

Clinks submission to the Labour Party Justice Policy Working Group

Introduction

Clinks provides infrastructure support to the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) working with offenders across England and Wales. Our mission is to support, represent and campaign for the Sector, so that VCS organisations, and all those with whom they work, are engaged and informed to transform offenders' lives and reduce reoffending. We are a membership organisation with over 380 members, including the Sector's largest providers as well as its smallest, and our wider national network reaches 3,500 VCS contacts. Overall, through our weekly e-bulletin *Light Lunch*, we are in contact with over 7,040 individuals and agencies with an interest in the Criminal Justice System (CJS) and the role of the VCS in the resettlement and rehabilitation of offenders.

This submission draws heavily upon Clinks' consultations with the Sector following the publication of the coalition government Green Paper *Breaking the Cycle*. During the consultation period we convened seven events across England and Wales in order to gather the views of our members and the wider VCS network, as well as inviting email responses to policy briefings on the paper. In total, over 400 organisations participated in these initiatives.

Clinks chairs the Ministry of Justice Reducing Reoffending Third Sector Advisory Group (RR3)¹. The RR3 provides advice to Ministers and officials on reducing re-offending from a diverse VCS perspective and presents views and concerns about future priorities, issues and policies which might affect the Sector. This response has been further informed by the contributions of this group, particularly its recent task and finish group paper, *Competition, commissioning and the VCS*.²

Q1. Where was the previous government most effective in its criminal justice policy?

The previous government made some positive progress in the localisation of justice commissioning. The inclusion of Probation Trusts on Community Safety Partnerships and the creation of Local Delivery Units were very helpful in facilitating the formation of more relevant partnerships between local Criminal Justice commissioners and VCS providers.

The funding that went into the women's diversion programme was a positive and enlightened response to the needs of that particular group of service users, while the introduction of community support services brought support to some very socially disadvantaged women. The Corston Review recognised the distinct needs of vulnerable women in the CJS, though this was only conducted after the women's prison population had been allowed to rise for a number of years, seemingly unchecked.

¹ See <http://www.clinks.org/policy-campaigning/rr3>

² RR3, *Competition, commissioning and the VCS* (2011), <http://www.clinks.org/assets/files/PDFs/RRSAG/RR3%20Competition,%20Commissioning%20and%20the%20VCS.pdf>

The last Labour government also oversaw improved coordination between a number of youth justice services and, towards the end, a reduction in the number of children and young people in custody.

Q2. Where was the previous government less effective in its criminal justice policy?

We feel that the previous government's message 'tough on crime, tough on the causes of crime' placed too much emphasis on the punishment of offenders over rehabilitation, without taking full account of the causes of social harm underlying criminal behaviour. There was no strong commitment to implement alternatives to short-term sentences (e.g. community sentences) and Indeterminate Public Protection Orders (IPPs) were poorly conceived. Ultimately, government policy failed effectively to tackle the rising prison population, leading to overcrowding in the prison estate and a revolving door of offenders whom the prison system failed to rehabilitate effectively. This was especially true of prisoners serving sentences of less than 12 months, whose patterns of offending were seemingly allowed to continue unchecked.

While the 2001 Labour manifesto included a commitment to improve provision for young people aged 18-21 in the criminal justice system, this was never implemented.

Q3. What are the best measures of efficiency in the criminal justice system?

Clinks has serious concerns regarding the use of 'binary' measurements of reoffending (currently the percentage reconviction rate within two years) as the best possible indicator of efficiency in the CJS. While quantitative figures are the most straightforward measurement of success in the rehabilitation of offenders, they fail to take into account the fact that desistance from crime is a complex and often lengthy process.

The use of binary measurements in models of funding based on Payment by Results (PbR) can lead to a situation where payments are withheld from VCS organisations whose work has helped to shorten the length of a criminal career or reduce the severity of further offences committed. Clinks would support the development of a more sophisticated measurement of reoffending which takes into account reductions in the frequency and/or severity of offences committed and recognises that reoffending rates are not necessarily a direct reflection of the quality of service provision or of progress in desistance. Distance travelled, as well as absolute reductions in reoffending, should be capable of financial reward under PbR. Participants at our consultation events gave examples such as the Richter Scale and the Outcome Star, as tools that display the richness lost when a binary measure alone is used to monitor results. For example, evidence of improved confidence and motivation indicates greater likelihood that a service user will retain employment gained. This would also help mitigate the incentive to 'cherry pick' by ensuring that an organisation will be paid for a holistic approach to each individual's needs.

Q4. What are the best ways of ensuring that those most vulnerable (e.g. young people, mentally ill, drug and alcohol addictions) are kept out of the criminal justice system?

Offenders with mental health needs, histories of substance abuse and related housing and employment problems require a joined up, holistic approach, tailored to their individual needs and circumstances. Where possible, early intervention and diversion from the criminal justice system into more appropriate services should be encouraged.

The recent *Review of the Northern Ireland Prison Service* has highlighted the need for permeability of provision between the prison estate and the community where vulnerable

offenders are concerned.³ VCS organisations are often best placed to provide this flexible ‘through the gate’ support, which can greatly enhance the chances of successful rehabilitation for those with addiction or mental health problems.

It is important to support innovative schemes to keep young people in education both before they become involved in offending and as a way of steering them away from further offending following arrest and conviction. High quality mentoring and volunteering schemes for young people have a major role to play in reducing youth crime. These can also support the work of the proposed ‘compliance panels’ as a way of increasing the effectiveness of Youth Rehabilitation orders for young offenders.

Targeted family intervention is an effective means of preventing youth offending and mitigating the negative effect which sentencing can have on young people. This can include family mediation services and support for young families. There are a range of VCS organisations that deliver good quality and innovative interventions in this area.

There are, however, serious concerns among VCS organisations working in the area of youth justice regarding the impact of austerity funding on their work. Participants in our consultation events stressed that the impact of public sector cuts and ongoing restructuring in the Youth Justice Board has led to situation where local statutory sector bodies are ‘protecting their own’ rather than safeguarding VCS interventions. Local commissioners must be made fully aware of the expertise of VCS organisations in providing an approach that recognises and responds to the multiple needs of young people in the criminal justice system.

Q7. What role can productively be played by the state, the voluntary sector and the private sector in the criminal justice system?

VCS organisations are often subcontracted exclusively as a delivery partner, dependent on time-limited and fragile funding. The recent interim evaluation of the Heron Unit at Feltham YOI has demonstrated that, in order to be fully effective in reducing reoffending, VCS partners should be involved from the earliest possible stages of planning and commissioning.⁴ Clinks supports the recommendations made in the recent task and finish group paper by the Reducing Reoffending Third Sector Advisory Group (RR3), *Competition, commissioning and the VCS*:

‘VCS partners at all levels (national; sub-national; local) have important knowledge and insights to contribute to the strategic commissioning process in terms of identifying needs and gaps in provision, and helping to plan the shape of future offender services. These activities precede the specification and procurement stages of the commissioning cycle and it should therefore be possible to involve the Sector without giving any competitive advantage.

The TFG therefore considers that mechanisms should be put in place at every level to involve the VCS as a key strategic commissioning partner. At the national / sub-

³ *Owers Review of the Northern Ireland Prison Service* (2011), <http://www.dojni.gov.uk/index/publications/publication-categories/pubs-northern-ireland-prison-service/owers-review-of-the-northern-ireland-prison-service.pdf>

⁴ *Evaluation of the London Youth Reducing Reoffending Programme (Daedalus)* (2011), http://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Daedalus%20-%20Interim%20Evaluation%20Report_0.pdf

*national levels, this could be achieved by involving RR3 members in MoJ/NOMS strategic commissioning processes.*⁵

Clinks recently worked alongside the Home Office to co-ordinate four local 'development and demonstration' sites exploring the role of the VCS as equal partners in the delivery of Integrated Offender Management (IOM).⁶ These pilots have demonstrated that VCS engagement and involvement in key strategic CJS partnerships can be readily achieved through the brokerage offered by VCS Local Infrastructure Organisations (LIOs), or by the formation of strong, co-ordinated local VCS/CJS Forums electing VCS representatives to sit on relevant Partnerships and Boards. This project has demonstrated that relatively small amounts of funding directed to the VCS can generate innovative new services and allow the VCS to take on a leadership role in both strategic and operational delivery of IOM.

There are, however, concerns that new PbR funding mechanisms will simply incentivise large, national prime contractors to 'parachute' into local areas where they have no history and no established relationships, undermining small local providers and resulting in the loss of a diverse local market able to meet the needs of individual offenders. Local commissioners will therefore have to be skilled in ensuring that new arrangements do not crowd out smaller local community-based organisations. Clinks's position on PbR will be outlined in greater detail below.

Q11. What lessons can be learnt from local schemes and pilots that can be rolled out and applied nationally?

In order to support the development of new local commissioning arrangements, VCS participants in our consultations particularly highlighted the need for neutral VCS organisations to take on a 'brokering role' in bringing together local VCS and statutory partners. Such organisations can facilitate access to the plethora of small local providers that can support offenders whilst also enabling strategic engagement between communities and VCS representatives. Three models viewed as having potential are:

- The Local Infrastructure Organisation (LIO)-led model being developed in Gloucestershire, Croydon, Dorset and elsewhere;
- The development of local VCS consortium arrangements (e.g. Devon Reform, a new forum of VCS organisations working across Devon, Plymouth and Torbay, which is seeking to enable consortium bidding by small and medium VCS organisations);
- The VCS provider-led model (e.g. West Mercia Probation Trust's selection of YSS as its 'preferred provider').

We would also draw attention to the Home Office pilots outlined above and to the diagrams in the appendix of the Clinks paper *Localising Justice*.⁷ However, the potential of all of these approaches to transform local markets and enable innovative VCS involvement in localising justice and reducing reoffending will depend crucially on how and where funding flows at the local level.

Q13. Do current sentencing guidelines achieve the right balance between punishment and reform of offenders?

⁵ *Competition, commissioning and the VCS*

⁶ See Clinks' web page on the Home Office VCS/Integrated Offender Management Project, <http://www.clinks.org/services/regional-work/iom>

⁷ Clinks, *Localising Justice* (2010), <http://www.clinks.org/assets/files/PDFs/Localising%20justice.pdf>

Clinks would support the implementation of measures to rationalise the use of imprisonment and deal more effectively with offenders who have a wide range of needs that are best met outside the CJS. The VCS has a significant contribution to make in supporting these approaches in terms of providing services that address the often complicated circumstances offenders experience in their daily lives.

Legislation governing Indeterminate Public Protection (IPP) sentences should be revised. The current situation where over 2,000 IPP prisoners have exceeded their 'tariff' date because of a lack of resources to enable them to demonstrate their reduced risk to the public has had a profound effect on the prison system. We would welcome measures to facilitate clearing this 'backlog' of prisoners.

Q17. What best practice is there in this country and abroad in effective probation?

Clinks would support continued investment in probation work which aims to facilitate the desistance process for service users. Though the Sector broadly supports an increase in locally commissioned offender services, Clinks would share the concerns of the RR3 about Probation Trusts continuing to act as both commissioner and provider in a more contested market.⁸ There are fears that, if the commissioner/provider split is not clearly made, the commissioning of innovation will be driven out by vested interests continuing to support more established 'in-house' approaches, particularly when decisions about switching scarce resources to new initiatives will be seen as high risk.

As part of the Probation Review, if Probation Trusts retain a key role in commissioning, this split should be reflected in a new structure. We would propose that one arm should be responsible for commissioning and procurement, while the other remains responsible for court reports, high risk offenders, and recall.

Q18. How do we deliver lower re-offending rates in an age of reduced public finance?

A significant reduction in the use of custody would enable the diversion of money previously spent on incarceration into community projects which aim to tackle the causes of crime and strengthen community alternatives to custodial sentences. For this reason, Clinks is looking with interest at justice reinvestment pilots currently taking place in London and Greater Manchester.⁹

The VCS broadly supports the extension of restorative justice (RJ) approaches at all stages of the criminal justice process. This is relatively inexpensive, has high recorded levels of victim satisfaction and, as recent pilots conducted by the Ministry of Justice have demonstrated, is highly effective in reducing reoffending.¹⁰

Our recent economic downturn survey indicates that VCS organisations are already working hard to implement more cost-effective approaches.¹¹ Clinks will support the VCS in forming consortia at the local level to bid for contracts, and believes this to be a pragmatic and sensible response to reduced public finances. However, it is critical that the Sector is given up-to-date information on proposed changes to local commissioning arrangements and bidding opportunities. Forming partnerships can be a lengthy and complex process given

⁸ RR3, *Competition, commissioning and the VCS*

⁹ See the Ministry of Justice's overview of PbR pilots, <http://www.justice.gov.uk/guidance/prison-probation-and-rehabilitation/payment-by-results/programme-overview.htm>

¹⁰ http://www.restorativejustice.org.uk/resource/ministry_of_justice_evaluation_of_restorative_justice/

¹¹ <http://www.clinks.org/publications/reports/eco-downturn>

e.g. financial, staffing and cultural differences between different VCS organisations. The Sector must be given adequate time to prepare its response to opportunities to tender. Without this, valuable and innovative services provided by smaller organisations will not survive the double impact of funding cuts and the implementation of new models of commissioning.

Q19. What works best in ensuring that those in custody are fully equipped with the skills and confidence needed for effective rehabilitation?

Clinks believes the emphasis that this question places on interventions in custody alone may be missing an opportunity to explore viable alternatives. In order to provide the support required for successful rehabilitation and desistance, there needs to be permeability of provision between the secure estate and the community, working around the service user's own individual needs and social resources. This is particularly critical for the most vulnerable groups of offenders, or those with particularly complex, multiple needs, such as women and young people.

On release, many ex-offenders face significant difficulties in obtaining accommodation and employment, which can greatly heighten the risk of reoffending. Planning for resettlement should be based on a 'communities in' rather than a 'prisons out' approach, which includes contact with appropriate services in the community during the prison sentence. VCS organisations are often best placed to provide this flexible, person-centred service, both inside and outside the prison walls. This would, however, require a significant reconfiguration of the secure estate to enable closer links with the communities into which service users will be released.

Integrated Offender Management has demonstrated the benefits of providing follow-up support to service users who have been released after serving sentences of less than 12 months. Given that rates of reoffending are currently highest among this particular group, it would appear that the current emphasis solely on custodial provision for those on shorter sentences should be revisited as a point of urgency.

There remain, nonetheless, numerous interventions in custody which should be maintained or reformed to increase the chances of successful rehabilitation. The ability to work is recognised as an important element in the desistance process and the VCS broadly welcomes recent proposals to transform prisons to deliver meaningful and purposeful experiences for offenders. The VCS is well positioned to provide or broker meaningful work placements that are tailored to the individual offender and that contribute to improving community facilities outside the prison.

Participants at our consultation events stressed that a 'real wage' is important to make working roles align more closely with life on the outside. A proper wage, advice on money management and the chance to provide resources for families of offenders would assist in building motivation to work.

Delegates did express concern, however, at the prospect of the entire regime becoming focused on vocational skill development. There are many other important interventions provided by the VCS within prisons that help offenders address their offending behaviour and that need to be preserved. For example, the place of education in prison needs to be maintained, as many prisoners require support to attain even basic levels of skill in numeracy and literacy. Our consultations also yielded many examples of arts based interventions and activities, for which there is considerable evidence of rehabilitative impact, especially in terms of motivating offenders to rethink how they have lived their lives.

Crucially, interventions both in custody and in the community must take account of the distinct needs of different groups of offenders:

Women

Delegates at our events urged the need for a specific commitment to invest in women-only services, which provide a safe and gender-specific environment and often have out of hours outreach as part of their specialist service. Women in Prison estimate that 81% of the women they work with have experienced domestic violence or sexual abuse. Services designed by and for women afford a level of insight and empathy that is often missing from generic programmes, and provide a safe space to address their distinct needs.

In particular, 'one-stop-shops' based in the community, and usually delivered by VCS organisations, have demonstrated their effectiveness and provided credible alternatives to imprisonment, especially short custodial sentences. A family-centred approach to rehabilitation is essential for women offenders, many of whom have children or other dependents, and should thread through all aspects of their sentence. Again, this necessitates a 'communities-in' approach, and is often best provided by VCS organisations with expertise in supporting families in the criminal justice system.

BAME

Clinks has worked with a number of organisations and individuals in the Race for Justice campaign and our report, *Less Equal than Others*¹² identifies a number of key actions and policy recommendations, including the importance of supporting BAME-led VCS organisations working directly or indirectly in the CJS.

There is evidence that local VCS organisations, including faith groups, are effective in engaging with BAME communities that have been hard to access by mainly white agencies. In particular, BAME prisoner and family support groups should be involved in supporting prisoners in resettlement as well as offenders on community sentences. A recently published Clinks report on settlement for BAME offenders, *Double Trouble*, identified the 'bridging role' of BAME-led VCS organisations in helping offenders who may be distrustful of statutory services.¹³

Young people

See Q4 above.

Q20. How best can we address the challenges of mental health, drug and alcohol dependency in our prisons and outside our prisons?

The government Green Paper *Breaking the Cycle's* approach to tackling drug-using offenders is generally welcomed, especially the proposed arrangements for a 3-tiered system based in the community with graduated levels of intensity of treatment. Although abstinence-based routes to recovery can be effective they should not be the only forms of treatment recognised within a PbR model of delivery. We would support the nuanced analysis and recommendations outlined in the recent published report by the United Kingdom Drug

¹² Clinks, *Less equal than others* (2008), <http://www.clinks.org/assets/files/PDFs/Race%20for%20Justice%20-%20Less%20Equal%20Then%20Others%202008.pdf>

¹³ Clinks and Prison Reform Trust, *Double Trouble* (2010), <http://www.clinks.org/assets/files/PDFs/%27Double%20Trouble%27.pdf>

Policy Commission.¹⁴ One of its key recommendations relates to the importance of reductions in HIV infection that have been achieved through a harm reduction (maintenance) strategy. A serious gap in *Breaking the Cycle* is the absence of any stated recognition of the prevalence of dual diagnosis in the offender population and the importance of ensuring that assessment and treatment services are joined up with more holistic approaches to deal with offenders' underlying needs.

While getting offenders with mental health and substance abuse problems into appropriate treatment is critical to successful rehabilitation, it is important that issues related to accommodation, debt, education etc are also addressed. VCS organisations are well positioned to deliver 'wrap-around' support services in these areas to assist in rehabilitation.

Q21. What challenges are there in payment by results models delivering a more cost-effective way of reducing reoffending?

We are broadly supportive of the principles informing Payment by Result (PbR) but there remains a great deal of concern in the Sector about the reality of PbR for small and medium-sized VCS organisations.

The success of a payment by results model will depend upon the use of an outcomes measure which is tailored to the project, provider and service users. This is discussed above in response to Q3 above. It is worth restating, however, that Clinks would advocate a focus on quality of provision and 'distance travelled' by service users rather than simplistic binary outcomes. Delegates at our consultation events also stressed the need for sentencers to be receptive to advocacy on the part of a provider where a lapse has occurred and a further sentence committed.

The central problems for small and medium-sized VCS organisation is the apparent lack of a level playing field when bidding for PbR contracts. Clinks shares the concern of the RR3 that only very large (private) prime contractors will be in any position to invest the necessary capital and accept the risk of contracts based on delayed payment, leaving VCS providers in a position where they can only hope to be subcontracted at a later stage.¹⁵ In the bidding process for the Work Programme, some sub-contractors have reported that they were used as 'bid candy', having been characterised in bids by potential primes as 'delivery partners' after only very limited contact and superficial relationships, which subsequently did not convert into a paid role. Delegates at our events felt that a clear and detailed code of conduct resembling the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Merlin Standards is required to regulate prime and subcontractor relationships within the CJS.

The design of the payment mechanism will be pivotal to achieving a truly mixed model of providers under PbR. Responses to our consultations emphasized that it is absolutely critical to VCS involvement that there is both an upfront service fee and payment for results. Social Impact Bonds (SIBs) are welcomed as a PbR model which protects the VCS from undue financial risk. It is unlikely, however, that this model will be rolled out extensively due to the large amount of capital required up front and the need to wait for the results of the Peterborough Pilot before investor confidence can be assured. We would support the RR3 recommendation that the service fee (delivery costs) in PbR contracts should be available up-front, with 10 – 30% of the contract at risk. Pricing should also reflect the existence of

¹⁴ UK Drug Policy Commission, *By their fruits... applying payment by results to drugs recovery* (2010), http://www.ukdpc.org.uk/resources/UKDPC_PbR.pdf

¹⁵ RR3, *Competition, commissioning and the VCS*

offenders within the cohort who will require more expensive provision, to mitigate 'cherry picking', whereby harder-to-reach service users are ignored. Some transitional funding, perhaps in the form of seed-corn grants, would also give the Sector an opportunity to adapt during the transitional period. A blended approach to PbR, with some grant and loan funding secured, would support the VCS to test new working models.

Further debate is required on the best ways to tailor PbR to meet the needs of specific groups of offenders (e.g. Women, BAME) particularly those with complex, multiple needs who may require co-ordinated support across many local agencies. Many respondents to our consultations emphasised that the critical question is whether a holistic and flexible approach to individuals can be maintained under PbR.

Many VCS providers have broader ethical concerns relating to PbR contracts and partnership working with different sectors. Feedback from our consultations confirmed that, for some VCS organisations, any involvement in relation to compliance or punishment of offenders is problematic. The effectiveness of many VCS services relies upon voluntary uptake, a sense of trust from the offender and freedom to disclose. The PBR system should be designed in such a way that VCS providers are able to cover their delivery costs and payment should be made for voluntary as well as compulsory uptake.

Q32. How do we avoid the tensions between a central role for victims and ensuring a fair and open justice for offenders?

Victims should feel involved and supported throughout the justice process. Wider implementation of Restorative Justice (RJ) throughout the CJS would facilitate this. The community ethos behind RJ makes the VCS particularly well suited as a delivery partner.

The definition of RJ offered in *Breaking the Cycle* is, however, very victim-centred and we would argue that such a narrow definition diminishes the potential impact of RJ, which traditionally includes the victim, the offender and the community. This more holistic view of RJ is reflective of an approach that considers the wider social causes behind offending behaviour and understands that many offenders have been victims themselves.

Clinks supports the idea of a National Register of Restorative Practitioners to ensure quality of delivery. Accreditation seems an appropriate way of ensuring that practitioners, whether paid or voluntary, are properly qualified for the work and, in turn, receive recognition.

Q34. What are the better aspects of the current government's proposals on punishment and reform?

Clinks welcome the emphasis placed in *Breaking the Cycle* on the need to bring about a 'Rehabilitation Revolution' rather than endorsing more punitive measures. We believe that this is the momentous change that is needed to reform the criminal justice system and create safer communities. The commitment to reduce demand on prison spaces and to restrict the use of remand in custody is a positive and pragmatic development.

The devolution of commissioning to the local level is a positive step to the extent that it theoretically gives the VCS freedom to be flexible and innovative in service delivery. There are, however, major concerns surrounding market stewardship and the limited time and resources available to VCS organisations to form effective partnerships and submit bids to provide services. Furthermore, VCS organisations are trying to weather the impact of severe funding cuts while waiting for new models of local commissioning to be implemented.

Early diversion from the criminal justice system for service users for mental health problems is a sensible measure and should be extended to offenders with substance misuse problems. The continuing commitment to women's community centres and the commitment to expand restorative justice are also welcomed.

Q35. Which aspects of the current government's proposals are of concern to you?

Our concerns surrounding new models of local commissioning and payment by results have been outlined in the responses to questions 18 and 21 above.

There remains considerable uncertainty surrounding the role of Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) or their remit in terms of holding local crime reduction budgets. Similarly, there has been little discussion of the place of Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) in co-ordinating or commissioning services. VCS participants at our consultation events voiced a need for these gaps in Government Strategy to be filled as quickly as possible, to enable them to plan and prepare for change.

Although extending the use of curfews as an alternative to short custodial sentences or as a means of supporting the delivery of community sentences is broadly welcomed, the proposal to lengthen the curfew maximum to 16 hours presents challenges in at least two respects. Firstly, it could seriously undermine efforts by supervised offenders to obtain and keep employment. Secondly, it poses particular problems for women offenders who are often primary carers for children and extended family, who can face isolation in the home and/or may be at risk of violence in the home.

The lack of concrete proposals for provision for specific groups of offenders – notably women and BAME groups – is a matter of considerable concern. In particular, there is little attention paid in *Breaking the Cycle* to the issues affecting young female offenders. The factors contributing to their offending are different to young male offenders and their emotional and psychological needs are unique. It is crucial to ensure that there are gender specific services for young female offenders, and these should include sexual health provision for victims of sexual assault and exploitation.

Breaking the Cycle also fails to identify the positive impact which service user involvement can play in the criminal justice system. Participants in our consultation events were very vocal about the importance of service user engagement as a mechanism for understanding and improving CJS services. Clinks has recently completed a piece of work reviewing levels of service user engagement in prisons and probation in England and Wales¹⁶, and has published a code of practice which identifies the key principles and processes that should inform engagement of offenders and ex-offenders in the delivery of CJS services.¹⁷

¹⁶ Clinks, *Service User Involvement: Main Report & Findings* (2011), <http://www.clinks.org/assets/files/Service%20User%20Findings%20Sept%202011.pdf>

¹⁷ Clinks and Revolving Doors Agency, *Service User Involvement: A Volunteering and Mentoring Guide*, <http://www.clinks.org/assets/files/PDFs/VOLUNTEERING%20GUIDE%20-%20Service%20User%20Involvement.pdf>