



supporting voluntary organisations that  
work with offenders and their families

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Criminal justice services at risk: VCS income cuts threaten community safety**

Voluntary and Community Sector organisations working to prevent and reduce crime are losing vital funding in the face of multiple challenges and growing demand for their services. Clinks' research has found:

- 68% of organisations have staff on, or imminently facing, precautionary redundancy notices
- More than three quarters have had grant income reduced already. For 46% this is compounded by a decrease in earned income, and for 36% in fundraising from the public. 87% expect further cuts in the year ahead.
- Seven out of ten organisations have used their reserves to compensate for falls in income - with almost 90% expecting to do so in the new financial year
- 83% reported an increase in the number of people seeking their help.
- 96% are spending more time on fundraising

Clinks invited Voluntary and Community Sector groups working with offenders to respond to questions on the impact of the current economic climate and adapting to the coalition government's new policy agenda.

Responses reveal uncertainty over policy and a struggle to maintain essential services when faced with reduced income, at a time when demands on their organisations are increasing for the majority.

*Clinks Director, Clive Martin, said: "the VCS is willing and able to work with the Government to meet our shared ambitions to reduce re-offending and build safer communities. But the Sector is simultaneously facing cuts and severe challenges, and expects this to get worse. The new agenda presents opportunities, but it is not yet clear what funding will be available and from where. The danger is that by the time the dust settles, we will have lost many valuable services. "*

The Government's 'Transition Fund' was made available in recognition of the difficulties the Sector is experiencing. However, only 24% of respondents said they were eligible to apply for the Fund, bringing into question the extent to which this funding was suitable for organisations working with offenders.

*Clinks Chair, Dame Anne Owers, said: "These organisations are essential partners in contributing to crime reduction and rehabilitation. The future cost of losing these services in terms of damaged lives and increased offending is enormous.*

## Notes:

1. For more information and a copy of the report *Changing Times, Challenging Times* contact Joe Gardham: 07929 727 129; [joe.gardham@clinks.org](mailto:joe.gardham@clinks.org)
2. The first online survey looked at the impact of the recession on the sector. It was conducted in the winter of 2010 and attracted responses from 99 organisations.  
The second online survey explored the impact of the coalition's policy agenda and the Comprehensive Spending Review on the VCS working with offenders . It was conducted in January 2011 and attracted responses from 196 organisations.

### 3. About Clinks

Clinks is a charity which supports, promotes and represents the Voluntary and Community working with offenders. Clinks:

- Provides representation and voice
- Promotes the Sector
- Influences policy and campaigns
- Provides information and support
- Undertakes research and development.

More information at: [www.clinks.org](http://www.clinks.org)

### 4. About the Voluntary and Community Sector in the Criminal Justice System

The Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) working in criminal justice is large and wide ranging. It includes small, unstaffed community groups and large national organisations that employ hundreds of people. Within this diverse group are campaigning organisations, self help groups, and service providers running a wide range of services including arts projects, counselling services, financial advice and drug and alcohol rehabilitation, to name just a few.

The sector is innovative and responsive. Services are set up to address unmet need, and as a result, tend to focus on the individual and those that are most disadvantaged. The majority of VCS organisations in criminal justice are locally run by people who understand local issues and are well networked in communities.

Read more about the role of the VCS at [www.clinks.org](http://www.clinks.org)