

In partnership with Black Men 4 Change (BM4C), we are establishing a new race collective driven by organisations led by and focused on by racial minoritised people.



I'm grateful to be part of a much bigger network than just my own charity. It provides reassurance and there's strength in numbers.

— Member survey

HIGHLIGHT - WOMEN'S NETWORK FORUM FOCUS ON HEALTH AND WELLBEING FOR WOMEN IN PRISON

In June, Clinks brought together 67 attendees for an in-person Women's Network Forum at HMP Askham Grange, exploring health and wellbeing for women in prison. We were delighted to be hosted by the prison's conference team, made up of women training in hospitality, whose professionalism and warmth were widely praised by participants.

The event opened with a short animation highlighting women's lived experiences of healthcare in prison, followed by a discussion between a senior lead from [Women in Prison](#), a network member and a Women in Prison volunteer, who shared her personal experiences of healthcare whilst in custody.

Colleagues from NHS England provided an update on progress in implementing recommendations from the [Women's Prisons Health and Social Care Review](#). Discussions highlighted the need for continued action on key issues, including menopause support and improving access to healthcare for women from racially minoritised communities.

Attendees also heard from [Birth Companions](#), which delivered an informative session on pregnancy and early motherhood in prison, while [Together Women](#) closed the event by showcasing the support available to women after release.

Feedback demonstrated the value of bringing people together in person, with participants expressing a strong appetite for more face-to-face events. The forum created opportunities to build connections, share good practice and develop future collaborations aimed at improving healthcare experiences and outcomes for women in prison.

FAMILIES AND STIGMA

Challenging Stigma, Standing with Children and Families Affected by Imprisonment

THE IMPACT OF STIGMA ON FAMILIES

- The prison visit process is challenging, families often describe feelings of anxiety, judgement and humiliation, with security procedures reinforcing a sense of being treated as a potential risk.
- Over time stigma experience can lead to social isolation, withdrawal and a reluctance to seek help or disclose their situation. Experiencing emotional distress, reduced wellbeing and increased pressure on already stretched relationships.

THE IMPACT OF STIGMA ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

- Children with a parent in prison often carry what can feel like invisible burden.
- Experience stigma by association. Which can in turn lead to bullying, exclusion, feelings of shame, confusion and anxiety.
- Without appropriate support, these experiences can have long-term effects on mental health, education and life chances.



THE CHALLENGE

Families of people in prison are often described as serving a “hidden sentence”.

Even though they have not committed an offence, they frequently experience judgement, exclusion, and disadvantage because of their connection to someone in the criminal justice system.



WHAT DO WE MEAN BY STIGMA?

Stigma refers to the negative labels and assumptions placed on individuals or groups who are perceived to fall outside accepted social norms. It is not only about attitudes, but how stigma can shape how people are treated, how services respond, and how individuals come to see themselves.

Stigma operates at multiple levels, including:

- Public stigma, which relates to negative attitudes and behaviours directed towards people and families
- Internalised stigma, which occurs when those affected internalise these perceptions,
- Structural stigma, which refers to the way policies, systems, and institutions can reinforce disadvantage.

These forms of stigma are interconnected and often reinforce one another.



WHAT CLINKS DID

Through the Clinks Families Network, we have developed a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) (MOU) in which we set out our shared commitment to reducing and ultimately eliminating stigma.



THE OUTCOME

The Clinks Families Network MOU represents a collective commitment to:

- Challenge stigma across systems and services
- Amplify the voices of children and families
- Promote fair and accurate public narratives
- Support children and young people in schools and communities
- Strengthen partnership working across sectors
- Address the inequalities that compound stigma



WHY IT MATTERS

Families play a vital role in supporting rehabilitation and resettlement. When families are supported, outcomes improve, not only for individuals in prison, but also for children, communities, and wider society.

Reducing stigma is therefore not only a matter of fairness, but also essential to building a more effective and humane system.

NATIONAL WORK & POLICY INFLUENCE



In a landscape shaped by policy shifts, funding instability, and increasing complexity, Clinks provides a steady convening presence. It translates national developments into accessible insight, creates space for honest conversation, and ensures that smaller or grassroots organisations are not overshadowed in wider strategic debates.

— Member Survey Response

Supporting sector readiness for justice reform

Clinks engaged organisations across England and Wales on the implementation of the Sentencing Act and FTR56 changes through forums, webinars, direct engagement and communications. This has increased awareness of forthcoming changes and enabled organisations to begin adapting services and operating models.

INCREASED SECTOR INFLUENCE ON POLICY

We created direct routes for VCSE engagement with policymakers, including:

- More than 120 participants attended the Vetting for People with Lived Experience webinar with government officials, providing an overview of the new process and allowing the sector to raise questions and queries directly with the Ministry of Justice to feed into the development of the new Lived Experience Vetting Framework, this will be followed by a further review of the policy in October and engagement with the sector to ensure direct feedback on experiences in the process.
- Convening voluntary sector roundtable with Ministry of Justice/HMPPS officials to explore alternatives to recall strengthening statutory-non statutory engagement and leveraging sector expertise to influence an important policy area
- Convened a sector roundtable with Department for Work and Pensions officials to explore proposals that would restrict benefits to people convicted but held in secure hospitals
- Convening a Wales VCSE roundtable ahead of the Senedd elections, generating a [clear set of sector priorities](#) covering anti-racism, youth justice, women, families, housing, commissioning reform and VCSE involvement.

REDUCING REOFFENDING THIRD SECTOR ADVISORY GROUP

10 nominated meetings
with senior officials



Seat holder engagement

- ✓ Established Sentencing Act Special Interest Group and held first session on lived experience
- ✓ Surveyed arts organisations working in criminal justice on key priorities
- ✓ Recruited two, new seat holders representing small organisations
- ✓ Developed guidance for the sector on non-funded partnerships with HMPPS



Supported statutory policy development

RR3 seat holders contributed to the ongoing development of HMPPS' Rehabilitation Strategy



Advised on legislative implementation

RR3 seat holders engaged with senior officials on the implementation of core, prison-based provisions within the Sentencing Act

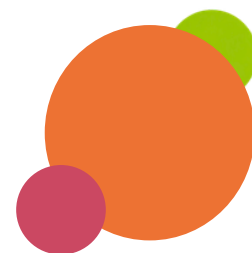


Focus on tackling racial disparities

Led by a collective of by and for leaders, race equity proposals were presented to officials designed to ensure the equitable implementation of the Sentencing Act

IMPACT IN ACTION

Strategic area engagement. Enhanced local voice.



The quarter saw significant development in strategic partnerships with regional His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) leads within both prison and probation services, and Welsh Government, increasing opportunities for voluntary sector influence. Whilst new operational partnerships enabled direct service delivery, our development of relationships with Local Infrastructure Organisations (LIO's) supported the visibility and expanded Clinks' reach into previously under-engaged sectors, resulting in increased awareness of and engagement with voluntary sector organisations across previously un-staffed regions.

Increased sector connectivity and representation

Across regions, Clinks strengthened relationships between VCSE organisations, HMPPS, probation, local government and infrastructure bodies:

- Strengthened voluntary sector representation on the Employment Advisory Board at HMP Berwyn by supporting Crest Cooperative to share their employment expertise and enabling improved links between employers, the voluntary sector and criminal justice partners, increasing employment pathways for people leaving prison.
- Helped to identify how Voluntary Action North Somerset's (VANS) community and sports-based work could better connect with criminal justice partners and support people with criminal justice experience. By linking VANS into Clinks membership, forums and distribution networks, this created opportunities for stronger local collaboration, improved awareness of criminal justice needs and future development of volunteering, employment and social prescribing pathways.
- Developed new relationships with local infrastructure organisations (LIOs) resulting in 13 LIOs joining Clinks as members this quarter, enabling increased access for and engagement with more smaller and community based organisations providing support within the CJS.

SPOTLIGHT: NORTH EAST, YORKSHIRE AND THE HUMBER

This quarter has focused upon building VCSE Strategic engagement with HMPPS, across North East Yorkshire and Humber area. Senior leaders from HMPPS and the area executive director's team, along with Clinks, have established a strategic group to develop a plan for engagement with VCSE organisations. It is recognised that good examples of engagement exist, but activity is fragmented and often dependent upon individual relationships rather than a coordinated structure.

With the introduction of the Sentencing Act there is a need for stronger collaboration to ensure that people in the criminal justice system can access all available support in their communities. Clinks is working with HMPPS to organise engagement events for Autumn.

Unfortunately, the funding landscape is a challenge for all sectors but where VCSE organisations secure external funding to deliver support to people in the CJS a more consistent and easier approach to referrals need to be established. To support this a non-funded partnership agreement is being developed between HMPPS and Clinks which will develop a consistent approach to collaboration.

VCSE perspectives were represented in local strategic boards and meetings including: NE and North Cumbria VCSE Partners Programme Executive Group, South Yorkshire Adult Offending Roundtable, Northumberland Probation Needs Assessment meeting, Y&TH Rehabilitation Partnership Board, Wales CJ Board, The Future of Justice in Wales roundtable, South Wales Reducing Re-offending Delivery Group, IOM Cymru Board, Wales Collaboration & Commissioning Forum, North Wales Justice Board, Greater Manchester Justice Rehabilitation Executive Board, South West Reducing Reoffending Board, and the HMP Isis Reducing Reoffending Board.



Website traffic and trends

BULLETINS

BULLETINS CIRCULATED

LIGHT LUNCH	LIGHT LUNCH NEWSFLASHES	WOMEN'S BULLETIN
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13	4	1
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NCJAA BULLETIN	POLICY BULLETIN
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1	3
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BULLETIN SUBSCRIBERS

LIGHT LUNCH	WOMEN'S BULLETIN
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7681	368
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NCJAA BULLETIN	POLICY BULLETIN
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5670	630
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**Your feedback.
Our impact.**

"The Clinks' Light Lunch has been invaluable. It has a really comprehensive range of information and updates and it's one of my go-to resources for Criminal Justice news. It's kept me informed and up-to-date on key developments."

Member Survey Response

Social media engagement

Our LinkedIn community continues to grow, with more people engaging with the issues, insights and solutions shaping the criminal justice sector.

HIGH-PERFORMING LINKEDIN CONTENT THIS QUARTER

1

Sentencing Act

A post detailing the new Progression Model, as part of the Sentencing Act.

 **1,699** impressions
 **91** engagements

2

Major Reforms Announced for Youth Justice

A snapshot of major youth justice reforms announced by the Government.

 **1,337** impressions
 **814** engagements

OUR LINKEDIN COMMUNITY

**7964**
FOLLOWERS**39,170**
TOTAL IMPRESSIONS



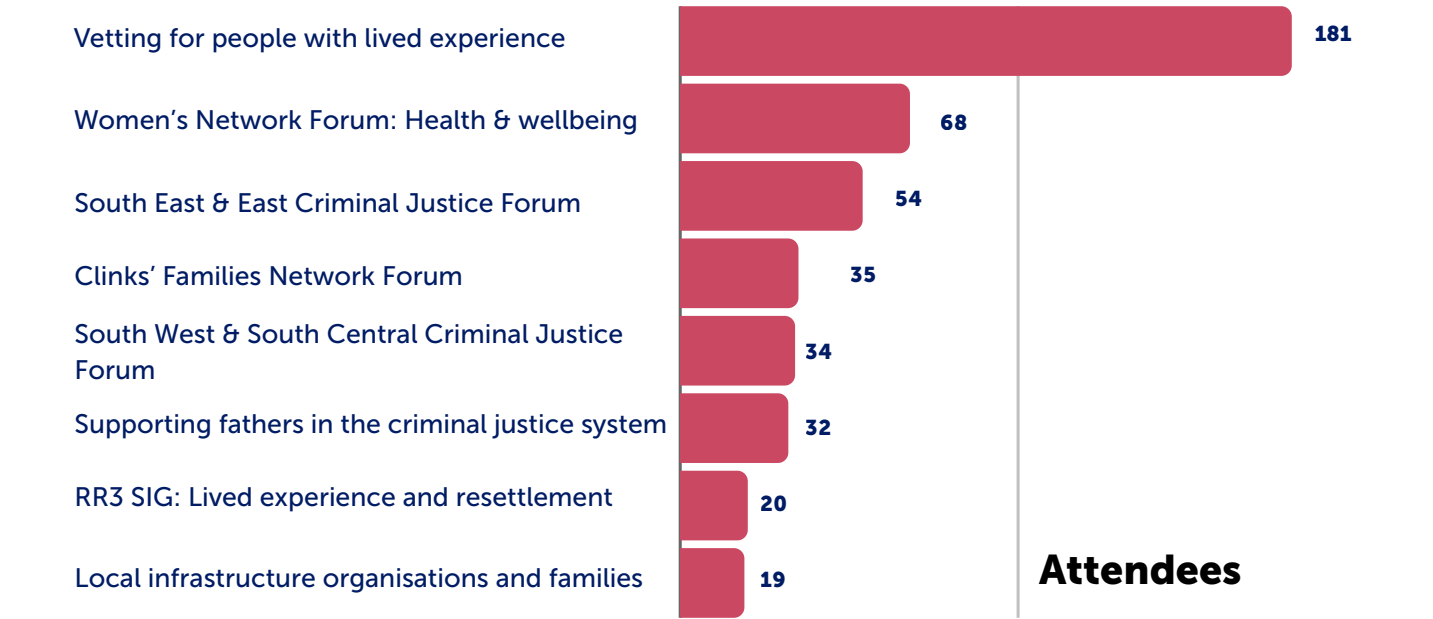
Participation and reach

This quarter, we delivered a diverse programme designed to inform, upskill and connect – reaching organisations and individuals across England and Wales.

QUARTER AT A GLANCE



TRAINING



Your feedback.
Our impact.



I found it really helpful to hear directly from HMPPS staff on this subject as it is very complex

Event attendee



Your feedback.
Our impact.

We are grateful for the regularity and format of information shared and the many opportunities provided to meet and learn from others in the space. It also helps us shout about our work!



Event attendee



Your feedback. Our impact.

You told us. We listened. We acted.
Turning your insight into action.



EVENTS

Spaces to share insight and build connection.



MEETINGS

Strategic forums to shape policy and practice.



CONSULTATIONS

Your views influencing key decisions.



GOVERNMENT ENGAGEMENT

Making sure the sector's voice is heard at the highest levels.

21 APRIL

Vetting for People with Lived Experience

Held with HMPPS on the recently published policy framework.

23 APRIL

The Future of Justice in Wales Roundtable

VCSE Roundtable to identify justice priorities ahead of the Senedd Elections

9 JUNE

South West & South Central Criminal Justice Forum

Connecting with voluntary sector partners to share learning and discuss criminal justice challenges

16 JUNE

Women's Network Forum

Focused on women's health, wellbeing and family contact in prison.

22 JUNE

What works: building better support for fathers

Celebrating Father's Day 2026, bringing organisations together to exchange insights, share what works, and strengthen support for fathers.

23 JUNE

Families Network Forum

Focused on Safety, well-being and hope: The untapped potential of family contact in prison

30 JUNE

South East & East Criminal Justice Forum

Connecting with voluntary sector partners to share learning and discuss criminal justice challenges

THROUGHOUT Q1

Ministry of Justice Consultations

Responded on supported accommodation, sentencing and probation reforms.

THROUGHOUT Q1

HMPPS Policy Input

Contributed to policy on VCCS grants and recruitment standards.



Your feedback. Our impact.

The training, information and opportunities Clinks provide helps us stay informed and effective and their advocacy work ensure that organisations like ours are not forgotten in policy conversations

Member - Small organisation



WHAT'S COMING UP OUR ROADMAP FOR QUARTER 2

JULY

7th - Navigating the CJS Training

21st - NCJAA and Royal Literacy Fund Workshop: Fundraising Bid Writing

AUGUST

18th - Sentencing Act Webinar

24th - Independent Review of the Prison System's Call for Evidence

SEPTEMBER

14th - Reframing Masculinity Evidence Review Webinar

14th - Small Organisations Network Meeting

14th - Women's Network Forum: Influencing Policy and creating change for women in the CJS

16th - Evidence gathering roundtable: Independent Statutory Regulation of Probation Practitioners

22nd - Wales Criminal Justice Forum

30th - North East, Yorkshire & Humber Criminal Justice Forum



OUR PRIORITIES.

These four priorities will guide our focus, influence and support for members over the coming quarter.

01



SUPPORTING IMPLEMENTATION OF MAJOR REFORMS

We will continue sector engagement on the Sentencing Act, FTR56 and progression model through roundtables, webinars and area and thematic criminal justice forums and networks. Gathering evidence of emerging impacts on services and communities.

02



INFLUENCE RELATED POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

We will shape proposals on recall reform to influence homelessness policy for women in contact with the criminal justice system. The Independent Review of the Prison System presents a significant opportunity to embed sector experience and experience in policy and practice to address risks and improve outcomes across the prison estate.

03



STRENGTHEN SECTOR VOICE

We will facilitate engagement in the October review of the vetting framework. Continue work on race equity, families, lived experience and anti-racism priorities. As well as continue to provide representation at local and regional strategic boards, ensuring that the voluntary sector is involved and engaged in strategic and operational developments, raising awareness of local services and increasing collaboration and partnership opportunities.

04



BUILD OUR ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY

We will launch our new website, CRM and Directory of Services. Continue to deliver on the HMPPS/Clinks Regional Engagement Expectations to expand our area support, communication and influencing routes and strengthen voluntary sector coordination processes with HMPPS.



Clinks amplifies collective voice. It helps ensure that lived experience, equity, and frontline realities are visible within national conversations, not as an afterthought but as a central consideration.

Clinks member

