



Reducing Reoffending Third Sector Advisory Group (RR3)

Inaugural meeting

The Foundry,
Vauxhall, London
16th November 2015

CLiNKS

supporting voluntary organisations that
work with offenders and their families

RR3
Reducing Reoffending
Third Sector Advisory Group

DELEGATE LIST

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Jeremy Crook OBE	Black Training and Enterprise Group
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Matt Wall	Community Chaplaincy Association
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Chris Wright	Catch 22
Anne Fox	Clinks
Nicola Drinkwater	Clinks
Nathan Dick	Clinks
Bettina Crossick	National Offender Management Service (NOMS)
Janet Edden	Ministry of Justice (MoJ)
Laura McCaughan	NOMS
Rachel Atkinson	MoJ



INTRODUCTIONS

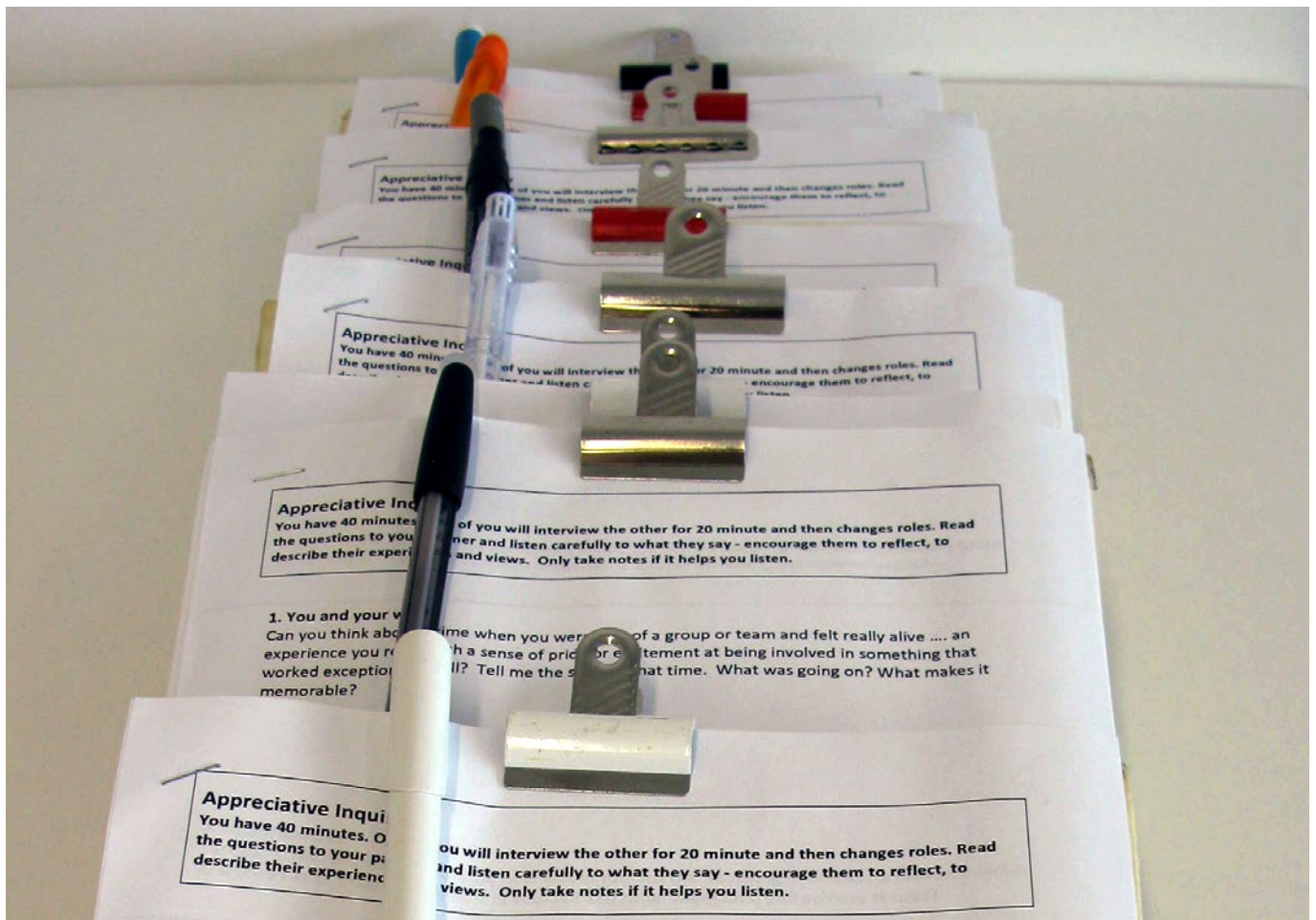
The Reducing Reoffending Third Sector Advisory Group (RR3) exists with the purpose of building a strong and effective partnership between the voluntary sector, the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), and the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) to reduce re-offending. The chair for the group and its secretariat is provided by Clinks.

Due to the significant changes the Transforming Rehabilitation (TR) programme has had for the Criminal Justice System and the voluntary sector, as well as a change in Government and a new Secretary of State for Justice (CJS), Clinks have taken the opportunity to refresh the RR3 terms of reference and membership in order to ensure that it can achieve its aims in this new environment.

Clinks, in partnership with the MoJ have now recruited 14 senior experts from the voluntary sector working in Criminal Justice, who hold between them a range of knowledge, skills and experience, to form the RR3 Leadership Board. You can read about the new members and the terms of reference for the RR3 by visiting:

www.clinks.org/rr3

This report covers the inaugural meeting of the new RR3 membership aimed to start the process of forming an effective advisory group and setting a broad agenda for the year ahead.



THE INAUGURAL MEETING OF THE RR3

Members reflected on why they were part of this group and, after a brief conversation, introduced each other. Anne Fox, CEO of Clinks and chair of the RR3, explained the purpose of the meeting.

Appreciative Inquiry

Using a short questionnaire, members interviewed each other using the Appreciative Inquiry framework. In small groups they drew out the key strengths, opportunities and aspirations that had emerged from these conversations. Those that were mentioned more than once are in **bold** in the following:



STRENGTHS

- Supportive (feeling understood)
- Friendly
- **Collaborative**
- Appreciation of others
- Listening
- **Diversity**
- Culture and religion
- Strong belief
- Belief that group can have an impact
- Passion
- Articulating of a vision
- Sense of purpose
- Business-minded
- Quick wins
- Infiltrating (not revolution)
- Creative
- Independent
- Impartiality
- Courage to speak out
- Tell it like it is
- Open and challenging
- Openness
- **Honest** and transparent
- Balanced
- Consistent
- Strong leadership
- **Doers**
- Capability
- **Pragmatic** and strategic
- Track record of delivery

Continued.

- Best person for the role
- Working to your strengths
- Not competitive or gradist
- Chosen to be here, not obliged
- Commitment
- Lots of institutional memory/**history**
- Specialist knowledge
- **Experience**
- Lots of different expertise
- User experience & client-led
- Learning and contributing (connected)
- Seeing beyond MOJ (e.g. to health, policing, education etc.)
- Ability to influence
- Being able to draw on the voice of the sector



OPPORTUNITIES AND ASPIRATIONS

- Tracking variety of approaches and who's doing what nationally
- Creating a bank of resources useful to commissioners (broadly defined)
- Using evidence in many forms
- Improve knowledge sharing
- Facilitate consensus and recognise difference – be democratic
- The voluntary sector should know what the RR3 is – a voice for the sector
- Increase engagement with Ministers and the Secretary of State to have genuine influence
- To have teeth and get things done
- **Recognised** as having integrity, is necessary and is respected for its input/output
- Respected by Ministers for our worthwhile advice
- Buy in from group members, support from MoJ and NOMS
- Identify the government's 'headlines'
- Agree quick wins, be helpful and see that our advice has made a difference
- Obvious that we've influenced good practice – time well spent
- To have data prepared to target particular issues
- Enjoyment and enthusiasm
- Want to aspire to it being a good thing to use the 'machinery of punishment' less
- Have a developed longer-term vision
- Take, or join with, leadership

Continued.



- Invite others to participate
- Better lives for people in the Criminal Justice System (CJS) and their families
- There has to be willingness (i.e. an opportunity to think creatively)
- Engaging with the detail
- Local problem solving has grown in importance compared to national policy
- Clear outcomes
- We have to have authority
- Aspire to a situation in which our services are no longer needed



OPEN SPACE

Using the Open Space process, the group created an agenda prompted by the question below, but were also encouraged to raise any issues they felt were important for the RR3 to consider. The question was:

What are your and your member's current experiences of the implementation of Transforming Rehabilitation? What is going well? What are you concerned about?



Topics were discussed in groups and the following recommendations emerged. The numbers in brackets reflect the votes assigned to different ideas at the end of the meeting.



How do we (RR3) know if TR works?

- Success from the point of view of the voluntary sector. (2)
- Wrong to have definitions of success solely in terms of voluntary sector. Public is the customer – want to prevent future harm and punishment. What is the role of the voluntary sector in harm prevention and punishment?
- The voluntary sector seems divided on role in TR – the reality has turned out to be different than expected for many organisations (for better and worse). Does the voluntary sector being part of a Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRC) supply chain change the dynamic nature of a charity's offer?
- Voluntary sector organisations must be driven by a set of values that have to trump contract opportunity – not be led by funding.
- There are big and stark choices for the RR3 – do we make recommendations that enable the voluntary sector to engage more in supply chains or enable an environment for the voluntary sector to survive outside supply chains altogether? (8)

What is happening to prison numbers/recall?

- How are service user experiences being captured and/or listened to? Can we collate that information? (1)
- How is the MoJ tracking TR – can we see the data they are collecting? Can we get MoJ in to tell us? When will it be available? How will it be presented? How will it be used, and what might the consequences be? (7)
- We need to decide what the most important questions are, and then ask them.
- What should be happening [schedule 8 of the contracts that CRCs have signed with the MoJ] and how does it compare to what is happening now?

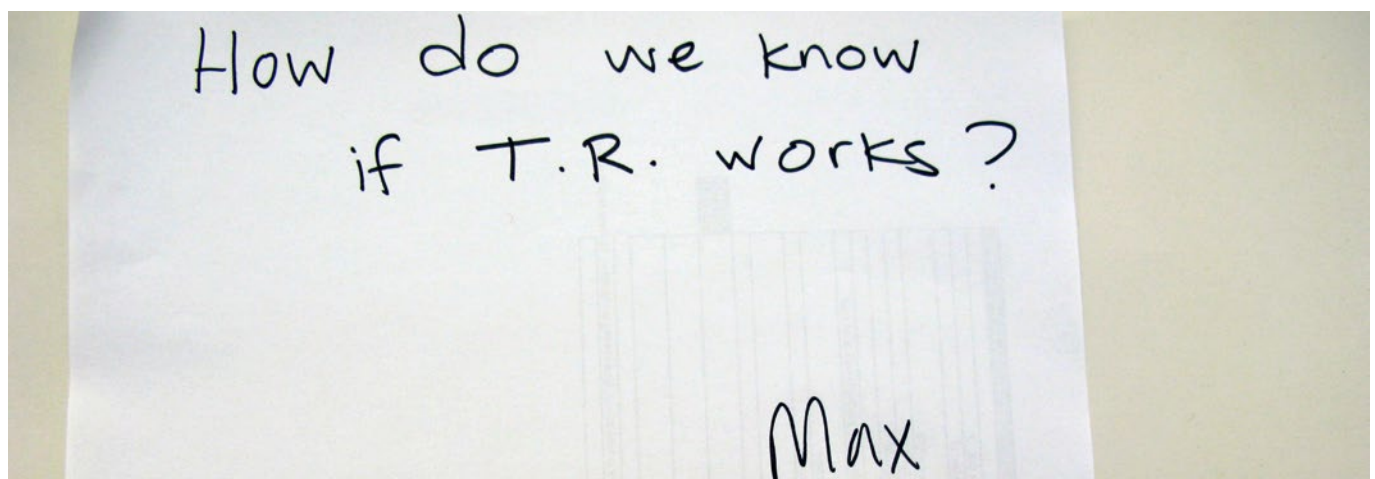


RR3's connection to other groups to maximise impact?

- How can RR3 views be included on key Rehabilitation Forum agenda items? Communicate between groups. Share minutes. (5)
- RR3 members need to understand what is happening at the Rehabilitation Forum, connecting RR3 to other groups.
- How to connect to co-commissioner strategy (e.g. mental health and adult social care)? (3)
- Could the RR3 support a 'myth buster' that unpicks what the CRCs and National Probation Service (NPS) are (and are not) contracted to provide (2)

Danger of a one size fits all approach – need to protect diversity of interventions

- Small organisations need to collaborate and join forces. What is the MoJ role in this, what are the boundaries? (4)
- Pressure on funding is a threat the voluntary sector (and others), coupled with a 'one size fits all' business model that is leaving some organisations behind.
- Need to make the case for a diversity of interventions – making sure we state the case for a desistance-based approach.
- The voluntary sector has always worked flexibly to adapt to local circumstance and need, and may not always be willing to sign up for a 7-year approach. Could this mean a loss of identity for the sector, and how will it impact the individual service users?
- Then voluntary sector will increasingly have to provide what is being commissioned, which may not necessarily be the holistic service they want to deliver. How can we work with CRCs on this – both to challenge and support?
- Can we encourage MoJ to broaden objectives – that includes meeting arising needs? For example, meeting the needs of minority groups, and encouraging new approaches.
- Need to look to the future – what approaches need prioritising for the future?
- RR3 can feed good practice to CRCs – demonstrate how different approaches work.



How can RR3 increase service user involvement with people who have convictions?

- Hard to get prison clearance – need to get data.
- Misconceptions about the level to which service user involvement is being encouraged by Government. Need overarching ethos/statement of intent from the MoJ. (3)
- Regulation of CRC providers employing ‘offenders’ (their definition). How do we know what is happening in local areas?
- Charities should be involving people with experience of the Criminal Justice System in their own governance. How do we encourage the voluntary sector to do this?
- The RR3 will need to look outside of NOMS and the MoJ, as policy created in other government departments will impact on this agenda.
- Does RR3 has user experience (are they already in)? If not then we need to ensure service-user voice is heard and is central to how we operate. (5)
- Can we assess to what extent CRC providers are involving people with convictions in the delivery and design of services?
- How can the MoJ themselves operate fairer recruitment practices (fund Employers Forum for Reducing Reoffending, should MoJ ‘ban the box’)?
- Can we agree the principle that involving service users will help reduce re-offending? And if not then how do we interrogate that viewpoint and facilitate that aim?



Do CRCs have a role to play in addressing health and social care inequalities for offenders?

- Be useful to see what is covered in CRC contracts around health, social care and equalities. How are they working in partnership to meet needs? What are the expectations of CRCs to make sure diversity on needs are met including mental health/personality disorder? It will also be an important role for the NPS, and both will need to focus on meeting the Public Sector Equality Duty. (3)
- Importance of NOMS using CRC data effectively, for example section 10 of the Offender Rehabilitation Act which stipulates that providers must meet the distinct needs of female offenders. The importance of families in rehabilitation should not be overlooked. Surveys of offenders and stakeholders will be a useful source of evidence, but how widely will it be available? (1)

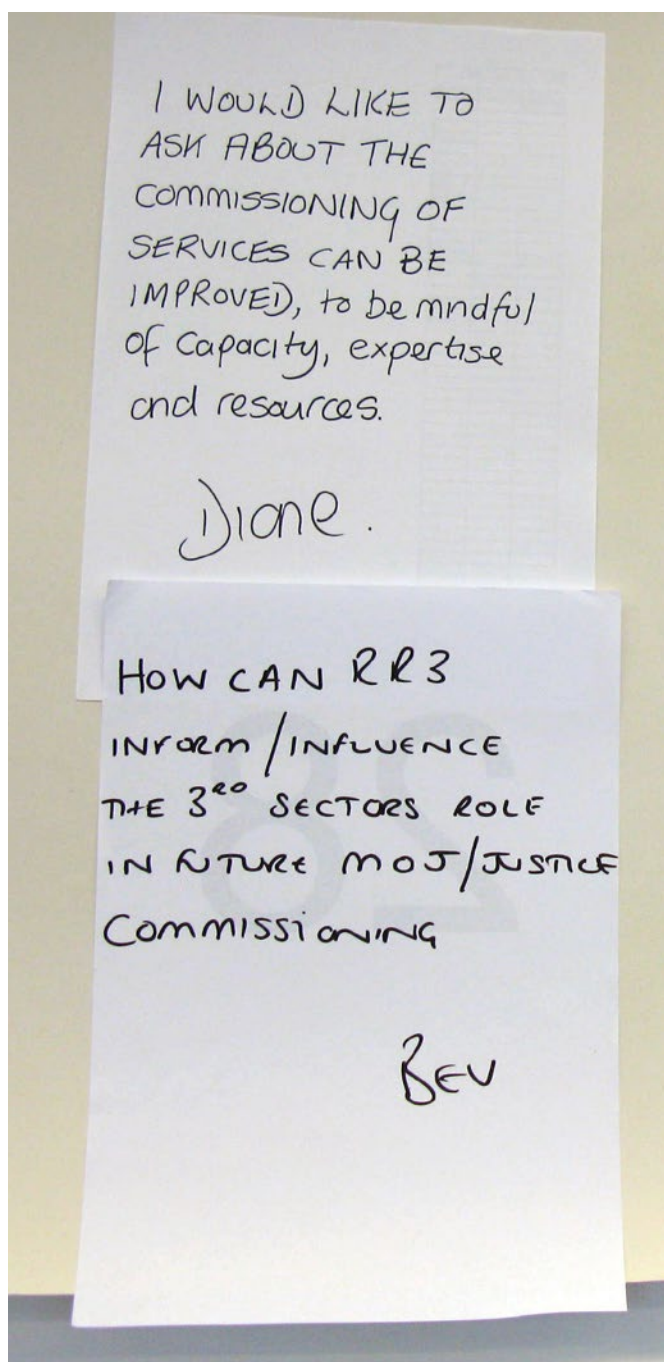
Evidencing outcomes

- Discussion with Rehabilitation Forum about evidencing outcomes (including intermediate outcomes).
- Data silos – and who will join them up again? Who owns data? How providers can integrate data (particularly when multiple agencies work together). How does the collection of data become joined up across government departments?
- Standards of evidence – what do MoJ/NOMs want to see? (3)
- Commissioners need to ring fence a percentage of budget for data collection evidence analysis.
- Do commissioners need to go back to a trusted partner approach to reflect the complexities of attributing organisations contributions to positive outcomes for success?
- Data needs to be part of evidence feedback loop to inform effective future commissioning (1)



Need for a productive and engaged dialogue pre-competition and informed commissioning

- What do the voluntary sector need to be better prepared for commissioning opportunities? Can the RR3 provide guidance? (2)
- Present commissioning ideas/hotspots to authority.
- How can the RR3 increase the quality and frequency of the voluntary sector's engagement in discussions around commissioning and procurement?
- Need strategic view of commissioning intentions – can the RR3 support/advocate for this to be developed, or perhaps it already exists?



DIRECTION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE POLICY

Rachel Atkinson, Deputy Director Reducing Reoffending, Ministry of Justice gave the group an update about the current and future direction of criminal justice policy.

Rachel began by saying that the group is very valuable to the MoJ, who welcome their input. Andrew Selous, Minister for Prisons, Probation and Rehabilitation is very interested in the role of offender's families and passionate about the voluntary sector's work. He wants to come to the next meeting and relay his expectations of the RR3 advisory group, and discuss how this can be achieved.

She outlined that there is a lot of change at the moment, with the department waiting for the announcement of the Comprehensive Spending Review settlement. Although we know that there will be a reduction in the budget, the capital investment around prison building is very positive and gives real potential. There will be a lot of working out as to what that will mean and the MoJ are just at the start of this process.

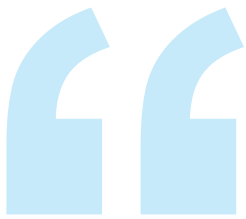
In relation to policy priorities, members of the RR3 will be aware that the Transforming Rehabilitation reforms will continue to be important for the voluntary sector. However, we now have a new Secretary of State for Justice, Michael Gove, which has meant that the department has seen a shift in priorities, which has allowed for other areas of work to develop. The Secretary of State is focused on prisons, including rehabilitation and wanting prisons to do more than they are currently doing - particularly in relation to education and work. He is also a strong advocate for devolution, especially in relation to prison governor autonomy.

Another important area for consideration by the department is the offender cohort and how different groups with different needs are met. The question for the department is how much can and should they focus on these differing needs?



Q & A

Questions were then put to Rachel, her responses are in italics:



We know that some prisons will be closed, do you know the timeframes?

I can't say exactly, but we are expecting to launch a consultation or some form of engagement sometime in the New Year. We also expect there to be some form of piloting of the new freedoms of prisons, but we are still working all of this out.

Governor accountability – CRCs are paid on success that they achieve. If you are asking a Governor to be similarly responsible it looks as if two people are being asked to do same job. How big is the appetite to redraw the boundaries of where responsibilities fit?

I don't know yet – we are still working all of that through.

To what extent are reforms dependent on flows into the system and is part of your thinking related to changes in sentencing, as that is ultimately what drives prison numbers? There was an indication that sentencing is on the agenda and to what extent do you see this group as having a role in relation to providing advice on this?

When we know where we are on the Spending Review we will be better able to know the answers. Any advice may help the dialogue, not sure how this will play out but Ministers are committed to prison reform - there is no 'do nothing option' although what is possible depends upon the spending envelope.

You talked about Micheal Gove MP, who in a previous role was Secretary of State for Education. In this role he spoke about the concept of self-improvement and the levers for this. Has that language come into his work in the MoJ?

Yes, the same philosophy has come through but in a different context - you need to empower local leaders with the right levers to make real change.

Is there an appetite to be working more collaboratively with other departments? Is the RR3's audience wider than just the MoJ and NOMS?

Yes but hesitantly because I'm not sure how we will be driven by timescales and we may be driven by pragmatism. We want to be connected, we want views on engagement but in practice it doesn't always happen. There is a lot of dialogue with health and others but the best thing in this Spending Review is on devolution and city deals and doing things at a local level. Maybe the question we should be asking is how do we as a group think about cross-governance issues – we will need the involvement of other government departments and this group can consider where some of the join-up might be.



CONCLUDING REMARKS

These are some of the comments made at the end of the meeting:

What I've got out this ... I've stepped out of a silo, got connections, parity, have roles to play and have a sense of joined upness at an early stage and see themes emerging.

Enjoyed the day, getting to know everyone and look forward to working together

Wonderful to meet together and get such an engaged group – we need to keep up the momentum.

A really fascinating day, great to meet you and see lots of ideas and some clear outputs.

Again, really nice to meet you all. There have been really positive vibes from today – it's very significant. You can feel it in the room.

Fantastic to see after all the hard work that we have a diverse RR3 advisory board with a breadth of experience; but also with a desire to have some quick wins so that we can get things done.

Do we have the dates for the next 4 meetings? (Anne: we're waiting for the first date to fit in with Andrew Selous and other dates will then follow.)

Very engaged - good to see like-minded opportunities.

I agree – there have been moments of convergence that could lead to some significant change.

Normally I'm very positive but today I'm not quite sure ... I'm a little hesitant. Although I thoroughly enjoyed it I'm not yet convinced we can make change.

Fresh start for me from the old group - very positive.

I love the fact that we are comfortable to sit in different chairs.

Thank you Clinks. I'm still a bit on the fence, used to criticising from the outside, but keen to work closer and collaborate so long as we can respect what we bring and look for long and quick wins.

I'm full of passion for opportunities for new ways of working. I've been amazed at people who are just as if not more passionate than me. With passion comes success.

It has been a pleasure. You are full of enthusiasm and passion with the right amount of realism. I want you to be able to think that this is a good use of your time. Your time is expensive and you chose to be here and I want to treat that choice with respect.

AFTERWORD

Processes used in this meeting that may be useful in the future:

- The group sat in a circle without tables.
- Everyone spoke within the first 5 minutes.
- There was a short silence for reflection before discussion.
- The agenda was framed as a series of questions.
- Members were invited to contribute to the agenda.
- Issues were discussed in pairs and small groups.
- Conclusions were fed back to the whole group through reports posted on the wall.
- Everyone was invited to close the meeting.



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