

Committee	Dated:
City Bridge Trust	6 th July 2018
Subject: Resettlement & Rehabilitation of Offenders – a review of your funding in this area	Public
Report of: Chief Grants Officer & Director of City Bridge Trust (CGO)	For Information
Report author: Rebecca Green, Grants Administrator	

Summary

This report informs you of the progress of your funding towards projects working with ex-offenders and provides an update on the criminal justice voluntary sector. It follows from a request at your meeting earlier this year to consider the effectiveness of your focus on supporting charities with suitable experience and track record. The paper also suggests a future focus for the 'Ideas Please' part of the Bridging Divides strategy.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- a) Note the report
- b) Continue with your approach to fund only those organisations which have a significant track record and expertise of work in this area
- c) Note that a future focus of the "Ideas Please" or Strategic Initiative mechanisms could be on related work with families; BAME communities; young adults, and/ or early action work.

Main Report

Background

1. To date, you have considered 71 applications through your Investing in Londoners Resettlement and Rehabilitation programme and funded 26 organisations to a total of £2,735,904. Your support also reached these beneficiaries through one of the outcomes within your Mental Health programme, where you funded five organisations to a total of £531,720 for projects working towards the outcome of more offenders and ex-offenders receiving help and support to improve their mental health.

2. Your focus under Investing in Londoners has been on work with ex-offenders leaving custody or serving community sentences, and this continues to be your approach under Bridging Divides. Funded work has generally included projects working pre-release ('through the gate') and with ex-offenders once released including: mentoring projects; routes into training; and support with addictions. During the assessment of applications, your officers focus on organisations that can demonstrate a good track record and relevant expertise.
3. In comparison to other Investing in Londoners programmes, the number of grants awarded is lower; the Resettlement and Rehabilitation strand forming 5% of your total grant giving under Investing in Londoners. However, the standard of the work delivered is high, and the services are reporting positive outcomes. The average grant size is also comparatively large which demonstrates a 'fewer but more specialist' approach to this area of work.

The prison and probation system

4. Prisons are under pressure with the highest rates of suicide since records began (119 suicides in prison in 2016), epidemic use of New Psychoactive Substances ('Spice'), and riots in prisons across the UK.¹ Reports of prisoners being locked up for 23 hours per day², overcrowding and a lack of staff mean that it can be challenging to facilitate access for charities, and prison governors can find it difficult to engage with charities, given these pressures.
5. Prisons have become increasingly overcrowded. The prison population has risen by 82% in the last 30 years; there have been multiple changes in government policy (six Secretaries of State for Justice in the last eight years); and cuts to funds and staff within the criminal justice system have all contributed to creating a very challenging environment.³ Although the Ministry of Justice is now reversing some of the cuts to prison staff numbers, a lot of experience and knowledge from long serving staff has been lost.
6. There have also been significant changes to the probation system which has had a substantial impact on the charitable sector. The 'Transforming Rehabilitation' process in 2015 led to the outsourcing of a large portion of the probation service in England and Wales, resulting in multi-million pound contracts for private companies and large voluntary sector organisations, with some smaller charities involved in sub-contracting arrangements. In London, the contract is held by the London Community Rehabilitation Company. This process has proved challenging for a lot of charities, both when involved in delivering a contract and where they felt they were 'squeezed out'.

¹ NPC, Beyond Bars: Maximising the Voluntary Sector's Contribution in Criminal Justice, March 2017

² HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for England and Wales, Annual Report 2016–17

³ Prison Reform Trust, Prison: the facts (Bromley Briefings Summer 2017)

7. Reoffending rates remain high, and 44% of adults are reconvicted within one year of release. For those serving sentences of less than 12 months this increases to 59%.⁴ Support through training, employment, housing and family are vital to supporting rehabilitation, and these are generally common threads running through many interventions, especially those delivered by charitable organisations. This is also likely to be a growth area as the Government has recently launched a scheme to let more prisoners out on day release to gain employment experience. Research by the Ministry of Justice '*Transforming Rehabilitation: a summary of evidence on reducing reoffending*' (2014) highlighted the importance of early action 'through the gate' work which begins an intervention prior to a prisoner being released and is maintained over a longer timeframe. Many charities are delivering excellent work in this area. However, while there is increasing knowledge, there also needs to be a correlating growth in the evidence-base for various interventions. The [Justice Data Lab](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/justice-data-lab) [https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/justice-data-lab] is run by the Ministry of Justice and encourages organisations to upload data on their service in return for analysis which assesses the impact of the programme against reoffending measures.
8. The criminal justice voluntary sector includes specialist services (targeting prisoners and ex-offenders) and non-specialist services (whose service users might include people who have a conviction but their main purpose is other work beyond the criminal justice sphere). Within this sector, voluntary organisations providing specialist support to families, women, young adults or people from black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities are experiencing specific challenges. These organisations are more likely to be maintaining or reducing services (rather than increasing). We know that people from BAME communities continue to be over-represented in the criminal justice system, yet services to support them appear to be in decline.⁵

Implications for City Bridge Trust

9. There are clear implications for your Committee in terms of understanding the challenges facing the organisations that apply for funding, considerations for assessing applications, and deciding where funding will have highest impact in this subject area.
10. Cuts to Government funding, policy changes and an overall reduction in sources of funding has meant that the criminal justice voluntary sector is very lean with many charities scaling back activities; Clinks State of the Sector 2017 reported that 30% of organisations had reduced and 21% had closed services in 2015/16. However, while relationships and perspectives will vary for each prison and governor, charity interventions are generally welcomed by the criminal justice sector and often provide an essential additional service. While some prisoners are not comfortable working with prison services, they

⁴ Prison Reform Trust, Prison: the facts (Bromley Briefings Summer 2017)

⁵ Clinks, The state of the sector 2017

may trust chaplains and charities more so as they are regarded as independent, and the choice of services provide various options of involvement – a solution for one person may not be the right approach for another. However, where charities work within prisons, it is essential that a positive relationship has been developed – it can take time to facilitate access to prisons and a sustained commitment is important.

11. NPC’s report *Beyond Bars: Maximising the Voluntary Sector’s Contribution in Criminal Justice* includes the below table which outlines potential intervention points. Currently your Committee focuses its funding on resettlement and rehabilitation.

	Policing	Courts	Prison	Resettlement	Community
Why fund this area?	<p>Strong evidence-base for early intervention</p> <p>Currently very little VSO activity in policing</p> <p>Opportunities to collaborate with PCCs</p>	<p>Ability to influence the treatment of individuals in the courts system</p>	<p>Custody provides a crucial time period to impact upon an individual's life.</p> <p>Charities do this through: Education and training Mental health Sports Arts Restorative justice Family ties</p>	<p>This is when individuals are most likely to reoffend, so potential impact is high.</p> <p>On leaving prison, charities support ex-offenders in areas such as: Housing Employment Education and training Re-integration with family and friends Support for family and friends Integration into the community</p>	
Funding tip	<p>Prevention needs substantial investment in pilots and in long term, robust evaluations.</p>		<p>Fund variety: service users have often been 'turned off' by multiple things. It could be something very niche that 'turns them back on'.</p> <p>Be aware that accessing prisons can be practically challenging.</p>	<p>There is great value in small, local charities. It is these organisations that have been cut out from the TR commissioning process. The risk of subsidising the state or private sector here can be reduced. And the drive for devolution and localism offers opportunities.</p>	

12. Charities in this sector can work in a variety of settings and intervention points, areas of need (e.g. family support, drug addictions, mental health) and different beneficiary groups (including women, young offenders, ethnic minority groups). Resettlement is the current focus in Bridging Divides and, as a key transition point, it also reflects your value of early action to prevent reoffending.

Conclusions and recommendations

13. While many areas would benefit from more research or funding, it is not recommended that your area of focus on resettlement be changed at this time. Bridging Divides currently invites applications from ‘suitably experienced specialist support services’ to support ex-offenders leaving custody or serving community sentences. Whilst providing a focus on the experience and expertise of the group - essential for work in this area - the target is usefully broad and reflects the range of services which can deliver positive outcomes for this beneficiary group. Bridging Divides also allows for core funding which would be very valuable to a lot of groups in this sector, considering the recent

challenges they have faced and continue to face. Your officers' assessments should continue to ensure that due consideration is given to the strength of the applicant organisation's relationship with any prison in which it is carrying out work.

14. However, there are other vital areas to explore outside of your current rehabilitation focus. Through Bridging Divides, the mechanisms of 'Ideas Please' and Strategic Initiatives could harness knowledge of other projects operating in London – especially where they work to your Bridging Divides values of 'Inclusion and Representation' and 'Early Action'. Some additional areas which emerged from your officer's research include (but are not limited to): work with offenders' families; work with BAME communities; young adults leaving custody (those aged 18-25 can slip through the gaps); early action work with the courts (in consultation with the Old Bailey in the spirit of the total asset approach of your new funding strategy); and early action work with young people. Each of these, and others, could be considered either as a Strategic Initiative or through 'Ideas Please' to ensure maximum impact in this complex area of work.

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Principal sources of information

- Beyond Bars: Maximising the voluntary sector's contribution in criminal justice, NPC (March 2017)
- Prison: the facts (Bromley Briefings Summer 2017), Prison Reform Trust
- State of the Sector 2017, Clinks
- HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for England and Wales, Annual Report 2016-17
- Conversation with Nick Hardwick, former HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, and former Chair of the Parole Board.