

A bolder cost-benefit approach to capture the contribution of the voluntary sector in criminal justice



About the author



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Why read this evidence review?

This evidence review provides an in-depth look at the rationale and uses of cost benefit analysis (CBA).

Mary Corcoran examines the use of CBAs in a number of different contexts, all of them particularly relevant to voluntary sector organisations working in the criminal justice system. She covers a number of key issues:

- Calculating the costs and benefits of entering a procurement competition such as Transforming Rehabilitation
- Ensuring that all groups, particularly those with protected characteristics, are included in new markets
- The importance of robust information to base CBAs on
- The value of including 'soft' outcomes as well as headline issues such as reoffending rates
- The complexity of CBAs and the risks they involve
- Ensuring that commercial considerations do not warp your charity's primary goals
- Principles of CBAs for the voluntary sector
- Ensuring that the work of the voluntary sector in the criminal justice system is not reduced to a simple consideration of value for money.



Glossary of Terms

This section includes brief definitions of key terms in this evidence review.

Cost benefit analysis

A range of systematic approaches to strategically assessing the strengths and weaknesses of alternative courses of action, with a view to gauging the optimal balance of benefits that might be generated against the costs or investment required to obtain such benefits.

Humanitarian capital

This concept has two applications: the first is that social protection is best achieved collaboratively when different actors play to their strengths. In recent history, this has often meant governments providing public aid and charitable agencies providing different resources, in coexistence with, rather than replacing, government aid. The second applies to the moral and practical efficacy of the third sector in facilitating, informing, and accelerating future concerted action.

Mixed market

Mixed market typically refers to government provision where providers are from the public and/or private and/or third sectors.

Oligopoly

A state of limited competition, in which a market is shared by a small number of organisations.

Preferential bias

A cognitive or organisational bias born out of tendencies to interpret ambiguous or complex information in ways that are favourable to their position or interests. For example, answering such questions as what has worked to change or reduce harmful behaviours, such as offending, results are often unclear or difficult to precisely pinpoint. This can give rise to a tendency to assign positive rather than negative importance to results.

Utilitarianism

Utilitarianism is the doctrine that an action is right in so far as it promotes happiness, and that the greatest happiness of the greatest number should be the guiding principle of conduct.



What is cost benefit analysis?

'Cost benefit analysis' (or CBA) describes a range of systematic approaches to strategically assessing the strengths and weaknesses of alternative courses of action, with a view to gauging the optimal balance of benefits that might be generated against the costs or investment required to obtain such benefits. CBA is widely used as a decision-making approach in policy and business, and is increasingly deployed in the aid and development and charitable worlds. Essentially, CBA is useful in two operational areas:

- 1 To determine the desirability of a given policy by ascertaining whether the benefits of taking a particular course of action is more or less likely to be greater than potential costs or losses
- 2 To provide a basis for evaluating the effectiveness of past actions or decisions, or for reviewing ongoing policy or projects.

Assessing the costs and benefits of participating in service markets

The idea of 'cost benefit' comparison is rooted in classical economic theory and utilitarian philosophy, although nowadays 'cost benefit' analysis is associated with behavioural economics, which is premised on the belief that individuals and groups operate according to enlightened self-interest. Cost-benefit calculations are intrinsic features of the 'mixed market' in criminal justice service provision, and as these considerations are now part of the commissioning and contracting landscapes the voluntary sector has developed considerable expertise in this domain. Reliable cost-benefit assessment is highly dependent on the soundness of the characteristics of the market in question. The central proposition here is that providers of services to the public criminal justice system should be able to assess the following information when considering a contractual undertaking, including:

- Is the competition open and fair?
- What mechanisms are available for incentivising participants (including service providers? stakeholders? service users)?
- How is success rewarded?
- How is good performance verified?
- Are outcome measurements fair and accurate?
- How does the system sanction (or at least discourage) failure or poor performance?
- Are there fair and open procedures for obtaining appropriate information, transparent decision making, accessing procedures for appeal or complaint?



The benefits of participating in new markets

In answer to these concerns one might answer: Competitive markets can be liberating in different contexts, and for the voluntary sector, can offer freedoms of choice regarding which services or goods to offer, which beneficiary groups to work with, and even which locations to work in. Market mechanisms such as competition and open tendering may achieve more equitable results than government spending or grant-funding by permitting smaller, more specialist or less noticed social groups opportunities to compete for resources to do their work. Market mechanisms theoretically gives all comers the freedom to do business with each other which, as a fortunate by-product, facilitates the greatest efficiencies where providers (especially at local or community level) are able to get as close as possible to ultimate end users. These kinds of 'freedom-efficiency' outcomes, of course, are only relevant in relation to whether it reaches intended beneficiaries, and indeed, whether it actually produces beneficial outcomes. Therefore, considerations of the benefits or added value which these services offer come to the fore.

Considerations for smaller providers wish to enter a new market

The presence or absence of options in the market may impose real opportunities or limitations on how far voluntary sector providers can actually participate in providing services to the criminal justice system. In assessing the purely commercial decisions relating to whether voluntary sector organisations participate or not, it is vital to take note of the forms which markets take, for example, whether they are competitive, skewed or monopolistic. The obvious signs here are whether there is a diversity of providers and services or whether competition in practice gives way to uncompetitive oligopolies dominated by a small number of large-scale providers who consistently bid for, and gain, tenders. There are obvious reasons why this might be the case: large providers (from commercial, public and charitable sectors) have the resources and capacity to tender for large-scale and multi-service contracts, therefore, having an built-in advantage over smaller, medium-sized, or specialist providers. But, in the context of limited resources and growing need, commissioners can also unwittingly encourage the preference for large-scale or multi-contract providers who are thought to generate greater economies of scale and efficiency than multiple, smaller-scale contractors. This militates against bespoke combinations of 'core' and specialist' providers having viable opportunities in the market. For the voluntary sector in particular, the complexity of the market both in its current form, and in terms of accessing it as a provider or consumer/service user, is a significant indicator of the health of the market. Failure on these counts – lack of provider diversity, a tendency towards market dominance by a few players – indicate systemic faults in market design and commissioning systems.



Ensuring protected groups are included in the market

In this context, it is as important to note what might be missing from the 'market' as it currently constituted, and whether that is remediable? Consider, for example, why certain services might *not be* commissioned or granted contracts – is the beneficiary group visible or recognised as especially marginalised or experiencing particularly complex needs? Are these needs associated with statutorily recognised protected characteristics (on the grounds of race, gender, disability, etc)? Are funders and policy makers accurately gauging emerging areas of need and if not, how can providers assess and make the case for addressing potential beneficiaries who are not yet on the policy radar?

If the answer to these is a 'no', the next question might be how one might persuade policy makers or commissioners that these are worthwhile areas for humanitarian and policy focus? In this sense, voluntary sector (and commercial and public sector) advocacy is acting consistently with the maxim that 'good information facilitates efficient markets'. The nature of the factual circumstances (such as the availability or absence of information, the quality of that information, and the evidence that is used to identify the need for intervention) is intrinsic to how our assessment of the best way to distribute effort and resources to where it is needed. That is to say: policy makers, funders or contractors also rely on flows of reliable information to make their own cost-benefit calculations as to what is most worthwhile course of intervention, and where this might be directed? In short, voluntary sector and other providers can play a role in influencing policies and the distribution of resources for social ends.

Information is part of the cost-benefit cycle

Sound cost-benefit assessment relies on the availability of robust, accurate, and reliable data and information. In most funding contexts, some form of independent verification of the claims of programme providers is required by funders as a condition of continued funding; this evidence is gathered through a combination of evaluations or inspection audits by external or official bodies.

In principle, evaluations of programmes should primarily inform internal planning and longer-term strategisation. However, the purpose of commissioned studies can be distorted by commercial and policy priorities, where 'evaluations' and audit reports are mainly used for external consumption of funders, sponsors and the general public. Commissioned evaluative studies by consultants or university personnel can be very costly, while smaller charities find that the required investment in data gathering systems and activities may outweigh the potential resources they need for improving or expanding their services. In the sense that information is liable to be commoditised in such a manner, it might be argued that there is an inverse relationship between the value of such studies as a tool for strategic planning and degree to which they are valued for fundraising and publicity. Put another way, evaluations might not



always serve the functions of both revealing weaknesses in performance while generating a public picture of success. Voluntary sector providers should be clear about their purpose when undertaking or commissioning a CBA and be aware that a more in-depth investigation may reveal areas for improvement as well as areas of success. (For a broader discussion of the value and pitfalls of evaluation for the voluntary sector, see Hedderman and Hucklesby, 2016).¹

CBAs are about more than reducing reoffending

Inspection audits of a kind which weigh performance and outcomes against national targets – such as assessing the success of programmes in reducing reoffending against national or regional reoffending thresholds – present their own advantages and limitations. Whilst the ability to compare outcomes for service users against the national or regional picture adds value to assessing the strengths and weaknesses of programmes (itself a useful form of qualitative cost-benefit analysis), such comparisons should be treated with caution rather than certitude.

The Ministry of [Justice's Justice Data Lab](#) (JDL) gives voluntary organisations and other bodies working with offenders free access to central reoffending data. Provided you have service users' consent to use their data and their names, date of birth, gender and date of community sentence or release from prison, and a significant enough number of service users to generate a statistically significant result, the JDL can calculate the reoffending rates of your service users against a matched cohort of offenders. You should be confident of your results though as the JDL stipulates that all findings are published in order to advance our knowledge of what works in reducing reoffending.

Chris Fox and Kevin Albertson (2012; 125-126)² usefully summarise the proper uses and misuses of cost-benefit analyses with a view to introducing some proportionality into commissioners' expectations as to what is reliably measurable and relevant for providers, including small and medium sized VSOs.

- The expectation that benefits (in terms of desistance or increasing pro-social behaviour) may outweigh costs (in financial terms) may not hold. In other words, there is a weak relationship between criminal justice interventions for reducing offending, and net financial savings to the public.
- Properly conducted, cost-benefit analysis should consider all outcomes (social, financial, personal) and not just weigh reduced reoffending against savings.
- Properly done, valuations of 'soft' outcomes (wellbeing, reduction in fear or insecurity) are as important to gaining an accurate analysis as comparison with 'hard' outcomes (reduced offending behaviour).

1 Hedderman, C. and Hucklesby, A. (2016). 'When worlds collide: researching and evaluating the voluntary sector's work with offenders'. In Hucklesby, S. and Corcoran, M. (eds). *The Voluntary Sector and Criminal Justice*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 117-140.

2 Albertson, K. and Fox, C. (2012). *Crime and Economics: An Introduction*. Abingdon: Routledge.

- The direct translation of outcome evaluative findings into monetary values is fraught with preferential bias, and any calculation of 'savings' where crime does not occur needs to be carefully interpreted.
- Traditional cost-benefit analysis is poor at identifying externalities, so that attribution of factors contributing to success or failure are often omitted, thus giving an inaccurate picture of what contributed to success or failure in a project.

Be careful what you measure – and what you are required to measure

The pressure to prove the efficacy of your programme (and understate problems) can be compounded when it is directly and narrowly linked to outcomes-based commissioning (in the form of payment by results or principal only payment systems). A major concern for the voluntary sector is the burden of evidence which is placed upon providers to establish both the cost-efficiency and social benefit of their work utilising instruments and measures which capture narrow financial and reducing reoffending parameters. In the current climate of austerity and the need for providers to 'do more with less', it can be a matter of politics, rather than social science, as to which 'costs' and which 'benefits' are actually utilised and calculated. The traditional view of commissioners and funders is that the costs of programmes or interventions should be favourable in relation to expenditure (i.e. should save money) when assessing the validity of programmes. This kind of calculation, for example, might offset the cost of intervention or treatment against what might notionally be saved had the service user otherwise been using health, policing, custodial or other public resources, reduced criminal activity, or any reduction in victim costs, for example. Net benefits might also be calculated for participants (engagement in education, treatment programmes), their families and communities, and the general public.

CBAs are more complex than they may at first appear

Clearly, this is an expert, and sometimes formidably complex area of evaluation and whilst 'cost-effective' calculations might be a useful reflective exercise for the purposes of assessing what works in their programmes, they are often not rigorously grounded in evidence which would satisfy stringent actuarial or criminological standards. The fact that such calculations often appear in programme evaluative reports as if they were founded in sound scientific facts is often not the 'fault' of either funders nor providers, who are often operating within a set of tacit and powerful messages with regards to what counts as valid indicators of 'value for money' (Marsh, Fox and Hedderman, 2009).³

³ Marsh, K. Fox, C. Hedderman, C. (2009). 'Do you get what you pay for? Assessing the use of prison from an economic perspective.' *Howard Journal of Criminal Justice*, 48(2), 117-135.



Furthermore, in practice, the 'validity' of a programme (i.e. whether it produces the stated effects such as reduced addiction, criminal behaviour, etc) is conflated with 'cost effectiveness', when these are separate and different entities. 'Success' may take on counter-intuitive appearances according to whether it is measured from scientific or cost efficiency perspectives. For example, programmes may 'work' by achieving their goals, but the treatment might not involve the most cost-effective methods. Participants who are removed from or drop out of a programme might raise the success rate of programmes if only those remaining are counted. Participants who are back in custody may be counted as 'failures' by funders, although from a public safety point of view, their re-arrest counts as a 'success' as they are incapacitated from criminal or substance misuse activities. A participant may not appear on re-offending or recidivism measures after completing a programme because they are back in custody, have died, or have fallen out of the reach of social services, rather than having desisted.

Counterproductive impacts

Cost-benefit analysis must function sufficiently well to identify potential counterproductive impacts of certain courses of action, including financial, reputational or other costs which outweigh perceived benefits. Many charities routinely assume calculated risks – entering into new areas of work, undertaking loss-making contracts or subsidising services for a short term – in the expectation that conditions may become more beneficial in the future. However, the recent history of significant financial difficulties among voluntary sector or social enterprises from Kid's Company to Lifeline to Working Links, attest to the risks of extended contract dependency. The ongoing fallout from failures in the Transforming Rehabilitation (TR) policy also bears out the exposure of the voluntary sector to changing policy priorities. Voluntary sector organisations were exposed to path dependency which meant that systemic problems with income projections and the TR business model revealed limitations in the Community Rehabilitation Companies, which in turn exposed many charitable contractors to intolerable commercial risks.

Finally, there is the problem with the 'costly verification' problem. In his study of faith-based social services providers in the United States, Avinash Dixit (2001)⁴ found that self-reporting systems for payment by results regimes created perverse incentives as providers who told the truth about shortfalls in outcome or implementation problems were sanctioned more than those who withheld or glossed over such data. The alternative system, which also used in Great Britain, is to require principals to verify whether or not outcomes have been achieved, often through expensive auditing or inspection procedures. The expense and resources required for either option is widely cited as one of the most prominent disincentives to the smaller or medium contractors in the charitable sector.

4 Dixit, A. (2002). *Incentive contracts for faith-based organisations to deliver social services*. New jersey: Princeton University. <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/6ac6/6ae5f0adcff17b82fa88eb461cfd77ed6b70.pdf>

Cost-benefit analysis and humanitarian capital

Of course, much of the previous, rather utilitarian, approach rests on the premise that the primary motivation for charities, social enterprises or volunteers is the maximisation of self-interest (in the form of generating profit or surpluses or prestige). Whilst this is undoubtedly true for a commercial business, the legal basis for social providers (whether Foundation, Trust, charity or NGO) is at least that they produce substantial grounds for justifying their socially beneficial purpose (Seddon 2007).

The Nobel Laureate, Amartya Sen, argued that ‘presumption of ubiquitous selfishness is hard to defend empirically’ especially in ‘complex circumstances’.⁵ By this he meant that what might apply to individuals or businesses cannot be extrapolated to all circumstances. Humanitarian and charitable agencies (including social enterprises) are bound by obligations to generate some form of social benefit, and therefore, it is not practicable or desirable to assume that incentive models will have a multiplier effect everywhere. This does not exclude the third sector from operating within the economic conditions of capitalism, but reinforces the point that the value of third sector work is not reducible to economic measures and descriptors. Instead, Sen argues that where social justice is one’s ultimate goal, the pursuit of economic justice ought to be a primary goal for the third sector.

In sum, it is not enough simply to keep going in a tough commercial and hostile policy climate, nor even to prioritise commercial survival even as a means towards a social end. Rather, programme provision without the pursuit of social justice merely perpetuates the conditions of injustice. Concepts of third sector viability must, in this sense, also embrace perspectives of substantive freedoms, as otherwise, ‘efficiency results do not say anything about equity of outcomes, or about equity in the distribution of freedoms’ (Amartya Sen 1999: 119).

Sociological perspectives highlight how people are incentivised by ‘non pecuniary motivations’ and ‘other regarding’ preferences.⁶ In findings which are broadly reflective of other research with volunteer organisations, Francois and Vlassopolous (2007) suggested that ‘prosocial motivation’ might be seen as a combination of two types of intrinsic motivations: firstly, *action-oriented incentives*, where participants valued positive interactions with people, and *output-oriented incentives*, where participants were concerned with making an overall positive contribution to societal good.⁷

5 Dixit, A. (2002). Incentive contracts for faith-based organisations to deliver social services. New jersey: Princeton University. <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/6ac6/6ae5f0adcff17b82fa88eb461cfd77ed6b70.pdf>

6 Sen, A. (1999). Development as Freedom. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

7 Francois, P. and Vlassopolous, M. (2007). ‘Pro-social motivation and the delivery of social service’. Paper presented to the CESifo Area Conference on Employment and Social Protection (ESP), Munich, May 18-20, 2007: www.personal.soton.ac.uk/mv1u06/surveycesifo.pdf

Additionally, they found that pro-social motivation was spurred by causes other than those merely related to commercial incentives, but which sprang from underlying factors, namely *extrinsic*, *intrinsic* and *reputational* drivers. Extrinsic motivations related to financial and material rewards of the kind which preoccupy current policy and commissioning perspectives to the detriment of the other two significant factors, intrinsic (where the activity is deemed valuable in its own right), and reputational (the development of valued social recognition for positive interactions with stakeholders).

Cost-benefit analysis – some principles for the third/voluntary sector

As this short piece makes obvious, modelling the impacts (including the challenges and trade-offs) of hypothetical scenarios is fraught with difficulty. The immediate problem relates to the limits of classical economic theory for producing cost-benefit models which are best suited for voluntary- and charitable sector organisations. At best, we can observe that cost-benefit analysis applies differently across different sectors, and that their core characteristics determine their respective approaches. There must be more constructive ways of acknowledging the diverse features of different sectors as positive attributes rather than deficits. One challenge for future policy is to devise systems which recognise and reward the diverse capabilities of the different sectors (and reward these contributions properly in the process).

- The state/public funders prioritise value for money and cost control, but must also ensure procedural fairness in the distribution of public money and proper accountability.
- Commissioners prioritise procurement and planning, but can also foster the diversity of participants, and therefore the health of service economy under their remit.
- The private sector focuses on effective service, customer satisfaction, profits, renewal of contract and cost control, but the assumption that business always knows best has generated hubris and led to costly consequences for our public services.
- Public statutory services prioritise general provision, eligibility criteria, triaging need, political accountability, and public interest but tend underplay their own capacity for innovation.

The limits of strictly commercial approaches to cost-benefit analyses are apparent, or should be, in voluntary and humanitarian spheres. As Amartya Sen showed, conventional economic measures ignore the ultimate cost-benefit calculation where they overlook the fact that for one group to benefit, others must lose out. In answer, he argues that addressing the economic-justice gap is indispensable if the third sector is to make a meaningful contribution to human good.

The larger challenge for the voluntary/third sector is not simply to evidence the immediate impact of their programmes in the narrow 'value for money' sense, but to be able to represent the wider benefits which their work generates. As with all such forecasts, findings from evaluative and research should be used carefully, and alongside the other tools available to charities for checking the health and robustness of their systems.

It is possible to generate outcome-based research which demonstrates the broad impacts of programmes, taking into account other major determinants such as access to services (housing, health, financial), the contribution of other agencies and supports, and indirectly, the quality of externalities such as family or community relations. These measures are no less pragmatic, viable, sophisticated and rigorous as existing measures of effort, outlay, investment, benefit and reward.

At present, payment-by-results or lead provider (sometimes called principal contract) systems do not adequately capture the actual value of the work done because they reward the agent (provider) for the primary product, while little commercial reward is allocated for 'by-products' such as social justice, humanitarian intervention, personal transformation, or community benefit. In short, a great deal of voluntary sector work is disregarded as having economic viability. There is no inherent reason (other than narrow misconceptions of what is financially worthwhile) why these outputs are not regarded as appropriate for society to support via governmental or social funding.

Should there be markets in the criminal justice system?

In criminal justice, we cannot ignore the important moral imperative which conventional political economy overlooks, but which is intrinsic to humanitarian intervention. There remains the strong public belief that working with criminally sanctioned persons is not like any other public services because of the solemn penal function of the criminal justice system (powers which one might argue should be limited by law to democratic and legally constituted bodies). The obligatory duty to punish and sanction, one argument goes, means that criminal justice is non-marketable (if one accepts that involvement in criminal justice work equates with participating in punishment). However, this does not always translate into a consensus whether this makes the penal/criminal justice sphere merely distinctive, or makes this an exception from the normal conditions of humanitarian work.

Classic commercial and policy cost-benefit models do not adequately reflect the contribution of the voluntary/third sector. Charities must achieve commercial viability, but their activities cannot be determined by profit generation if the sector is also to claim public legitimacy and create meaningful distinctions between themselves and commercial businesses. In this sense, cost-benefit analysis means that charities need to employ tools which take into consideration of the different goals of charitable organisations – some of which conflict with

each other. The interaction between sectors is complex, and there is still plenty of scope for policymakers and commissioning bodies to work with different sectors to devise a framework for assistance provided by different actors. It ought to be possible to devise actuarial instruments for assessing the holistic costs and benefits of working with those affected by criminal harms. Such tools would assist strategic decision making, not just in terms of financial planning, but in factoring in the other significant elements of reputation (lending or transacting your good name), recognisability with crucial stakeholders, personnel and organisational 'costs', reach and legitimacy with beneficiary groups and communities. There are no intrinsic reasons why the value of externalities and outputs cannot be recognised and rewarded by funders and stakeholders alike.

This evidence review was first published in January 2020.



Links to literature

This section includes links to all the research listed in the evidence review.

Wherever possible, we have included links to sites where the research can be read or downloaded free of charge.

Albertson, K. and Fox, C. (2012). *Crime and Economics: An Introduction*. Abingdon: Routledge.

www.amazon.co.uk/Crime-Economics-Introduction-Kevin-Albertson/dp/1843928426

Dixit, A. (2002). *Incentive contracts for faith-based organisations to deliver social services*.

New jersey: Princeton University. www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Incentive-Contracts-for-Faith-Based-Organizations-%E2%88%97-Dixit/6ac66ae5f0adcff17b82fa88eb461cfd77ed6b70?p2df

Francois, P. and Vlassopolous, M. (2007). 'Pro-social motivation and the delivery of social service'. Paper presented to the *CESifo Area Conference on Employment and Social Protection (ESP)*, Munich, May 18-20, 2007.

Hedderman, C. and Hucklesby, A. (2016). 'When worlds collide: researching and evaluating the voluntary sector's work with offenders'. In Hucklesby, S. and Corcoran, M. (eds) *The Voluntary Sector and Criminal justice*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 117-140. www.researchgate.net/publication/303414418_When_Worlds_Collide_Researching_and_Evaluating_the_Voluntary_Sector's_Work_with_Offenders

Marsh, K. Fox, C. Hedderman, C. (2009). 'Do you get what you pay for? Assessing the use of prison from an economic perspective.' *Howard Journal of Criminal Justice*, 48(2), 117-135. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1468-2311.2008.00556.x>

Sen, A. (1999). *Development as Freedom*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

https://books.google.co.uk/books/about/Development_as_Freedom.html?id=Qm8HtpFHYecC



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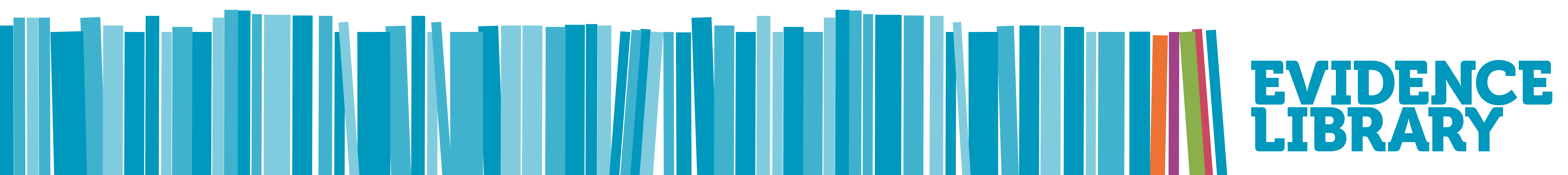
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An online evidence base for the voluntary sector working in the criminal justice system

This article forms part of a series from Clinks, created to develop a far-reaching and accessible evidence base covering the most common types of activity undertaken within the criminal justice system. There are two main aims of this online series:

- 1 To increase the extent to which the voluntary sector bases its services on the available evidence base
- 2 To encourage commissioners to award contracts to organisations delivering an evidence-based approach.

Each article has been written by a leading academic with particular expertise on the topic in question. The topics are selected by Clinks' members as areas of priority interest. Clinks intends to build a comprehensive directory of the best evidence available across a wide range of criminal justice topics within the next three years (2020-2023). The online evidence base is co-ordinated by Russell Webster on behalf of Clinks.

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