

revolving  
doors

Changing the criminal justice system

# Our impact

May 2022



# Contents

- Introduction from the CEO** ..... 4
- Definition of the Revolving Doors group** ..... 6
- Influencing at a national and local levels** ..... 7
- Partnering for Influence** ..... 14
- Growing our influencing through our members** ..... 16

# Acknowledgements

First and foremost we take this opportunity to thank our lived experience members for their extraordinary work with us. Their dedication to drawing honestly on their lived experience to change systems and services for other people is truly inspiring and makes our collective impact possible. We also thank our partners and funders for their continued support and Dr. Ann Hanrahan (University of Greenwich) for drafting and collating this report.

# Dedication

We dedicate this report to Jahmaine and Phil who both sadly passed away before this report was published. Their energy, compassion, and commitment to using their lived experience to help others inspired us and continues to inspire us.



Click the hand for hyperlinked webpages

**Our ambition  
is to break the  
cycle of crisis  
and crime.**

# Introduction from the CEO

It should not be inevitable that the road map for those facing multiple disadvantage ends in the criminal justice system. But we need to ensure that, when it does, the services and policies they encounter offer a route to a different endpoint through diversion and support. How can we, as a small charity, measure our impact in this space? While we alone can't end the revolving door of crisis and crime, we can – and we do:

Influence Government officials, policy-makers, commissioners and statutory and voluntary sector services...

- Change thoughts and behaviors
- Change delivery on the ground
- Change perceptions of those in the revolving door of crisis and crime

Partner with...

- Services, to shape design and delivery
- Policy-makers, to evidence policy development
- Academics, to research gaps in the evidence base
- Professional groups, to create systems and cultural change

Impact through...

- Speaking directly to those who run services and make policies, using our lived experience forums, meetings, and teams
- Underpinning our work with solid evidence, building on our research
- Inspecting, questioning, and advising on what works, with our policy work

Our uniqueness as an organisation lies in our Lived Experience membership. The people who have experienced the criminal justice system first-hand and understand it both as a system and as a recipient of the system. Our members speak directly to those in power, offering practical solutions for supporting the system to break the cycle of crisis and crime. They can unpick policy and services with precision and clear thinking. They understand what makes good services, good policies and how to deliver them in a spirit where those on the receiving end can have a fair chance of a different life journey. We believe that only by working closely with people with lived experience, co-producing responses to policy questions, designing research and co-crafting recommendations can we bring about system and cultural change that is fit for purpose and breaks the cycle of crisis and crime.

That is why my ambition as CEO is that Revolving Doors will become a truly member led charity. One where our members will have greater influence, driving our agenda and holding positions of influence within the organisation. It will also be a charity where members come for a while and thrive as they influence the system and move on to other opportunities.

Our focus going forward is procedural justice – an opportunity which has been afforded by our successful Open Society Foundation (OSF) bid where we can really get under the skin of what reconciliation could look like between the police and diverse communities. Our recent history has included campaign work around abolishing shorter sentences. It involved a period where we developed expertise across policing, sentencing, probation and systems and service change initiatives to provide better support to people facing multiple disadvantage. I want to build on this expertise by influencing and promoting alternative sentences to custody and diversion away from the criminal justice system where possible.

This report outlines our recent achievements. We are proud of the recent achievements outlined in this report and hope you enjoy reading about them.

**Pavan Dhaliwal**  
Chief Executive Officer



# Definition of the Revolving Doors group

A person experiencing multiple disadvantage will face a range of negative social and health issues at the same time. These issues are life disrupting and can include housing insecurity, problematic substance use, mental ill health and a history of repeat, low-level offences with resultant repeated contact with the Criminal Justice System. Many have experienced traumatic events from childhood and deal with the impact of these experiences throughout their lives. People facing this complex mix of challenges are likely to have poor physical and mental health and may have financial issues. All of these social and health issues can exacerbate each other and drive contact with the criminal justice system.

While there are many services to support those with individual problems, few services are equipped to deal with the challenge that those with multiple disadvantage can present. As a result, those with multiple disadvantage are often viewed as difficult to work with. At times this can limit their access to the services they need for a particular issue until they can access support for a related but different issue. This in turn builds a distrust in services amongst those with multiple disadvantage - often leading to disengagement - leading to further exclusion.

**This is the Revolving Doors group.**

'If you change the system just with professionals doing it, you will change it a bit. But if you do it properly with people from Lived Experience, you will change it to a greater extent.'

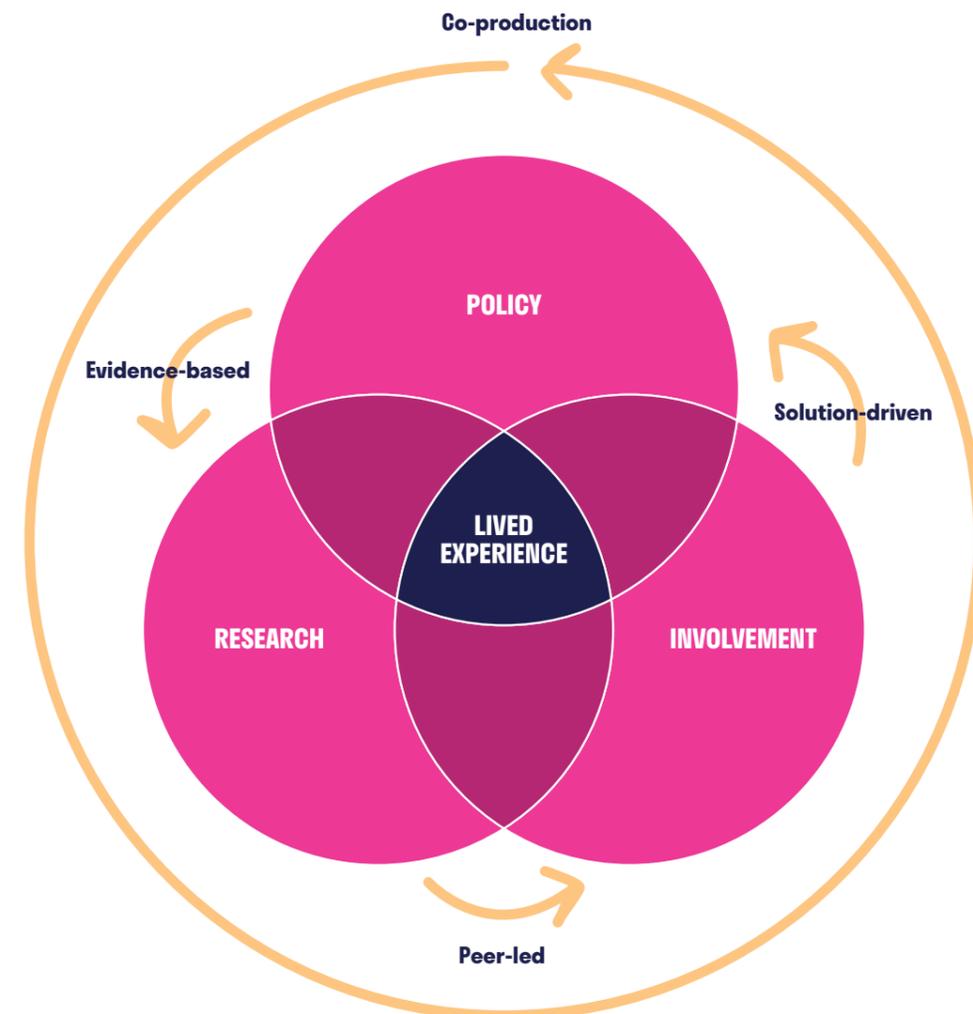
**Revolving Doors team member**

# Influencing at a national and local level

## Making an impact through lived experience voice and partnership working

Revolving Doors uses lived experience voices, research and influencing to provide evidence-based solutions for those facing multiple disadvantage and who are caught up in the cycle of crisis and crime.

By empowering those with lived experience to talk directly about their backgrounds and their experiences of the revolving door we seek to ensure that those forming policies and designing services understand how current systems can exacerbate the cycle of crisis and crime, and crucially how they can provide the support necessary to break this cycle.



## National level influence

### The National Expert Citizens Group

The National Experts Citizens Group (NECG) was established within The National Lottery Community Fund's Fulfilling Lives Programme (2014-2022) and is now the lived experience representative group for DLUHC's Changing Futures Programme (2021-24). It brings together the twelve Fulfilling Lives areas as a group to interact with government and service organisations. The interaction can take the form of questions coming directly from government and services while at other times the NECG raises an issue or topic to be passed back from the ground. NECG comprises two members from each of the Fulfilling Lives sites, all of which have lived experience. As well as the national NECG meeting, the groups divide into regional North, South and Midlands regional meetings where initial discussions on a question or topic takes place. These discussions are then taken to a national meeting where recommendations are made and a report written and submitted to the organisation where the query began. Thus the model is layered with different opinions from different parts of the country culminating in an agreed national approach.

The reach and the influence of the NECG is wide ranging including advising the Dame Carol Black Independent Review of Drugs where they brought the issue of dual diagnosis to the table and focused on highlighting the gaps in provision and the needs of those people struggling with addiction and other multiple disadvantages. In addition, one of the NECG Members sat on the House of Lords Panel on Drug Policy Change. Dual diagnosis became a focus of the discussions as a result.

The influence of NECG has stretched to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities rough sleeping response team and the Housing Committee on responses to the pandemic.

'The Expert Reference Group (NECG) kept my feet firmly to the fire and on the ground. The voices of those with lived experience of drugs have been urging us forward throughout, I hope not in vain, and I thank them for their invaluable testimony.' "Arising from such collaborative teamwork, the review recommendations take the form, "We recommend ." but I take full responsibility for them and their every word.'

**Dame Carol Black**

### Lived experience voice in the strategic review of policing

The Police Foundation have been undertaking a strategic review of policing to set the long-term strategic vision for policing in England and Wales. The first phase of the review identified how public safety has changed in the last two decades. The second phase examines the response to the changing public safety and crime landscape identified in phase one with a focus on the role of the police.

As part of this work, the Police Foundation researchers facilitated consultation sessions with our New Generation lived experience forum, our Women's Forum as well as our northern and southern forums – thus allowing the researchers to interact with a wide range of people. The aim of the consultations was to understand how experiences of the criminal justice system filter through to the everyday person and whether there were differences in perceptions across people's demographics.

The forums brought to the review opinions from those who had been in the criminal justice system. It also suggested solutions to the issues raised in phase 1 – adding another level of evidence to underpin possible future recommendations. In particular, the consultation informed the 'legitimacy' aspect of the review – which explores the relationship between the public and the police and helped contextualise findings from academia, surveys and experts in the field.

The report has now been published and brought to the attention of the police service, which we hope will lead to follow-up actions. Overall, the forums have proved to be helpful in framing the researchers thinking about the issues raised.

### User research for Her Majesty's' (HM) Court and Tribunal Service

HM Court and Tribunal Service (HMCTS) commissioned us to conduct qualitative research with 38 defendants to develop recommendations to improve the engagement of defendants with criminal court processes, particularly in the early stages of their engagement in police custody.

To improve engagement in police custody we recommended that HMCTS:

- Work with the Police to support them to inform defendants more effectively about their rights when being questioned, whilst still acting within PACE guidelines.

'Statistics won't capture what people want from the police and what people think the police's role is in their lives and it's always better to speak to people about those kinds of questions, who have had experience of the criminal justice system...they give a personal perspective.'

**Stephen Walcott, Researcher, The Policing Foundation**

'The vital work this agency achieves to future amendments in the criminal justice systems policies and practices is essential, especially to women and POC.'

**Lived experience member**

- Provide written information in Easy Read format to defendants that explains the importance of representation when being questioned.
- At the point that the defendant is charged, provide the defendant with information in Easy Read format about the next steps in their journey and how they can prepare for their hearing.

HMCTS have since **developed a pilot** with two Police forces (Suffolk and Norfolk) to test the impact of providing more information to defendants whilst they are in police custody and at the point of being charged. Our recommendations have informed the development of this pilot, including the user testing (to promote accessibility) of published materials with defendants.

- HMCTS developed a leaflet (to be given to defendants when they are booked into the police station) and posters (to be displayed in custody suites) encouraging defendants to seek independent and free legal advice in police custody.
- HMCTS also developed a leaflet (to be provided to defendants when they are charged) encouraging them to seek further legal advice and signposting them to further resources around selecting a legal representative and what to expect at court.

## Influencing at a local level

### Lived experience voice in developing a hub for young people on probation

The Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) is part of the Greater London Authority, delivering the mayor's objectives. MOPAC were developing a hub for young adults, aged 18-25, on probation. This hub is innovative for this age group and linked in with our New Generation Young Adult members – MOPAC asked if we could support consultation with young adults to develop the hub.

The young people's consultation, run in collaboration with Leaders Unlocked influenced the development of the pilot work for the hub as well as commissioning of its services. We found that young adults do not always understand the terms of conditions of their licence and could therefore breach their licence in error. This highlighted the need to expand a Speech and Language Therapy role to review the accessibility of language in probation documentation for young adults. The SLT has since worked on a License Conditions Glossary of terms. This document will be given to young adults as an accompaniment to their License Conditions and will help the practitioner to break down those License Conditions into easy-to-understand language.

'We created a partnership with Revolving Doors and we ran young people focus groups together. That was a really positive piece of work and definitely shaped our thinking on the pilot and what services we wanted to commission and how we could centre young adults' voices throughout that experience.'

**Roisin Briody, Transitions to Adulthood Pilot Manager, Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime**

A second issue that arose in the consultation was that young people wanted practical things to do to fill their time. MOPAC reacted by commissioning a service to provide 'meaningful activities' aimed at building skills and confidence.

### Evaluating a post-prison resettlement project

Thirteen Housing piloted Project Lifestyle in the Northeast – a post-prison resettlement service. Our evaluation spoke with people receiving support from the service, staff, and stakeholders to understand how the pilot needed to evolve to support successful resettlement service development.

We recommended:

- Developing a well-defined eligibility criteria to improve the referral process into the service and case management meetings for joint decision making and share learning.
- Building on existing local partnerships to ensure that people receiving support from the service have support for their needs beyond housing.
- Accessing the Justice Data Lab to learn more about the impact of their work with people leaving prison.

Thirteen have since been awarded a contract by the Probation Service to provide advice, support and assistance to people leaving custody who need housing. Our recommendations have supported the design of the new programme. For example,

Eligibility criteria was developed in partnership with contractors and probation staff.

- Monthly caseload reviews, with the relevant partners are a formal part of the management processes.
- Thirteen have begun to develop a partnership portfolio which builds on other organisation's expertise. They have sub-contracted aspects of the programme to two experienced support agencies and will continue to bring other specialist agencies onboard in future services.
- Thirteen are registering with the Justice Data Lab understand the impact of their new programme on reoffending rates locally.

'The learning from the evaluation and Revolving Doors recommendations helped us to enhance our future support offer for people leaving prison. We recognised that we needed to establish a more cohesive approach to supporting individuals and ensure that there was additional support in place for people most at risk of reoffending and/or homelessness.'

**Karen Kenmare, Head of Business Growth at Thirteen**

## A women's centre designed by women

During 2020-2021, staff from the Ministry of Justice's Residential Women's Centre team attended our Women's Forum five times to consult members on the design of the Residential Women Centre (RWC) pilot in Wales. Members were consulted on topics including staffing, the presence of children at the centres and rules around substance use and move-on support. Members also had the opportunity to speak to the architect of the pilot site to discuss the physical environment and interior of the Residential Women's Centres, and what was important to support recovery. The RWC team provided feedback to members to show how these processes shaped the service design.

The women shared their varying experiences of detox, relapse and advocated for a person-centred approach. It was unanimously felt that zero tolerance does not work. Detox assessment will be offered as part of a women's journey in the RWC, to ascertain whether on or off-site detox is appropriate.

The forum members advocated strongly for the role of lived experience within the staffing as well as a trauma informed approach. They also shared that having on-call support during the night is important for continuing recovery. The specification states that there will be staff with lived experience and 24/7 staffing on site.

On the benefits and challenges of involving children in the provision, some women shared that having the chance to recover alongside their children would have benefitted them, whilst others made clear that there needs to be boundaries to support those who are no longer legal guardians or are unable to have children. As a result, the specification includes two separate 2-bedroom flats with a separate entrance as well as family visiting rooms and a family contact centre.

Lastly, following on from feedback from the forum in January 2021, the guide for the builders of the pilot Residential Women's Centre includes elements such as lots of green outdoor space, it being a calming space and not having a fences, which members were pleased about.

'[It] makes me feel really hopeful...you've really listened to what we said in the forum...makes me feel really excited for the future... hopefully women will be able to go into this centre and get the help they need.'

Lived Experience Member,  
Women's Forum

## Influencing local and national planning

### Reviewing HM Prison and Probation Service's Reducing Reoffending Plans

In June 2020 all probation services unified under the Probation Service, a service consisting of twelve sub-regions across England and Wales. With reunification came the opportunity for each of these regions to set out their [three-year plans](#) for working with partners to reduce reoffending in their areas. Working alongside KMPG we supported the development of each of these plans, providing regional and national leaders with feedback from policy, research, and lived experience perspectives (via our Probation Lived Experience Team). As recognised by Sonia Flynn (Chief Probation Officer for England and Wales, our feedback supported Regional Probation Directors to develop and refine their ambitions and practical strategies for meeting these.

As regional and national probation leaders were very receptive to our feedback, several members of our Probation Lived Experience Team described how being involved had a significant positive impact, particularly as they often did not feel listened to by the Probation Service when they were under supervision.

'By providing constructive and insightful feedback on early drafts of our Regional Reducing Reoffending Plans, the Revolving Doors Probation Lived Experience Team helped us consider the views of those who use our services, to produce Plans with a strong commitment to listening to, and including people who use our services in all our work.'

Sonia Flynn, Chief  
Probation Officer for England  
and Wales

'To see the voices of people with lived experience being valued by a (probation) service I once felt overlooked by and the needs and experiences of people under probation supervision and focused primarily on risk, fills me with hope that systematic change is not just happening; it is happening as we speak. Long may it continue.'

David, Probation Lived  
Experience Team Member

# Partnering for influence

## Leading the Police Knowledge Network

In partnership with the Police Foundation, we launched a Knowledge Exchange Network (KEN), for 200 police and Chief Inspectors across England and Wales, which is an accessible forum to help police share innovative practice for young adults. Working with the Police Foundation gave us access to policing expertise enabling Revolving Doors to grow our networks with the police, and have greater influence.

KEN is a working network with police services, criminal justice agencies and Police Commissioners contributing different examples at each meeting to showcase their distinct approach to working with young adults. KEN brings together operational and policy expertise with a wide-ranging sector knowledge.

A survey of KEN members found that participating police forces felt better equipped to understand the needs of young adults. Importantly, membership of KEN helped them to identify emerging good practice in other policing services.

## Working with academic partners

In 2020-2021 we partnered with academics on two key research projects. We worked with Dr. Coral Sirdifield and Dr. Helen Nicholls (University of Lincoln) to better understand the impact of the pandemic on probation and with Professor Jo Armes and Dr. Renske Visser (University of Surrey) to better understand the quality of cancer treatment in prisons. Across both projects we supported several of our lived experience as peer researchers throughout the research process, including its design, conduct, analysis and dissemination.

As a result of peer researchers being involved in these projects:

- Professor Armes and Dr. Visser built a better understanding of the value people with lived can bring to the research process, and so extended their involvement to its conduct, analysis and dissemination (initially their involvement was limited to design).
- Our members published academically from their lived experience for the first time (see [here](#), accessed more than 1,000 times), encouraging more academics to collaborate meaningfully and safely alongside people with lived experience.

'It's a great step forward, please continue.'

Knowledge Exchange Network member

'Working with the three Experts by Experience from Revolving Doors on our NIHR cancer diagnosis treatment study in prisons was a very productive and rewarding experience, it is one of the highlights of my career! They helped with all aspects of the study, including reviewing documents, developing the interview guide, conducting interviews, and analysing and interpreting the data.'

Professor Jo Armes, Professor of Cancer Care & Lead for Digital Health (University of Surrey) & Investigator on the NIHR cancer care and treatment in prisons study.

- Peer researchers supported academics to conduct interviews more sensitively and safely, helping to generate richer research data.
- The analysis process was strengthened as peers provided insights from their different perspectives and utilised their lived experience to develop practical and workable policy and practice recommendations.
- Dissemination was strengthened as peers utilised their lived experience during presentations with key policymakers, including senior leaders within the Probation Service, to underline the importance of the co-developed recommendations.
- New opportunities were developed, including for two of our members to publish a book chapter in an upcoming collection (edited by Dr. Sirdifield) on Probation and mental health.

## The KNOT: a collection of essays exploring multiple disadvantage

'The Knot' explores how poverty, trauma and structural disadvantage create and perpetuate multiple disadvantage. It is published as an essay collection, webinar and podcast series and demonstrates the value of innovative models of collaboration. Our work on The Knot brought people with lived experience, practitioners and academics across different disciplines together. They shared varied views on multiple disadvantage, including from a human rights, race or gender-based lens, to promote a more holistic conceptualization. The collaborative process of developing the publications and conversations between our members, academics and practitioner contributors led to new insight and practical solutions being explored.

'It was a chance to have my say if you like and I think the others (peer researchers) felt the same...I am really proud of it. I'm really proud of the way that it was organised and the way that we, the three of us...were given every chance..every opportunity to make changes... Nothing was done without our permission.'

Sue, Peer Researcher, NIHR cancer care and treatment in prisons study.

'The framing of multiple disadvantage put forward by these essays is so compelling that it caused me to reflect on why it hasn't always been my main frame of reference. Until a few weeks ago, I would have viewed poverty and trauma as important contextual factors in understanding multiple disadvantage, but I wouldn't have put them front and centre of any response.'

Julian Corner, CEO, Lankelly Chase

# Growing our influence – Revolving Doors’ members

Revolving Doors’ lived experience members are the core of our work, and central to the influence and impact that we have. We are constantly improving the way we work with people with lived experience, ensuring a safe environment that supports their development and progression, and breaks the cycle of crisis and crime.

## The Lived Experience Probation Inquiry

The Lived Experience Probation Inquiry was set up to explore how probation might evolve to respond better to the needs of our members. The inquiry model commenced with the deliberately high-level and open question: ‘What should be next for the Probation Service?’. We then established a Probation Lived Experience Team (PLET) who worked alongside our Research Team to design more targeted questions to our members to identify practical solutions.

The PLET then worked with us to test these practical solutions with probation practitioners, both to understand their perspectives and to co-generate practical solutions that would be workable in practice. This collaborative approach allowed us not only respond to issues directly raised by our members, but also to generate robust evidence for practical solutions, tested with both practitioners and people with lived experience, to support the Probation Service in fulfilling its potential.

The inquiry model goes deep to the root of an issue, collects the views of both lived experience and practitioners to design solutions that are rooted in practicality. We believe that it can be applied to a wide range of issues and questions across the system.

‘A lot of people are scared of the challenges of working with people with lived experience but those are often easily overcome... and the benefits far outweigh the challenges.’

**Involvement Consultant**

## Lived Experience Involvement Consultants

In 2021 Revolving Doors appointed two Lived Experience Involvement Consultants from our membership. These roles upskill lived experience individuals who have worked with Revolving Doors for some time, preparing them to move into work elsewhere, creating a pathway to employment. The roles are designed to provide support and training to new Revolving Doors members with a particular focus on member well-being.

The first two consultants have been in post for a year and have both secured paid NHS roles.

Revolving Doors will continue to develop the Involvement Consultant roles, and aims to transition one of the two posts as an external facing role focused on project design and delivery. The second role will continue to focus on membership support.

‘It is a clear step up from being a lived experience member...that last step before getting work.’

**Staff member**

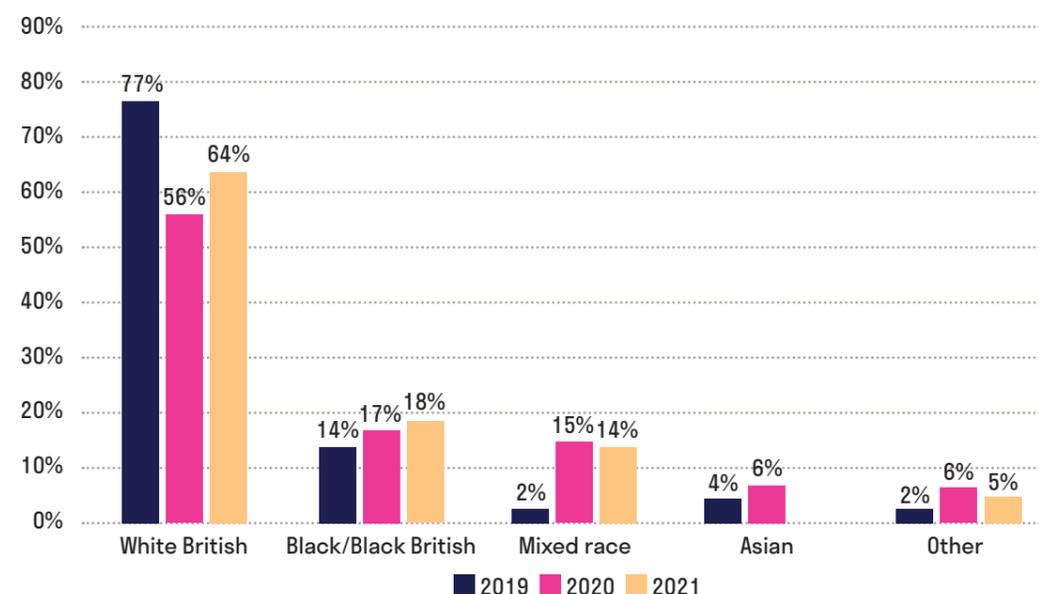
‘I have gained confidence... a whole new set of skills... (developing) the training has allowed me to see the world through others eyes.’

**Involvement Consultant**

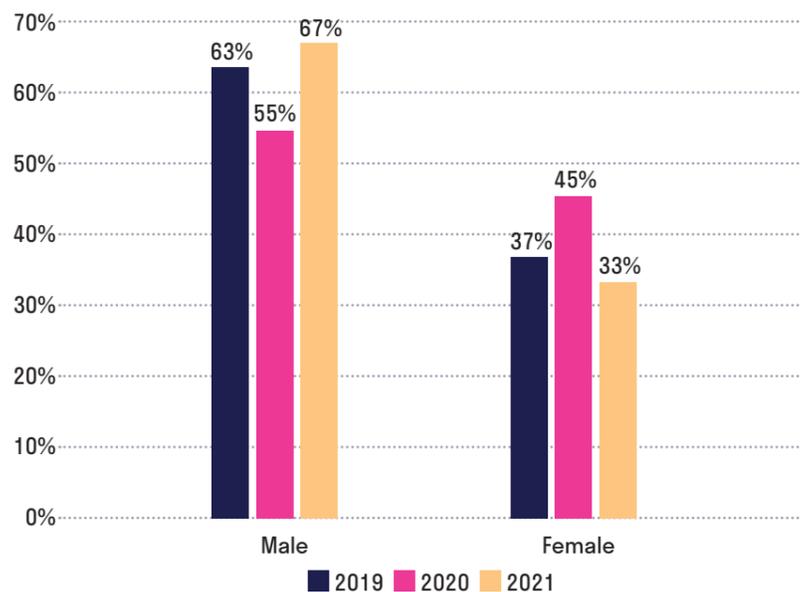
## Our changing membership

We are continually striving to ensure that our members reflect those who are in the revolving door

### Comparison of the ethnicities of members who joined between 2019 and 2021



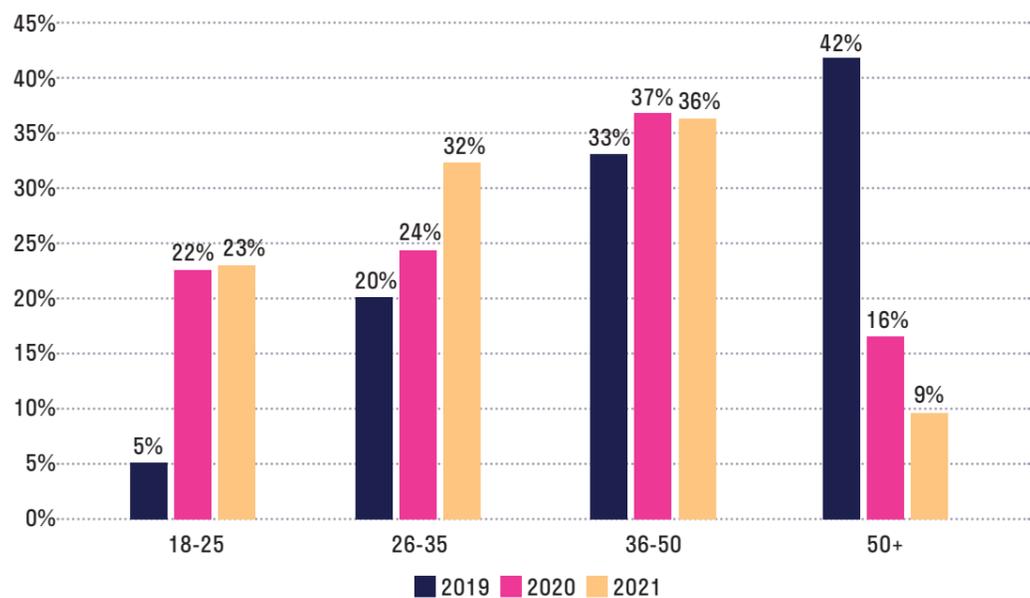
### Comparison of the gender split of members who joined between 2019 and 2021



'Not only do I have a voice which is actually listened to, not just by the charity, by government ministers which is really unique. But also by having a forum to share my experiences with other women who have been through the same thing has been really beautiful and I think the bonds you form in this are kind of lifelong really. I think it's incredible.'

Lived Experience Member, Women's Forum

### Different age-groups of members who joined between 2019 and 2021



## The New Generation Young Adults Forum

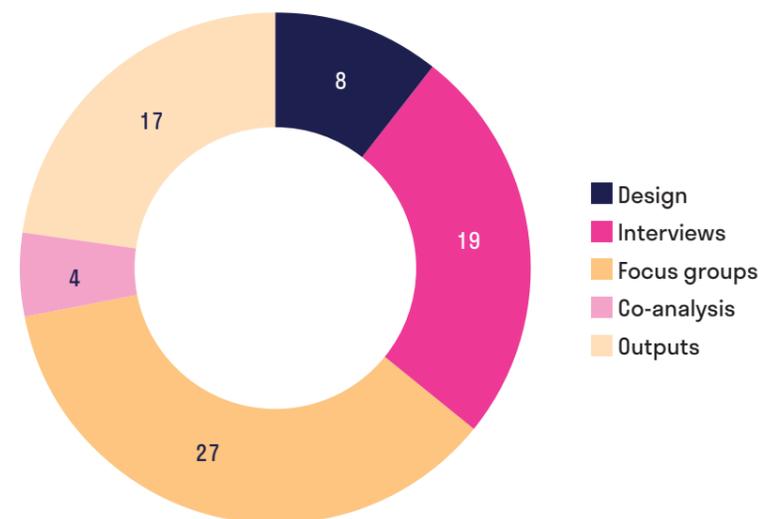
In 2019 we introduced a new young adult forum, developing a range of reports which reflect their experiences of the criminal justice system such as school exclusions, the care system, the policing of young people and their experiences of racism and prejudice. From 2022 the group will become part of our core lived experience programme

- Between March 2020 and October 2021, we held over 100 forums with our members.
- 94 members attended these different types of forums between March 2020 and October 2021
- 12 different members were involved in three different internal recruitment activities between March 2020 and October 2021, sitting on panels when we were recruiting for our new Chief Executive, Policy Manager and Membership Engagement Coordinator.
- We held 20 different types of training for our members between March 2020 and October 2021. This included podcast training, peer research training and parliamentary training. This training was attended by 41 different members, some of whom attended several of the options available.
- There were 75 different sessions completed as part of our research and evaluation activity, involving 82 different members.

'It's lifted my confidence no end. It's turned my life around. I mean, we were written off by the system. Not only were we damaged by the system, we were written off by the system and could never have proper jobs. Made to feel like absolute crap on the ground that someone has stood on, and look how far we have come and what we're doing now.'

Lived Experience Member

### Number of different research and evaluation activities completed by members between March 2020 and October 2021



'The feeling of being listened to and your voice and what you say are equally important. We are well supported, we're treated with respect and we are treated as valued members of Revolving Doors.'

Lived Experience Member

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