

Clinks

Supporting voluntary organisations that work with
offenders and their families

Clive Martin

CLiNKs

About Clinks

- Clinks is a national infrastructure organisation that supports the work that voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations undertake within the Criminal Justice System (CJS) of England and Wales.
- Our vision is to see an independent, vibrant and well resourced Voluntary and Community Sector, working in partnership to promote the rehabilitation of offenders.
- We have over 250 members, whom we represent to influence policy regarding voluntary sector involvement in the CJS.

The logo for Clinks, featuring the word "CLINKS" in a bold, white, sans-serif font. The letters are slightly stylized, with the 'L' and 'K' having unique shapes. The logo is set against a blue background.

About Clinks

- We undertake regional and national initiatives including involving Service Users in policy making, developing Community Chaplaincies, increasing VCS engagement in prisons, and influencing commissioning practices within the probation service.
- We provide training, advice, CJS news, bulletins and a national database of VCS organisations working with offenders. Members of Clinks enjoy additional exclusive benefits, including help with finding funding, consultations and discounted services.

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Reform through Partnership with the VCS.

- Why reform?
- Why partnership?
- The tools used to achieve partnerships.
- The results so far.
- The Dangers.
- Looking ahead.

Why reform?

- Re-offending rates.
- Changing evidence of what works.
- Demographics.
- Public service reform – UK and EC.
- Public finances.

Why partnership?

- Evidence about motivation in re-offending.
- Evidence about how interventions are implemented.
- Dynamic security.
- Reality of who provides community services.
- Community engagement and skill base.
- Public confidence in the CJS.
- Multiplicity of funding streams.

The Tools.

- High level buy in – Ministerial road shows.
- Establishment of Independent Advisory Group reporting to DG and Minister.
- Prison service instructions.
- Lead post in HQ.
- Named responsibility in prisons.
- Resources from VCS.
- Clearer aligning of aims – VCS being seen as part of a solution rather than part of a problem.

Some local mechanisms:

- VCS representation on establishment and other senior management boards and vice versa.
- Shared Training.
- Partnership sponsor for each organisation.
- Common development of business plans.
- VCS Engagement in performance improvement

The results!

- Undoubtedly positive but slow.
- Gap between political embrace and operational reality.
- Improved agreements about effectiveness measures.
- Different for prisons and probation.
- Commissioning practice sometimes contradicts stated intentions.
- Large vs small organisations.
- Different role for other stakeholders eg funders

The dangers.

- Managing expectations.
- Effectiveness measures create mission drift.
- Commissioning and outcomes still in an immature state.
- Grants vs contracts.
- Campaigning and innovation at risk.
- Unexpected outcomes.

The future?

- Challenges of commissioning in terms of finances, size of organisation and outcomes.
- Independence of the sector – challenge of state and private sectors.
- Risk management vs rehabilitation.
- Financial risks – engaging the VCS for the wrong reasons or a great chance to rethink.

Clinks

25 Micklegate

York

YO1 6JH

01904 673970

info@clinks.org

www.clinks.org

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