



Supporting the voluntary sector  
working in the criminal justice system

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Charity sector welcomes swift decisions to alleviate prisons crisis and calls for immediate resettlement support for people leaving prison**

Clinks welcomes the government's announcement today of action to relieve the pressure on the prison population both immediately, as well as in the longer term, and calls for clarity on the arrangements needed to support effective resettlement.

Clinks Chief Executive, Anne Fox said: "In these increasingly challenging times, difficult decisions will have to be taken. However, the success of these decisions rests on the government working together with the voluntary sector, to help get people in contact with the criminal justice system the support they need. There will be a significant number of people released as a result of these measures and it is therefore vital that services run by the state and by voluntary organisations have enough resource to give people the support they need."

To ensure the success of these plans, Clinks believes it is essential they are combined with effective support for people leaving prison, both prior to their release and in the community.

The voluntary sector provides a range of support to people at all stages of the criminal justice system, including to people leaving prison and resettling into the community. Clinks works extensively with organisations across the sector to develop and promote practical solutions that, if implemented, would improve the resettlement support available for people leaving prison.

One of the key barriers to people's resettlement is accommodation. The government notes research that shows people leaving prison without settled accommodation are almost 50% more likely to reoffend than those who have stable accommodation on release. However, data shows that over 6,000 people released from prison in 2022-23 were sleeping rough at their release, and inspections of prisons by HM Inspectorate of Prisons indicate that there are issues in release planning for people in prison.

Anne Fox added: "It is essential that preparation for release begins on the first day someone enters prison, so there is as much time as possible to allow for work to be done to address people's needs, such as around accommodation, substance use, physical and mental health, and employment support. Practically, this could include the establishment of Pre-release Boards in all resettlement prisons, bringing together all stakeholders, including both statutory and voluntary sector partners, to help prepare people for release."

Anne Fox continued: “The Probation Service must also be fully resourced to support and supervise people on their release from prison. Probation staff must have the time, resources, and knowledge available to build effective relationships with people under their supervision and direct them to services that can support them to transform their lives. Being resourced to work more effectively with the voluntary sector can provide some of that much needed capacity.”

--ENDS--

## Notes to Editors

Clinks’ *State of the Sector* research into the landscape of the voluntary sector working in criminal justice saw 81% of organisations who responded to our survey report working with people in prison preparing for release, and the same proportion report working with people in the community having served a custodial sentence. The full response to this question is available here:

<https://clinks.org/SOTS2023-who-we-heard-from>

This figure about reoffending and stable accommodation was often quoted by the previous government, such as in this written answer to a Parliamentary question: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-03-09/HL6302>

The government publishes accommodation outcomes for people leaving prison in its Community Performance Annual figures. The most recent data is for the year to March 2023. The figures for accommodation at release for April 2022 to March 2023 can be found in Table 2 of the ‘Accommodation at Release’ tables: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/community-performance-annual-update-to-march-2023>

The most recent annual report from HM Inspectorate of Prisons, covering 2022-23, saw that of the 36 men’s prisons that were inspected that year, less than half were rated as ‘good’ or ‘reasonably good’ for rehabilitation and release planning, with 17 rated ‘not sufficiently good’ and four rated ‘poor’. Moreover, the Inspectorate noted that of the men’s prisons inspected in 2022-23, 64% of its previous main/key recommendations around rehabilitation and release planning had not been achieved. The annual report can be accessed here:

[https://hmiprisons.justiceinspectores.gov.uk/hmipris\\_reports/annual-report-2022-23/](https://hmiprisons.justiceinspectores.gov.uk/hmipris_reports/annual-report-2022-23/)

The recommendation for the establishment of Pre-Release Boards in all resettlement prisons is set out in greater detail in this paper that collates expertise from across the voluntary sector:

<https://www.clinks.org/publication/rr3-special-interest-group-accommodation-2023-24-report-1>

## About Clinks

Clinks is the national infrastructure charity dedicated to supporting voluntary organisations working with people in the criminal justice system and their families. We support, promote, and advocate for our members and the wider voluntary sector across England and Wales. Our vision is of a vibrant, independent and resilient voluntary sector that enables people to transform their lives.

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