

CLINKS

Supporting the voluntary sector
working in the criminal justice system

Chair Recruitment Pack



Welcome

from the Chair of the recruitment committee

Thank you for your interest in applying for the role of Clinks' Chair. Founded as a project to coordinate voluntary organisations in London prisons, Clinks has been running for 30 years. Clinks is a national infrastructure organisation supporting charities and social enterprises across England and Wales, to support people in the criminal justice system and their families.

We are proud of what we do. We believe wholeheartedly in the power and potential of voluntary organisations to support people in the criminal justice system and their families to have positive futures in strong communities.

Our current Chair stands down at our 2024 AGM. If selected, you will start your role as we implement our new strategy. We want to recruit you in its development period so you can have input.

We welcome all applications and we understand the importance of having a diverse board, representative of the communities impacted by criminal justice. Clinks is committed to becoming an anti-racist organisation and we are transparent about the work needed to achieve that. We especially welcome applications from racially minoritised people and those who represent Black and racially minoritised led organisations.



Additionally, we uphold the right of people with criminal convictions to take on paid and unpaid roles across society and welcome applications from people with lived experience of the criminal justice system.

I look forward to helping my fellow trustees find Clinks' next Chair and perhaps working with you in the future.

Simon Ruding - Clinks Trustee

About CLiNKs



Clinks is the infrastructure organisation supporting voluntary organisations in the criminal justice system in England and Wales. Our aim is to ensure that organisations and the people they support are informed and engaged in order to transform lives and communities.

We support, promote and represent the [voluntary sector working with people in the criminal justice system](#) and their families - currently that is over 1,700 voluntary organisations working in England and Wales. Our 500+ members, which range from large organisations through to unstaffed community groups, work in prisons and the community in a variety of ways to help people turn their lives around and also offer support to their families.



SUPPORT

We keep the sector up-to-date through our comprehensive programme of communications, our briefings and events. We support the voluntary sector to address entrenched issues and key challenges, to share solutions and realise opportunities.

PROMOTE

We champion voluntary organisations, highlighting the important role they play in criminal justice system, ensuring this is recognised by policy and decision makers. We provide examples of, and promote, good practice and innovation through communications, events and networks.

REPRESENT

We give voice to the voluntary sector. We influence stakeholders through participating in policy and decision-making bodies, building relationships and developing networks with key decision makers. We share voluntary sector intelligence - gathered through our networks and our research - with the government.

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.

Our Values

Our members – voluntary organisations play a crucial role at the heart of our criminal justice system.

Using evidence – in order to improve the system we must amplify the voices of voluntary organisations working in criminal justice.

Involving service users – we are committed to supporting the effective involvement of people with lived experience of the criminal justice system to inform policy and practice.

People's capacity to change – we believe that every individual should have the right support so they can transform their lives.

Equality – we proactively identify and tackle disadvantage, discrimination and inequality in our criminal justice system.

Inclusivity – we strive to be approachable, accessible, inclusive and collaborative.

Anti-Racism

Inequality exists structurally and globally and there is an over-representation of racially minoritised people in the criminal justice system in England and Wales which forms a part of that injustice.

For too long, despite numerous reviews including [the Young Review](#) and the Lammy Review, and despite the tireless work of dedicated organisations led by, and for racially minoritised communities, these injustices have sustained.

[Clinks thinks](#) all organisations working in criminal justice must acknowledge and work to tackle structural, as well as individual, racism and ensure that their services meet the needs of racially minoritised people.

Becoming anti-racist is essential to building a justice system which is fair and equitable so that our communities can become safer and stronger. People from some racially minoritised groups are overrepresented in the criminal justice system and experience poorer outcomes compared to people who are not racially minoritised, which impacts their lives and communities.



Our impact

Clinks' latest published [Impact Assessment\(2019\)](#) presents the views of a range of Clinks members and key stakeholders, including small and medium voluntary sector organisations, statutory stakeholders from local and national organisations, funders and those who have worked in partnership with us. Respondents fed back on what we do well, where we could do better and offered recommendations for our work. We gained valuable insight into how Clinks is perceived, as well as constructive criticism, which will help shape our future work.

The overwhelming response from those consulted was positive. Where we can, Clinks is keen to make changes to respond best to what the sector needs. We will shortly be publishing our 2023 Impact Assessment and applicants for the role of Chair can request a copy prior to publication.

Our future plans

You can [read our latest annual report here](#). We are now developing our next strategy. We know that we are needed, so we are looking at how to continue our vital work, retain our independence, and protect the quality and breadth of what we offer while operating in an ever more challenging funding environment. We are seeking to diversify our income through investing in income generation activities which meet sector need.

162,883 website users across the Clinks and NCJAA websites



565,000+ page views on the Clinks website alone

50 editions of Light Lunch our weekly ebulletin to 13,801 subscribers

12 editions of the NCJAA newsletter to 7,416 subscribers

30,204 total followers across all Clinks and NCJAA accounts



44 publications
2,595 average visits per month
31,144 blog page views

2,239 vacancies posted on our job board
145,000 views

2022
-
2023

We delivered 146 ebulletins and newsflashes over the year to 21,601 subscribers.

2,301 attended 73 Clinks events

Ended 22-23 with 608 members



298 registered members of the Women's Network

15 forums held covering England, Wales, London and the North, with a total of 401 attendees

Directory of Services - 57,000 views
Partnership Finder - 15,500 views

63 registered members of the Race and Justice Network

The Voluntary Sector

in Criminal Justice

Over 1,700 voluntary organisations work in the criminal justice system.

Organisations range from volunteer-led groups to large, multi-million pound organisations with thousands of staff. Some only work in their local community, whilst others serve larger areas.

Whatever the future holds, the voluntary sector has an important role to play

The sector plays a unique and valuable role in engaging with, and highlighting, the unmet needs of the most excluded communities and those suffering multiple disadvantages - those which mainstream services often fail to reach. Voluntary sector work is conducted in and out of prisons, with some organisations doing both, ensuring continuity of support through the prison gate.

The voluntary sector supports and empowers individuals. Organisations support rehabilitation, reduce reoffending and improve community safety and cohesion. More people work for voluntary organisations than the prison and probation services combined.

As well as responding flexibly to address unmet and changing need, voluntary organisations also share intelligence and develop innovative ways to address need. This intelligence is useful to commissioners, policy makers and others. Strong partnership, cooperation and communication between commissioners and the voluntary sector improves commissioning and leads to more effective outcomes.

Could you be our Chair?

The Chair is pivotal to creating the conditions for overall Board and individual director effectiveness, both inside and outside the Boardroom.

Responsibilities

- Provide leadership to the Board.
- Act as line manager to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), undertaking appraisals, providing support, advice and, where appropriate, challenge to the CEO, while respecting executive responsibility.
- Ensure that the board receive clear and timely information, particularly about the organisation's performance, enabling them to make sound decisions.
- Manage board meetings ensuring sufficient time is allowed for discussion of contentious issues. Collaboratively with the CEO, set the agenda for meetings, which should include the concerns of all trustees and have a strategic focus.
- Lead in succession planning for the Board. Oversee recruitment of new trustees, ensuring compliance with the Articles of Association.
- Lead in identifying and meeting the development needs of individual trustees and the Board as a whole.
- Facilitate change and address any areas of conflict within the board and the organisation, liaising with the CEO to achieve this.
- Evaluate the performance of both the board and individual trustees, undertaking annual appraisals and supporting trustees to improve and grow.
- Encourage active engagement by all trustees.
- Lead in recruiting to the role of CEO and ensure that a proper induction takes place.
- Time commitment - 4 x quarterly Board meetings and 4 x quarterly Finance, Hr and Risk committee meetings. Regular appraisals with the CEO, arranged when needed.



An effective Chair

- Promotes and upholds the highest standards of integrity and governance
- Sets the agenda and tone of board discussions to promote effective decision-making
- Promotes open communication, both inside and outside the boardroom
- Ensures effective implementation of board decisions
- Builds an effective and complementary board, initiating change and planning succession, subject to board approval
- Ensures a clear structure for the effective running of board committees
- Ensures the organisation pursues its objects as defined in the Memorandum of Association
- Provides coherent leadership of the organisation, including representing the organisation and its values.



Person Specification

- Knowledge of the criminal justice system in England and Wales and the role of the voluntary sector within it
- Knowledge of the UK voluntary sector and charity governance
- Commitment to the organisation, and willingness to devote the necessary time
- Commitment to anti-racism
- Ability to think creatively and strategically
- Understanding of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship
- Good communication, interpersonal and leadership skills
- Ability to work effectively as a member of a team
- Impartiality, tact and diplomacy.



Application and Appointment

Please write or send a video/audio recording to Simon Ruding c/o courtney.newson@clinks.org addressing why you would like to be Clinks' Chair, what skills and expertise you bring, and what you would like to achieve in the role.



We would like to be able to offer you the opportunity to present yourself in a way that is most comfortable and accessible for you. Therefore we will happily accept alternative methods of communication to the above, or another format, that addresses the person specification and highlights your valuable expertise.

We will be looking at applications on a rolling basis, so submit your interest as soon as possible to avoid disappointment.

Selection conversations will be held with a) a panel of trustees and members and b) the CEO and a group of staff. If selected, you would be an observer of the board until election at the 2024 AGM likely to be in December.



How Clinks will support you



If you are thinking about becoming Clinks' Chair, rest assured there is plenty of support that will be available to you to help you transition into the role and continue to thrive throughout your term. Clinks have recently recruited a Corporate and Governance Support Officer whose role is support the Board of Trustees with all things governance. They will support the Chair with preparation for board meetings, and sub-committee meetings. In addition, they will provide any necessary documentation for the Chair to fulfil their duties as effectively as possible. Clinks value the dedication of our board and hope to make the opportunity as fulfilling as can be, therefore we have dedicated staff to aid the board every step of the way. We want you to get as much from the experience as you'd like, meanwhile offering us your expertise and knowledge.

Clinks will pay for the Chair to become a member of the Association of Chairs.

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