



Reducing Reoffending Third Sector Advisory Group (RR3)

Broadway House, Tothill Street, Westminster

Tuesday 3rd December 2019

- Phil Douglas, Ministry of Justice
- Bettina Crossick, HMPPS
- Nicky Park, St Giles Trust
- Richy Cunningham, Recovery Connections
- Martin Blakebrough, Kaleidoscope
- Mike Pattinson, Change, Grow, Live
- Tracy Wild, Langley House Trust
- Emma Wells, Community Chaplaincy Association
- Tina Parker, PACT
- Peter Atherton, Community Led Initiatives
- Peter Dawson, Prison Reform Trust
- Helen Dyson, Nacro
- Christina Marriott, Revolving Doors Agency
- Lisa Dando, Brighton Women's Centre
- Rod Clark, Prisoners Education Trust
- Anne Fox, Clinks (chair)
- Will Downs, Clinks (secretariat)
- Lauren Nickolls, Clinks

Apologies: Khatuna Tsintsadze, Zahid Mubarak Trust; Chris Stacey, Unlock; Dez Brown, Spark2Life; Jess Mullen, Clinks.

1. Introduction

1.1. **Introductions:** Anne Fox invited a round of introductions. She welcomed new members Tina Parker, Peter Atherton, Christina Marriott and Helen Dyson to the group, and congratulated Peter Dawson and Rod Clark on being re-appointed. Both Chris Stacey and Dez Brown, also appointed in the recent open recruitment process, gave their apologies.

1.2. **Context to the meeting:** Anne Fox explained that Lucy Frazer QC MP, Minister of State for Prisons and Probation, had agreed to attend the meeting but could now not attend in the pre-election period. The chair and secretariat, with approval from RR3 members and officials, decided to also postpone agenda items on race disparity and probation reform, as key publications on these issues had been delayed due to the pre-election period and officials would be restricted in what they can say. In place of these items, the session would be used to conduct an extended workshop with the aim to:

- Bring members together as an effective group
- Understand the breadth of expertise and experience in the group

- Understand the distinct role and strengths of the RR3
- Identify priorities for the next year, and build a work plan around those priorities.

1.3. **How the RR3 works:** Will Downs and Lauren Nickolls explained how the RR3 works, and how the group conducts special interest groups (SIGs) - using the example of the recent employment SIG. [The RR3 briefing sets out how the RR3 operates in more detail and can be found here.](#)

2. Reflecting on the RR3

2.1. **RR3 member's reflection:** Anne Fox invited members to share their reflections on the work of the RR3, focussing on what it does well and what it can do better.

- 2.1.1. Rod Clark said RR3 members know what happens 'on the ground' and the group works best when it collects and communicates that knowledge to government officials. He cited [the work on Universal Credit and access to banking](#) as a good example of this, and the [group's feedback to officials on women's residential centres at a previous meeting](#).
- 2.1.2. Rod Clark said the group's role is not to campaign, but instead to engage with officials to make better policy. He said some members of the group have much greater experience of the criminal justice system than officials often tasked with making policy, and that it is therefore beneficial for the government to draw on this group's expertise.
- 2.1.3. He said however that the group face a dilemma when policy makers put forward proposals that the group feel are fundamentally flawed. In these cases, they must decide whether to continue to work with government in the hope of making changes at the margins, or whether they take a stronger stance and criticise the fundamental flaws in proposals. Transforming Rehabilitation was an example of this. The voluntary sector foresaw all the problems that would emerge under the reformed probation service, but the sector decided to engage with the government, rather than simply oppose the programme, because they wanted to make the flawed programme work better. He said in hindsight they should have been stronger in calling out the fundamental flaws.
- 2.1.4. He said that going forward, the RR3 should be conscious of the need to strike the right balance in their work - to have conversations on the detail of policy, but to not be afraid to question the fundamental principles of policy too.
- 2.1.5. Richy Cunningham said the group helped make policy makers see things through a different lens. He said being a member also brought depth to his own knowledge.

- 2.1.6. Nicky Park said a great asset of the group was not just their strategic and operational expertise, but how they can channel the view and experience of the front line into policy.
- 2.1.7. Rod Clark said the group should consider working beyond the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and HM Prison and Probation (HMPPS), given the likely impact on the sector of policy outside their remit. For example, the group should be asking questions on the Home Office's drive for increased police numbers and relaxed laws on stop and search. Peter Dawson agreed and said that housing was a priority that needs cross-departmental work. He said however the group would need support to navigate the complex structures of government.
- 2.2. **Officials' reflections:** Phil Douglas acknowledged the difficult questions Rod Clark posed, and the potential for losing influence if the group decide to pull out of conversations.
 - 2.2.1. He suggested to avoid those dilemmas they could proactively flag issues at an earlier stage. He suggested informal relationships with officials could be strengthened - which would provide the avenue to flag issues, to build trust and have a two-way dialogue. He encouraged members to call him directly if they had issues they wanted to raise.
 - 2.2.2. Phil Douglas said the group were well connected to the front line, and were able to see trends and issues that were often beyond officials working centrally.
 - 2.2.3. Even when ministerial priorities change, the work the group does is invaluable and can continue to shape the view of officials.
 - 2.2.4. Bettina Crossick said the RR3 had a strong relationship with MoJ but that they could strengthen how they work with HMPPS. She said the group could have a greater focus on operational issues in addition to their focus on national policy. She said there was scope for HMPPS voluntary sector engagement to be more strategic and consistent, and that the RR3 should be clearer in their aims and objectives and how their work adds value to that of government.

Action 1: Will Downs to collate contact numbers of RR3 members and key officials and circulate a contact list to the group.

3. Group activity- full introductions

- 3.1. Members were given ten minutes to create a visual map of themselves using card, pens, paints and crafts provided. Each member then introduced themselves using their map. The purpose of this activity was to bring members together as an effective group and to understand the breadth of expertise and experience in the group.

4. Group activity - understanding the groups strengths

4.1. The group were asked to get into pairs to discuss the strengths they brought as individuals, the distinctive strengths of the RR3, and what the RR3 could aspire to do more of. Pairs then fed back to the group as a whole. Feedback was collated and plotted on flipchart paper. The full list is set out in appendix 1. The purpose of this task was to come to an agreement on the distinct role and strengths of the RR3, which would help to inform the next part of the meeting in which the RR3 would identify policy issues the group would be best placed to address.

5. Group activity - priorities and work plan

5.1. Anne Fox explained that with the new members and the upcoming new government, it was important that the group set out their priorities. She summarised the key achievements of the group over the last few years.

5.2. Members were asked to list priority issues within their seat specialism, before moving into groups to discuss each idea, and agree the urgency and importance of each priority.

5.3. The group reconvened as a whole, to discuss the priorities identified by each smaller group. These were listed on flip chart paper. Members were then invited to indicate which of these priorities were of most importance. A full list of priorities are set out in appendix 2. In addition to the priorities listed, the group agreed that every piece of work they conduct should consider the impact of policy on people with protected characteristics, as defined in the Equality Act (2010).

6. Wrap-up and next steps

6.1. Anne explained that the priorities the group have identified will be taken away and turned into a work plan for the new year, which would help the group think strategically about policy issues they would like to address and to identify whether each issue should be addressed as a group or through a more focused and in depth piece of work, utilising the special interest group function.

Action 2: Will Downs to draft work plan based on the group's ideas put forward in the meeting. Work plan to be circulated for comments before next meeting and signed off at the March 2020 meeting.

Appendix 1: Understanding our strengths

What strengths do you bring to the RR3 as an individual?	What are the strengths of the RR3 as a whole?	What should the RR3 group aspire to?
<p>Resilience and hope despite facing reoccurring issues</p> <p>Strong guiding values and beliefs</p> <p>Non-judgemental</p> <p>Varying and rich experience- strategic, operational, technical</p> <p>Policy insight</p> <p>Knowledge of government</p> <p>Lived experience of system</p> <p>Local knowledge</p> <p>Knowledge of multiple disadvantage</p> <p>Perspective outside the criminal justice system</p> <p>Academic skills</p> <p>Analytical skills</p> <p>Passion</p> <p>Longevity</p> <p>Healthy scepticism</p>	<p>Diversity of backgrounds</p> <p>Diversity of knowledge</p> <p>Diversity of skills</p> <p>Diversity of perspectives</p> <p>The group can learn from each other</p> <p>More power through a collective voice</p> <p>Ability to offer mutual support</p> <p>The freedom to contribute to something when not representing your organisation</p> <p>Wide access to specialist networks</p> <p>Strong leadership</p> <p>Able to bring lived experience to the fore</p> <p>Draws people out of silos</p>	<p>Engaging other departments to encourage cross-departmental working</p> <p>Setting the agenda, not just responding to it</p> <p>Anticipate policy developments and intervene early</p> <p>Aim to influence new ministers earlier</p> <p>Looking beyond Britain for examples and evidence of effective alternatives</p> <p>Set out more aspirational positions - for example on drug reform</p> <p>More emphasis on <i>why</i> policies are being implemented before engaging with the detail/ implementation</p> <p>Find the right balance between pragmatic engagement and stronger critique</p> <p>Be prepared to leave a conversation if fundamentally at odds with the values of the group</p> <p>Consider addressing wider attitudes of the public/civil society</p>

Appendix 2: priorities for work plan

Short term priorities	
Issue	Importance
<p><i>Probation reform</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor voluntary sector involvement in the new probation model • Scrutinise whether the government has learned the right lessons from the prison education dynamic purchasing system in designing the probation dynamic framework • Scrutinise the proposed changes to through the gate • Track the impact of the early integration of offender management in Wales. 	High
<p><i>Women services</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the lack of sustainable funding for women centres and the wider women specialist sector • Monitor proposals for the funding of women’s services in the new probation model • Make the case for the importance of commissioning holistic services for women. 	High
<p><i>Policing policy</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask how the government’s commitment to increase the numbers of police officers might impact the criminal justice system. 	High
<p><i>Violence reduction</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examine the roll-out of local violence reduction units, the impact they will have and whether ‘violence reduction’ is replacing ‘reducing reoffending’ as a priority in local areas. 	Medium
<p><i>Safety</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support government to resist a knee-jerk response to the attack at Fishmonger’s hall • Consider how to support the voluntary sector to work safely with people in prison and in the community in light of the attack. 	Medium
<p><i>‘Stuck’ cohorts</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore specific issues related to people who may feel stuck within the system- for example those serving indeterminate Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) sentences, or living in forensic secure mental health units. 	Medium
<p><i>Working with the new government</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be proactive with new ministers and remind the new government of existing commitments made in Female Offender Strategy, Lammy Review and both Farmer reviews • Establish a clear voluntary sector voice in response to the new government. 	Medium
Medium term priorities	
<p><i>Health and justice</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor the implementation of the National Partnership Agreement for Prison Healthcare in England 2018 - 2021 • Examine how commissioning practices lead to disjointed services, preventing effective care pathways for people moving through the criminal justice system • Make proposals for how departments can work better together to ensure the continuity of health care for people leaving prison • Explore what is causing an increase in self-inflicted deaths and drug-related deaths amongst people in the community. 	High
<p><i>Lived experience</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenge the government to bring more people with lived experience into its policy development. 	High

<p><i>Substance misuse</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore purpose and funding of drug and alcohol services for people in the criminal justice system - especially important in context of access to services in prison and viability of Community Sentence Treatment Requirements (CSTRs) as an alternative to custody for those in addiction who may be eligible. 	High
<p><i>Employment:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 • Encourage the government to act on its manifesto commitments to employment e.g. a job coach in each prison. 	Medium
<p><i>Wales</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor the possible move towards some devolution of criminal justice powers in Wales. 	Medium
<p><i>Release on Temporary License (ROTL)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the impact of changes made to ROTL in 2019, and press for expansion of the use of ROTL. 	Medium
<p><i>Muslim people in the criminal justice system:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ascertain how HMPPS plan to respond to the growing disproportionality of Muslim people in prison. 	Medium
Long term	
<p><i>The use of prison</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Propose aspirational ideas on how the government can reduce the size of the prison population, including the use of alternatives to custody • Monitor the impact of policing and sentencing on the prison population • Ascertain how HMPPS plan to respond to the needs of ever more people serving longer prison sentences. 	High
<p><i>Ageing prison population:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examine how older people can be better supported in prison, including those with particular health or care needs • Examine how older people can be better supported on release from prison • Consider specific challenges in supporting older people with convictions for sex offences. 	High
<p><i>High risk of harm/ long sentences</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the specific issues faced by people deemed to be of high risk of harm to others, or those that have served long sentences, in resettling and reintegrating into the community after being released from custody • Explore the specific problems in access to appropriate housing for this group. 	Medium
<p><i>Psychologically informed approach</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the need for a psychologically informed approach to re-offending, especially in relation to addiction and recovery. 	Medium
<p><i>Coordination of faith sector</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore how faith-based voluntary organisations working in the criminal justice system can be better coordinated and supported. 	Medium
<p><i>Contracting culture</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore how the pervasive use of contract-based funding has created a damaging competitive culture between voluntary organisations, at odds with the sector's values and beliefs. 	Medium