

Women in the Criminal Justice System (CJS)

Overview

Women are a minority in each stage of the CJS.



Whilst women are a minority in the CJS, those in contact often have complex needs that criminal justice agencies cannot tackle alone.

Almost **60%** of women in custody and supervised in the community have experienced **domestic violence**.*

Women under community supervision and in custody with an assessment are **twice** as likely to have a **mental health need** than men*.

*of those with an assessment, 30 June 2017

An estimated **24-31%** of female offenders have **dependent children** (Women cautioned or convicted in 2012)

Almost **half (48%)** of female prisoners said they committed their offence to **support the drug use** of someone else compared with **22%** of male prisoners. (2005/06 prisoner survey)

Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) women are over-represented in the CJS and experience even worse outcomes than those for other women; a 'double disadvantage'.



Early Intervention: Fewer women coming into the criminal justice system

There are opportunities to intervene earlier to identify and address vulnerabilities that lead to offending and, where appropriate to do so, divert women away from the CJS.

The number of female offenders given out of court disposals (OOCs) has **declined** at a **greater rate** than the fall in arrests (also the case for men).

Adult Women

- 23% Decline in arrests, since 2012/13
- 53% Decline in cautions, since 2013
- 70% Decline in PNDs, since 2013

(to 2017)

About **1 in 5** of those engaging with **liaison and diversion** schemes are women. (2016/17)

Over **half** of female defendants are prosecuted by bodies other than the police.

Body	Women	Men
Police	44%	77%
TVLA	31%	5%
DVLA		
Local Authorities		
Other		

(2017)

Shoplifting accounts for a **substantial** proportion of sentences given to women for indictable/triable either way offences. (2017)

Gender	Percentage
Women	43%
Men	19%

Community Solutions: Fewer women in custody (especially on short-term sentences) and a greater proportion of women managed in the community successfully

There are a number of women who, provided they were given the right support, could be more safely and effectively managed in the community.

About **9 in 10** women in prison on remand or serving <12m are **low/medium risk of serious harm***.

*of those with an assessment, 30 June 2017

Almost **three quarters (72%)** of women sentenced to custody were sentenced to **six months or less**, compared with **56%** of men. (2017)

Gender	Percentage
Women	72%
Men	56%

Treatment and residential requirements appear **underused**, given assessed needs.

Treatment	Assessed Need	Requirement (2017)
Mental Health Treatment	22%	1%
Drug Treatment	32%	9%
Alcohol Treatment	29%	5%
Residential	33%	<1%

*Proportion of women serving a court order with assessed need in this area. Proportion of adult women given this requirement, 2017.

Among similar female offenders, those given a court order are **5 percentage points** less likely to reoffend **within one year** than those given a **short custodial sentence**.

Released from prison or commencing a court order in 2008 to 2011

Outcomes on release from prison are poor.

Between April and end Dec 2017, **39%** of women allocated to **CRCs and NPS** were entering unsettled accommodation on release.

The **reoffending rate** on release from prison remains **too high**, particularly following short sentences.

Release Type	Women	Men
All releases from custody (April to June 2016)	56.1%	47.3%
Releases following <12m sentence	70.7%	62.9%

Reflecting the type of sentences women receive, about **3 in 5 women recalled** are recalled after serving a short sentence (<12m), about **2 in 5 men**. (2017)

Better Custody: Better conditions for those in custody

The impact on women in custody and their families can be significant.

The rate of **self harm** incidents in prison is nearly **5 times** as high for women than men. (2017)

Only around **1 in 4** imprisoned **mothers** reported that their **children lived** with their partner during their imprisonment, compared with around **9 in 10** imprisoned fathers. (2003 and 2004 prisoner surveys)

About **650** women are held more than **100 miles** from home (out of a population of c.3,900). (31 May 2018)