

The National Criminal Justice Arts Alliance (NCJAA) is the leading national network supporting the arts in criminal justice. Our aim is to ensure the arts are used within the criminal justice system as a springboard for positive change. Over 800 Alliance members deliver creative interventions to support people in prison, on probation and in the community, with impressive results. We support this transformative work by providing a network and a voice for all the talented and creative people who are committed to making great art with offenders.

## **Alison Frater** **Chair of the NCJAA**



The great thing about the annual reviews is that they let you look forward and backward at the same time. Behind us, 2016 was a frenetic year for politics, yet it established positive policy conditions for arts and criminal justice going forward. Over the year, first in the Cameron and now the May government, ministers, MPs, Lords and senior officers worked with us because they recognise the power of the arts and culture in education, health, citizenship, community development, and economic and social cohesion. So, for the coming year there is fertile ground but no panacea, far from it. There is still dissonance between what we know, what we hear and what we see. There is much work to do. But, there are opportunities to stick to our core values and realise our ambition: arts for all, responding to diversity, building inclusion across the sector, working regionally, growing capacity and capability for individuals and the creative industries through research and development, training and skills development, and gaining traction from the mainstream; a springboard for change.

Our work programme for 2017 is being drafted and in a small organisation like ours it can and will adapt throughout the year to meet new and emerging conditions and respond to ideas. Funding from the Monument Trust has made a huge difference both for sustainability and in setting a direction through partnership. Within a fellowship of organisations we can now model the importance of working together.

Reducing the costs of crime for individuals, for families and for communities requires an integrated approach for arts and culture with organisations that work in prevention, the courts and justice, prisons, and with communities, to achieve continuity through the gate.

The greatest joy about being chair of the NCJAA is the people. My huge thanks to Jess Plant for her phenomenally hard and high quality work in managing the Alliance, to Kate Davey our Communications Officer who keeps this unique and innovative network alive and fresh, the Steering Group for their extraordinary insight and commitment, to Clinks for support in hosting the Alliance, to all member organisations for their brilliance and willingness to speak up when we need strong voices to share experience and showcase their art - and to all the many others who share our values and our work.



## **Jessica Plant** **Manager of the NCJAA**

This year's rapidly changing political environment has been challenging to keep up with to say the least, so much has happened on a local, national and global scale. The justice system is undergoing a plethora of reviews and reforms with a focus on safety and security and the arts sector has been under pressure to distribute resources across the country and improve diversity. Any impacts on the arts and criminal justice sector are still emerging. However since the encouraging review into prison education by Dame Sally Coates we've witnessed changes to Offender Learning and Skills Services (OLASS) contracts that should enable more positive creative commissioning with a focus on 'engagement and progression.'

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Following on from the Culture White Paper published in June, which makes a commitment to arts and culture in criminal justice settings, the Arts Council England have asked us to help them explore what success looks like in this area. In many ways this visioning and implementation will be our biggest challenge yet. For me - like Professor Sarah Colvin remarked at one of our steering group meetings - success looks like the normalisation of arts and culture in criminal justice settings. I know the membership have the skills and expertise to successfully embed arts in prisons, probation and community life and I am looking forward to the NCJAA supporting them to do that.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Alison Frater for her energy and leadership, which are moving the NCJAA in a positive direction.

## Making the case for arts and criminal justice

The evidence base continues to grow. This year we've seen many influential reports emerge, including 'Understanding the value of arts and culture,' commissioned by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, and 'ImagineNation: the case for cultural learning,' produced by the Cultural Learning Alliance. Additionally, arts charity Safe Ground's latest Justice Data Lab results show that their Fathers Inside programme reduces reoffending rates amongst participants by 40%.

"Cultural engagement... can provide a means by which offenders in prison can reflect on themselves." AHRC Cultural Value Report, p43

## The Evidence Library

The online Evidence Library houses evaluations and research reports highlighting the impact of arts projects in criminal justice settings. There are currently 96 evaluations on the Evidence Library involving 32 different arts organisations and 37 academic institutions.

### New reports on the Evidence Library this year include...

- [Exploring Good Vibrations projects with vulnerable and challenging women in prison](#): "Taking part in a Good Vibrations project can reduce anger, worry, and levels of unhappiness, and improve social skills."
- [Community Exchange project between detainees at Harmondsworth Immigration Removal Centre and young people at West London YMCA](#): "The project encouraged participants to be reflexive, to open up and reflect on their own lives and to think about those of others."

## Membership

**Our overall membership has increased by 6% this year to 840.**

46% of our members work in prisons, 42% in the community, 23% in community settings (including probation and Youth Offending Teams) and 22% in arts settings. 15% deliver in health settings, and 7% in immigration detention centres.

34% of members use creative writing, 33% theatre and drama, 25% visual arts, 23% music, 18% multi-media, 15% film, 14% dance and 13% craft.

## Promoting arts in criminal justice

→ Our **Twitter followers** have increased by **22% since last year to 2,425.**

→ We now have **257 likes on our Facebook page**, a **51% increase** on last year.

→ We now have an average of **2,800 page views on our website every month**, an **increase of 12%** on last year.

→ We've had a **24% increase** in subscribers to our monthly newsletter. It now reaches **2884 people.**

### Our members say the NCJAA helps them to:

"Be more aware of policy developments, the potential for networking and joint project development."

"Stay connected to the sector and have a strong voice at policy level."

"Have a greater awareness of the bigger picture."

- Quotes from NCJAA members

## Improving practice across arts and criminal justice

In 2016, we launched [Arts, culture and innovation in criminal justice settings: a guide for commissioners](#), a publication providing those with responsibility for supporting the education, health, wellbeing and reintegration to society of individuals within the criminal justice system with clear information on the valuable role the arts can play in supporting these objectives.

"Provides a useful articulation of the benefits of arts in CJS in a language that commissioners understand." Survey respondent.

"Good resource on current thinking. Very useful for funding applications!" Survey respondent.

42% of our annual survey respondents said they had found the guide useful in their work.

### Equality and diversity

Following an event at Sadler's Wells chaired by Baroness Lola Young we [produced a resource](#) on using the arts as a driver for equality in criminal justice settings to help our members, as well as other arts organisations, promote equality, inclusivity and diversity in their work.

### Professional mentoring scheme

Our professional mentoring scheme provides our members with opportunities to develop professional skills and knowledge in the field of arts and criminal justice through a one to one mentoring relationship. This year we've matched nine mentors and mentees as part of our professional mentoring scheme. Seven of the pairs completed the six month scheme. Mentors include Odd Arts, Second Shot Productions, TiPP, Clinks, Geese Theatre Company, Music in Detention, Safe Ground and Clean Break.

"I am better now at framing the mentoring conversation to be more than just a conversation. To identify a goal and area to explore at each meeting and to review this at the end." – Mentor

"The mentoring is going well. Thank you so much, this scheme has been so helpful and really helped me gain confidence in the work I want to be doing." – Mentee

"I have felt empowered that my initial ideas, thoughts and plans were the right ones and to follow these instincts. My mentor listened and helped me see objectively, this in turn gave me confidence to say to others this is what is happening and why." – Mentee

## Supporting and informing policy

In 2016, the impact of arts in criminal justice settings was highlighted in the [Department for Culture Media and Sport's first Culture White Paper](#) in 50 years. The Paper also included nine case studies of arts and criminal justice organisations, including the NCJAA, in its appendices.

**"There are also many good examples of how cultural interventions can benefit prisoners, ex-offenders and people at risk of becoming involved in crime."** Culture White Paper 2016, p33.

In 2016, [Unlocking Potential: a review of education in prisons](#) by Dame Sally Coates recognised the importance of the arts in engaging prisoners, including those who have had negative experiences of traditional classroom subjects. The report said that **"there should be no restriction on the use of education funding to support the creative arts, Personal and Social Development opportunities, and family or relationship courses."** (p 27)

Following both of the reports, the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) held a joint Ministerial Round Table with the former Minister for Culture and the Digital Economy, Ed Vaizey, and former Minister for Prisons and Rehabilitation, Andrew Selous. We have been encouraged to hear that both the DCMS and the MoJ are still committed to this agenda, despite the subsequent reshuffle.

In October 2016 we hosted a performance of Open Clasp's Key Change at the Houses of Parliament in collaboration with Agenda, Clinks and the Prison Reform Trust. The event aimed to help parliamentarians, policy makers and influencers to understand the complex journey women have when they come into contact with the criminal justice system. The event featured on BBC 4 Women's Hour and was mentioned on the BBC news.

### All Party Parliamentary Groups

On 8<sup>th</sup> November 2016, we co-hosted the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) round table on arts, health and wellbeing in the criminal justice system. The information gathered will be used to inform policy recommendations for the Inquiry into Arts, Health and Wellbeing.

The NCJAA presented at the All Party Parliamentary Group on Music, which focused on how music can support young offenders in turning their lives around. The APPG was coordinated by UK Music.



## Events

Last year we had a total of 346 people come to our events, seven performances or film screenings, and nine workshops highlighting the inspiring work of our members. Panelists and speakers included the National Offender Management Service, Arts Council England, prison governors, prison staff, House of Lords representatives, artists, academics and arts organisations.

**"I liked the networking ability, the freedom to express different views/policies, and the fact that we all have a similar passion." Event attendee, Diversity, arts and criminal justice, Sadler's Wells, March 2016.**

We held our events in some renowned venues, including the National Theatre, Sadler's Wells, the Library of Birmingham and Intermission Theatre. Our event programme covered a range of topics, including diversity in arts and criminal justice settings and the barriers facing practitioners wanting to work in the sector.

**"Great forum for sharing ideas and making connections. Felt grounding, especially as an artist working independently most of the time." Event attendee, Annual Meeting, March 2016.**

The keynote speech at our Annual Meeting was given by Ed Vaizey, former Minister for Culture and the Digital Economy. We held our annual conference at HMP Askham Grange, where we launched the new commissioning guide and celebrated the incredible work currently happening in the sector through workshops and performances.

**"Valuable beyond words, innovative, inclusive, challenging and barrier breaking." Event attendee, Anne Peaker lecture, December 2016.**

Our Anne Peaker lecture, 'Shutter Stories: prison life behind the lens,' focused on the use of photography and film in criminal justice settings, and we were pleased to have award winning artist Edmund Clark as the keynote speaker.

**"Wonderful and inspiring photography project and humble and inspiring artist." Event attendee, Anne Peaker lecture, December 2016.**

## Thank you!

We would like to say a huge thank you to the 2016/17 Steering Group for the hard work and commitment to the NCJAA and the work we do. Without them our work could not happen, therefore we would like to thank:

- Carlotta Allum (Stretch Charity)
- Esther Baker (Synergy Theatre)
- Dan Boyden (Change Collective CIC)
- Selina Busby (Central School of Speech and Drama)
- Michelle Bynoe (Independent)
- Nina Champion (Prisoners' Education Trust)
- Sarah Colvin (University of Cambridge)
- Kevin Field (Media for Development)
- Katy Haigh (Good Vibrations)
- Russ Haynes (Independent)
- Anna Herrmann (Clean Break)
- Sara Lee (Irene Taylor Trust)
- Jenni Parker (Fine Cell Work)
- Ginny Scholey (Independent)
- Sally Taylor (Koestler Trust)
- Andy Watson (Geese Theatre Company),

Thank you too to Clinks, who manage the work of the NCJAA, and to our funders this year: the Monument Trust and the Ministry of Justice.



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**National Criminal Justice Arts Alliance**

c/o Clinks, Tavis House, 1-6 Tavistock Square, London, WC1H 9NA  
020 7383 0966

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[www.artsincriminaljustice.org.uk](http://www.artsincriminaljustice.org.uk)  
[info@artsincriminaljustice.org.uk](mailto:info@artsincriminaljustice.org.uk)  
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