



**“Clinks will always  
have an umbrella handy  
if it starts to rain.”**

Clinks member

# Impact assessment



**ideas to impact**

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# Executive summary



Photo: Clinks annual conference 2019

# Introduction

**This publication reports on the findings of an assessment of Clinks' impact. It looks at Clinks' work since the previous impact assessment in 2016. The assessment was undertaken between March and August 2019. It set out to review:**

- 1 Whether Clinks is providing the range of services and activities that stakeholders want and need
- 2 What difference Clinks is making to its members and the wider voluntary sector in criminal justice and, ultimately, to the sector's service users
- 3 Whether Clinks' work is of a good quality.

Over 120 people were involved through three workshops, around 12 mini-interviews, a 'postcard' survey with 92 respondents at Clinks' events, 33 telephone interviews and one email response with a range of voluntary sector, government and statutory sector stakeholders. A review of Clinks' written material, and workshops and interviews with staff, was also included.

Survey responses indicated that:

- **91%** of respondents to the survey strongly (71%) or slightly (20%) agreed that **Clinks keeps their organisation informed** about issues in the criminal justice system that affect them
- **84%** of respondents to the survey strongly (68%) or slightly (16%) agreed that **Clinks is effective in promoting the role and value of the voluntary sector** to decision-makers and funders
- **79%** of respondents to the survey strongly (43%) or slightly (36%) agreed that **Clinks helps their organisation to develop skills, knowledge and relationships** to further their work
- **70%** of respondents to the survey strongly (46%) or slightly (24%) agreed that **Clinks listens to and acts on their needs, concerns and experiences**.

Overall, stakeholders from different sectors were extremely positive about all of Clinks' work, identifying changes that Clinks had influenced, and praising the quality of its policy analysis and development, consultations and collection of

evidence and provision of information in particular. Some interviewees commented that engagement with members and its focus on smaller and specialist organisations had improved over the last few years.

Most of the changes suggested in this report are tweaks to what Clinks already does, with key recommendations including:

- Considering black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) representation and tackling the disproportionality of BAME people in the criminal justice system
- Enabling members to connect and share information more with each other
- Looking at the programme of work of networks and forums in relation to identifying strategic goals.

## Attributing impact

In complex systems it is unlikely that any one organisation has influenced an outcome. Government interviewees indicated that it was multiple voices with similar messages that particularly influenced change, and so the ability for organisations to work together is crucial. This impact assessment aims to establish what Clinks' contribution has been, amongst others, to changes in policy, practice, and people's lives rather than claiming sole credit for Clinks.

## The difference that Clinks makes

### ✓ Outcomes

**The criminal justice system is improved; voluntary organisations provide the best possible opportunities for individuals and their families; and people's lives are transformed.**

## What is successful

Interviewees were able to point to a range of changes to criminal justice policy and practice, to voluntary organisations – and ultimately people in the criminal justice system and their families – that had come about, at least in part, because of Clinks' influence. These included:

- The Farmer Review,<sup>1</sup> carried out in partnership with Clinks, the effects of which have been seen over the period of this impact assessment, where attitudes have been changed about the importance of families for people's rehabilitation. There are new family services in prisons and family work is more consistent across prisons rather than being piecemeal, and prisons are inspected on their family work. Voluntary organisations described how they are delivering new family services.
- Transforming Rehabilitation and probation reforms, with government officials citing Clinks' trackTR<sup>2</sup> and State of the sector<sup>3</sup> research, plus the evidence that Clinks brings through coordinating meetings with voluntary organisations, as being influential in changing the original intentions around the new probation structure.
- The *Female Offender Strategy*<sup>4</sup> was influenced by a range of women's organisations with Clinks being important in coordinating a delegation to the Minister. As a result, the strategy emphasises a move away from prison sentences as well as confirming the vital role of voluntary sector women's centres.
- Raising the profile of arts in the criminal justice system, including getting this into the Arts Council's *Draft strategy 2020-2030*<sup>5</sup> for the first time.
- Organisations gaining funding and delivering new services, both as a result of opportunities that Clinks has opened up, through information provision and the relationships built at Clinks' events. Brokering access to prisons was mentioned as particularly important.
- Intervention around the collapse of Community Rehabilitation Company Working Links, meaning that voluntary subcontractors were paid following the issuance of a Ministerial Direction and organisations continued to remain in existence when otherwise they could have closed.

Although the impact on beneficiaries was not measured directly, interviewees talked about how these changes in turn had an impact on individuals and their families through changes in policy and practice and new and improved services.

## What Clinks could consider

Some areas of work have not been so successful. Some participants pointed to policy not always leading to implementation as intended, or implementation being slow. A sizeable number of participants mentioned prisons being difficult to access or to work with because of their culture. There were still concerns about the future probation reforms not including small and specialist voluntary organisations.

Many stakeholders were very positive about Clinks but found it difficult to identify the specific impact that Clinks has made on their organisations. The longer-term nature of policy change also makes this difficult to measure; ongoing systematic monitoring would help, with regular reporting so that voluntary organisations understand the value of involvement with Clinks.

## The right services at the right quality

Stakeholders were very positive overall about the range and quality of services, with a few suggestions for improvements. These are listed under the outcomes that were used for the impact assessment.

## ✓ Outcome

**The role and value of voluntary organisations is known by stakeholders, opening up opportunities to develop and grow.**

### What is successful

Providing organisations with a route into commissioners and decision-makers to promote their services was highly valued. Promotion of the voluntary sector as a whole, and of individual organisations, helped with profile-raising and access to new opportunities nationally and at regional levels where there are area development staff. Government, statutory and voluntary organisations benefited from learning about different ways of working, taking ideas away to implement.

### What Clinks could consider

Some organisations would like more opportunities to promote themselves at events, and more clarity about how to get involved. The need for more events in different parts of the country was also frequently mentioned.

## ✓ Outcome

**The voluntary sector has the skills, knowledge and relationships to achieve its goals.**

### What is successful

Information, policy briefings, networks and forums were the most popular answers in the survey question about what support from Clinks has been most helpful. Having targeted information about the criminal justice system saved organisations time from having to sift for that information themselves, particularly the Light Lunch ebulletin, because it can be quickly scanned and covers a broad range of subjects. Being able to contribute to Light Lunch and other communications was welcomed and organisations received responses as a result. The provision of targeted information for Wales was

welcomed. Some interviewees mentioned that the website is now better organised since its review.

Most people felt that staff in Clinks were approachable and accessible, and having named contacts in Clinks for the areas and thematic networks helped. Area development staff helped with promoting the criminal justice voluntary sector locally and linking with other sub-sectors, and this support was requested in regions where Clinks does not currently have a local presence. Although not statistically significant, regions in which there are area development staff tended to have more positive responses to the outcomes in the survey than those in areas without.

### What Clinks could consider

Different ways of delivering information such as blogs, vlogs or podcasts were requested. Some people felt that there was too much information from Clinks and this could be better filtered against priorities, or that it should be clearer why the information was important and relevant. Presentations at networks, forums and events could be more interactive with a clearer 'call to action'. Increasing attendance at events of all types was mentioned. This included an increase in the number of people overall to network, with involvement of a wider cross-section of people (for example from different sub-sectors) and participation of government and other statutory officials.

## ✓ Outcome

**The voluntary sector involves people with lived experience in the design and delivery of services.**

### What is successful

Promoting the involvement of people with lived experience at Clinks events was important in inspiring people and giving practical ideas. Organisations also had made changes as a result of involvement in the service user involvement managers' network and written resources.

## What Clinks could consider

Redeveloping resources around people with lived experience in line with current good practice was suggested. *The state of the sector 2018* report suggests that many organisations do not involve service users in decision making over and above consultation, so this is an area that could be improved. The needs of people with lived experience for support to set up their own organisations – when they may be reluctant to approach mainstream services – could be considered.

### Outcome

**The voices of voluntary organisations working in criminal justice, particularly small and specialist organisations, are amplified.**

## What is successful

Providing commissioners and decision-makers with a route into the voluntary sector, and the voluntary sector with a route into commissioners and decision-makers, were both valued highly. Government and statutory officials would not have access to the number and diversity of groups without Clinks. This includes ongoing advisory groups, workshops and roundtables, and steering groups for specific pieces of work. This helps to improve the confidence of policy makers in what they are proposing, and voluntary organisations felt that these groups could help to hold officials to account against their promises. Because of these relationships, organisations felt that being involved with Clinks could really make a difference.

Stakeholders said that Clinks is good at managing complex situations and relationships with multiple stakeholders and interests, presenting a range of views rather than focusing on one solution, and is good at working collaboratively with frontline organisations, other voluntary sector influencers and commissioners and decision-makers. Not seeking funding for frontline services was important to some officials in trusting Clinks to be part of the policymaking process. Clinks' staff were described as being responsive, open, sensitive, empathetic and showing passion for their work, and that they were a nice and likeable organisation to deal with.

Clinks' policy information, including bulletins, briefings and blogs were praised for summarising policy so that it was easy to understand and use, which helped organisations to plan for the future and liaise with commissioners and decision-makers with confidence.

How Clinks manages different relationships was highlighted. This included the sometimes-conflicting interests of larger and smaller organisations, with most respondents feeling that Clinks handles this well. Tension between Clinks being funded by the Ministry of Justice, whilst Clinks may sometimes need to criticise government policy, was also questioned. Again, most participants felt that Clinks took the right approach to gain the most influence, although a few people felt that Clinks could on occasion be more assertive. Government officials felt that Clinks were robust in their analysis and contributions and weren't afraid to give constructive criticism.

## What Clinks could consider

There could be more publicity about what happens as a result of Clinks' policy work to ensure that people know what has happened with their information, plus greater use of ICT to develop policy collaboratively. Clinks forums and networks could have more of a strategic focus to better influence policy. They could look at particular problems identified by attendees in a geographical or thematic area.

### Outcome

**Disadvantage, discrimination and inequality in our criminal justice system are tackled.**

## What is successful

Representation of the small and specialist organisations was evident across all Clinks' activities, and the focus in the State of the sector research on organisations that work with people with protected characteristics under the Equality Act (2010) has highlighted issues for these groups.

Interviewees were optimistic about Clinks' merger with Women's Breakout and how the women's sector influenced the *Female Offender Strategy*.

## What Clinks could consider

Although people were positive about Clinks' work around BAME people and their disproportional representation in the criminal justice system, it was felt that there hadn't been much progress in changing practice, for example with outcomes of the Young Review<sup>6</sup> and the Lammy Review.<sup>7</sup> There were some suggestions that Clinks needed to be more representative of BAME people, and that addressing this issue should be a specific area of work for Clinks and its members.

### Outcome

**The voluntary sector is aware of and able to respond to opportunities and challenges.**

## What is successful

Many organisations mentioned that, through Clinks, they had developed relationships with others, which had enhanced their services. These included better referral networks and publicity directly to beneficiaries, gaining access to prisons, and gaining funding leading to new services.

## What Clinks could consider

People wanted more ways to connect and collaborate with others, both inside and outside of meetings, including within regions and at levels smaller than regions. Many organisations are still struggling to access opportunities through unrealistic or inaccessible procurement practices, and it was suggested that Clinks could recruit a procurement expert to support this work. Participants from the voluntary and statutory sectors felt that there wasn't enough practical support for smaller organisations to access opportunities, which may impact on those dealing with disadvantaged communities in particular.

### Outcome

**There is accurate, timely and comprehensive intelligence on the needs and challenges in the voluntary sector.**

## What is successful

The quality of Clinks' evidence was raised by government officials in relation to how it had influenced their thinking, particularly in the trackTR research, but also in the State of the sector research. Organisations had plenty of opportunities to feed in their experiences. Voluntary organisations used Clinks' evidence to help with funding applications and influencing decision-makers, and many commented how responsive Clinks is to their requests for evidence. Working with academics has helped to bring extra capacity, rigour and the ability to take a longer-term view.

## What Clinks could consider

How to increase response rates for surveys and requests for information to better enable busy organisations to participate.

### Outcome

**The voluntary sector is treated as an equal partner in the design and delivery of services.**

## What is successful

There is some optimism that the voluntary sector is treated as an equal partner in some areas. It is valued that Clinks has been invited to sit around the table by the government regarding probation reforms. Reports from officials that Clinks' contribution has made a difference is further evidence of this.

## What Clinks could consider

Despite some optimism, most voluntary organisations still don't feel as if they are an equal partner. They feel that decision-makers could be more collaborative at national and local levels, they could understand their work better and take more of a partnership approach – and less of a transactional approach – to developing services.

## Impact report 2016 pledges

Clinks made 10 pledges as a result of its last impact report.<sup>8</sup> There has been progress on most of these, for example:

- A comprehensive series of consultation events took place during 2018 and Clinks' strategy for 2019-22, *Creating change together*,<sup>9</sup> was developed and promoted, with most stakeholders clear about Clinks' role
- A communication strategy guided the redesign of communications, giving the voluntary sector multiple ways to engage
- Area development roles have had an impact in five areas, providing information, support, and linking people up
- Clinks has worked effectively with other partners to achieve shared aims across a variety of activities
- The learning from past work has been applied to influence change, particularly in discussions around the probation reforms.

Areas still for development or further development include:

- Increasing the profile of more of Clinks' staff, and ensuring that staff are not over-stretched
- Considering whether information needs to be streamlined and more focused
- Building relationships and gaining funding for area development officers in the remaining regions
- Further reviewing the membership offer, the distinction between members and non-members and the benefits of being a member, not just to individual organisations but to Clinks and the wider criminal justice system
- How to communicate what Clinks is working on and what it has achieved.

## 2019 recommendations

Key recommendations for action by Clinks include:

- Undertaking ongoing impact measurement and promotion of the difference Clinks makes
- Identifying how organisations can communicate and network more with each other
- Greater online communication and collaboration
- Working with the government to ensure that when Clinks has successfully influenced policy, it is then implemented
- Continuing to promote the voices of small and specialist organisations in the probation reforms
- Making forums and networks interactive and more strategic, including more involvement of the government and statutory services, and increasing attendance
- Working with commissioners and decision-makers to improve access to prisons and the procurement processes of prisons
- Meeting the different needs of organisations in Wales
- Increasing the representation of BAME people and organisations, and addressing the problems of disproportionality
- Redeveloping lived experience resources and encouraging organisations to involve people with lived experience more.

# 1 About Clinks



Photo: The Farmer Review launch, House of Lords 2016

## Vision

Our vision is of a vibrant, independent and resilient voluntary sector that enables people to transform their lives.

## Mission

To support, represent and advocate for the voluntary sector in the criminal justice system, enabling it to provide the best possible opportunities for individuals and their families.

## Objectives

- 1 Promote the work of the voluntary sector in the criminal justice system, with a particular focus on smaller specialist organisations.
- 2 Support voluntary organisations working in the criminal justice system with individuals and their families.
- 3 Represent and advocate for the voluntary sector and its service users.
- 4 Identify challenges and opportunities facing the voluntary sector and its service users, and work together to find and implement solutions.
- 5 Clinks being effective, efficient and professional in its work and operations. Ensuring we have the systems, resources and processes to achieve maximum impact.

## The researchers

Ideas to Impact provides a range of services to help people, organisations and partnerships in the voluntary, community and social enterprise and public sectors. This includes research, evaluation, impact assessment, quality assessment and systems, partnership and service development, and commissioning and procurement support.

Becky Nixon, Director of Ideas to Impact, led the research. She has experience in local, regional and national infrastructure and with criminal justice organisations. Ann Gilbert and Krista Blair provided support with the fieldwork, and Marlen Tallett with the coordination.

# 2

## Aims and methodology

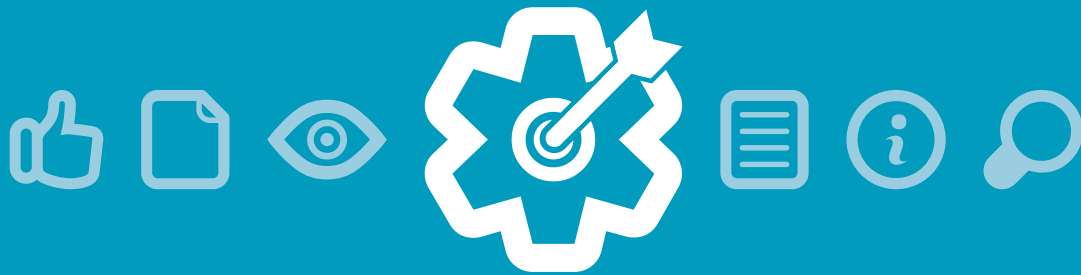


Photo: Clinks AGM and 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration 2018

## 2.1 / Aims

This publication reports on the findings of an assessment of Clinks' impact. It looks at Clinks' work since the previous impact assessment in 2016. The assessment was undertaken between March and August 2019. It set out to review:

- 1 Whether Clinks is providing the range of services and activities that stakeholders want and need – reported in sections 3.1 and 3.4.
- 2 What difference Clinks is making to its members and the wider voluntary sector in criminal justice, and ultimately, to the sector's service users – reported in section 3.3.
- 3 Whether Clinks' work is of a good quality – reported in sections 3.1 and 3.4.

The impact assessment looked at changes since the previous report in 2016, although because of the nature of policy change, some of the initiatives reported on started before that date with their effects being felt now.

## 2.2 / Outcomes and evidence

A literature review of Clinks' publications was undertaken, from which outcomes from Clinks' work were taken. These were prioritised by Clinks to focus on those most central to its work. They include:

- The criminal justice system is improved
- Voluntary organisations provide the best possible opportunities for individuals and their families
- People's lives are transformed
- The role and value of voluntary organisations is known by stakeholders, opening up opportunities to develop and grow
- The voluntary sector has the skills, knowledge, and relationships to achieve its goals
- The voluntary sector involves people with lived experience in the design and delivery of services

- The voices of voluntary organisations working in criminal justice, particularly small and specialist organisations, are amplified
- Disadvantage, discrimination and inequality in our criminal justice system are tackled
- There is accurate, timely and comprehensive intelligence on the needs and challenges in the voluntary sector
- The voluntary sector is aware of and able to respond to opportunities and challenges
- The voluntary sector is treated as an equal partner in the design and delivery of services.

### Evidence was gathered using the following methods:

- Two workshops and individual interviews with Clinks staff.
- Examination of Clinks' written material.
- A 'postcard' survey administered at Clinks' events with 92 responses.
- Attendance and informal discussions at Clinks' conference and National Criminal Justice Arts Alliance's Annual General Meeting.
- Focus groups at Wales and North West 'Criminal justice forums' with around 13 and 20 delegates respectively, plus feedback from a Clinks-facilitated workshop in the North East forum of around 30 people.
- Telephone interviews with 33 people from different sectors including the voluntary sector, Ministry of Justice, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service and NHS officials, funders and academics. Some interviewees were suggested by Clinks and others through 'snowball' sampling by asking people that were interviewed for further suggestions.
- One email response to the telephone interview questions.

There is some duplication between the survey and other methods of information collection, but it is estimated that at least 120 individuals participated in this assessment.



Photo: Clinks members, RSVP

## 2.3 / Limitations to the methodology

### Survey

It was decided not to undertake an online survey because the timing coincided with the State of the sector survey. Clinks also runs an annual membership survey, so there were wider concerns about survey fatigue. Instead a 'postcard' survey was given to attendees of events during the period of the impact assessment. This limited the number and depth of questions that could be asked, and the sample was skewed towards those that were already more engaged, although for many respondents it was the first event they had attended.

### Telephone interviews

Data protection concerns affected our ability to contact organisations directly, which meant that it could be difficult to target particular respondents. As a result there were some gaps in areas in which we had originally hoped to focus, particularly concerning questions about Clinks' area development team and BAME organisations.

Interviewees were a mix of people identified directly by Clinks, and people identified by interviewees, who were asked for suggestions particularly of people who might have a different view of Clinks, for example who might be more critical or have a role that may conflict or overlap with Clinks.

# 3 Findings



Photo: Clinks annual conference 2019

## 3.1 / Summary

Overall, stakeholders from different sectors were extremely positive about all of Clinks' work, identifying changes that Clinks had influenced, and praising the quality of its policy analysis and development, consultations and collection of evidence and provision of information in particular. Some interviewees commented that engagement with members and a focus on smaller and specialist organisations had improved over the last few years.

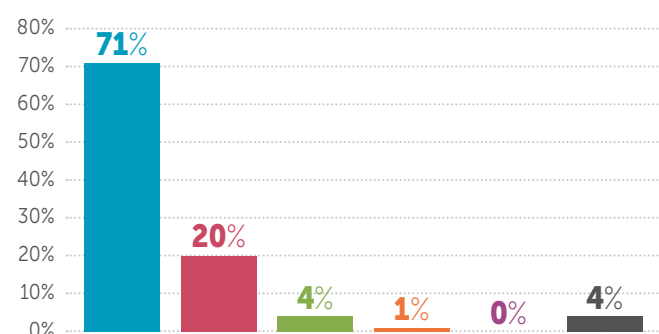
Most of the changes suggested by this report are tweaks to what Clinks already does, with the

most significant being BAME representation and tackling the disproportionality of BAME people in the criminal justice system; enabling members to connect and share information more with each other; and looking at the programme of work of networks and forums to identify strategic goals.

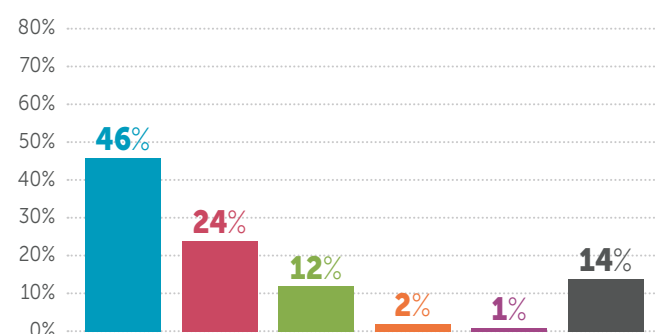
The graphs below demonstrate some differences between outcomes. Clinks' role promoting and informing the sector rated most positively. These are discussed further in section 3.3.

### Here's what survey respondents say about Clinks' services

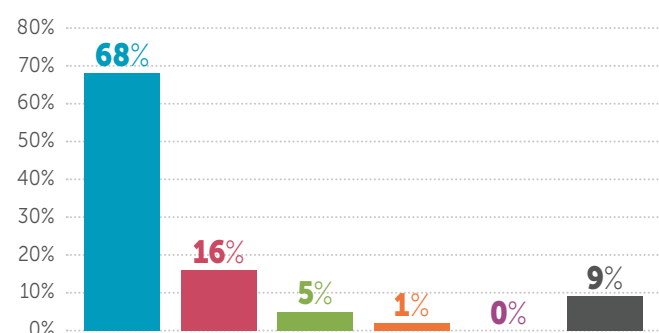
#### Clinks keeps my organisation informed about issues in the criminal justice sector that affect us



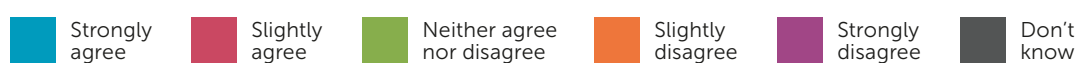
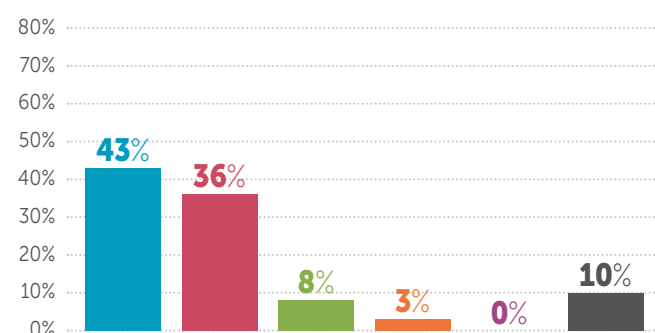
#### Clinks listens to and acts on our needs, concerns and experiences



#### Clinks is effective in promoting the role and value of the voluntary and community / social enterprise sector to decision makers and funders

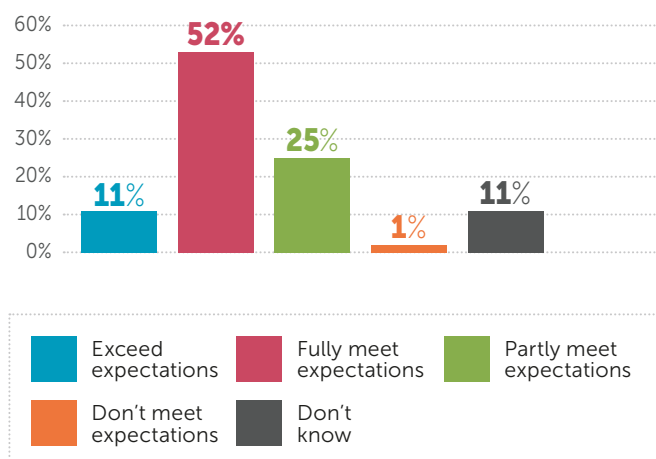


#### Clinks has helped my organisation to develop skills, knowledge and relationships to further our work



Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number and may not add up to 100%.

## Do Clinks' services meet your expectations?



There was only one respondent who said that services didn't meet their expectations at all, and they commented that there was a need to improve representation by BAME people. Of those who said that services partly met their expectations:

- Three felt they needed more awareness of what was on offer
- Three commented about getting more organisations involved in the work of Clinks
- One wanted more training for their staff and another wanted more face-to-face activities.

## Differences in responses by organisation characteristics

None of the differences are statistically significant, but still may provide an indication of where there are differences between organisations. Notable differences by organisation type or location include:

### By location:

- London, Yorkshire and the Humber, and the North East, had the highest agreement about Clinks keeping them informed.
- London, Yorkshire and the Humber, and Wales, had the highest "strongly agree" responses about Clinks acting on needs, concerns and experiences, with the North West and South West scoring more highly when "slightly agree" responses were taken into account.

- The South West, London, East of England, South East and Yorkshire and the Humber were highest-scoring concerning Clinks promoting the voluntary sector.
- The North East, South West, Yorkshire and the Humber, and the South East were most positive about Clinks helping develop knowledge, skills and relationships.
- West Midlands, South West, and East Midlands had the highest number of "exceed expectations" responses. This does not correspond with the answers to previous outcomes. There is no obvious reason for this – it could relate to higher expectations where Clinks has a regional presence.

Areas with area development officers do appear in the list more frequently for the first four statements than those without, although London is likely to be affected by its proximity to the Clinks office. Wales tended to have fewer positive answers, but comments indicate that this probably relates to wanting more of a focus from Clinks nationally concerning Welsh legislation. Other comments from Wales were about increasing participation at networks and events, which is often a challenge considering the geography of Wales. Attendees at the Welsh 'Criminal justice forum' were very positive about its existence.

### By organisation turnover:

- Organisations with a turnover of £1m-£4.9m showed the highest satisfaction concerning Clinks acting on needs, concerns and experiences, with all either strongly or slightly agreeing. Organisations with a turnover of £99k or less showed the least satisfaction, with those with a turnover of £500k-£999k responding with "strongly agree" the least.
- Organisations with a turnover of £100k-£499k showed highest scores concerning Clinks' promotion of the voluntary sector, with 80% strongly agreeing. They also had the highest "strongly" or "slightly agree" responses about developing skills, knowledge and relationships.
- Organisations with a turnover of £99k or less also rated developing skills, knowledge and relationships relatively highly, with "strongly" and "slightly agree" responses over 80%.

**By type of organisation:**

- Responses from people which identified as being from “voluntary sector organisations” were more positive than those which identified as specifically “social enterprises” or “community interest companies.” Suggestions for improvements from social enterprises included greater knowledge of what’s on offer, a marketplace to advertise opportunities, a wider audience at events, and more easy access, for example using podcasts or vlogs, which could indicate a greater wish to reach out to others to expand their business.

**By client group:**

- The numbers of organisations that provided services to specific client groups were too small to draw any conclusions, but there was no indication that organisations working with specific client groups were less satisfied than others.

## 3.2 / Attributing impact

In complex systems it is unlikely that any one organisation has influenced an outcome.

This impact assessment aims to establish what Clinks’ contribution has been amongst others to changes in policy, practice, and people’s lives.

This approach was reflected in comments from participants.

**“Sometimes it’s difficult to distinguish who’s doing what, sometimes agendas get currency, you couldn’t pinpoint who does it.”**

*Voluntary sector telephone interviewee*

**“It’s hard to provide tangible evidence – it’s a cumulative thing and happens over time.”**

*Voluntary sector telephone interviewee*

Some interviewees highlighted that it was specifically because of the involvement of multiple organisations that change occurred, making it more important that Clinks works effectively with others.

**“A collaborative voice can have more of an impact.”**

*Government / statutory telephone interviewee*

**“There are lots of different voices, it’s multiple stakeholders saying something that has an effect.”**

*Government / statutory telephone interviewee*

This research has sought to identify the contribution that Clinks has made to the discussion rather than identifying it as the sole influencer.

## What does Clinks do best?

Telephone interviewees from all sectors were asked what Clinks does best. The comments below are representative of the answers.

### Promoting the sector

**“Being out there and being seen and visible on behalf of the sector in an evidence-based and informed way.”**

*Providing information and evidence*

**“Translating and condensing government policy into something that makes sense, so you can read it when you have a busy life and keep up with what’s going on.”**

**“Light Lunch.”**

**“State of the sector, their research work is absolutely brilliant and so valuable.”**

## Supporting the voluntary sector

"Supporting its members and considering a wide range of members. They work very hard at meeting the needs of the membership and increasing their membership."

## Influencing policy and practice

"Bringing organisations together to make a collective case. For officials in the government it would be much more difficult to develop policy and practice. Without Clinks, service users and the voluntary sector would have far less voice. It would be damaging to small and medium-sized organisations to be without Clinks."

"They are really good at representing their membership; scrupulous about reaching out and trying to reflect a broad range of opinion. That's really difficult, having to represent views that don't necessarily reconcile."

"They are very good at articulating what experience of a joined-up problem for people with complex needs looks like when other people are suggesting siloed responses, and bringing a wider perspective in a way that's professional, courteous and constructive."

## 3.3 / The difference that Clinks makes

This section reports against the research question:

- What difference is Clinks making to its members and the wider voluntary sector in criminal justice, and ultimately, to their service users?

It looks at the evidence against three outcomes:

- The criminal justice system is improved
- Voluntary organisations provide the best possible opportunities for individuals and their families
- People's lives are transformed.

### Outcome

**The criminal justice system is improved.**

### What is successful

Voluntary organisations were able to identify changes in the criminal justice system that were influenced by Clinks. Interviewees described a pivotal role for Clinks in increasing the visibility of the voluntary sector and its beneficiaries.

**The Farmer Review** was the clearest initiative where Clinks' role translated into changes on the ground. The development work was taking place around the time of the last impact assessment, but many respondents mentioned its effects that had been experienced over the last three years.

"The Farmer Review helped families engage and contribute, the review has had a huge impact and it's been accepted that families make a huge contribution to rehabilitation. Prison governors now come to us asking for help in putting services in place for families."

*Voluntary sector telephone interviewee*

Other changes that interviewees identified include:

- Prisons that previously had no family services now do
- Work around children and families has been developed and standardised whereas before the review contracts were ad hoc and piecemeal
- There are inspections of prisons concerning family work with any issues passed to Ministers and government officials.

One small and specialist organisation described the mechanism by which opportunities had been opened up to them.

**“We are now a contract provider and have added services to an additional prison. The first time voice of our organisation as a small provider has been heard and it definitely made the contracts better. The involvement of the family services group prevented the contracts from being regional; they became sub-regional and clusters could be formed. Small groups came together who couldn’t have bid under the original regional contracts that required big organisations with big reserves.”**

## Voluntary sector telephone interviewee

The more recent *Farmer Review for Women*<sup>10</sup> was also mentioned. This is at an earlier stage, but respondents were optimistic.

**“They produced a detailed report with lots of practical recommendations about women’s issues. Has anything changed yet? No, but we have a powerful tool to make it happen.”**

Voluntary sector telephone interviewee

## Transforming Rehabilitation and probation reforms.

Transforming Rehabilitation was introduced in 2015, a year before the last Clinks impact report. Since then there have been problems. These include the promised role for the voluntary sector not materialising, the collapse of one of the organisations delivering the Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs). The programme is being ended and a consultation undertaken on what should replace it.

Clinks has been instrumental in making representations to the government and producing the trackTR report series – robust evidence about what effect Transforming Rehabilitation has had on the voluntary sector. Clinks’ influence in the new probation models was described by a government official.

**“Last summer we were proposing to keep current structures with CRCs. Clinks argued strongly it was the wrong thing to do and we should be integrating into the public sector, though Clinks weren’t the only voice arguing for this. A lot of the more persuasive arguments were about what went wrong last time and what to do to not replicate those mistakes.”**

Government / statutory telephone interviewee

The government response to its ‘Strengthening probation, building confidence’ consultation in 2018 specifically name-checked Clinks concerning the position of voluntary organisations in probation delivery, as well as mentioning the stakeholder engagement through Clinks.

Voluntary sector organisations recognised the work that Clinks has done.

**“Clinks’ role in Transforming Rehabilitation changes has been significant, providing up to date information, sharing experiences, undertaking soft diplomacy, and providing case studies.”**

Voluntary sector telephone interviewee

"Clinks co-ordinated research and feedback to the government which built up a head of steam which culminated in Transforming Rehabilitation being dropped. If there was no Clinks, Transforming Rehabilitation would have eventually fallen apart, but Clinks provided evidence to change things, they lobbied on behalf of voluntary sector providers, but in an objective way."

Voluntary sector telephone interviewee

**Influencing the *Female Offender Strategy*,** including reducing prison sentencing and recognising the key role of voluntary sector women's centres, was a success. Women's services worked together, with Clinks leading a delegation of women's centres to meet the relevant Minister. One interviewee said that they felt that the work had led to a change in attitude towards women and how they are treated. A government official commented on how this change had happened.

"We held roundtable events on the Female Offenders Strategy. Lots of people reacted quite strongly and asked why we were investing in prison infrastructure. This turned the position around over the course of development of the strategy and it was more community-focused than custody-focused. Clinks is able to take the heat out of the debate and give advice."

Government / statutory telephone interviewee

**Raising the profile of arts in the criminal justice system.** This includes influencing the Arts Council strategy, and getting criminal justice into the *Draft strategy 2020-2030* when it had not appeared before.

"Clinks got significant people around the table about the Arts Council strategy, and it was picked up at Ministerial level."

Voluntary sector telephone interviewee

"The National Criminal Justice Arts Alliance is a strong body in its own right and has a disproportionately big influence. They have quite a lot of attention from Ministers of State, and it's helped raise the wider contribution that can be made from the creative industries."

Government / statutory telephone interviewee

## What Clinks could consider

### More practical involvement at the implementation stage of government policy.

Although there were examples of how the Farmer Review had changed things for prisoners and their families, there were also less positive messages about how it had been implemented, including differences between prisons.

"Nothing much has really changed despite all the rhetoric. Not all family services are commissioned, some prisons run their own, and although family services will be inspected in the future, there isn't the resourcing there to do anything special. Clinks had a role in the Farmer Review and that was important of course, but as to there being any changes evident through that..."

Voluntary sector telephone interviewee

Whilst the actual implementation may be out of Clinks' hands, holding officials to account can be important.



Photo: Clinks members, 1625 Independent People

"Having too much to do affects the degree to which Clinks is able to demonstrate and see things through. For example, there's a feeling with the *Female Offender Strategy* that it's lagging behind and there's not been progress."

Voluntary sector telephone interviewee

**Concerns about the probation reforms** still being more of an opportunity for larger rather than smaller organisations, which may exclude in particular those representing protected characteristics or smaller community organisations in deprived areas.

"Clinks isn't making a concrete difference to the criminal justice system yet. Transforming Rehabilitation was disastrous for us. I'm hopeful things will change. Clinks will do their best but can only do so much."

Voluntary sector telephone interviewee

## ✓ Outcome

**Voluntary organisations provide the best possible opportunities for individuals and their families.**

### What is successful

Many voluntary sector organisations identified changes to their organisations as a result of Clinks' support.

#### Gaining funding and delivering new services.

For example, new probation services:

"We have volunteers in courts now, we work with Community Rehabilitation Companies, and have links into the National Probation Service. A lot of this has been due to Clinks and its network building."

Voluntary sector telephone interviewee

Two organisations mentioned getting funding as a result of Clinks' involvement to add family work into the government's 10 Prisons Project. There was originally no resource for families work but through Clinks' representation extra money was added.

**"I'd like more opportunities to secure funds through projects like the 10 Prisons Project, it worked really well."**

Voluntary sector telephone interviewee

A Clinks member working in the arts had success as a result of being invited to perform at a Clinks event for livery companies:

**"It gave us lots of visibility and has helped the process to apply as we found a family sponsor."**

National Criminal Justice Arts Alliance Annual General Meeting participant

### Developing relationships that lead to service developments at forums and events.

**"We developed partnerships that led to better referrals."**

Regional forum participant

**"We met people from prison radio at the forum, and we have been on air to make people aware of our services."**

Regional forum participant

**Brokering access to prisons.** Regional criminal justice forum and National Criminal Justice Arts Alliance Annual General Meeting attendees mentioned that the networks help them to understand how to access prisons and speed up the process.

**"When you can't get into prison you can make links with people who are in there already who will say, 'Come in and deliver a session with us one afternoon'."**

National Criminal Justice Arts Alliance Annual General Meeting participant

**Helping organisations to improve their reputations.** This makes their work easier. One voluntary sector organisation said that they had become better known regionally through the regional criminal justice forum.

**Intervention around the collapse of Working Links**, a probation Community Rehabilitation Company that subcontracted to voluntary sector organisations. When Working Links went into administration, voluntary sector subcontractors were not originally going to receive payment of money owed. Clinks and the voluntary organisations made the case to the Ministry of Justice that it should pick up the debts to the nine organisations whose existence could otherwise be threatened. As a result of these representations, agreed Ministerial direction was issued that payments should be made to the organisations and so they remain in existence. Without this intervention they may have closed or been significantly impeded in their activities.

### What Clinks could consider

**Measuring changes.** Attendees at forums were extremely positive about Clinks' role in supporting their organisation, but many struggled to identify specific changes as a result. Identifying how to capture this more systematically would help Clinks with its own service improvement as well as provide evidence for the voluntary sector and funders about Clinks' impact and therefore why they should be involved or fund Clinks.

## ✓ Outcome

**People's lives are transformed.**

### What is successful

Although this impact assessment did not measure the impact on beneficiaries directly, stakeholders identified changes that were made with the support of Clinks that they felt had made a difference to people in the criminal justice system and their families.

**Policy changes** particularly with the Farmer Review. Organisations think upcoming changes have the potential to make a difference once they have been implemented. The *Female Offender Strategy* and upcoming probation reforms were mentioned.

**Organisations have made changes to their services** as a result of Clinks' support through building relationships, gaining funding, improving referrals, and liaising with commissioners and decision-makers, which have in turn impacted on service users through more or better quality services.

## What Clinks could consider

**Longer-term impact monitoring of policy change** using intermediate outcomes to recognise the length of time change takes, including considering what has changed for beneficiaries.

**More collection of information about and promotion of the impact of the voluntary sector on beneficiaries**, increasing understanding of what difference the voluntary sector makes to people and their families so that commissioners and decision-makers focus on the outcomes on beneficiaries as a result of support from voluntary sector organisations as well as the outcomes for organisations themselves.

## 3.4 / The right services at the right quality

This section reports against the two research questions:

- Whether Clinks is providing the range of services and activities that stakeholders want and need
- Whether Clinks' work is of a good quality.

It looks at eight outcomes and examines the pledges from the previous report.

## ✓ Outcome

**The role and value of voluntary organisations is known by stakeholders, opening up opportunities to develop and grow.**

## What is successful

**84%** of respondents to the survey strongly agreed (68%) or slightly agreed (16%) that **Clinks is effective in promoting the role and value of the voluntary sector to decision-makers and funders**. This increases to 88% (69% and 19%) for voluntary sector respondents only, with the government and the private sector showing a higher proportion of "strongly agree" answers. Although there were only a small number of government respondents, it is positive that they see Clinks doing a good job of promoting the voluntary sector to them. This is also reflected in their comments in the telephone interviews.

**Providing organisations with a route into commissioners and decision-makers** to keep the sector on the radar. The trackTR and the State of the sector research was identified as having a significant role in raising the profile of the voluntary sector, as were consultation and roundtable events that gave decision-makers access to a range of organisations that they would not otherwise be easily able to consult.

**Increasing the visibility of the voluntary sector** and increasing understanding so that commissioners and decision-makers are more likely to think about the voluntary sector as a positive option. Organisations identified that raising their profile had helped with making their

service more sustainable as new opportunities opened up to them for funding and partnerships.

**"To help us showcase they put things in Light Lunch every time we ask and we get feedback and enquiries from this."**

Voluntary sector telephone interviewee

### Promoting different ways of doing things

at events that people can implement.

**"Clinks' conference showcased different ways of working. I was delighted to see the alternative approaches that were being put forward after the ineffective ways of dealing with prisoners day-to-day. A new world was open to me and there will be more things happening in my prison as a result."**

Government / statutory telephone interviewee.

## What Clinks could consider

### More opportunities for organisations to promote themselves at events

with organisations wanting to know who is out there, what they do and how to connect. A survey comment was made concerning promotion for arts organisations, but this also came up in forums and telephone interviews. This perhaps requires something more structured than an open networking session (which some people can find challenging) with more opportunities for organisations to interact with each other. For example themed workshops, open space sessions or 'speed dating'. How to get involved was also mentioned.

**"I sometimes wonder as to the process for involvement in particular events."**

Voluntary sector telephone interviewee

**Events in different areas of the country** were requested by some, although this is difficult for national organisations to balance around transport networks. Providing other ways to get involved in events through technology may be a better solution to travel, time and cost.

## Outcome

**The voluntary sector has the skills, knowledge and relationships to achieve its goals**

## What is successful?

**91%** of respondents to the survey strongly agreed (71%) or slightly agreed (20%) that **Clinks keeps their organisation informed about issues in the criminal justice system that affect them**. This rises to 94% (75% and 19%) for voluntary sector respondents only.

**79%** of respondents to the survey strongly agreed (43%) or slightly agreed (36%) that **Clinks has helped their organisation to develop skills, knowledge and relationships to further their work**. This rises slightly to 80% (43% and 37%) for voluntary sector respondents only.

**Information, policy briefings, networks and forums were the most popular answers in the survey question** about what support from Clinks has helped people most. Light Lunch and policy bulletins were specifically mentioned, as was information in bite-sized chunks, the range of information provided, and up-to-date information about national policy, guidance documents, and how to inform the policy debate.

**Targeted information around the criminal justice system** was important to organisations so that they do not need to duplicate the work of filtering information themselves, saving time and being able to focus more on service delivery. A National Criminal Justice Arts Alliance member liked having arts and criminal justice information in one place, and the quality of Arts Alliance publications was mentioned:



Photo: Clinks members, Rees Foundation

**"The Arts Alliance guides are exceptionally high quality and are widely referenced."**

Government / statutory telephone interviewee

**Light Lunch** was popular with nearly everyone because it isn't too long, it can be scanned for relevant information and it covers a broad range of subjects. One interviewee said they found out about things from Light Lunch that they don't find out about from the prison where they work. One interviewee pointed out that it was useful to remind them that Clinks was there.

**"Light Lunch is a very very useful resource, it's useful for information and it reminds people that Clinks is here working on your behalf."**

Voluntary sector telephone interviewee

**Website being clearer and better organised** since it was reviewed.

**"You can find specific reports and blogs and other material, it feels that it's more about the work than the organisation."**

Government / statutory sector telephone interviewee

**Feeling part of a network** and that support is there if organisations need it:

**"We are quite a tiny third sector organisation, but we feel part of something slightly bigger."**

Voluntary sector telephone interviewee

**"Clinks will always have an umbrella handy if it starts to rain."**

Voluntary sector telephone interviewee

**Tailored support** across organisations of different sizes, beneficiaries, services and locations.

**Area development team support**, with organisations identifying that they wanted to receive support from a criminal justice specialist and not just generalist infrastructure organisations, and that this was otherwise not available locally.

**Having an identified contact in Clinks**, for example the area development officers, National Criminal Justice Arts Alliance and women's network staff were mentioned as important to accessibility, knowledge of the issues in those particular sub-sectors, and clarity about who to speak to means it is easier to make contact with Clinks.

**Targeted information around Welsh legislation and funding**, including praise around Clinks' direct involvement with the Welsh Government, and having an area development officer specifically for Wales.

# Regional criminal justice forums and the area development team

Three workshops were held at the regional 'Criminal justice forums', two facilitated by Ideas to Impact, and one by a Clinks area development officer. The table summarises how participants thought that having a Clinks area development officer and regional forum is helpful to them. This is supplemented by comments from the telephone interviews.

	Regional 'Criminal justice forum'	Area development officer
<b>Networking and building relationships</b>	<p>Good networking opportunities that wouldn't happen otherwise...</p> <p><i>"It makes us feel less like we're working in the dark."</i></p>	<p><i>"The area development officer has an excellent knowledge of the region and is a trusted partner in networks,"</i></p> <p>...which in turn can open doors for voluntary sector organisations. Having staff that were previously embedded in the local voluntary sector before they started working at Clinks appears to have been helpful.</p>
<b>Information</b>	<p>Forums provide information on issues that impact the voluntary sector, provide opportunities to share best practice and hear from other organisations with similar experiences and challenges.</p>	<p>Tailoring support to the needs of individual organisations,</p> <p><i>"A fantastic knowledge base to find support and help to plug knowledge gaps."</i></p>
<b>Promoting the voluntary sector</b>	<p>Raising the profile of individual services and enabling organisations to showcase their services. This helps with organisational development, including influencing policy and gaining funding, and increases knowledge of services to signpost service users so they get a better experience.</p>	<p>Attending local events to advocate for and raise awareness of the criminal justice voluntary sector, for example to the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, prisons, community safety partnerships, and the Ministry of Justice.</p>
<b>Understanding and implementing policy and practice</b>	<p>Supporting organisations to influence and understand the impact of policy.</p> <p><i>"It brings the national work to life and gives it local relevance,"</i></p> <p>for example,</p> <p><i>"Getting around the table to discuss Transforming Rehabilitation."</i></p>	<p>This includes national policy, but also policy at a local level, for example with devolution in Manchester and the Welsh Government.</p> <p><i>"It's useful to have a Welsh division of Clinks as the system is different in Wales."</i></p>

	Regional 'Criminal justice forum'	Area development officer
<b>Influencing policy and practice</b>	Giving local organisations a voice and enabling them to influence national policy. This is supported by Clinks' strong links to the Ministry of Justice.	Bringing the criminal justice voluntary sector into other sectors, such as housing or employability.
<b>Identifying gaps</b>	A funder identified that it was helpful to understand the gaps in funding in the area and to raise awareness of organisations who may receive funding in the future.	Identify gaps in services that need filling. <i>"Where Clinks can be useful is identifying an issue and being the conduit for sharing that information up to the government."</i>
<b>Access to policy and development support</b>		A criminal justice specialist and a single point of contact into Clinks. Clinks' approachability was mentioned. <i>"They pitch the service really well."</i> Organisations appreciated individual and tailored support. <i>"I'm able to run things by the area development officer."</i>

## What Clinks could consider

**Blogs, vlogs or podcasts** were mentioned by four survey respondents as ways of getting information that they used in other areas of work; for bringing topics to life and engaging a wider range of people in discussion and debate.

**Reducing the amount of information**, some participants felt that there was too much information and Clinks should filter more, for example fewer issues communicated with more focus and a clearer link between the information provided and Clinks' objectives.

**Changes to the website**, there were some comments about how the website could be better organised:

Even with the new website it can be a bit of a muddle, it needs a better signpost to why information is in there, why is it important? It doesn't appear to fit across strategic themes, although what's there is well informed, detailed, appropriate, and well-pitched."

*Voluntary sector telephone interviewee*

**Presentations at networks, forums and all types of events could have more of an interactive focus**, for example being clear about what the 'call to action' is for any item on the agenda. It was noticed at the forums, and came up in conversation with the area development team, that people don't necessarily respond to or ask questions about policy presentations at the regional forum, although the area development team said that organisations

contact Clinks subsequently to ask questions. There could be more practical discussion, a clearer conduit of information back to Clinks' policy staff, and identified actions that forum members can take.

**Increasing voluntary sector attendance at regional criminal justice forums,** including a general increase and a better representation of a cross-section of organisations working across different sub-sectors who provide support for people involved in the criminal justice system. For example, those specifically mentioned in Wales included services such as drugs and alcohol, housing, and sexual and domestic violence services. Participants felt it was important to explain to those organisations why involvement with the network is relevant and how it could help their work. Forum members could be more involved in getting others involved. For example, each member could aim to bring one or two new people to the forums. Issues around membership and cost to attend may be relevant with the need to generate income perhaps in conflict with the need to broaden attendance.

**Involvement of government and statutory bodies** in regional criminal justice forums, to sit around the table with voluntary sector providers in a similar way to Clinks' national groups.

**Regional information.** Presently this goes into Light Lunch. However, in the North East there is a separate news bulletin and blog because of the connection with VONNE, the North East regional VCSE network. A mechanism for communicating with Clinks members and other stakeholders locally, for example an ebriefing, web page or website was requested by some participants, along with ways to communicate with others locally.

**Ways for organisations to communicate more directly with each other.** Whilst Light Lunch is well regarded for information-giving, the format does not easily enable two-way conversations in the way that an online forum or email group can. However, these can be difficult to moderate and make successful and relevant.

**Clinks membership and promotion of service,** with people newer to Clinks wanting a clearer

idea about what being a member of Clinks means, more awareness about what Clinks does and how organisations can work with Clinks at local and national levels. This information is available but may need repeating frequently.

**More staff capacity at a regional level** was requested, including thinking about how the area development team works with other Clinks staff, for example how policy staff engage with regional criminal justice forum attendees to collect intelligence. As well as more events regionally, participants mentioned Clinks staff other than the area development team, particularly senior managers, getting out into the regions more, although this may be impractical at current staffing levels. Telephone interviewees in regions without area development staff mentioned they would like local support.

**"It's a massive resourcing issue, but there are different issues here; the prisons are different, probation providers are different, there's a different set of agendas. If I want to speak to the head of the Community Rehabilitation Company, a Clinks in the region could convene that, it's more weight."**

*Voluntary sector telephone interviewee*

The funding for the post in West Yorkshire came through an open grant process in which Clinks worked proactively locally to create an opportunity rather than waiting for it to be commissioned. This could be replicated in other areas using the West Yorkshire post as a model. This would involve relationship building in each of the areas to ensure that the development happened in partnership with local organisations and/or possibly looking at whether local Clinks members could receive a small amount of funding to kick-start the work of network-building in a region to create the momentum for a post.

**Consortium and partnership development** may be important in the probation reforms, and organisations' access to support around this may help voluntary sector delivery, particularly

the relationship between smaller and larger organisations. This can be difficult work both technically and concerning the skills needed to broker and facilitate relationships and contracts.

## ✓ Outcome

**The voluntary sector involves people with lived experience in the design and delivery of services.**

## What is successful

**Promoting the involvement of people with lived experience at events.** This was observed at Clinks' conference and the National Criminal Justice Arts Alliance Annual General Meeting through performances, workshops and involvement on panels.

"Clinks is championing a shift in perspective. Hearing people with lived experience in the sector and bringing the community into their conference has made a phenomenal impact. I was really enthused when I came away from their conference, people were very impressed."

Voluntary sector telephone interviewee

**Providing ideas and support** through the service user involvement managers network and resources on the website. Organisations identified changes they had made as a result.

"We are developing our user involvement strategy, and importantly at the forum we learned from others how their organisations operate. The learning from it and other Clinks' information improves our service, and this will impact on service users."

Voluntary sector telephone interviewee

"We were inspired by a group run by Clinks to run a survey for families to provide experiences of our services. The feedback helped to improve things such as changing menus, providing different toys, and delivering support at family centres slightly differently."

Voluntary sector telephone interviewee

**Involving the voices of people with lived experience in policy development**, for example the Farmer Reviews had extensive involvement with prisoners and their families. Clinks and National Criminal Justice Arts Alliance worked with the Monument Fellowship finding people with experience of the criminal justice system contribute to a book, *Crime & Consequence*.

"At the launch of the second Farmer Review on women's services, service users spoke about their experiences, there were senior officials and Ministers in the room. This was effective and powerful. Clinks provide the forum and a trusted environment for service users to be involved."

Voluntary sector telephone interviewee

## What Clinks could consider

**Redeveloping resources** such as the *Good practice in service user involvement guide*, in line with current practice in the voluntary sector.

**Considering how people with lived experience are supported to set up and run organisations.** There is a lack of local infrastructure support with funding reductions. An interviewee made the point that people with experience of the criminal justice system may be reluctant to approach a 'mainstream' organisation without involvement of or introduction from a criminal justice specialist.

**Encouraging organisations to involve people with lived experience in more than consultation.** *The state of the sector 2018* report shows that

69% of respondents have consulted service users, 38% have some form of service user forum, and only 14% have service users on their boards.

**More communications by and about involving people with lived experience** for example through Light Lunch, briefings, and blogs.

## ✓ Outcome

**The voices of voluntary organisations working in criminal justice, particularly small and specialist organisations, are amplified**

## What is successful

**70%** of respondents to the survey strongly agreed (46%) or slightly agreed (24%) that **Clinks listens to and acts on their needs, concerns and experiences**. This rises to 72% (49% and 23%) for voluntary sector respondents only.

**Providing a route in for commissioners and decision-makers to the voluntary sector** that would otherwise be difficult to achieve.

**"It's an easy way to mediate contact with the voluntary sector; they do the heavy lifting in terms of corralling the sector."**

Government / statutory sector telephone interviewee

**"Clinks gives depth of penetration. It's easy to gauge views from the larger organisations, chief executives can be contacted for sense checks. What is harder is reaching 1,000 smaller organisations."**

Government / statutory sector telephone interviewee

This gives confidence to, and makes things easier for, government and statutory organisations.

**"They gave us more confidence about things that we're doing and facilitated a ready-made forum, it's more difficult to get people together and this was a professional and easy opportunity."**

Government / statutory sector telephone interviewee

**The Reducing Reoffending Third Sector Advisory Group (RR3)** is coordinated by Clinks and made up of voluntary sector members and attended by government officials. Members are selected via a recruitment process to represent a range of interests. Voluntary sector members of this group felt that it was helpful to have this ongoing channel of communication.

**"RR3 has the ability to nudge things forwards. Officials have to turn up and say whether they are doing things or not and it's uncomfortable if they haven't done what they said they'd do."**

Voluntary sector telephone interviewee

**"Absolutely things have changed through Clinks' influence, they held the government to account on Transforming Rehabilitation, and RR3 has become the advisory body for the Reducing Reoffending Board. Clinks has clout with the Ministry of Justice and the voluntary sector."**

Voluntary sector telephone interviewee

**Excellent connections and reputation** both within the voluntary sector but also with the government and statutory partners, so people feel that involvement with Clinks will make a difference.

"Because of Clinks' network they have immediate access to link in Lord Farmer and to mobilise a network of individuals and families to feed into the research. Clinks has the reputation, credibility and reach to encourage the involvement of people so there was a good response."

Voluntary sector telephone interviewee

"In Wales Clinks has taken a major role in assisting the relationship [with] the government. There is no other established route into the government, so it wouldn't have been such a productive dialogue without Clinks. The government listened because of Clinks' established interface between the voluntary sector and the government, and Clinks' reputation."

Voluntary sector telephone interviewee

### Managing complex situations and relationships with multiple stakeholders and interests.

"It's a very tricky space to work in but they did a really good job in managing different groups of people involved. They are extremely well-respected."

Government / statutory sector telephone interviewee

"Clinks has maintained a good reputation in otherwise fraught circumstances."

Academic partner telephone interviewee

**Presenting a range of views** rather than focusing on one solution.

"They have an interest in presenting views in a representative way rather than pushing a particular recommendation for policy-making."

Government / statutory sector telephone interviewee

**Good at working collaboratively with voluntary sector service providers** and involving others in an open and transparent way.

"Clinks is more willing to respect members' expertise and knowledge and to use this, whereas some other infrastructure organisations think they know best."

Voluntary sector telephone interviewee

"Things have massively improved in terms of engagement with membership over the last few years. There's a willingness to include membership more, they are more respectful, members are valued for expert knowledge, and this is used to the benefit of policy development."

Voluntary sector telephone interviewee

"They are very consultative."

National Criminal Justice Arts Alliance Annual General Meeting participant

**Good at working collaboratively with other voluntary sector influencers**, for example other networks or organisations seeking to influence policy. Some interviewees felt that things are changing in the criminal justice system, particularly at a strategy or policy level, and that Clinks has been a key player but that it was also a joint effort by many organisations with whom Clinks had worked with well. One organisation identified that having Clinks there enabled them to focus on their priorities and take a back seat on things that Clinks did best, therefore minimising duplication and maximising impact. With the *Female Offender Strategy* it was emphasised by Clinks and others that it was a shared project, with partners identifying that there would have been gaps in knowledge and understanding without Clinks' involvement, and that:

"Clinks made work around women more organised, lots of organisations were involved in influencing the *Female Offender Strategy*, but Clinks brought it together."

Voluntary sector telephone interviewee

### Good at working collaboratively with commissioners and decision-makers.

Participants identified that the Farmer Reviews in particular provided the opportunity to work closely with commissioners and decision-makers, working with the Ministry of Justice to determine what does and doesn't work.

**"Organisations could spend time with officials and make input into the design of services for prisoners' families. Clinks provided the open door to that."**

Voluntary sector telephone interviewee

**"Their relationship management and style is a lovely balance between championing challenges faced by membership and understanding restrictive relationships within government."**

Government / statutory telephone interviewee

**Not being in competition with frontline providers** was mentioned as being important by voluntary sector organisations and by decision-makers and commissioners.

**"Clinks is objective, non-partisan, supportive, and independent. They're not a provider; you can trust them and they provide a safe space in the forum."**

Voluntary sector telephone interviewee

**"They've given us honest advice; we can trust and rely that it's not tainted because they are not a delivery agent."**

Government / statutory telephone interviewee

**Providing easily understandable policy information** for groups who may have little time to otherwise analyse it, helping organisations to plan for the future, liaise with commissioners and decision-makers with more confidence.



Photo: Clinks annual conference 2019



"Access to being able to understand policy changes can't really be underestimated. It's very helpful that Clinks will have done a summary."

Voluntary sector telephone interviewee

"Clinks is a very good font of knowledge and shifting policy landscape and how it impacts on the third sector."

Voluntary sector telephone interviewee

**Good at targeting the information** needed to commissioners, funders and decision-makers.

"What I really like about Clinks is that they don't just send lots of information in, some organisations send reams of reports. Being able to sit down and share what you know is sometimes more impactful than sending an email that you won't read."

Government / statutory telephone interviewee

**Having local staff** to pick up specific issues.

"Having a Welsh development officer will raise the game a bit for Wales."

Voluntary sector telephone interviewee

**Approach, attitude and personal characteristics of staff.** As the Chief Executive Officer, Anne Fox was mentioned most frequently, but there was praise for staff in all roles.

"The sensitivity, empathy and passion that they all have for the work, their authenticity comes across. Even if organisations don't understand what policy work is, they are friendly and approachable."

Voluntary sector telephone interviewee

**"They demonstrated trust, openness and transparency, building strong relationships."**

Government / statutory telephone interviewee

**"There are some extremely talented individuals."**

Government / statutory telephone interviewee

**"They have a little bit more campaigning zeal than other infrastructure charities."**

Voluntary sector telephone interviewee

**"They are a nice organisation to deal with. A huge part of influencing is that people are pleased to see you. It's important to be a likeable organisation, civilised and generous to other people in the system."**

Government / statutory telephone interviewee

**Change of Chief Executive Officer**, with Anne Fox only just having come in to post around the time of the last impact report. The previous impact report stated, "Since the last impact assessment there has been a change of chief executive. Following in the footsteps of a long-standing director, who was very closely linked to the culture of Clinks, is not easy." The report identified that "initial soundings" from participants in the 2016 impact report were positive. This report provides a longer-term view; participants' comments from all types of organisations indicated Anne's successful leadership.

**"Their reputation has grown over the last three years; Clinks are stronger than ever. They are really respected and the work that is coming out is great, that's a lot of Anne, she's very ambitious for Clinks and has pushed things forward with really good people working for her."**

Government / statutory telephone interviewee

## What Clinks could consider

### Ongoing concerns about probation reforms.

There may be opportunities for the voluntary sector in the reform of probation services, but some interviewees were wary about it still being more of an opportunity for the private sector because of the size of contracts and the uncertainties of dynamic purchasing systems, particularly for small and specialist organisations.

There was a concern about the effect of commissioning processes on other funding.

**"Dynamic purchasing systems are creating some odd side effects. You have to go through tendering and there's no guarantee that you will get work so you can't use the work as leverage with trusts and foundations. It's more about transactions than partnering and collaborating. We could do with future thinking about that."**

Voluntary sector telephone interviewee

### The culture amongst some commissioners,

particularly prisons meaning that changes in policy did not necessarily lead to changes on the ground.

**"The culture in prisons is a big problem, it's difficult to engage with prisons and that's where things get stuck."**

Voluntary sector telephone interviewee

**"The culture in the system with prisons and probation is control and command, they simply don't understand the value of the voluntary sector."**

Voluntary sector telephone interviewee

**More use of ICT** was suggested in order to be more collaborative and collective about how intelligence is gathered and policy is made.

**"Clinks could be more digitally savvy and use digital tools so that membership makes decisions to make it genuinely national and so that everyone feels they are being heard."**

National Criminal Justice Arts Alliance Annual  
General Meeting participant

This could benefit smaller and specialist organisations who may not be able to travel to a meeting either because of cost or a need to keep their services open, but can participate online.

**Publicity about what happens as a result of Clinks' policy work**, with a mix of interviewees who did and didn't know what happened following their input, possibly linked to how involved the organisation was already with Clinks. Clinks being party to confidential information through non-disclosure agreements may also complicate this, restricting or perhaps making unclear what they can and can't talk about.

**"Changes are difficult to be able to attribute publicly; a lot is done through relationships with civil servants, things Clinks has not been able to shout about."**

Voluntary sector telephone interviewee

**Tension between small and specialist and larger generic organisations** was mentioned by a few people, although most seemed to think Clinks managed relationships well. Some interviewees were clear about Clinks' strategy to focus more on small and specialist groups, although not all. One large organisation said that they didn't need Clinks because they had their own routes into senior civil servants, Ministers and policy makers but were supportive of Clinks' work, and another interviewee mentioned how larger organisations had supported policy that would open up commissioning for smaller organisations. One issue that had arisen was about the criteria for representing different sectors on the RR3 and the tensions between larger generic and smaller specialist organisations; this was resolved but had been difficult at the time. Another interviewee brought up how specialist

organisations can be in competition with generic organisations who see specialist work as a 'market'.

**The effect of funding from the Ministry of Justice on Clinks' ability to criticise policy and practice** was questioned by some

respondents, though these were mainly supportive of the approach that Clinks has taken.

**"Funding for Clinks makes it look as though it's got its feet in both camps even though it probably hasn't. It raises a doubt in my mind about whether the organisation moderates its approach because of this. They need a more mixed funding bag, but they would have to compete with their members, so they are between a rock and a hard place."**

Voluntary sector telephone interviewee

Many interviewees were supportive of the line that Clinks takes.

**"There is a potential issue around independence and the campaigning voice pushing back against their biggest funder. I believe that there is more power and influence this way but it is a difficult compromise."**

Voluntary sector telephone interviewee

**"Clinks tread a good line, some people might think it's a bit close, for example working in prisons they use their language to get access, they are not in people's pocket but are clever about using language to get in the door."**

Voluntary sector telephone interviewee

Government officials were questioned as to whether they felt that Clinks challenged them on policy. Their feedback indicated that they felt that Clinks was able to put forward views of the voluntary sector, but did it in such a way that they were more likely to have influence.

**"They represent the sector really well, they are strong and vocal advocates, they are clearly there representing the sector in an articulate way with data and research and authoritative argument, not anecdote."**

Government / statutory telephone interviewee

**"Anne is very strategic in a non-threatening way; she has a great way of challenging that is really spot on. In order to have influence it has to be less in your face, more of a middle ground. If you go back some years it was much more challenging of what the government were doing."**

Government telephone interviewee

**"There's a risk that people can go native one way or another, be a patsy to the department, or give undigested views of the sector and don't add value. Clinks manage to steer in-between."**

Government / statutory sector interviewee

One government official felt that one of the strengths of attending events organised by Clinks is that they are not government meetings, and government representatives attend as guests so voluntary sector organisations felt freer say what they want to, which they may be more reluctant to do if they were at a meeting arranged by and at the Ministry of Justice.

A further factor in how forceful Clinks can be is that members don't always agree with each other. For example, Clinks identified that there were some members who originally felt that Transforming Rehabilitation might be positive for the sector. Clinks didn't appear to speak out as strongly as some people felt it should. This could have been a reflection on different views within the membership rather than a concern about the relationship with the Ministry of Justice.

One voluntary sector campaigning organisation pointed out that because they don't receive any funding from the government they are freer with what they can say and, through cooperation between organisations, several different approaches can be taken to an issue. Where Clinks might want to take one approach, this organisation can work with others who might approach it in a different way. This can be particularly effective, because hearing a similar message from multiple stakeholders is one of the factors that government officials indicated is important in influencing policy.

**Being more assertive.** This was not a common comment, but a couple of respondents said:

**"They could have had a more assertive role in relation to the Female Offender Strategy."**

Voluntary sector telephone interviewee

**"I would like them to be a bit more confident, they often aren't the first to speak up."**

Government / statutory telephone interviewee

**Consideration about the broader role of the voluntary sector** beyond a focus on specific initiatives.

**"I'd like them to be more vocal about the nature of the sector at large and the nature of civil society."**

Partner organisation telephone interviewee

**"Clinks tends not to start with a blank sheet, it's a bit transactional rather than blue-sky thinking."**

Voluntary sector telephone interviewee

**Consider whether there is equitable access to services for all organisations.**

Many people we interviewed had well-developed working relationships with Clinks' senior staff. One of these said:

**"Sometimes it feels a bit cliquey, some people are very vocal and powerful and influential in their fields and there's a bit of a sense that they're the 'go-to people'. Some people might feel left out if they don't know people at Clinks very well."**

Voluntary sector telephone interviewee

**Representing different views.** Although the government and statutory officials felt that Clinks was good at representing a range of viewpoints, one voluntary sector organisation commented how different views can get lost in a collective response. There was also a view from one interviewee that individual responses to the trackTR surveys were more muted in the final report and, even though the report was quite critical, there were even stronger criticisms from some of the respondents that did not come across.

**A more strategic work programme for networks and forums** was mentioned at both national and regional levels, where all networks and forums could have specific aims and work programmes as part of their role. For example, in Wales problems with housing were identified, including the need to get more accommodation providers involved in the regional forum enabling more joined-up and strategic service development and a collective voice for influencing others. Other suggestions for work for regional forums included: linking prison and community support through quarterly prison clinics, improving opportunities for prison release into the community pathway, ending short sentences, and housing issues needing to be resolved before leaving custody. An interviewee in an area without a regional forum suggested having:

**"Regional strategic steering groups and boards around different themes, for example social justice, health and social care, to drive pilots and look at funding. This is done to some degree, but this piece of work would be more focused and strategic than what they are doing now."**

Voluntary sector telephone interviewee

This also applies to national networks and events.

**"We need to go beyond networking meetings. Those I attend are not effective, very traditional 'talk and chalk'. There should just be events on action and change and specific delivery. We need to try and focus on issues, for example, BAME organisations have been totally left out of delivery, what are we going to do about this as a network of organisations?"**

Voluntary sector telephone interviewee

**"I went to an event but it was the same old thing. I can get feedback on policy from the blog. It's not the best use of my time going to events unless there are opportunities to influence, those meetings are really useful."**

Voluntary sector telephone interviewee

**Reducing Reoffending Third Sector Advisory Group.** A government official who has sometimes attended wasn't sure whether it's Clinks' job to drive the RR3, and had a question about what it has achieved or is trying to achieve for the sector other than giving people a forum to share views, as they felt that the main policy influence happens in smaller groups and conversations. A voluntary sector member said that the group had spent time identifying priorities for the sector and where they could most make an influence, and although the interviewee could not point to any specific changes as a result, they did say that the group had been involved in preparing papers for a Cabinet Committee, demonstrating the level at which it is working.

**Constant changes within the government and Brexit delaying activities.** This is clearly out of Clinks' control, but this makes ongoing relationships with senior civil servants more important as Ministers change or get pulled away on other areas of work.

### How to measure and report preventing negative change.

Clinks could undertake more work around recording and publicising where its influence has stopped something happening that would have had a detrimental effect on the voluntary sector and service users, which may otherwise be invisible to stakeholders.

## Outcome

**Disadvantage, discrimination and inequality in our criminal justice system are tackled**

### What is successful

**Advocating for the needs of small and specialist organisations.** Briefings, reports and policy responses clearly advocate for the needs of small and specialist organisations and their service users.

"In the last few years there has been a definite shift in the representation of small and specialist organisations."

Voluntary sector telephone interviewee

"Clinks represents my women's organisation really well. It's difficult to reach small organisations who are often limited in their ability to attend things. I'm not sure what else Clinks could do."

Voluntary sector telephone interviewee

"In the focus group on commissioning, Clinks did speak up for small and grassroots organisations that have local knowledge and expertise. There was a concern that small organisations would be pushed out. That meant that the contracts included a clause on fair and prompt payments to protect smaller organisations."

Voluntary sector telephone interviewee

### The focus in *The state of the sector 2018* report on protected characteristics, in

particular to highlight what is happening to the organisations who deal with discrimination, disadvantage and inequality.

"The particular focus on the impact of BAME-led smaller organisations has hit a mark and we are thinking about this quite a lot in terms of future grant rounds."

Government / statutory telephone interviewee

**Work around women's services,** including changes to the *Female Offender Strategy* in part as a result of Clinks' work, although all partners, including Clinks, emphasised the joint approach and that it was difficult to separate out who had influenced what.

"At the women's network meeting there was a presentation about how change happens: collective action, working to strengths, getting on board, and not spending ages fiddling around. This was reflected in how organisations responded to the *Female Offender Strategy*. Everyone was good working together and not haggling about language. It felt like a clear outcome."

Voluntary sector telephone interviewee

Respondents were positive about Clinks taking on the work from Women's Breakout.

"Staff have done a lot of work so that Women's Breakout's core mission has been taken up by Clinks. The staff appointment has been key."

Voluntary sector telephone interviewee

**Young Review and Lammy Review work,** which both concerned BAME people's experience of the criminal justice system, received positive comments.

**“Clinks has played a pivotal role in drawing attention to the racial disproportionality that exists within the criminal justice system within the voluntary sector, Ministry of Justice, HM Prison and Probation Service, through the Young Review, contributing to the Lammy Review, as well as working with the Ministry of Justice to put into practice the Lammy Review recommendations.”**

Voluntary sector telephone interviewee

**The Flexibility is vital<sup>11</sup> report** about the role and the value of voluntary organisations in meeting the needs of older people who have offended was produced as a result of a member raising issues about older prisoners and Clinks taking this on.

### **Clinks’ responses, reports and policy briefings**

clearly raise issues around disadvantage, discrimination and inequality, for example Clinks’ response to the Ministry of Justice consultation on the probation reforms<sup>12</sup> identifies issues concerning ring-fencing funding for women’s services, and requests that “disproportional outcomes for black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) people in contact with the criminal justice system and the lack of specialist BAME services are addressed.” The Ministry of Justice response<sup>13</sup> to the comments mentions addressing disadvantage or discrimination based on a protected characteristic, such as female, disabled or BAME people.

## **What Clinks could consider**

### **BAME people’s disproportional representation**

in the criminal justice system remains a big issue. This was raised both by voluntary sector and government/statutory sector participants. Initiatives have been undertaken, such as the Young and the Lammy Reviews but interviewees reported not seeing much change. With *The state of the sector 2018* report finding that organisations that work with specific client groups, including BAME people, are more likely to be reducing their services than those working with more general populations, the

situation may get worse. Whilst respondents were mostly positive about Clinks’ work in this area, their role in tackling these as a predominantly non-BAME organisation was raised. BAME representation was mentioned by Clinks’ staff as an area for further development. It was highlighted by one respondent in the survey and mentioned by various interviewees.

**“The only area where I’ve heard criticism is about BAME work. Their influence in the Lammy report was excellent, but they didn’t necessarily get credit for the amount of work they did, it’s been tricky for them.”**

Government telephone interviewee

Although, there were a range of views.

**“It’s tricky as it’s a [predominantly] white organisation.”**

Voluntary sector telephone interviewee

**“They’ve done a good job with women’s sector, and BAME, but perhaps not as extensively as might have liked.”**

Voluntary sector telephone interviewee

**“I don’t see Clinks as a white organisation because the membership is quite diverse.”**

Voluntary sector telephone interviewee

**“In supporting women and BAME led voluntary organisations Clinks has skilfully created a line of communication between these specialised organisations and those in power to ensure that the realities on the ground are given a hearing around the policy table.”**

Voluntary sector telephone interviewee

Some interviewees suggested that this needs to be picked up by Clinks, its members, and other partners in a more purposeful way as a specific

area of work identifying the issues, objectives, actions and with resources attached to it. For example how to address the difficulties BAME organisations have winning procurement processes.

### **Implementation of the *Female Offender Strategy***

There will inevitably be some bedding down of Clinks' role after the merger with Women's Breakout in relation to what one government official described as a "very vocal sector." Implementation of the *Female Offender Strategy*, and ensuring the government's commitment to this at a time of change in the wider criminal justice system, will be important in how Clinks' role develops.

## **Outcome**

**The voluntary sector is aware of and able to respond to opportunities and challenges.**

## **What is successful**

**Brokering relationships between organisations** who otherwise might not have worked together.

"Initially I was reticent to be involved because of sitting with competitors but it was valuable and supportive, sharing knowledge and best practice and ensuring that contracts were fit for purpose. We became an 'expert' group. It was also good to sit alongside commissioners and hear their concerns."

*Voluntary sector telephone interviewee*

**Making specific links for individual voluntary sector organisations**, particularly through the area development work. One organisation mentioned how the area development officer had linked them with partners and had helped in getting them known across Wales. Another said:

"The West Yorkshire area development officer role is useful as it has created a link with the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for the voluntary sector; previously the PCC was remote. The development officer makes great efforts to make links and take on board local issues, runs a criminal justice forum and is very strategic."

*Voluntary sector telephone interviewee.*

## **What Clinks could consider**

**More opportunities to connect and collaborate outside meetings** and clearer routes for information sharing between organisations. People wanted a better understanding of who is out there and what they are doing, and development support in how they work together. In the North West one member said that it was nice to meet people from other local authority areas but, regarding her services, it was organisations in Greater Manchester that she needed to collaborate with. Regions are large and diverse, and having more localised groups or meetings would provide an opportunity for more practical links to be formed. These could take place with minimal facilitation from Clinks, but might mean that people are less likely to come to the regional forum. People also mentioned having a web forum as a place for members to share and offer advice to each other or match members who are wanting or offering something.

### **Organisations struggling to access opportunities.**

A National Criminal Justice Arts Alliance Annual General Meeting attendee couldn't "get a foot in the door" with decision making in prisons, and said that tenders that were advertised were very specific and unrealistic in what can be delivered. They wanted an opportunity to talk directly to commissioners about what they could do. Similar messages were heard at the regional forums. Clinks can't liaise with every single prison, but there may be a role to track implementation and work with the Ministry of Justice and HM Prison and Probation Service to troubleshoot. One interviewee suggested that Clinks could recruit staff

with technical procurement experience to follow through on ensuring that policy becomes practice.

**The Good Prison project**, where Clinks supported a voluntary sector member of staff in three prisons to coordinate voluntary sector services, was mentioned by a couple of interviewees as not being successful.

“Clinks tried to sell the project but no one has taken it up. Prison staff say that they already know who’s doing what, but they don’t. They think it’s expensive, not that it will save money in the longer term. Clinks didn’t get prison buy-in and got quite a lot of criticism at a meeting. They need a better strategy.”

Government / statutory telephone interviewee

**More intelligence about what’s happening at a local level** was mentioned concerning how policy is working on the ground.

“Clinks provide national support but hearing intelligence about what’s happening on the ground in different areas would be useful.”

Government / statutory telephone interviewee

**More focus on the development needs of small organisations**, whilst most participants valued Clinks’ influencing and networking work, some felt that there was a gap in providing more direct support for smaller organisations.

“I’d like to see a focus on supporting smaller or specialist groups, more coalition-building, identifying commonalities and facilitating those organisations to work together.”

Voluntary sector telephone interviewee

This may be key to addressing the needs of BAME organisations and those representing other protected characteristics.

“There’s a significant BAME population, yet the voluntary sector is not developed enough for contracts; specialist organisations tend to be really small and find it difficult.”

Government / statutory telephone interviewee

“I would like Clinks to work with small organisations, we are losing good voluntary sector organisations that work with specialist groups.”

Government / statutory telephone interviewee

It could also include providing more support to organisations bidding for funding.

“Organising round-tables for organisations when there are funds available.”

Voluntary sector funder

This has implications for staffing and capacity. It may be more realistic for Clinks to work with other capacity-building providers to ensure organisations can access them rather than providing the support itself.

## ✓ Outcome

**There is accurate, timely and comprehensive intelligence on the needs and challenges in the voluntary sector.**

**The trackTR and State of the sector research** were mentioned by many people as providing evidence that had influenced change.

“trackTR is an unpalatable read.”

Government / statutory telephone interviewee

**"The state of the sector report is a signature publication for Clinks. It's presented really clearly and has been used in conversation with the Ministry of Justice about the next iteration of probation and the commissioning and contracting process."**

Voluntary sector telephone interviewee

A funder identified that *The state of the sector* report has been useful to show that the sector has been affected by changes to influence their decisions.

An academic partner commented that Clinks undertook research with a practical purpose.

**"I was impressed by the way they had a clear eye on where those messages are going to go and how they might feed into an ongoing policy conversation. I can see points at which key reports cite findings from the research."**

Partner organisation telephone interviewee

### Providing evidence that the voluntary sector uses.

**"I get the health and justice bulletins and use the intelligence in them."**

Voluntary sector telephone interviewee

**"It's reassuring to be able to cite research from academics that Clinks produces."**

National Criminal Justice Arts Alliance Annual General Meeting participant

### Being responsive to requests for information.

**"We can always pick up the phone to Clinks for specific intelligence."**

Voluntary sector telephone interviewee

**Working with academics** to add capacity and rigour to the evidence and who can look at the deeper, longer-term effects of policy.

**Asking for evidence from the voluntary sector.** Most interviewees felt they had plenty of opportunities to feed in.

**"I've fed in through contributions to State of the sector, also through research about specific issues."**

Voluntary sector telephone interviewee

## What Clinks could consider

**Response rates are perhaps not as high as Clinks might like.** This may be because some organisations are not clear about how influential the reports are and how they have influenced change, through survey fatigue, or purely the pressures of increasing demand and decreasing funding that many organisations have been facing.

## ✓ Outcome

**The voluntary sector is treated as an equal partner in the design and delivery of services.**

## What is successful

There is some optimism about the voluntary sector being treated as an equal partner.

**"It's getting better. The family services group was the first special interest group able to impact on family services. Education contracts went out to tender last year and a similar approach to family services was taken, so smaller groups are being involved."**

Voluntary sector telephone interviewee

**"As a result of Clinks, and other organisations, it does feel as though progress is being made, for example work that was done prior to the launch of the *Female Offender Strategy*. I would say that things are improving because of the advocacy."**

Voluntary sector telephone interviewee

**"The Advisory Board on Female Offenders is a government-run forum with a mixture of Ministry of Justice and others, so it means that voluntary sector board members are equal, this is important."**

Voluntary sector telephone interviewee

**Clinks being treated as an equal partner.** There is perhaps more evidence that Clinks itself is treated as an equal partner, although there are always going to be inherent power dynamics in how decisions are made. Clinks has been involved and trusted to contribute to strategy and policy.

**"Clinks are the go-to people when we want to test thinking. We fund Clinks but the strength of the relationships with Anne and the team are important. They add value, we wouldn't invite them otherwise."**

Government / statutory telephone interviewee

**"Clinks is definitely an equal partner; they were part of very small inner circle involved as thinking changed and knew the future direction of travel. Only a few external organisations were involved in this."**

Government / statutory telephone interviewee

### **Enabling the government and statutory partners to work effectively with the voluntary sector.**

**"They've always worked alongside other partners and built really good working relationships and personal relationships with others in the partnership."**

Government / statutory telephone interviewee

**"They're a very solution-focused partner, they're great people, you do want to chat to them, get to know them, which makes a difference."**

Government / statutory telephone interviewee

## **What could Clinks consider**

**Many voluntary sector organisations don't feel they are an equal partner.** Although there was some optimism, most interviewees still felt that the voluntary sector was not treated as an equal partner.

**"We are still bruised by Transforming Rehabilitation."**

Voluntary sector telephone interviewee

**"Still things are happening that we wouldn't want to happen, for example other bits of the Ministry of Justice have not read the *Female Offender Strategy*, or thought about gender-specific services, however well listened to and respected Clinks is."**

Voluntary sector telephone interviewee

**Problems with the culture in some statutory services,** particularly prisons, where there was a lack of understanding about why the voluntary sector could help improve outcomes.

**"We've not been able to make any dent in how well prisons work with voluntary organisations and in terms of clearance and training for volunteers. Understanding the value of volunteers is not yet as successful as we would like. The culture within prisons is the main barrier."**

Voluntary sector telephone interviewee



Photo: Clinks conference and AGM 2017

## 3.5 / Pledges from Clinks' impact report 2016, Our impact

The table below outlines the pledges that Clinks made following the previous impact report in 2016 and progress towards meeting them.

### Pledge

#### 1 / Knowing our strengths and goals

We will be clear about what we do, why we do it and for who. We will revisit our vision, mission and values and ensure there is clarity about our remit and messaging across all our communications channels.

### Progress

A comprehensive series of roadshows and events was undertaken during 2018, including targeted workshops looking at the experience of BAME groups, evidence, and people with lived experience. This culminated in the production of *Creating change together: Our strategy for 2019-2022*. One interviewee commented on how much effort had been put into consulting members about future strategy, that it was done really well and was well-attended and inclusive.

Interviewees were mainly clear about Clinks' role and priorities.

*"I think with their new strategy they have been able to set out more clearly than previously what Clinks considers its role, particularly for parts of the sector that are less well-connected, smaller organisations and those serving communities of interest."*

Voluntary sector telephone interviewee

*"Their role and priorities came across clearly at the last conference, they communicate really clearly."*

Voluntary sector telephone interviewee

**Future developments:** Ensuring that progress against the strategy is reviewed and reported to keep it current and relevant, and that this feeds into impact reporting next time.

## Pledge

### 2 / Valuing our people

We will ensure we understand and sustain our organisational culture and safeguard our valued and respected organisational stance. Some of this can be achieved through continued investment in staff. In 2016/17 we are investing in key roles that will allow our teams to work more effectively together and we will be looking for ways to help all our staff contribute effectively to our shared mission.

### 3 / Keeping our finger on the pulse and responding to need

We will be looking at a broad range of strategies to maintain our impressive track record of consultation with our membership. This could include greater use of the roundtable model and facilitating groups representing particular demographics/types of work/shared interests. We will continue to work with research and infrastructure partners to better understand the sector, its needs and future challenges and to respond accordingly.

## Progress

Comments about staff from stakeholders were very positive about staff attitudes, responsiveness, and skills. Observation in the course of this impact assessment demonstrated staff being given the opportunities to influence Clinks' development. A few people were concerned about the amount of work that Clinks does, and whether staff were overstretched.

A couple of government interviewees had a lot of involvement with Anne, but wondered about other staff.

*"Clinks needs to not rely on Anne, they need other people with profile. Arts Alliance have managed to do that, Jess is very much Arts Alliance."*

Government / statutory telephone interviewee

**Future developments:** Ensure that staff roles are not over-stretched and are sustainable in the longer-term; this may sit alongside a greater focus on priorities for Clinks and enabling staff to say no to things that aren't a priority. Discussions are being undertaken about how national and regional work links up; this is something that could be further developed. Consider whether there needs to be more development to enable staff to take on more demanding and higher profile activities.

Interviewees commented on the quality of Clinks' evidence in formal research and the knowledge that Clinks shares in discussions. People from the government/statutory sector and those from the voluntary sector who participated in roundtables were appreciative of the opportunity to sit down with others from different sectors to discuss issues. Academics were positive about their research involvement with Clinks, as were other campaigning or policy organisations. Telephone interviewees mentioned how collaborative Clinks is.

**Future developments:** There were a few interviewees who weren't sure about how to feed in evidence, so Clinks could review participation to ensure that engagement is representative of the voluntary sector. There was also some suggestion of 'survey fatigue', although the State of the sector research in 2019 had a higher number of responses than previously. Clinks could consider whether there is a need to streamline requests for information, but also to feedback clearly what has happened as a result of any evidence provided so organisations understand the difference they have made and why their contribution is important, which in turn will encourage people to respond in the future.

## Pledge

### 4 / Keeping it local

Across England and Wales we are investing in core roles to provide a more tailored and localised support offer. We will engage more with key commissioners, influencers and processes that are likely to impact on our locally-based member organisations. This will include a focus on devolution and supporting strategic engagement by the sector with reform prisons, reformed probation providers and police and crime commissioners.

### 5 / Keeping you in the loop and on the agenda

We will implement a new communications strategy that aims to make most effective and timely use of relevant communications tactics and channels. This will allow us to inform the sector and shape the agenda affecting how it works. We will continue to invest in our social media presence, building on our impressive results to date. We will look at how technology can help us to more effectively connect those in the sector to one another, to those they need to work with or alongside, and to those they need to influence. We will help the sector understand the outcomes and the impact of our collective work. Because we share the work we'll share the successes and learning.

## Progress

The area development roles were welcomed by interviewees. The survey answers to questions about outcomes suggested that, in general, areas with development officers were more satisfied than those without (although not statistically significant). Making links between voluntary sector organisations, between voluntary sector organisations and commissioners and decision-makers, and promoting the role of criminal justice organisations locally were mentioned as important.

**Future developments:** Consider how local organisations can connect more with each other, how to include statutory sector partners in forums and other meetings, and how people can work together on strategic objectives. For example, in regard to influencing or filling gaps in services. Consider how to develop support in areas in which there is currently no area development worker.

A communications strategy 2016-2018 was developed setting out six objectives, with practical action plans to meet them.

Clinks' communications were praised, particularly Light Lunch and policy blogs and bulletins, although a few felt that they could be streamlined, more focused on fewer things, or clearer as to why something was important. Some people commented that the website was better structured since the review, and social media presence has increased.

Some interviewees were more aware of the impact of Clinks' work than others, perhaps those more actively involved or those who had strong relationships with staff.

**Future developments:** Consider how to use technology to better connect people to each other and to collectively discuss and develop policy. Review and update the communications strategy alongside the strategic plan. Some interviewees suggested more use of podcasts and vlogs, so Clinks could consider whether this is a good way to achieve communications goals. Feeding back to the voluntary sector about the outcomes of research, policy and representation, including identifying how to best track this over the length of time it can take for changes to be realised, is important in helping the voluntary sector feel a sense of purpose.

## Pledge

### 6 / Growing our base and support

We have invested in a revised membership, training and events offer. We will be working with members and wider partners to offer services that provide the sector with timely, effective, relevant support, not duplicating but adding value. Where practicable and needed, we will have a more localised and regional offer. We'll look at the potential benefits and uptake of short courses and online training, enabling greater engagement with isolated and cash strapped members.

## Progress

Participants welcomed Clinks' events, including the opportunity to connect with others, and to gain knowledge and ideas.

Although the issue of membership was not a specific question to organisations in the impact assessment, the benefits of membership were not raised by any interviewee. Because of the nature of infrastructure organisations, getting intelligence about what's happening on the ground and representing the needs of the sector, non-members can get many of the benefits of members so it can be difficult to restrict services to encourage membership.

A few interviewees had attended training and were positive about it. Others mentioned wanting training more locally, and one said that training had been cancelled due to low numbers. Feedback from other infrastructure organisations would indicate that filling places on training courses, even when organisations have asked for them, is a common problem at present.

**Future developments:** Clinks could identify whether there is anything further that could be done to differentiate members and non-members without impacting areas such as evidence collection and networking. This could include looking at how membership benefits Clinks as well as individual organisations, therefore helping Clinks to help them; this could be tied in to better reporting of Clinks' impact. The training programme could be reviewed again to analyse whether face-to-face training courses are the best way to disseminate knowledge, or whether other methods, including online or workshops at forums and networks, are more likely to reach more people.



Photo: Clinks annual conference 2019

## Pledge

### 7 / Keeping you informed

We will share a 12-month forward plan with members, as part of our communications strategy, to help reduce the potential for misunderstanding, organisational overlap and duplication of effort. We will refine our stakeholder engagement approach and provide more ways to hear from you and tell you what's happening, what you've helped achieve and what's coming next.

### 8 / Partnering for progress

We will work with a range of partners from various sectors to broker relationships that provide voluntary organisations with opportunities to improve outcomes for their beneficiaries. This will include scanning the horizon for new opportunities and providing the practical support organisations need to respond positively.

## Progress

The 12-month forward plan has not been produced, and many organisations felt that Clinks could be better at communicating what has been achieved. Interviewees were very positive about being able to contribute to Clinks through a range of mechanisms. Multiple requests and opportunities for involvement in consultations were observed during the impact assessment, including workshops, roundtables and requests for written evidence.

**Future developments:** Provide more information for stakeholders about what has been achieved, and what Clinks is working on.

Many interviewees mentioned the role of Clinks in brokering relationships, for example helping give access to prisons, linking with local commissioners, or joining up arts organisations. People also mentioned getting information about opportunities through Light Lunch or other Clinks' communications and had made connections through networks, forums and events.

**Future developments:** Offer more opportunities for organisations to meet commissioners or decision-makers at national and regional levels; some interviewees commented on how access to government or statutory officials was important to them in deciding to attend events. Provide more opportunities for people to connect with each other directly.

## Pledge

### 9 / Building our future strength

We will diversify our income and aim to grow our earned income. This will allow us to respond better to the needs of the sector, whilst continuing to work with those funders and partners where there's synergy and mutual benefit. We will do this with due consideration to the income needs of the sector and, wherever practicable, will aim not to duplicate or compete.

### 10 / Connecting for change

We will build on what we are best at – advocating with, and on behalf of, the sector through change and challenge as the policy and service landscape continues to evolve. We will learn from the policy experiments of recent years and apply these lessons for the benefit of the sector and its beneficiaries as further changes happen. In doing so we will further develop our work as a facilitator of difficult/challenging conversations within the voluntary sector and with our key stakeholders.

## Progress

Various interviewees fed back that an important factor in Clinks' influencing was that it was not a frontline provider of services and could give an impartial view as it doesn't compete with other organisations for resources. The value of Clinks providing formal and informal intelligence to commissioners and funders was highlighted, yet it remains challenging to get resources for infrastructure work. This is the case particularly at a local level, as it's difficult to get national funding for this, but at a local level funding has dried up or Clinks is in competition with local organisations. Gaining funding in West Yorkshire from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner has been successful, as the commissioners could see the value of coordinating small, specialist voluntary sector organisations to help to meet their aims. This is funding that could have been allocated to frontline organisations, although there were no comments from interviewees about this.

**Future developments:** Continuing to find resources for local work; the West Yorkshire contract can provide a model for this both about why it's important and what can be achieved.

trackTR and Clinks' negotiations about the probation reforms are good examples of how Clinks has developed learning to advocate for changes based on evidence about what has and hasn't worked. Interviewees were positive about Clinks' work facilitating roundtables and other discussions, and those from government / statutory organisations in particular commented that Clinks was good at recognising, representing and managing different and sometimes conflicting viewpoints.

**Future developments:** Clinks could consider whether it could sometimes be more assertive, not only about influencing the government and other decision-makers, but also concerning challenging the sector. However, this needs not to be to the detriment of the good working relationships that give Clinks access to involvement in the decision-making process.

# 5 Recommendations



Photo: Clinks conference and AGM 2017

## 4.1 / Ongoing impact measurement

- 1 Identify how to measure the longer-term impact of Clinks' work against the current strategic plan using intermediate outcomes to recognise the complexity and length of time that change takes. It could also include where Clinks' influence has prevented negative changes. It could be a collective exercise with members.
- 2 Provide more feedback on how Clinks and the wider voluntary sector has made an impact to changes in the criminal justice system, changes for voluntary sector organisations and changes for beneficiaries. This will help to provide organisations with an incentive to contribute as they see that their involvement makes a difference.

## 4.2 / Information and communication

- 3 Consider whether information needs to be filtered more, or be more clearly aligned to Clinks' priorities.
- 4 Consider whether there are ways that organisations can communicate and network directly with each other more rather than information needing to travel in and out of Clinks.
- 5 Consider whether more two-way online communication might help to meet aims around promoting, connecting and informing stakeholders. Look at collaborative ways to share information and good practice and develop policy, or different methods of delivery such as podcasts or vlogs. This may also include communication at a local or regional level as well as for communities of interest.

## 4.3 / Influencing policy and practice

- 6 Consider whether more monitoring and support is needed at policy implementation stage to ensure that when Clinks has successfully influenced policy it is implemented as intended: advising commissioners, supporting voluntary sector organisations, and ensuring that policy intention is followed through into practice on the ground. This may also require staff to have different skills on the technicalities of commissioning and procurement including dynamic purchasing systems, and consortium and partnership development.
- 7 There are still considerable concerns about the probation reforms and how these will impact on beneficiaries and organisations. Continuing to ensure that the voices and needs of smaller, specialist organisations are promoted in the probation reforms is crucial to ensure that the proposed changes will continue to include them. There may be further learning from how Clinks approached Transforming Rehabilitation originally and whether, as a few interviewees mentioned, Clinks should have been more critical despite some organisations viewing it positively, particularly concerning unequal opportunities for larger and smaller organisations.
- 8 Make the policy round-up at regional criminal justice forums more interactive in determining how policy is affecting organisations, what is important to them, and what action Clinks and the voluntary sector should take in response.
- 9 Continue to publicise where Clinks has been critical of the government and other statutory agencies' policy and practice so that members are aware that this is happening, and identify why Clinks is taking a particular approach where members have different views.
- 10 Keep Clinks' approach to influencing policy under review, including whether there is a need to be more critical of the government and its agencies either in general or in specific areas, or whether a more collaborative approach is more effective.

- 11 Access to prisons and the culture in prisons were mentioned frequently as being barriers to voluntary sector groups. Clinks could consider how to address this issue both with individual prisons and within the system as a whole, including reviewing any learning from the Good Prison project.
- 12 Identify how the different needs of organisations working in Wales might be met, both through the area development officer and national policy.
- 13 Consider whether the Reducing Reoffending Third Sector Advisory Group (RR3) work programme is focused and clear what it is achieving and that this is communicated effectively to stakeholders. This links to recommendation three about filtering and focusing information more generally.

## 4.4 / Forums and networks

- 14 Consider how to increase attendance at networks and forums, both increasing overall numbers and increasing the different types of organisations and sectors represented. This could include attendees themselves taking responsibility for contacting others and increasing attendance and increasing the involvement of government/statutory organisations, particularly for the regional criminal justice forums.
- 15 Consider whether networks and forums could be more strategic in involving the attendees in what they want to achieve and working together towards goals.
- 16 Ensure that there is a 'call to action' for every item on the agenda of networks and forums and it is clear why the item is there, how it links with Clinks' priorities, and what action will be taken as a result.
- 17 Identify how more local networking can take place, for example within a city or local authority area, which may have more practical benefit for organisations who are better placed to work together.

## 4.5 / Area development work

- 18 Identify how to expand area development work across the country, for example using the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner work in West Yorkshire as a model, and working with members in the regions to build relationships. Consider whether there could be more integration between national and regional work, for example how the regional criminal justice forums and area development team are influenced by, and feed into, central policy objectives.

## 4.6 / Tackling disadvantage, discrimination and inequality

- 19 BAME people's disproportional involvement in the criminal justice system and a perceived lack of progress or change needs addressing, potentially as a specific campaign. How Clinks ensures that BAME people are represented needs consideration, including through recruiting BAME staff, involving member BAME organisations, and/or working with other partners.
- 20 Continue to develop and establish Clinks' role and relationships in the women's criminal justice voluntary sector with the merger with Women's Breakout, including ensuring that the government is effectively implementing the *Female Offender Strategy*.
- 21 Although area development work is largely focused around policy, influence, networking and information provision, there may be a need for organisations representing people who are discriminated against or disadvantaged to receive more direct support to be able to participate.

This may not be within Clinks' role or capacity to be able to provide directly, but is an important part of the picture to consider in tackling the issue of disadvantage and discrimination both from the top-down and the bottom-up.

## 4.7 / Lived experience

- 22 Redevelop lived experience resources in line with current good practice, and be more assertive in encouraging organisations to more meaningfully involve people with lived experience in their organisations. This could include considering how Clinks itself does this.
- 23 Consider whether there is a need for more support, or more suitable support, for people with lived experience to set up and run organisations and how this might be met.
- 24 Continue to promote and showcase the voices of people with lived experience at conferences, events and training.

## 4.8 / The voluntary sector as equal partners

- 25 Work with partners of all sectors to identify where this has been successful and where the voluntary sector, including Clinks, has felt valued and included. Identify and promote how it can be replicated and what the impact of this is on the different stakeholders, including beneficiaries.

## 4.9 / Membership, training, conferences and events

- 26 Consider how conferences, networks and events can provide more opportunities for interactive exercises and organisations to connect with each other. Improve clarity about how stakeholders can get involved in presentations, performances, panels and workshops.
- 27 Consider how to promote information about what being a member of Clinks means, what Clinks does, and how organisations can contact and be involved with Clinks through different areas of work. This also relates to equitable access for organisations whether or not they have existing personal contact with Clinks' staff.

## 4.10 / Clinks' organisational development

- 28 Consider whether staff need further development to enable them to take on more high profile roles.
- 29 Consider whether staff are over-stretched and the implications for longer-term sustainability of staff roles.

## 4.11 / Next impact assessment

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- 1 Consider how Clinks' ongoing monitoring and review can be developed and can feed into the three-yearly impact assessments.
- 2 Identify whether requests for information and survey completion can be streamlined to minimise duplication and maximise response rates.
- 3 Review use of data in line with GDPR to identify whether providing names and organisations for interviewees can be made easier next time to maximise responses.

# 5 Clinks' view

**Responding to the impact assessment's recommendations**



**CLiNKS**  
at  
**20**

Photo: Clinks AGM and 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration 2018

**Clinks welcomes the findings of this impact assessment. We are an ambitious organisation keen to know what we need to do to best achieve our goals. Considering our impact and where we might have room for improvement is an essential part of that.**

In April 2019 we launched our new three year strategy, *Creating Change Together*.<sup>13</sup> This strategy, developed following a consultation programme with the organisations we serve, sets out five strategic objectives and five goals we aim to achieve by 2022.

We are confident that this strategic approach aligns well with the findings of this impact assessment and that we have work planned to address the areas identified for further consideration.

## Recommendations and Clinks' response

### Ongoing impact assessment

- Building upon our three-yearly impact assessments, in this strategic period we will focus more on understanding the difference we make and making that clear to a wide range of stakeholders. Clinks is committed to undertaking impact measurement on our policy work and to consider how we communicate that to our members. We will take what we learn from the policy work and explore how to apply this to the rest of the charity.
- Our forthcoming communications strategy will identify the range of stakeholders we need to reach and the approaches we'll use to ensure that we are able to speak to those who need to know how our work makes a difference.

### Information and communication

- In our strategy we have committed to assessing the need for, and then establishing and maintaining, up to six distinct specialist networks to support organisations working with people with protected characteristics, or working in ways which are often harder to fund and get support for.

- Clinks is committed to developing a communications strategy to support our strategy to 2022. We will ensure timely, accessible information delivered to the sector – aiming to create and offer user focussed communications products.
- We will explore the potential of technology to deliver our services and to add value to what we can offer. We will explore the potential of digital tools to promote the services on offer in the sector and make the most of technology to help people get the help they need from the sector taking into account barriers to access.

### Influencing policy and practice

- Clinks will consider how we influence, monitor and communicate the implementation of policy and how our national policy messages need to be adapted and utilised in local and operational delivery contexts. We will explore our capacity to support implementation and keep the sector up to date about what we are doing, including through our area development team and our specialist networks.
- As the probation review develops, we will continue to engage with the government's probation review team to advocate for a central place for the voluntary sector, in particular the small and specialist organisations, in the delivery of future probation services and commissioning processes and regional structures that facilitate this. We will engage with and build relationships with the new National Probation Service structures, their teams and local partners.
- We will work to encourage a more strategic approach to the voluntary sector in Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service, including through the use of grants and the development of commissioning principles which better enable the voluntary sector to work effectively with people. We are also committed to continuing to explore how our Good Prison model can be adopted in more prisons and better support how organisations work with and within prisons.

## Forums and networks

- We will ensure that our forums and networks are more interactive and strategic and explore other ways of bringing the sector together. As we're committed to collaboration, we will work with partners where possible to ensure that the organisations we support are able to link with others they need to know and work with in order to have best impact.

## Area development work

- We aim to maintain a regional presence, where possible, and grow our area development team, as well as consider how our area development team enables local and regional joint working.
- We are delighted to have been able to reinvest in staffing in Wales but we are acutely aware of the limitations of the resource we can dedicate. Whilst recognising that we do not have the capacity to produce the same level of response in Wales, we will have a Welsh focussed workstream in our State of the sector work in 2020. We will learn from that information as to the needs of the sector and how we can better meet them, working with our partners in Wales.

## Tackling disadvantage, discrimination and inequality

- We will continue to work with specialist organisations to maintain pressure on the government to implement the Lammy Review and *Female Offender Strategy*, and ensure that meeting the specific needs of women and addressing race inequality remain a priority for criminal justice policy.
- Our strategy commits us to assessing the need for an additional specialist network to support organisations working with particular groups including BAME people. We will do this through coproduction, working with BAME organisations to understand their needs and how our support can best add value.

## Lived experience

- Our strategy reaffirms our commitment to support the sector to be better at service user involvement. We will continue to develop our service user involvement managers network, providing access to tools and resources to support effective service user involvement across the voluntary sector working in criminal justice.

## The voluntary sector as equal partners

- Through all our work we will continue to promote the sector and call for it to be treated as an equal and valued partner. Through our policy impact activity, we will seek to identify when this has been successful and build on that learning.

## Membership, training, conferences and events

- Our forthcoming communications strategy will identify how we can best communicate our membership offer.
- We will review our training and events offer and coproduce programmes of support with the sector, connecting the sector to available evidence and good practice.

## Clinks organisational development

- We aim to continue to be a strong and well run organisation, with access to resources to meet emerging needs in an impactful way. We will continue a focus on attracting multi-year funding for core activity to allow us to concentrate efforts on priorities as we identify them. We will also model excellent working practices including recruiting and retaining a skilled staff team sought from the widest pool of talent, removing barriers to full participation for those who most appropriately represent the diversity in our sector.

# Appendix

## Interviewees



## A huge thank you to everyone who contributed to this impact assessment

### Interviewees

Agenda	Ministry of Justice (two interviewees)
Barrow Cadbury Trust	Nepacs
Brighton Women's Centre	NHS England
Changing Lives	Ormiston Families
Clinks chair	Partners of Prisoners Support Group (POPS)
Geese Theatre Company	Paul Hamlyn Foundation
Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (three national and two local interviewees)	Prison Advice and Care Trust (PACT)
Home Group	Prison Reform Trust (two interviewees)
Jigsaw	Recoop
Kaleidoscope	St Giles Trust
Keele University	Shannon Trust
Lincolnshire Action Trust	Sheffield Hallam University
Maslaha	West Yorkshire Community Chaplaincy
	Women in Prison

# Notes

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- 10 Lord Farmer (2019) *The Importance of Strengthening Female Offenders' Family and other Relationships to Prevent Reoffending and Reduce Intergenerational Crime*, available from [www.gov.uk/government/publications/farmer-review-for-women](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/farmer-review-for-women)
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- 12 Clinks (2018) *Clinks' response to the Ministry of Justice's consultation Strengthening Probation, Building Confidence*, available from [www.clinks.org/publication/ministry-justices-consultation-strengthening-probation-building-confidence](http://www.clinks.org/publication/ministry-justices-consultation-strengthening-probation-building-confidence)
- 13 Ministry of Justice (2019) *Strengthening Probation, Building Confidence: Response to consultation*, available from [www.gov.uk/government/consultations/strengthening-probation-building-confidence](http://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/strengthening-probation-building-confidence)
- 14 Clinks (2018) *Creating change together: Our strategy for 2019-2022*, available from [www.clinks.org/publication/creating-change-together](http://www.clinks.org/publication/creating-change-together)





**“Clinks will always  
have an umbrella handy  
if it starts to rain.”**

Clinks member

## Our vision

Our vision is of a vibrant, independent and resilient voluntary sector that enables people to transform their lives.

## Our mission

To support, represent and advocate for the voluntary sector in criminal justice, enabling it to provide the best possible opportunities for individuals and their families.

## Join Clinks: be heard, informed, and supported

### Are you a voluntary organisation supporting people in the criminal justice system?

Join our network of over 500 members.

Clinks membership offers you:

- A voice to influence change
- Practical assistance to be effective and resilient
- Support from a community of like-minded professionals.

Membership starts at just £20 per year and is free for organisations with little income.

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

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