



Supporting the voluntary sector
working in the criminal justice system

Member advisory forum meeting notes

Tuesday 12 July 2022, 13.00 – 15.00 via video call

Attendees

Chris Stacey	Clinks (Co-chair)
Rachael Byrne	Co-Chair, Clinks Trustee (HomeGroup)
Lynn Kelly	POPS
Chris Leslie	Inside Out Support Wales
Riana Taylor	Circles UK
Peter Merrifield	Support When It Matters (SWIM)
Ian Merrill	Shannon Trust
Arron Owen	Cranstoun
Robert White	Mayday Trust
Matina Marougka	Together for Mental Wellbeing

Apologies

Beverley Brooks	The Recruitment Junction
Janine Alcantara	Employment 4 All
Emily Giles	The Bell Foundation
Khatuna Tsintsadze	Zahid Mubarek Trust

1. Welcome and introductions

- Chris welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Clinks member advisory forum.

2. Introducing some of Clinks' Sector Support, Members and Networks team

- We were joined by a couple of new members of the Clinks team. Their roles connect closely to that of the forum, and so each of the forum members introduced themselves, their work, and why they are part of the forum.
- Emma Kidger is Clinks' new sector support, members and networks manager
- Paul Bernard is Clinks' new members, events and information officer.
- They both started at Clinks on 4th July. They each explained a bit more about themselves, their role and their team
- Robert explained that he would soon be leaving Mayday and so would be standing down from the forum. He will suggest to colleagues at Mayday that they consider applying.
- **Action for Clinks (Chris/Emma/Paul) – Review the gaps in forum membership and look to recruit to fill those.**

3. Circles UK's experience of commissioning

- Riana provided an update to members on the background, progress, positives and difficulties around the commissioning of Circles of Support and Accountability.
- She highlighted how the MoJ will be contracting directly with providers, but that providers have to be approved by Circles UK.
- All contracts are small in value, but because the contracts look like they will be 3 years with the option of further years, many organisations will need to qualify over the £1m threshold on the Probation Dynamic Framework.
- The timescales are delayed, meaning the potential need to prepare bids in August, which is a challenge.
- There were a number of questions from forum members about the context.
- Chris asked Riana if it would be helpful, Clinks could look at raising some issues in the commissioning forum that Clinks takes part in with the MoJ.

4. Clinks response to Justice Committee inquiry on public understanding of sentencing

- Olivia and Franklin from Clinks' policy team joined as they are working on Clinks' response and want to ensure we have members' perspectives, especially in areas such as women and race.
- We went through three questions:
 1. What do you think the government should take into consideration with regards to sentencing policy?/What is your one key message on sentencing policy?
 2. How does public understanding of sentencing affect the work that you do as a voluntary organisation?
 3. We are looking for examples of good sentencing practice in the voluntary sector. Are your organisations involved in any work around sentencing, or do you know of effective work being done by others?
- The discussion was helpful in informing Clinks' response and the response will be shared with forum members once it has been submitted.
- **Action for Clinks (Olivia/Franklin) – share the Clinks response once it is submitted.**

5. AOB

- Robert (Mayday Trust) asked group if they could promote current Mayday jobs across their networks, including his job. Mentioned some of the difficulties around recruitment at the moment.
- Peter (SWIM) shared some frustrations around recruitment, describing it as a 'real nightmare'. SWIM have tried the big recruitment agencies, Clinks, specialist BAME recruitment, but there is a real lack of numbers / quality coming through. There is a feeling that people are exiting the sector and not sure what to do next. Question: is the offer not strong enough in terms of wages, benefits etc, or are the people just not out there?
- Riana (Circles) has recently gone through recruitment round and really struggled to draw people. There seems to be more appetite for part-time working. Another issue is people not wanting to work face to face, and while some work can be done remotely or at home, a lot of the work will be face to face.
- Robert suggested looking at recruitment as a group at the next meeting.

6. Meeting admin

The next meeting that was due in August will be cancelled due to the school holidays, so the next meeting will be Tuesday 4th October, 1pm – 3pm.

Beverley Brooks has decided to stand down from the forum. We are grateful for her input so far and she would like to remain involved in Clinks work that is focused on the North East and/or that has a particular employment focus.