

What is the Reducing Reoffending Third Sector Advisory Group (RR3)?

Introduction

The Reducing Reoffending Third Sector Advisory Group (RR3) was set up by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), in partnership with Clinks, with the aim of building a strong and effective partnership between the voluntary sector and the MoJ. The group is made up of senior experts from the voluntary sector and comes together with civil servants each quarter to provide guidance and feedback on MoJ policy developments.

The group is chaired by Clinks' Chief Executive Anne Fox and Clinks' policy team provides the secretariat. The group is sponsored by the Director of Youth Justice and Offender Policy at the MoJ. Representatives from the Vulnerable Offenders Team at the MoJ, and the Third Sector and Grants Programme team at the HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) attend the group permanently.

Please visit the Clinks website to view the group's [Terms of Reference](#) and [current membership](#).

[Notes from RR3 meetings](#) are also published on our website.

Membership

RR3 members are recruited through an open recruitment process, advertised through Clinks' newsletters and jobs board. If their application is successful, they attend an interview and selection decisions are then made by the RR3 Chair and secretariat in partnership with the MoJ.

Each position on the RR3 has a specialism attached to it such as mental health, substance misuse or knowledge of the role and situation of small organisations. Members are recruited based on their individual experience of service delivery and policy expertise and sit on the group as representatives of the sector rather than the organisation they are employed by. A strong application to join the group will demonstrate a broad understanding of the challenges facing the voluntary sector in criminal justice and the ability to think strategically about the policy landscape in criminal justice.

Successful applicants are appointed to join the RR3 initially for a term of two years. Members can have their membership renewed for a further two years if they wish, subject to agreement from the RR3 chair and relevant government officials. At the end of that period (a total of four years), the seat must come up for an open selection process, in which the incumbent holder is free to reapply for that role - should it continue to be a role the chair and officials feel is needed.

Positions may also be recruited for when a member of the group steps down, where additional need is identified in relation to a specialist area or following a review of membership.

How the group works

The group works to an agreed work plan which identifies priority areas and the group's activity and objectives within these. Some examples of these areas of work are: probation, mental health, substance misuse, black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) people in the criminal justice system and accommodation.

Each meeting will usually include a policy update from the MoJ and HMPPS, providing information about all relevant policy areas, and a focused group discussion on a particular topic in relation to the role of the voluntary sector in the criminal justice system¹. The MoJ provide a policy update for each meeting and HMPPS update on relevant operational developments as well as any HMPPS discretionary grants programmes for voluntary organisations. Recent meetings have focused on accommodation, probation reform and health and justice. An example agenda can be found in appendix one.

The group has engaged with a variety of officials to provide guidance on policy areas such as education, employment, women, prison estate transformation and devolution. The group will often maintain contact with these officials following meetings in order to continue to provide voluntary sector feedback and to receive updates on future policy developments.

Following the meeting, notes are published on the Clinks website and actions are put into an action log to track progress.

Special Interest Groups

As well as meeting each quarter, the RR3 can also convene time-limited Special Interest Groups (SIGs) to explore certain topics in more depth. These groups are sponsored by a member of the RR3 in response to issues raised by the MoJ/HMPPS or by the sector. On behalf of the RR3, Clinks recruits additional members for these groups from the sector with expertise of the topic. Like the main RR3 group, members of SIGs attend in an individual capacity and do not represent their organisations.

SIGs may take the form of a one-off meeting to gather evidence from the sector, or a series of meetings to feed into ongoing work by MoJ or HMPPS officials. SIGs feed information back to the RR3 group but also produce outputs such as recommendation papers or good practice guides.

All notes from SIGs are published on the Clinks website.

Example: Special Interest Group on Accommodation

The SIG on Accommodation was set up in November 2017 in response to growing concern in the voluntary sector that the housing needs of people in the criminal justice system were not being met. The RR3 group nominated its member Beverley Williams of Home Group to sponsor the SIG and contacted the MoJ to request attendance from a relevant official.

The group had its first meeting, bringing together several voluntary organisations with expertise in accommodation for people in the criminal justice system, as well as MoJ officials with

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responsibility for accommodation policy. Organisations outlined the challenges faced by their service users in securing accommodation and the impact this had on their wider life chances.

Following three more meetings, the SIG produced a [recommendations paper for the MoJ](#), outlining key principles and considerations for MoJ policy on accommodation.

All of the recommendations from paper have either been accepted by the MoJ, with plans for action, or partially accepted pending the outcome of the current review of probation.

The paper also directly influenced the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government's *Rough Sleeping Strategy*. Many of the guiding principles and recommendations in the paper are reflected in the strategy.

Example: Special Interest Group on Commissioning Family Services

In early 2016, HMPPS informed the RR3 group that they were planning a national process to commission family services for all prisons in England and Wales in 2017. The RR3 convened a SIG of voluntary organisations currently providing family services for prisons or with an interest in this area, in order to consult with HMPPS officials on the development of the commissioning process and good practice in the delivery of family services. Due to the feedback from voluntary organisations, HMPPS made changes to the way in which the contract lots were divided up and increased engagement with potential providers in each contract area. With the transparency offered by the RR3 processes such as publishing all meeting notes, HMPPS felt able to continue engaging with the voluntary sector over a long period of time without compromising the fairness of the bidding process.

While the consultation process was positive and successful in enabling those with the most expertise in delivering family services to bid for contracts, there were difficulties in engagement with MoJ at the point of tender, leading to problems in the process of awarding the contracts. In order to provide guidance for the MoJ in developing more effective commissioning processes, the RR3 used the learning from the group to produce a paper entitled, *How to improve commissioning*.

Read [How to improve commissioning](#) on the Clinks website.

RR3 key achievements

The RR3 input and work is valued by the MoJ and HMPPS, officials regularly request input from the RR3 group and refer to RR3 publications and meeting notes for guidance on policy-making. The group, or members of it, has had a number of meetings with Ministers and senior officials. We recognise the value of working across departments too, for example through our work influencing the cross-ministerial Reducing Reoffending Board.

April 2019

Held a one-off roundtable with 15 employment specialist voluntary organisations to provide advice to the government on its implementation of the employment aspects of the Education and Employment Strategy and to support the development and strategic direction of the New Futures Network. A [recommendations paper](#) was subsequently published.

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February 2019

Established a formal arrangement to provide advice to the cross-ministerial Reducing Reoffending Board (RRB), chaired by David Lidington MP, then Minister for the Cabinet Office and Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. At the request of the RRB, the RR3 **submitted its first recommendation paper**, on Universal Credit and access to banking for people leaving prison.

April 2018

Published a recommendations paper *Ensuring the accommodation needs of people in contact with the criminal justice system are met*, through the RR3 Special Interest Group on Accommodation. The group received a written response from the Ministry of Justice on each recommendation made in the paper, all of which were either accepted, with plans for action, or partially accepted pending the outcome of the current review of probation. The paper also directly influenced the development of the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government Rough Sleeping Strategy.

November 2017

On two occasions met with Sam Gyimah, then Minister for Prisons and Probation, to discuss key principles for an effective probation system and the role of the voluntary sector in providing expertise and delivery to support this. These included the use of release on temporary licence, the development of governor autonomy, the implementation of the Lammy Review and MoJ commissioning processes.

July 2017

Provided feedback on organisations' experiences of the HMPPS voluntary sector innovation grants programme. This feedback was used by officials to inform the development of the upcoming grants programme. Responding to the group's suggestions, HMPPS have now extended the grants programme from one year to two.

October 2016

Set up a Special Interest Group on effective care and support for people at risk of self-harm and suicide. The group brought together a range of voluntary sector experts on mental health for two meetings, to explore the challenges in this area and develop recommendations for change. **The SIG produced a report on the topic**, with nine recommendations for the MoJ, voluntary organisations and other relevant parties.

August 2016

Published a paper entitled *Prison reform and the voluntary sector*. This outlined a number of ways in which the expertise and services of the voluntary sector could be used to support the prison reform programme's aims of improving rehabilitation and supporting desistance. It presented several ideas for voluntary sector engagement and was circulated within the MoJ.

February 2016

Met with Andrew Selous, then Minister for Prisons and Probation and provided expertise on how the voluntary sector can support the prison reform programme. The group was asked by the Minister for additional feedback by email and sent examples of good practice in order to inform the Minister's policy direction.

An ongoing record of the group's key achievements is kept up to date [on our website](#).

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Getting involved

You can stay up to date with the activity of the RR3 group by looking out for notes and announcements from the group in Clinks' [Light Lunch newsletter](#) and monthly [Policy Briefing](#). News about recruitment to the RR3 and to RR3 Special Interest Groups will go out through Clinks' newsletters and will be on the Clinks [Jobs Board](#).

If you would like to discuss any specific areas of the group's work or how you can engage with the group's activities, please contact will.downs@clinks.org.



Appendix 1: Example agenda

RR3 meeting, 5th December, 10am – 2pm
Barrow Cadbury Trust, Kean House, 6 Kean St, London, WC2B 4AS

Agenda

Item	Led by	Preparation
1. Welcome and introductions	Anne Fox, Clinks	
2. MoJ & HMPPS update	George Barrow, MoJ Bettina Crossick, MoJ	
3. Prison estate transformation	Louise Collins, MoJ Chloe Elsley, MoJ	
4. Update on RR3 work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minutes of the last meeting Action log Update on commissioning paper influencing Update on probation roundtable with Minister Women’s Networking Forum Substance misuse roundtable Accommodation SIG 	Oonagh Ryder, Clinks	1. 13.09.17 RR3 meeting minutes 2. Action log 3. How to improve commissioning 4. Women’s Networking Forum notes
Lunch		
5. Lammy Review update and discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MoJ/HMPPS response and action Sector response and action 	Anne Fox, Clinks (George Barrow, MoJ Beverley Thompson, HMPPS Equalities team)	5. Clinks Lammy Review briefing
6. AOB		
Meeting ends		



Clinks supports, represents and advocates for the voluntary sector in criminal justice, enabling it to provide the best possible opportunities for individuals and their families.

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