



# A snapshot from the north east

## The voluntary sector working in criminal justice

**April 2014**

Clinks

In partnership with

Voluntary Organisations' Network North East



# CLINKS



Clinks is the membership body that supports, represents and campaigns for voluntary sector organisations working with offenders and their families. Clinks aims to ensure the sector and all those with whom they work, are informed and engaged in order to transform the lives of offenders.

[www.clinks.org](http://www.clinks.org)

Voluntary Organisations' Network North East (VONNE) is the support body for the voluntary and community sector in the North East of England. We represent over 600 charities, voluntary organisations, community groups, networks and social enterprises from across the region with further reach through our many networks.

VONNE's vision is that charities, voluntary and community groups and social enterprises make a distinct and sustained contribution to the economic and social development of the North East of England.

[www.vonne.org.uk](http://www.vonne.org.uk)

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April 2014



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# Executive Summary

In August 2013 Clinks and VONNE formed a partnership to better support the voluntary sector working in criminal justice and community safety across the North East of England. As one of our first actions, we undertook a mapping exercise to ascertain what the voluntary sector is providing, and what support they need to thrive. This report summarises our findings and makes recommendations as to how the assets of the voluntary sector could be best utilised to reduce crime re-offending.

**What we uncovered was a dynamic, wide ranging, vibrant and essential voluntary sector that is delivering important services across a number of areas which we know support desistance from crime;** housing, drug and alcohol support, family interventions, mental health services, education, training, and support in accessing and maintaining employment. The sector makes a vast contribution to

improve community safety, support people to turn away from crime, and support victims in local communities. It also clearly makes a significant contribution to the local economy as an employer, and as a way to engage local people around issues of crime reduction and tackling re-offending rates.

.....  
**This contribution needs to be fully recognised by commissioners and the providers of public services so that best use can be made of these assets within local communities.**

.....  
 Voluntary sector organisations are providing diverse services, with a robust track record of delivery over a number of years, to a range of service users across gender divides, supporting people with complex needs, across different Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Communities, and in a number of different prisons. These services can be better engaged both practically, to support people's desistance from crime,

and strategically, to inform future provision.

In total 54 organisations responded to our survey, the majority of whom were not specialist criminal justice organisations but nevertheless provided support to people involved in the Criminal Justice System (CJS). Two thirds of the organisations surveyed have been operating for five years or more, and more than half of the organisations had a turnover of less than £500,000 per year.

*Of the 54 organisations surveyed we counted 7,814 employed staff and 15,469 volunteers to support the delivery of services to approximately 243,000 service users.*

Eighty eight percent of organisations provide wrap around support in the community and almost all (95%) support those that have been sentenced to a custodial sentence of 12 months or less. This highlighted the critical role that the voluntary sector has to play in supporting chaotic 'revolving-door' service users, and makes clear the potential role for the sector in the Transforming Rehabilitation agenda. The survey showcased the sector's experience in supporting people serving short term prison sentences who will soon become subject to a minimum period of statutory supervision (12 months) under the new probation arrangements.

Two thirds of the organisations surveyed provided 'motivation and empowerment' as a primary service. Furthermore, many stated that they provided services to people who were struggling with multiple and complex needs.

The funding for these services came from a variety of sources, including public sector contracts and grant making trusts. Many organisations working in this area had been, or were still, supported by regional charitable funders, such as the Northern Rock Foundation. The survey highlighted that many organisations felt their funding to be unstable, with a significant amount of effort being targeted at identifying alternative funding sources. Despite this, the surveyed organisations reported that they remained optimistic about being

able to develop and deliver new services, with some organisations looking at expanding their services to new geographical areas, as well as working in new thematic areas.

We recorded a healthy combination of organisations working in partnership with the public, private and amongst diverse voluntary sector organisations. Those surveyed felt that having a shared aim of supporting service users, and building strong relationships to further that aim, led to positive and long-lasting partnerships. Difficulties often arose when organisational priorities differed or were incompatible. Many cited the increasingly competitive funding environment as a hindrance to partnership and, linked to this, a lack of effective information sharing between services was seen as a barrier to increasing collaboration.

The services delivered by the voluntary sector clearly contributed to the priorities published in the police and crime commissioners (PCC) Police and Crime Plans. The organisations surveyed were clear that they would welcome more opportunities to work with the office for the PCC, in order to use their services, skills, and knowledge more effectively to support local priorities.

Some respondents felt they understood the role of the PCC and mentioned that they had good mechanisms to engage with them, but the majority felt that this was not the case, and that much more had

to be done to effectively engage their organisations in a strategic and operational capacity.

Given the economic climate it is perhaps unsurprising that access to income and fundraising support was rated as the top priority by almost all the organisations that were surveyed. Other priorities for support included assistance in developing collaboration, providing a voice for the voluntary sector, and disseminating information to the sector.

As a result of the findings of this survey we have made the following recommendations:

#### **Recommendation 1: Access to income needs to be prioritised**

The top priority for organisations was the need for more income generation opportunities, and support to access them. Voluntary sector services are funded from a variety of sources including public sector contracts and grant making trusts, however organisations are reporting that the funding environment is becoming increasingly more complex with the sector's income rapidly diminishing. The competition for diminishing funds will exert pressure on the sector's capacity to deliver services, and as the Northern Rock Foundation is closing its grant programmes at the end of 2014 there will be additional pressure. Whilst the sector remains optimistic about being able to develop and deliver new services, new investment



in the sector is needed to eliminate some of the difficulties they face in the current funding environment.

**Recommendation 2: Invest in effective partnerships and collaboration**

The survey shows that good partnership working exists in the voluntary sector, however we need to ensure additional support is provided. Commissioners should consider providing resources to support the sector to consider the full spectrum of collaboration in order to deliver effective services in the North East. This could include supporting and testing the effectiveness of consortia development, supporting organisations to bring together informal partnerships and networks, and to explore more formal joint working arrangements including mergers.

**Recommendation 3: Police and crime commissioners in the North East need a clear strategy and structure for engaging the voluntary sector**

PCCs should explore transparent and equitable ways of engaging with the voluntary sector to contribute strategically to Police and Crime Plans and operationally in the design and delivery of services. This should include more opportunities for the sector to engage effectively through regular meetings and events and opportunities to influence policing priorities. An approach as to how this is taken forward should be included within the Police and Crime Plans.

**Recommendation 4: Ensure effective communication and information sharing with the voluntary sector**

Commissioners, public sector and private sector organisations should ensure they provide the voluntary sector with accessible information

as quickly as possible. The survey respondents said they would benefit from a wide range of information on policy updates; funding opportunities; new developments in the Criminal Justice System and would welcome this information in the form of policy briefings, events and bulletins. Clearer channels of communication need to be developed and implemented, to get information to the voluntary sector in a timely and effective manner.

# Introduction

With support from the Northern Rock Foundation, Clinks and Voluntary Organisations' Network North East (VONNE) formed a partnership in 2013 to further develop a criminal justice network for voluntary sector organisations in the North East of England. This partnership has allowed Clinks to bring its specialist knowledge and expertise around the Criminal Justice System (CJS) to the North East, building on existing work that VONNE had carried out on working with offenders, community safety and criminal justice agencies.

The main aims of our survey, and this summary of our findings, were to gather more information about voluntary sector organisations operating in the field of criminal justice in the North East of England and to identify what specialist support the sector needs to enable it to thrive. We already have details of the scale and dynamics of the wider voluntary sector in the North

East from the Northern Rock Third Sector Trends Study<sup>1</sup>. Our snapshot provides us with greater detail around sector-specific delivery and support needs.

The data presented in this report was collected through an online survey. The survey was designed to capture information about the characteristics of the organisations and the service user groups they support.

At the end of the survey a total of 54 organisations had responded, who have been added to a directory of voluntary sector organisations working in the CJS in the North East which is available to access on the VONNE website<sup>2</sup>. This directory is a free resource available for voluntary sector, public or private sector organisations to be able to search for organisations delivering services in a geographical or thematic area. All organisations that participated in the survey gave permission for

their details to be added to the directory. The directory has details of the services of 183 voluntary organisations working in the North East. A Directory of Offender Services<sup>3</sup> is also available on the Clinks website which includes details of over 1,000 organisations operating throughout England and Wales.

<sup>1</sup>Third Sector Trends, The Northern Rock Foundation (2011): <http://www.nr-foundation.org.uk/resources/third-sector-trends/>

<sup>2</sup>VONNE, Safer Future Communities Directory: <http://www.vonne.org.uk/policy/criminaljustice/saferfuturecommunities/directory/?fblink=724>

<sup>3</sup>Clinks, Directory of Offender Services: <http://www.clinks.org/directory>

# A profile of voluntary organisations working in criminal justice in the North East: characteristics of respondents

## Characteristics of respondents

Respondents represented a wide range of voluntary sector organisations including those working with prisoners, young people, families, substance misuse, the homeless and victims of crime.

## Characteristics of the organisations

The majority of respondents (65%) indicated that the organisation they worked for was not a specialist criminal justice organisation, but nevertheless provided support to people within the Criminal Justice System. The remaining 35% defined themselves as specialist criminal justice organisations. 65% of all organisations had been providing services that support people within the CJS for five years or more.

Chart 1

For how many years have you provided services that support people within the Criminal Justice System?

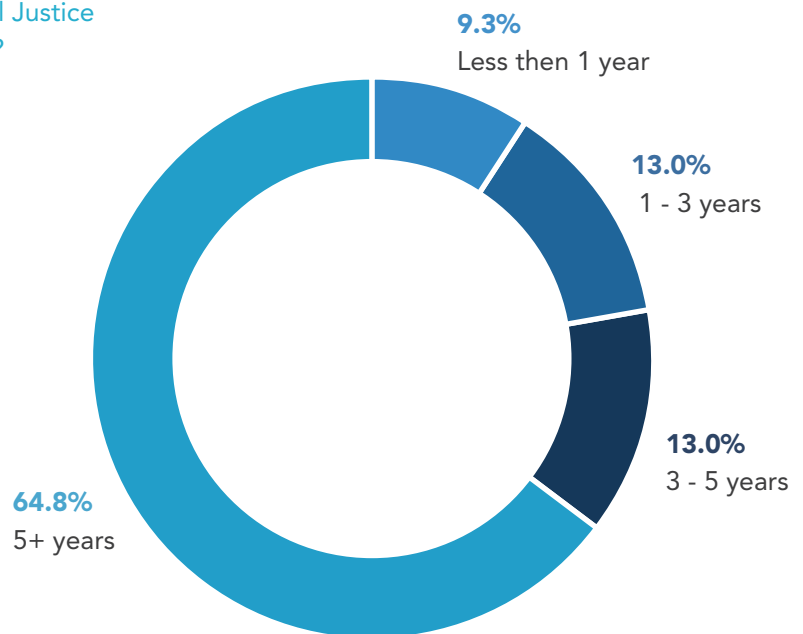
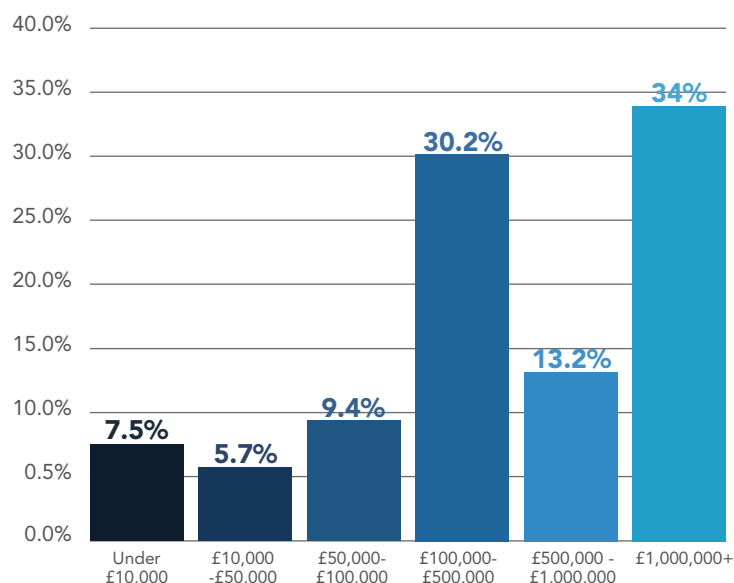




Chart 2  
What is your organisation's annual turnover?



### Organisational size

More than half of the organisations that responded were small to medium in size, with an annual turnover of less than £500,000 (see Chart 2). One third of respondents (34%) had an annual turnover of over £1 million. This compares to national research undertaken by the Centre for Social Justice<sup>4</sup> that showed only 26% of voluntary organisations working in the CJS have an income of £1 million or more, with the vast majority being micro, or small organisations.

### Geographical coverage

A third of respondents described their organisation as having national coverage, with the majority of respondents working at a local or regional level. Two organisations indicated they also operated at an international level. The numbers of organisations providing support in the Cleveland and Durham police force areas are notably similar (around 50%), with a higher

number providing support in the Northumbria police force area (78%). This is not unexpected as many of the larger organisations that responded to the survey have their main base in Newcastle, providing a hub for services in that area.

### Staffing

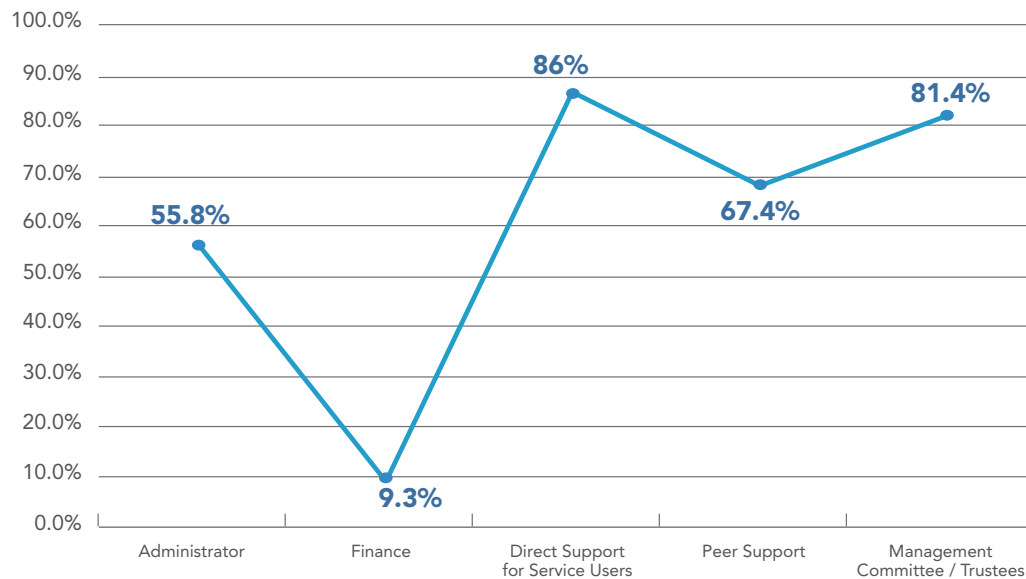
The organisations surveyed employ 7,814 staff; this would reflect 21% of the 37,000 people employed by the voluntary sector in the North East. It is estimated that there are approximately 4,700 charities staff, making them micro or small organisations, whilst 24% of responses came from large organisations employing more than 100 staff. The remaining 32% represented a broad range of medium sized organisations, employing between 11 and 78 staff. We recognise that this sample is not representative of the whole sector, although it is worth noting that the majority of organisations that we surveyed were small to medium in

size. Whilst there are some larger organisations in our sample, this is a mixture of North East specific organisations and national charities that have services in the North East.

<sup>4</sup> Centre for Social Justice (2013), <http://www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/UserStorage/pdf/Pdf%20reports/landscape.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Figures taken from Northern Rock Third Sector Trends Study <http://www.nr-foundation.org.uk/resources/third-sector-trends/>

**Chart 3**  
For what purpose does your organisation use volunteers?



## Volunteers

*“New services and opportunities are constantly evolving and volunteers are an integral part of our delivery.”*

All the organisations, regardless of their size, rely on dedicated volunteers to deliver their services. A total of 15,469 volunteers enable the 54 organisations to provide support to people in the CJS. By comparison there are an estimated 143,000 volunteers associated with voluntary sector organisations in the North East. The majority of volunteers (86%) provide direct support to service users closely followed by volunteers taking the role of trustees or management committee members. The use of volunteers for financial purposes is considerably lower than the other tasks at just 9%.

Even with the high number of volunteers already involved, 79% of the organisations are seeking

to involve more volunteers in their service delivery. Respondents see volunteers as a significant asset to their organisation. Organisations also expressed the value of volunteering opportunities for service users; enabling them to increase their skills, knowledge and confidence. Where possible organisations attempted to provide employment opportunities for volunteers.

*“Often volunteering provides a useful way of developing skills and abilities within a safe environment, leading into employment”*

The main barrier to volunteering, or increasing volunteer involvement, was not having the capacity to provide the ongoing training and support that volunteers require.

# Service user group

Respondents were asked to give details of the numbers of service users their organisation supported on an annual basis. They reported that a total of 243,000 people received services in the last year.

Respondents were asked to provide information about the gender and age range of the service user groups they supported. The results can be seen in the table below. In North East prisons there are around 2,375 adult male prisoners, 530 young adult male prisoners and 325 female prisoners (18 years and over). Most organisations support adults and young adults of either gender. A higher number of organisations (96%) indicate they provide support to female offenders.

Respondents were asked about a range of service user groups that their organisation provides specialised or targeted support to (see Table 1). Three quarters of the organisations

Service user group	Per cent
Male	89%
Female	96%
Transgender	62%
Children (under 16)	57%
Young People (16-18)	79%
Young Adults (16-25)	94%
Adults (25+)	92%
Older People (60+)	75%
BAME (Black, Asian and minority ethnic)	20%
(Ex) offender	76%
(Ex) military	20%
Families	56%
Learning disabled	24%
Physical disabled	15%
Refugees/asylum seekers	20%
Sexual orientation minority	10%
Victims	39%
Witnesses	17%
Lesbian	12%
Gay	5%
Bi-sexual	7%
Transgender	7%

Table 1 - The range of service user groups supported.

provide specialised support to (ex) offenders and more than half provide specialised support to families. The third highest support provided was to victims, with 39% of organisations providing support to this service user group. Only a handful of organisations specialised in delivering support to Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual or Transgender groups. Equally, a small minority of organisations stated that they targeted support at people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities.

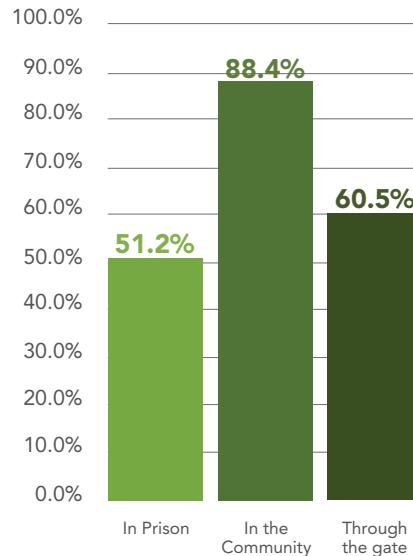
To identify where organisations worked with offenders the survey asked about the location in which they delivered support. The majority (88%) provide support in the community, indicating that the organisations we surveyed are still firmly rooted in local communities. Almost two thirds (61%) provide 'through the gate' support to offenders and their families. Just over half (51%) provide support to offenders in prison (see Chart 4). It is clear that many organisations actively work within the prison, and also provide support to people who are resettling back into local communities at the end of their sentence. The ability of voluntary organisations to straddle the divide between custody and the community, as well as providing after-care resettlement support, is often referred to as one of the sector's main strengths.

### Specific types of offenders

Respondents were asked if they

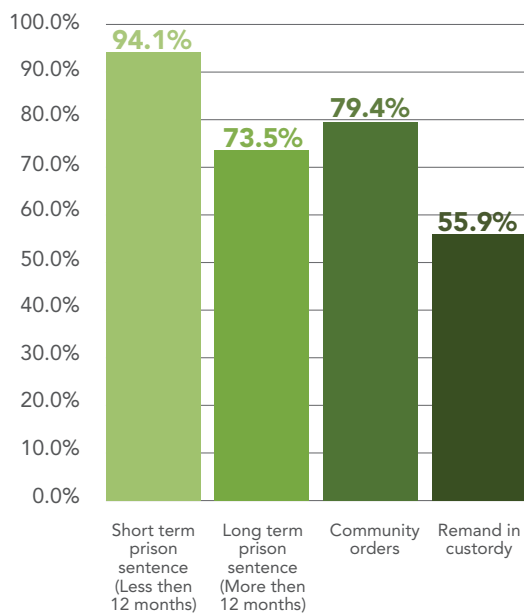
**Chart 4**

If your organisation works with offenders, does it work with offenders who are in prison and/or who are in the community? (tick all that apply)



**Chart 5**

If your organisation works with offenders does it specifically target offenders who are on, or recently completed:



targeted specific types of offenders. The vast majority of organisations (95%), as shown in Chart 5, described themselves as targeting short term offenders (those serving less than 12 months). A high number of organisations targeted offenders on long term sentences (74%) or on community orders (79%). It is clear that voluntary organisations are already offering support to people

serving short-term prison sentences, who will be subject to 12 months of statutory supervision by an offender manager after release under the new reforms to the probation service (Transforming Rehabilitation). The voluntary sector organisations we surveyed also provide support to a range of people who pose varying risks to themselves and the public; from very high to low risk of harm.

# Services the voluntary sector delivers

Respondents were asked to provide information about the nature of support provided by their organisations. The survey offered a list of services and organisations were asked to indicate which were primary services (delivered by their organisation), and which were secondary services (provided by their organisation, but not a main focus), or a service they usually referred service users on to. A 'not applicable' option was provided for those services that the organisation had no role in.

Sixty eight percent of organisations provide 'motivation and empowerment' as a primary service. Almost half of the organisations supported service users with education, employment and training as a primary service. Many indicated that providing opportunities for service users to volunteer added to their employment prospects. Providing support for perpetrators of domestic violence or women

engaged in sex working were provided as a primary service by a relatively small number of organisations. However, almost half of the respondents did refer service users to another organisation for these services.

Only 13% of organisations provided finance, benefit and debt advice as a primary service; however 39% offered this as a secondary service, with an almost equal number referring service users to another organisation for this service. One organisation offers in house finance, benefit and debt advice, specifically targeted at people with multiple and complex needs.

Accommodation services were provided by 31% of organisations as a primary service. No organisation provided accommodation services as a secondary service. Nearly half of organisations (43%) referred service users to another organisation for this service.

A quarter of organisations provided details of other support that they deliver as a primary service. These included youth work, social and community enterprise development, victim support, and several mentioned homelessness prevention activities.

## Specific services

Respondents were asked to provide details of specific services their organisation provided. The table below shows the wide range of services voluntary organisations provide in the field of criminal justice. One third of organisations provide advice and advocacy services to service users and 68% provide volunteering services. Just over half of organisations provide employment services, peer mentoring support/advice and personal development. By contrast, there were some more niche providers, with two organisations providing support with gambling problems, a further two supporting

those with HIV/Aids, and one organisation providing visitor centres.

Other services provided by organisations were public protection, enterprise support, mediation and transport schemes. Table 2, below, demonstrates the range of services organisations provide.

Respondents were asked to provide detailed information about some of the services their organisation

provides. Details of 62 separate services were given. This provides us with a sample of the sort of services being undertaken in the North East by the voluntary sector. Some examples are listed below in Table 3. We have also stipulated which of the combined PCC priorities they met, many of which were covered through existing service provision. The North East PCC priorities are as follows:

1. Dealing with anti-social behaviour

2. Tackling domestic and sexual abuse
3. Reducing crime
4. Prevention of hate crime
5. Prevention of reoffending
6. Problems caused by alcohol and drugs
7. Retaining and developing neighbourhood policing
8. Improving engagement between police and local communities
9. Putting victims and witnesses first
10. Improving road safety

	Number of organisations	Percentage
Volunteering	32	68%
Advice and advocacy	31	66%
Personal development	27	57%
Number of organisations	25	57%
Peer mentoring support / advice	24	53%
Employment	23	51%
Family Support	23	49%
Service user involvement	23	49%
Mentoring and befriending	22	47%
Training	22	47%
Counselling	21	45%
Education	21	45%
Finance, benefits and debt	19	40%
Resettlement	19	40%
Mental Health	18	38%
Parenting skills	18	38%
Housing and homelessness	17	36%
Alcohol	15	32%
Drugs	15	32%

	Number of organisations	Percentage
Domestic Violence	15	32%
Lobbying and campaigning	13	28%
Physical health	13	28%
Sports	11	23%
Education	10	21%
Mediation	8	17%
Arts	7	15%
Environment and regeneration	7	15%
Legal advice	6	13%
Restorative justice	6	13%
Disability	5	11%
Generic services	5	11%
Media	5	11%
Racial equality	5	11%
Research and academia	5	11%
Faith	4	9%
Transport provision	4	9%
Infrastructure	3	6%
Gambling	2	4%
HIV / Aids	2	4%
Visitors centre	1	2%

Table 2 - The range of services provided.

We also captured the costs of providing those services, how the impact of the service is measured and whether the services have directly contributed to a reduction in reoffending.

Services are funded from a variety of sources including public sector contracts and grant making trusts. Many organisations working in the CJS have been supported by the Northern Rock Foundation at some

point in their existence. There is a clear risk that many services will suffer financially when Northern Rock Foundation closes its grant programmes at the end of 2014. Respondents were asked whether their organisation had any plans to develop new services. Despite the current economic climate 72% remain optimistic about being able to develop and deliver new services which are required, for example numeracy and literacy programmes,

preventative and diversionary activities, services for victims and perpetrators of domestic violence and mentoring projects. Some organisations are looking to roll out their model to other geographical and thematic areas.

Service Description	Cost (per annum)	How is it funded	When funding ends	PCC Priority contributes to	Is the service replicable?
Through the Gate mentoring project	£91,000 p/a	Public sector funding and grant making trusts	August 2015	3, 5, 6	Yes
Preventative Domestic Abuse Programme	£25,000	No external funding		2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9	Yes
Mentoring project	£15,000	Grant making trusts	March 2014	1, 3, 5	Yes
Youth education project	£65,000	Grant making trusts	December 2014	5	Yes
IOM Project	£330,000	Public Sector funding	March 2015	1, 3, 4, 5	Yes
Family Based Restorative Service	£320,000	Half money received from grants and donations	May 2014	3, 5, 8	Yes
Veterans Training Scheme	£15,000	Public sector and grant making trusts	August 2017	3, 5, 8	Yes
Crisis Management scheme for homeless people	£52,000	Grant funding	November 2014	1, 3, 5, 6, 8	Yes
Victim Support Service	£65,000	Own finances	N/A	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9	Yes
Drugs Programme	£330,000	Public sector funding	March 2014	3, 5, 6	Yes
Alternative to school programme	£320,000	Public sector and grant funding		1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	Yes

Table 3 - Details of some of the programmes organisations deliver.

# Partnership working

Respondents were asked about any partnership working that their organisations were involved in. The competitive environment is proving to be a big issue for organisations, making it more complicated to work in partnership or develop new collaborations. Whilst it is recognised that collaboration is necessary at a time when resources are limited, this does not negate the fact that partnership working is often time consuming and complex.

Ninety percent of the organisations that completed the question listed a public sector organisation as their main partner organisation. Eighty eight percent indicated that their organisation worked in partnership with other voluntary sector organisations and just over 70% indicated that their organisation worked in partnership with private sector organisations.

## Works well

*“[Partnership] expands our reach and adds expertise”*

When asked what works well in terms of partnership working respondents provided a range of suggestions. The strongest examples of what works well were underpinned by having a shared aim of supporting service users, good personal relationships, clear information sharing procedures and a willingness to share good practice.

*“Commitment to common values and a common goal provides a ‘win-win’ for both partners”*

## Difficulties

*“Changing roles within agencies, people moving on and having to create new relationships with new workers, instead of the work being entrenched”*

Respondents were also asked to provide detail of the difficulties their organisation faced when working with partners. The majority of respondents indicated that organisations’ different priorities, cultures and values had the most significant negative impact on partnership working. Other difficulties included the competitive funding environment and individuals within the organisation moving on. Public and private sector organisations do not always have a clear understanding of the capacity of some smaller voluntary sector organisations when entering into partnerships and contracts.

*“We have no funding for full-time employees and cannot always attend meetings due to lack of manpower and other resources”*



# Working with police and crime commissioners

There are three elected Police and Crime Commissioners (PCC) in the North East, covering Northumbria, Durham and Darlington, and Cleveland. Each PCC has produced a five year Police and Crime Plan, detailing priorities for their area. Whilst compiling the survey each PCC priority was taken into consideration to identify where voluntary sector organisations are delivering services that meet those priorities.

## Meeting PCC priorities

From the snapshot of services provided by the respondents, three quarters (76%) of services delivered contributed to the PCC priority of reducing reoffending, and 63% contributed to reducing crime, and just over half were tackling issues to do with substance misuse and addictions. In contrast no organisation stated that their service improved road safety and only 4.8% contributed to developing and retaining neighbourhood

policing. Chart 6 provides details of all responses provided, which shows a range of diverse services being provided by a comparatively small sample of voluntary sector organisations in the North East. This goes some way to highlighting the value that the sector has in supporting partners like the PCC's offices to meet their strategic objectives.

## Working with PCC's

Respondents were asked what they felt the barriers were to working with Police and Crime Commissioners. Some respondents have engaged well with their PCC, but this is not representative of the majority of respondents.

*"Don't know where to start, don't know enough about them"*

More than half of the respondents felt that they did not have any opportunities to engage with North East PCC's, and would welcome

the chance to come together to share the sector's knowledge, skills and expertise. Several respondents felt that their organisation lacked capacity to try to engage more with their PCC and others felt that they simply did not have an awareness of the role of the PCC. The responses to the survey indicated that many felt the opportunity to attend engagement and networking events in a practice focussed, as well as strategic capacity, would be an appropriate first step to improve engagement. Where possible it would be beneficial for PCCs to collaborate in order to provide a regional perspective.

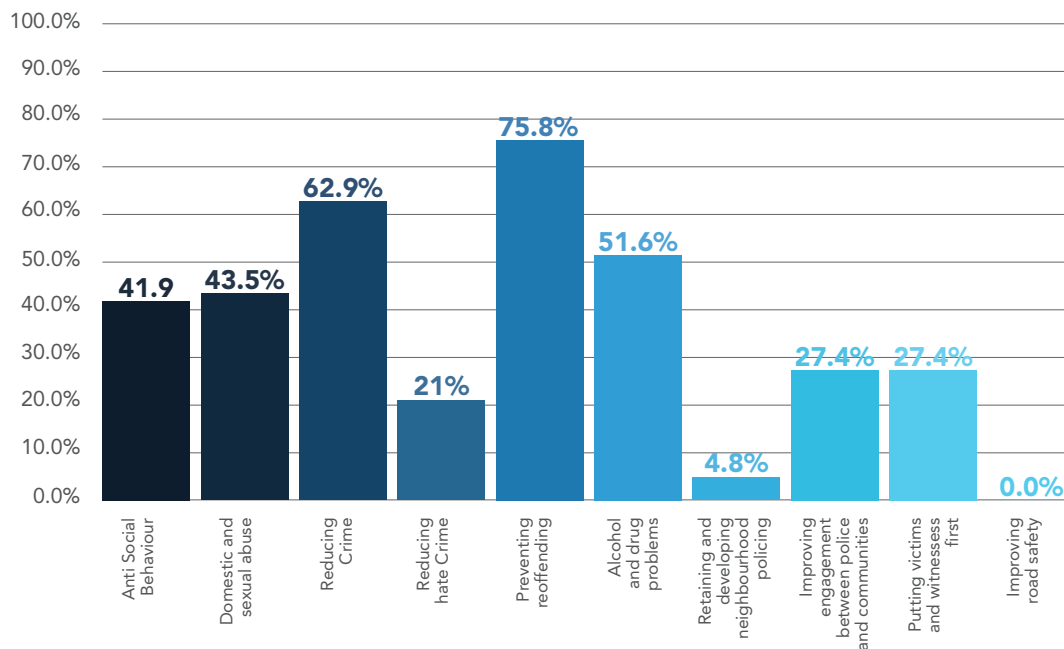
*"We are small; we do not know which meetings are best for us. It would be great to highlight our project but when, where and how?"*

Respondents were asked to provide details about what would enable their organisation to become more involved with PCCs. The opportunity to engage with PCCs and discuss how the sector can contribute to the PCCs priorities was cited as the top response. More effective communication was also suggested; a lot of the communications produced by PCCs are aimed at the general public and the voluntary sector organisations we surveyed

did not feel that they were provided with the opportunity to utilise their knowledge of, and expertise in, supporting people with multiple and complex needs to inform the Police and Crime Plan's implementation.

*"We need to develop clear links between the police and crime commissioner's aims and what we, as a sector, can contribute"*

**Chart 6**  
What PCC priorities does your service contribute to? (tick all that apply)



# Support needs of voluntary organisations

The survey aimed to identify the needs of voluntary sector organisations working in the Criminal Justice System in the North East. The responses received will be used by Clinks and VONNE to inform our future offer to local organisations in this area. Respondents were asked to rate how important specific kinds of support would be to their organisation.

- 65% of respondents rated access to funding/funding support as 'very important'.
- Over a third (38%) of respondents rated 'information dissemination/briefings' and 'developing partnerships and collaboration' as 'very important'.

Chart 7 (next page) shows that organisations would value a wide range of support but with particular focus on access to funding, developing collaboration and partnerships, as well as providing a bridge between the statutory and

voluntary sector to enable better joint working.

When organisations were asked to state which one area of work they felt they needed most support with 'access to funding/funding support' was the top priority (41%). This was followed by developing partnerships and collaboration, providing a voice, information dissemination and acting as a bridge between the voluntary sector and statutory sector.

*"We need to find smart ways of working together to improve reach and maximise capacity to deliver high quality services"*

Organisations were asked to provide details about the reasons why they chose their top priority. Many organisations cited the Transforming Rehabilitation agenda as a new opportunity which may or may not provide access to funding for smaller organisations. The opportunity to voice the issues and concerns of the

sector was also raised by a number of organisations.

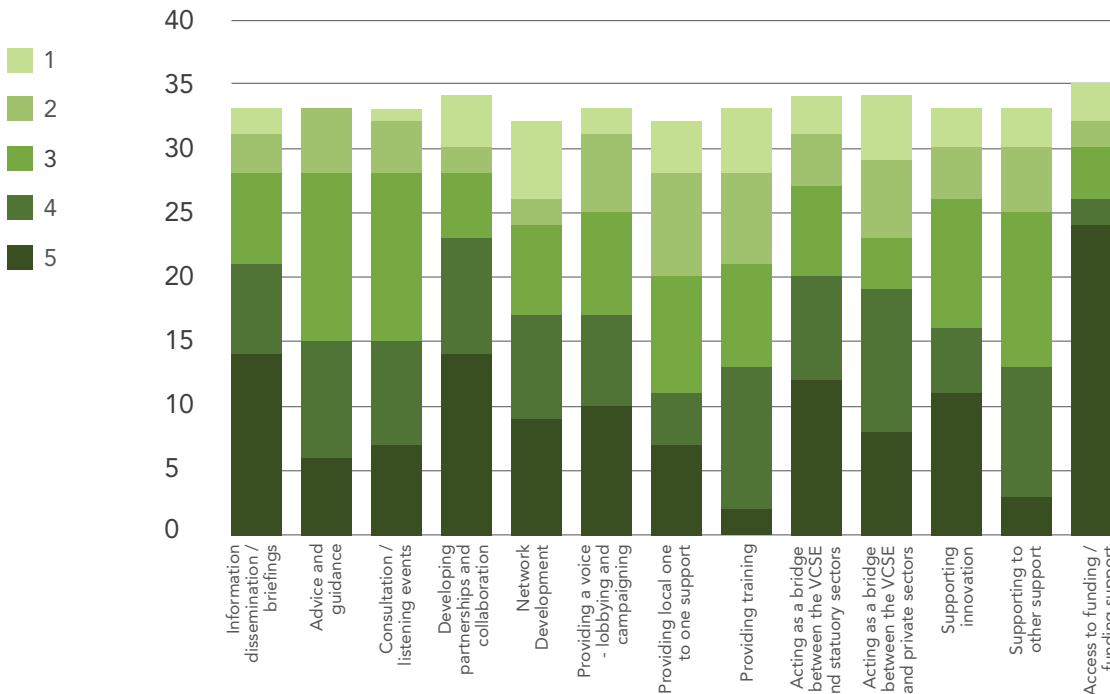
*"There is still a lack of awareness of how the voluntary sector works by the statutory sector and this leads to unrealistic expectations around resources and finances"*

Respondents were provided with the opportunity to indicate other areas where they would welcome support. The complexity and difficulties around organising security clearance for volunteers to work in prisons had particular prevalence. This is an issue that Clinks has raised with NOMS previously and it continues to be a hindrance to local service provision. Respondents were asked what briefings and events their organisation would benefit from

the most. Several organisations requested briefings, training or events around the following themes:

- Transforming Rehabilitation and changes to the Criminal Justice System
- Collaboration and partnerships
- Working more effectively with prisons
- Working in youth justice/ Transition to adulthood
- Income generation

*“The CJS is rapidly changing... there is a strong likelihood existing practice will be steam rolled out of existence. Clinks has proved an invaluable champion for the sector so far, and we need to continue to build on this”*



**Chart 7**  
Please consider the ongoing needs of your organisation and rate the following areas, in terms of how important additional support would be on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = not very important / 5 = very important)

# Conclusion

The survey shines a light on the vast contribution that the voluntary sector makes to improve community safety, support people to turn away from crime, and support victims in local communities. This contribution should be recognised by commissioners and other agencies, and best use needs to be made of this resource that already exists within communities. Voluntary sector organisations are providing diverse services, with a robust track record of delivery over a number of years. The sector provides a wide range of primary and secondary services, as well as support to a wide variety of people with multiple and complex needs.

The asset of wide-scale volunteer involvement is a significant resource, which is largely unique to the voluntary sector, with organisations involving dedicated and trained volunteers to deliver their services. From a small sample of 54 organisations the survey identified

that 15,469 volunteers were being involved for a wide variety of reasons including management committee members, providing legal advice, mentoring, fundraising, and counselling.

The economic importance of the sector was also highlighted, showing them to be an important employer, with an ability to bring investment into the North East, focussing on providing support to some of the most deprived communities and tackling complex needs.

This report has presented a snapshot of organisations working in criminal justice and community safety in the North East. We will be widely distributing these findings, both throughout the voluntary sector and amongst commissioners of offender related services, probation, prisons, the National Offender Management Service (NOMS), Ministry of Justice and offered to potential bidders in the Transforming Rehabilitation

competition.

The main aim of the survey was to gather intelligence about the range of services being delivered in the CJS and to identify the ways in which Clinks and VONNE might help them to thrive in the future. Using the information gathered from our respondents, we have made four recommendations, on which we will focus future work:

## **Recommendation 1: Access to income needs to be prioritised**

The top priority for organisations was the need for more income generation opportunities, and support to access them. Voluntary sector services are funded from a variety of sources including public sector contracts and grant making trusts however organisations are reporting that the funding environment is becoming increasingly more complex with the sector's income rapidly diminishing. The competition for diminishing

funds will exert pressure on the sector's capacity to deliver services, and as the Northern Rock Foundation is closing its grant programmes at the end of 2014 there will be additional pressure. Whilst the sector remains optimistic about being able to develop and deliver new services, new investment in the sector is needed to eliminate some of the difficulties they face during the current funding environment.

**Recommendation 2: Invest in effective partnerships and collaboration**

The survey shows that there is some good partnership working already going on in the voluntary sector however we need to ensure additional support is provided. Commissioners should consider providing resources to support the sector to consider the full spectrum of collaboration in order to deliver effective services in the North East. This could include supporting

and testing the effectiveness of consortia development, supporting organisations to bring together informal partnerships and networks, and to explore more formal joint working arrangements including mergers.

**Recommendation 3: Police and crime commissioners in the North East need a clear strategy and structure for engaging the voluntary sector**

PCCs should explore transparent and equitable ways of engaging with the voluntary sector to contribute strategically to police and crime plans and operationally in the design and delivery of services. This should include more opportunities for the sector to engage effectively through regular meetings and events and opportunities to influence policing priorities. An approach as to how this is taken forward should be included within the Police and Crime Plans.

**Recommendation 4: Ensure effective communication and information sharing with the voluntary sector**

Commissioners, public sector and private sector organisations should ensure they provide the voluntary sector with accessible information as quickly as possible. The survey respondents said they would benefit from a wide range of information on policy updates; funding opportunities; new developments in the criminal justice system and would welcome this information in the form of policy briefings, events and bulletins. Clearer communicating channels need to be developed and implemented, to get information to the voluntary sector in a timely and effective manner.





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