# DRAFT National Criminal Justice Arts Alliance’s submission to the Arts Council England’s consultation document, Shaping the next 10 years

* [***Click here to read Arts Council England’s consultation document***](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/Shaping%20the%20next%20ten%20years_consultation_online_oct2018.pdf)

*Please note this is a working document collating views from our members so far. We very much welcome your input; see end of this draft for more details.*

*As well as contributing to this, the NCJAA’s response, we encourage our members to respond to the consultation individually in order to ensure the strongest case for Arts Council England support in criminal justice settings.* ***You are welcome to use this guidance to inform your own response.***

* [***Click here to respond to the consultation***](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/nexttenyears) *(Closes 2 January 2019)*

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## Further details about National Criminal Justice Arts Alliance and Clinks

The National Criminal Justice Arts Alliance (NCJAA) currently has 900 members delivering creative opportunities to people in prison, on probation and in the community, with impressive, internationally recognised results. Its vision is to promote access to arts and creative opportunities in criminal justice settings as a springboard to positive change. It provides a collective voice for its members, showcases the quality of arts in criminal justice settings and supports the development of evidence based practice through its online Evidence Library. In April 2018 NCJAA joined Arts Council England National Portfolio as a Sector Support Organisation. The NCJAA is managed by Clinks.

Clinks is the national infrastructure organisation supporting voluntary sector organisations working in the criminal justice system (CJS). Its aim is to ensure the sector and those with whom it works are informed and engaged in order to transform the lives of offenders and their communities. Clinks provide specialist information and support, with a particular focus on smaller voluntary sector organisations, to inform them about changes in policy and commissioning, to help them build effective partnerships and provide innovative services that respond directly to the needs of their users.

The NCJAA held an event with its members on 7th November in Liverpool to gather feedback on the Arts Council England’s strategy and their views are reflected in this document. This is very much a work in progress; if you were unable to attend, please get in touch so your views can also be included.

This response also draws heavily from our report, [What does success look like for arts in criminal justice?](https://www.artsincriminaljustice.org.uk/what-does-success-look-like-for-arts-in-criminal-justice-settings/) (published September 2018) written following a series of roundtable discussions commissioned by Arts Council England in 2017.

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## General comments on the Arts Council England 10 year strategy consultation

The NCJAA welcomes and supports the Arts Council England’s shift in emphasis towards “*everyday culture, for everyone, from all background*s” and supports the bold outcomes that work towards “***a nation that supports and celebrates culture and creativity of every kind”*** and that “***people from every background benefit from public investment in culture.***

The NCJAA believes the work of our network can support the Arts Council England to achieve its ambitious outcomes by 2030 and want to work collaboratively to deliver success. We have set out below some initial responses to the draft strategy and made some suggestions about how we think the arts and criminal justice sector can further enhance the new strategy to create an inclusive creative landscape across England in the next 10 years.

In line with the Arts Council England’s recently published [summary of evidence](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/publication/arts-and-culture-health-and-wellbeing-and-criminal-justice-system-summary-evidence) on arts and health and arts and criminal justice and their recent generous commitment to the NCJAA and the Culture Health and Wellbeing Alliance, we would like to see the criminal justice sector not only talked about alongside health and wellbeing in the next iteration of the strategy, but also recognised as a distinct and important sub sector than can support Arts Council England achieve its outcomes around creativity, relevance, inclusivity, diversity and global leadership.

It is also vital that Arts Council England support and enhance work carried out in criminal justice settings to strengthen the case for public investment in the arts and culture, which will become increasingly scrutinised in the future. For further reading see Nesta’s report, [Experimental Culture: a horizon scan](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/our-new-strategy-have-your-say/experimental-culture-horizon-scan).

**Below we have drafted additional ideas related to the seven outcomes outlined in the draft strategy.**

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## 1. A nation that supports and celebrates culture and creativity of every kind

The NCJAA would like to see art produced by people with an experience of the criminal justice sector recognised and celebrated across all arts and culture; in relation to art form, place-based commissioning and digital platforms.

Arts and culture produced in these settings needs to be fostered through investment in brave collaborative projects, which enable arts and culture to thrive on a personal level (in prisons, probation and community settings) and expand into mainstream platforms. Arts Council England along with its leading National Portfolio organisations, with their high status and profile, need to advocate and invest in arts and culture from criminal justice settings, through its employment practices (for example, by banning the box) along with its programming, educational and outreach work to ensure individuals from all corners of society can see their own culture reflected back to them in mainstream institutions and platforms.

The Koestler Trust - and others who exhibit creative excellence from within our prisons – celebrate art forms such as music, playwriting, soap carving, sculpture, model making, textiles, painting and poetry. Participation in these can not only improve wellbeing, but also have an active impact on reducing reoffending (See [Justice Data Lab analysis](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/270086/arts-materials-report.pdf) and NCJAA’s [Evidence Library](http://www.artsevidence.org.uk/)).

More can be done in criminal justice settings to foster and drive creative activity to not only support rehabilitation, but to improve art and culture for all by nurturing talent and unheard voices from the margins of society.

\*More case study examples to be added.

## 2. People from every background benefit from public investment in culture

To support Arts Council England work with local communities and enable they “*reach a far wider range of people and tackle the barrier that prevent people from taking part in publically funded cultural experience”* the work across criminal justice must be expanded and explicitly supported.

In England there are currently over 85,000 people in prison and over 250,000 on community sentences. There are just under 1,000 children under the age of 18 in custody in England and Wales. There are also 6,000 young adults aged 18-20 in prison. Over 11 million people in the UK have criminal records (See Unlock’s [key facts](http://www.unlock.org.uk/policy-issues/key-facts/)).

There is therefore huge potential to reach new participants, artists and audiences by working to include the arts and criminal justice sector more explicitly and holistically across the strategy to ensure the work is embedded in approach. Those in the criminal justice system represent some of the most disadvantaged people in our society – the 2016 [Bromley Briefing](http://www.thebromleytrust.org.uk/files/2016factfile.pdf) highlights that people from low socio-economic groups, care leavers and those from BAME and Gypsy, Romany and Traveller backgrounds are all over-represented. It also points to the high level of mental and physical health issues, poor educational attainment and individuals caught in a cycle of crime: 47% have no qualifications; 48% of prisoners reoffend within a year of release.

To compound this, criminal justice settings are not well served by the arts. They are often in isolated locations with very few creative resources to draw on. Consequently, access is unequal and not determined by desire or need. In contrast, the [Warwick Commission](https://warwick.ac.uk/research/warwickcommission/futureculture/finalreport/warwick_commission_final_report.pdf) highlights that nearly half of live music audiences and a third of theatregoers and gallery visitors are from the wealthiest, best educated and least ethnically diverse 8% of society.

To make this a reality the NCJAA would like to see Arts Council England:

* Invest in building relationships between specialist, grass roots organisations working in criminal justice settings and mainstream large, high profile arts organisation. We would therefore support Arts Council England in their aim that all organisation that receive public funding must tackle barriers that exclude people.
* Acknowledge the specific challenges that occur when working in a prison environment.
* Ensure sustained investment in small local specialist work and support to help secure funding and ensure resilience.

\*More examples to be added from NCJAA consultation event and document, [What does success look like for arts in criminal justice?](https://www.artsincriminaljustice.org.uk/what-does-success-look-like-for-arts-in-criminal-justice-settings/)

## 3. Creative R&D and talent development are flourishing

There is a significant need for recognised training in the field of arts and criminal justice. Our members consistently ask for a range of training from introductory courses to leadership and artistic direction. The NCJAA has begun to offer opportunities for training and mentoring but cannot currently meet demand.

Higher Education applied arts courses are increasingly including an element of social practice, which does in some cases apply to the criminal justice sector (specifically in the performing arts), but more could be done to join up this work with the needs of the criminal justice sector workforce.

It has been found that artists working in criminal justice settings have found the experience to significantly impact their creative practice. More can be done to understand and celebrate the role of the artist in prison and probation settings. Schemes like the artist-in-residence at HMP Grendon/IKON Gallery partnership, could be replicated with great impact and benefit for both prisons, artists and cultural institutions.

Talent and expertise from across the arts and criminal justice sector needs to fostered, shared and celebrated more widely. Individual artists with background in criminal justice system could be supported more to access funded and learning and development opportunities. This could include a “Directory of opportunities for people post-release and mechanism to develop talent within the sector to increase sustainability” (Member feedback).

## 4. England's diversity is fully reflected in the organisations we support, and in the culture they produce

We very much support Arts Council England’s ambition to ensure that by 2030 Arts Council England will only invest in organisations that have governance, leadership and workforce that reflects England’s diversity - and we believe partnership with the criminal justice system can support the arts and cultural sector to do this.

\*Information from the [Lammy Review](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/lammy-review) to be added.

By encouraging arts and cultural organisations to sign up to Ban the Box, Arts Council England can support people with criminal records to find employment upon release - despite compelling evidence that employment is a leading factor in reducing reoffending only [17% of ex-offenders are in PAYE work a year after coming out of prison](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/710406/education-and-employment-strategy-2018.pdf) and only half of employers say they would even consider employing an ex-offender.

We want to encourage arts organisations working with people in the criminal justice sector to make sure this is also reflected in their staff, freelance artists and governance structures.

## 5. The creative and cultural lives of all children and young people are recognised and nurtured

In order for Arts Council England to deliver their aim that *the creative and cultural lives of all children and young people are recognised and nurtured* we would like to see young people in the criminal justice system (including those in care, secure children homes, prisons, detention centres and those serving sentences in the community) targeted explicitly by investment and strategy, so that resources for those least likely to access a variety of creative and cultural opportunities are given the most opportunities.

To enable Arts Council England to ensure that investment in the creativity of every child and young person both in and out of school is increased and better co-ordinated, working with criminal justice sector partners is crucial. This will ensure that those least likely to be exposed to variety of creative practice are provided with the opportunity to take part in community and cultural life. This can have huge return on investment in terms of reducing crime and supporting community cohesion. Partnerships with the Police and Crime Commissioners, Youth Offenders Institutions and Community Rehabilitation Companies need to be fostered at a local level to maximise the opportunities for young people who have the most to gain.

## 6. Cultural organisations are dynamic, focused on the future, and relevant

\*To be added.

## 7. England continues to increase its global reputation for the quality of its creative industries

The arts in criminal justice sector in England is recognised as having world-leading expertise. The NCJAA’s Steering Group (including The Irene Taylor Trust, Geese Theatre and Clean Break) are frequently asked to attend global conferences and provide best practice research and training across the world in prisons and arts sectors.

Our award winning [Evidence Library](http://www.artsevidence.org.uk/) is utilised by counterparts all over the world (the USA are currently trying to replicate this model).

There is more to be done to celebrate the work of the sector on a global stage, capitalising on our expertise, unique practice and skill set as we move towards fully understanding the social impact of arts and culture internationally.

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## Other feedback on the strategy from our members:

* The language of process, community and “socially engaged” practice could be strengthened across strategy.
* Build resilience for long term future with sustainable funding and more consistency of provision across the criminal justice landscape, which utilises existing arts organisations to build a stable culture offer.
* Technology and digital access is a big problem in the criminal justice sector.
* More work needs to be done to advocate for arts to governors, heads of learning – so it becomes normalised across the prison and criminal justice services.
* Ideas of co-production could be enhanced across the strategy.
* Increased research and evidence to continue making the case.
* There needs to be a joined up national approach across Arts Council England and the Ministry of Justice.

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## Add your views

*Please note this is a working document.*

*Jessica Plant (NCJAA Manager) is continuing to collate views for the NCJAA network and will submit a full response to Arts Council England. If you would like to contribute,* ***please send comments to*** ***Jessica.plant@clinks.org*** ***by Friday 14th December.***