

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

Introduction

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

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

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

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

Membership

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

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

Successful applicants are appointed to join the RR3 initially for a term of two years. Members can have their membership renewed for a further two years if they wish, subject to agreement from the RR3 chair and relevant government officials. At the end of that period (a total of four years), the seat must come up for an open selection process, in which the incumbent holder is free to reapply for that role - should it continue to be a role the chair and officials feel is needed. Positions may also be recruited for when a member of the group steps down, where additional need is identified in relation to a specialist area or following a review of membership.



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How the group works

Each year an agreed work plan is set out, which identifies priority areas and the group's activities and objectives within these areas. Some examples of these areas of work include accommodation, employment, commissioning, and staffing.

Each quarterly meeting will include a policy update from the MoJ and HMPPS on relevant operation developments, and a focused group discussion on a particular topic in relation to the role of the voluntary sector in the criminal justice system.

Recent meetings have focused on issues such as vetting challenges and tackling racial disparities in the criminal justice system. The group has engaged with a variety of officials to provide guidance on policy areas such as education, employment, women, prison estate transformation and devolution. The group's members maintain contact with nominated policy leads to provide ongoing voluntary sector feedback and to receive updates on future policy developments. Following each quarterly meeting, notes are published on the Clinks [website](#) and actions are put into an action log to track progress.

Special Interest Groups

As well as meeting each quarter, the RR3 can also convene time-limited Special Interest Groups (SIGs) to explore certain topics in more depth. These groups are sponsored by a member of the RR3 in response to issues raised by the MoJ/HMPPS or by the sector. On behalf of the RR3, Clinks recruits additional members for these groups from the sector with expertise of the topic. SIGs may take the form of a one-off meeting to gather evidence from the sector, or a series of meetings to feed into ongoing work by MoJ or HMPPS officials. SIGs feed information back to the RR3 group but also produce outputs such as recommendation papers or good practice guides.

Example: Special Interest Group on Covid-19

The SIG was set up in response to growing concern in the voluntary sector around the needs of people in contact with the criminal justice system during the Covid-19 pandemic. Three key publications were produced.

- [Feedback to HMPPS on its management of Covid 19 \(November 2020\)](#)

The HMPPS Insights team invited the RR3 SIG to provide feedback on how HMPPS managed the Covid-19 crisis. This included looking at how HMPPS communicated its Covid-19 response to the voluntary sector, HMPPS' leadership style throughout the pandemic, and its corporate culture in relation to the voluntary sector.

This formed the basis of a paper that made recommendations to improve how the criminal justice voluntary sector and the government work together towards common goals and to support recovery post-pandemic.

- [Impacts of Covid-19 on the financial sustainability of the voluntary sector \(August 2020\)](#)

The HMPPS Third Sector Task Force requested information on the financial impacts of the pandemic on the voluntary sector. A paper was produced which found that long-term trends in funding and communications undermined the sustainability of voluntary organisations working in the criminal justice system, and that Covid-19 both exacerbated these challenges and created new ones.

- [What does recovery look like? \(July 2020\)](#)

The HMPPS Third Sector Taskforce requested information on recovery from Covid-19. A report was produced presenting the voluntary sector's views on the possible future landscape for delivery of services by voluntary organisations and highlights six key principles as to how we can create a fairer and more effective post-pandemic criminal justice system.

Example: Special Interest Group on Probation Reform

In March 2020, the RR3 established a SIG on probation reform, to provide advice and support to the MoJ and HMPPS as they prepared for the transition towards the reunification of the Probation system in June 2021. The group gave feedback on the following areas: the design of the Dynamic Framework, day-one contract values and volumes, the mobilisation of day one contracts, future commissioning of services, the design of the through the gate model, and how Regional Probation Directors can work in partnership with the voluntary sector.

In April 2021, the group also met Richard Oldfield who was commissioned by the previous Prisons and Probation Minister, Lucy Frazer MP, to undertake a review of the Dynamic Framework commissioning and the group were able to provide their views and feedback on the process to inform his view. Additional voluntary sector probation experts were co-opted to the SIG, with a total of 43 senior voluntary sector leaders from over 30 voluntary organisations engaged across all meetings. 23 officials from the MoJ, HMPPS and the National Probation Service (NPS) attended at least one of the six meetings. Key recommendations include further simplification and better promotion of the Dynamic Framework in order to be accessible to small and specialist organisations and better engagement with the voluntary sector to understand how government can reduce the complexity of its commissioning processes. [Read the final report here.](#)

RR3 key achievements

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

April 2019

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

February 2019

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

April 2018

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



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Getting involved

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

For further information on how to get involved with the work of the RR3 please refer to [this blog](#).

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