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Cleveland Safer Communities
VCS Network

Spotlight on Clinks North East Regional Criminal Justice Forum

Clinks hold a North East criminal justice policy forum approximately once every quarter at locations across the region.

These forums are for any VCO working within a context of criminal justice, either formally or informally, to network and hear about the national developments in criminal justice, and offer you the opportunity to contribute to the work Clinks do at a policy level, ensuring representation of the interests of the VCS.



As coordinator of the Cleveland Safer Communities VCS Network, I also meet

regularly with Clinks' North East development officer, Natalie Maidment, to ensure the issues for VCOs at a more localised level across Cleveland are understood. These events are extremely useful for getting the 'bigger picture' especially in this time of ongoing change, and for providing a forum for your voice, especially around the ongoing challenges being experienced in the sector.

The next event for the North East is **7 March, 11am-3pm in Sunderland.**

[Book your place here](#) where updates from Clinks' policy team will include:

- The Ministry of Justice's review of probation services
- Clinks' State of the sector report 2018
- The Farmer Review into supporting family ties for women in contact with the criminal justice system
- The Rough Sleepers Strategy proposals around improving accommodation on release from prison
- The NHS' recently published long term plan and commitments relating to the criminal justice system.

There will also be an opportunity to showcase your work from the voluntary sector. If you would like to showcase a project at the event, please contact Natalie Maidment or events@clinks.org





... or find a funder



National News

Developing a voluntary sector model for engaging people with convictions

The voluntary and community sector (VCS) should develop a distinctive model for effectively engaging people with convictions. This is the message from new research which calls the current Probation review “a golden opportunity for Government and the sector to develop and test the sector’s distinctive contribution to supporting offenders.”

Research on young adults with convictions found these service users highly valued the *way in which* the VCS delivered their services, as much as the services themselves. The key elements were reciprocity, consistency of services and emotional pleasure (use of informal setting, staff approach and feelings of being cared for).

[Read the research](#) by Wong, K. Kinsella, R. Meadows, L. (2018) Developing a voluntary sector model for engaging offenders. The Howard Journal of Crime and Justice.

The NHS long term plan

The NHS has published its long term plan, which sets out their priorities for the next 10 years, including the long-term approach to health and justice. Key criminal justice sector asks have made it into the final report with the prioritisation of issues such as the continuity of care, meeting mental health needs and partnership working.

The plan also makes a number of commitments, including the expansion of Community Sentence Treatment Requirements and a full roll-out of the health and justice digital patient record information system across all adult prisons. Other commitments of note include the provision for everyone entering the prison to receive both an initial health screening on entry and a follow-up

appointment within seven days.

Independent Review of the Mental Health Act published

Make Every Adult Matter (MEAM), a coalition of Clinks, Homeless Link and Mind, have responded to the final report of the Independent Review of the Mental Health Act. The Review, chaired by Professor Sir Simon Wesseley, was set up to look at how the legislation in the Mental Health Act 1983 is used and how practice can improve.

MEAM welcome the review's recognition of the need for more accessible and responsive mental health crisis services and community-based mental health services. It particularly welcomed the recognition that current opportunities for early intervention are being missed, leading to people's first contact with services through the police, and that police cells should not be used as a place of safety and that health-based places of safety should be commissioned instead.

The Women's Mental Health Taskforce final report

The Women's Mental Health Taskforce has released its final report which outlines the key principles that should ensure women access gender and trauma-informed care across services. It encourages commissioners, providers and practitioners to promote best practice in their organisations while taking into account women's individual, gender-specific needs.

The report draws on women's lived experience of mental ill-health heard through a number of focus groups. The Women's Mental Health Taskforce was set up in 2017 to tackle evidence of deteriorating mental health among women and poor outcomes experienced by those using support services.

In-cell phones for more prisons

David Gauke MP, Justice Secretary, announced that in-cell phones, currently installed in 20 prisons in England and Wales, will be rolled out to 50 prisons by March 2020. This represents some progress on a government commitment made in 2018 to extend the provision of in-cell phones across the prison estate.

The government have said in-cell phones are intended principally to help people in prison maintain contact with their families; citing the 2017 Lord Famer review which found close ties between prisoners and key family members can significantly reduce the risk of reoffending.

Impact of arts in prisons highlighted by politicians

[In a recent evidence session](#) held by the Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee, Michael Ellis MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Arts, Heritage and Tourism, praised the work of the National Criminal Justice Arts Alliance (NCJAA) in promoting the impact of arts in prisons across government.

The following week, in a House of Lords debate on Sport, Recreation and the Arts, Baroness Bull praised the powerful impact that art can have on the lives of people in prison and [referred to NCJAA's report, *Re-imagining Futures*](#).

How protected are people with protected characteristics in prison?

In December, two government reports were published that focused on the experience of people with protected characteristics in the criminal justice system- the *Offender Equalities Annual Report*, published by Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service, and *Women and the criminal justice system 2017*, published by the Ministry of Justice.

Lauren Nickolls, Policy Officer at Clinks, has [written a blog on what these reports indicate](#) on the experiences of young people, women and people from black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities. She highlights how young people between the age 18-20 are the most likely to self-harm in prison, that BAME people continue to be overrepresented in the prison population and that women continue to receive very short sentences for often minor, non-violent offences.

[Broken Trust: The rising numbers of women recalled to prison](#)

The Prison Reform Trust has published a report which attributes the sharp increase in women being recalled to prison as an outcome of both the 2014 Transforming Rehabilitation probation reforms and the Offender Rehabilitation Act 2014.

The report makes recommendations and was informed by a study of 24 women who had been recalled to prison, who described facing complex issues on release from custody, such as accessing appropriate accommodation, drug misuse and domestic violence, whilst receiving limited support from their responsible officer.

Ministry considering scrapping sentences of less than 6 months

The Ministry of Justice is proposing a [new policy](#) to make jail sentences a minimum of 6 months and increase the use of community sentencing to deal with offenders. It could reduce the prison population by over 3,000.

Local News

Nepacs Volunteer Open Days

Nepacs is a North East charity which provides support to families and friends of prisoners at local prisons. They are holding a series of volunteer open days for roles to help people and families prior to release and families of defendants whilst at court.

The dates are 28 January at HMP Holme House in Stockton and 5 February in Middlesbrough. To book onto the days or for more information contact Emma Price, volunteer coordinator on eprice@nepacs.co.uk or call 0191 375 7278.

[Download details](#)

Restoring Something Lost

In their evaluation of a pilot dog therapy scheme, the Centre for Mental Health found considerable, measurable, and statistically significant benefits to people in prison who had access to therapy dogs. The pilot, run by Rethink Mental Illness across three prisons in the North East, also recorded participants self-reporting an improvement in their wellbeing and a statistically significant reduction in intentional self-harm.

The Centre for Mental Health has recommended that Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service and prison governors should make therapy dog intervention

more widely available across prisons and that providers of therapy dog intervention should consider group-based activity.

Events

Regional criminal justice forum

7 March, Sunderland | free for members, £50 for non-members

These events will give organisations the opportunity to hear the latest national developments in criminal justice, and offer you the chance to use your experiences to inform Clinks' national policy work. The forums allow you to step back from your crucial day-to-day front-line work to see the bigger picture and context in which you are working.

These events will include updates from Clinks' policy team on:

- The Ministry of Justice's review of probation services
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- The Farmer Review into supporting family ties for women in contact with the criminal justice system
- The Rough Sleepers Strategy proposals around improving accommodation on release from prison

- The NHS' recently published long term plan and commitments relating to the criminal justice system.

There will also be an opportunity to showcase work from the voluntary sector. If you would like to showcase a project at the event, please [contact your Area Development Officer](#) or events@clinks.org

As always, you will also be able to update Clinks on key challenges you are facing and network with other organisations in the region.

[Book your place](#)

Consultation events on future of probation services

[Clinks is running three events](#) in February, the nearest being York on 13 February, as part of the next stage of the Ministry of Justice's (MoJ) engagement with the voluntary sector on the future of probation services.

Jess Mullen, Head of Policy and Communications at Clinks, has provided [a summary of the MoJ's latest plans for the future structure and delivery of probation services in her blog](#).

Restorative Justice and Mediation training workshop

1 February, Stockton, TS18

This is, by necessity, a fast-paced workshop. The morning session is a no holds barred exploration of Restorative Justice and Practice in its various forms. You will learn about the theory and practice of Restorative Justice as it is practiced in 'the real world' dealing with real crimes.

The afternoon session is a roller coaster ride through the process and model of

Mediation. You will discover its underlying principles and discuss its application across a wide range of settings.

Places are £99 each. Contact Mike James at GoMediate to book on 07933 294 292 or mikejames@gomediate.co.uk

Funding

Interventions for people convicted of terrorism-related offences

The Home Office has issued a Prior Information Notice for the provision of targeted intervention services including mentoring support for individuals convicted of terrorism-related offences. Prospective suppliers are invited to express an interest in the provision of services and to register interest in attending an event for further information by emailing

HOSprocurement@homeoffice.gov.uk

Criminal justice and human rights

The AB Charitable Trust has grants available for charities that work with marginalised and excluded people in society, with a focus that includes criminal justice, and human rights, particularly access to justice. Grants range in size,

with most grants awarded being in the range £10,000 to £20,000. Applications are accepted on an ongoing basis.

[Find out more](#)



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