



Jenny Earle, Programme Director,
Reducing Women's Imprisonment
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Welcome to the Summer edition of our quarterly news bulletin.

This issue has a focus on women offenders. It is well documented that women offenders have complex needs and that sending them to prison can have devastating effects on not only the women but also their families.

This bulletin showcases examples of innovative commissioning approaches and effective work with women in, or on the margins of, the criminal justice system.

Academy News

NEW! Commissioning Learning tool

The Academy has just launched a new commissioning learning tool - **Introduction to Commissioning**. This eLearning module is intended as an introduction for those who will be commissioning public services at both national and local level and is designed to help promote a shared commissioning language across the public sector. Visit the Academy [website](#) to find out more.

Academy Learning Groups

Do you have a topic that would work well in a cross sector learning group environment? We are considering **Victim Services** as a topic and if you would like to be involved or have any suggestions for other topics please [email](#) us.

Manchester Academy Evening Seminar

Our next event in Manchester is on Monday, 21 July and is focussing on **Offenders and Welfare Reform**, featuring Tim Conway, Disadvantaged Groups Policy Manager at the Department for Work and Pensions.

The seminar will focus on why the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) are reforming welfare and the case for Social Justice. Further details can be found on the Academy [website](#).

Feedback

If you have any comments or suggestion about our news bulletins or any other Academy services please [email](#) us.

Editors' Comments

Thank you to our Guest Editor for this issue -
Jenny Earle, Programme Director for
Reducing Women's Imprisonment at the
Prison Reform Trust



Jenny Earle,
Programme Director,
Prison Reform Trust

I welcome the opportunity to guest edit this Summer edition of the Academy for Justice newsletter on women offenders. This was prompted by publication of the Prison Reform Trust's Brighter Futures report at the end of March, which profiles innovative approaches to reducing women's offending that bring together police, probation, health and women's services to help women turn their lives around. The report was published as part of our programme to reduce women's imprisonment, generously supported by the Pilgrim Trust.

The women's prison population in England and Wales more than doubled between 1995 and 2010, from 1,979 to 4,267. Recently the numbers have declined a little – from 4,279 women in April 2012 to 3,844 in April 2014. However, across the UK, more than 13,500 women are imprisoned each year - most of them for non-violent offences. Women are much more likely than men to enter prison to serve short custodial

sentences, which have the worst reoffending rates, and are more likely than men to be in prison under sentence for a first offence. There is evidence that women respond well to community interventions and that most of the solutions to women's offending lie outside prison walls, in treatment for addictions and mental health problems, safe housing, education and employment and debt management.

Because women comprise a small minority of people going through the criminal justice system there is a risk of overlooking their particular needs, and the different drivers to their offending, unless a conscious effort is made to factor these in to policy, service design and funding decisions. Although there is now widespread acceptance of the need for a distinct approach to women offenders, the resourcing of women's centres, services, and interventions remains uneven, intermittent and unsatisfactory.

Our *Brighter Futures* report is aimed at those responsible for commissioning and delivering

services to rehabilitate offenders, reduce crime and support victims. It makes the case for multi-agency commissioning and pooling budgets across departments and agencies to achieve more integrated provision for people with complex needs. Whilst many people who enter the criminal justice system have unmet psychological, social care and health needs, this is particularly true of women.

There are significant differences between women and men in the criminal justice system, including:

- *their patterns of offending* - women are more likely to commit acquisitive crimes and less likely to commit serious and violent offences. Theft offences accounted for nearly



half of all women sentenced to custody in 2013, compared to less than a quarter of men;

- *impact of relationships* - women's offending is often linked to violent, abusive and coercive relationships in which they are trapped;
- *patterns of substance use* - women in prison report higher rates of opiate use (e.g. heroin and crack cocaine) and use of (legally or illegally obtained) prescription drugs, and their offending is commonly linked to a partner's drug use;
- *responsibility for children* - women are more likely to be primary carers of dependent children, including as lone parents. In 2010, 17,000 children were separated from their mothers by imprisonment and for most of them it was the first lengthy separation;
- *health inequalities* - women have higher rates of self-harm and eating disorders, their rates of depression and anxiety are twice as high as those for men, they are more likely to have symptoms associated with post-traumatic stress disorder and are more likely than men to have a mental illness;
- *the impact of human trafficking* - women are vulnerable both to sexual exploitation and to coercion into criminal activity.

It is particularly important to recognise the links between

women's experience of domestic violence and sexual violence and their offending. An understanding that the first contact a domestic violence victim may have with the police is as a suspect – arrested for suspected shoplifting for example – should inform police training, arrest and prosecution policy and the way she is treated. It may be her first opportunity to disclose her situation and to obtain help. If services for victims and offenders are not coordinated in this way, the likelihood is she will reoffend and the damaging cycle will continue.

On 1 June 2014 section 10 of the *Offender Rehabilitation Act 2014* commenced, requiring the Secretary of State for Justice to ensure that arrangements for the supervision or rehabilitation of offenders identify any specific provision for women. As a result, the Ministry of Justice has included minimum requirements for those tendering for the Community Rehabilitation Company contracts, requiring providers to 'give female offenders the option, where practicable, of (i) having a female supervisor/responsible officer; (ii) attending meetings or appointments in a female-only environment; and (iii) of not being placed in a male-only environment for unpaid work or attendance requirements'. This is a welcome foothold for women's services.

In a House of Lords [Short Debate on Custodial Sentences](#)

[for Women](#) on 26 June the Minister Lord Faulks reiterated the Government's commitment to reducing women's imprisonment and ensuring women's specific needs are met, expressing the hope that section 10 "*will be something of a catalyst*".



So as we navigate our way through this changing commissioning landscape, it is timely to consider examples of innovative commissioning approaches and effective work with women in, or on the margins of, the criminal justice system. In this issue of the Newsletter you will find the following contributions:

- Clare Jones has been pivotal to the development of the largest and one of the longest-established women's centres in the UK, world renowned for innovative practice and excellent outcomes for women involved in their services. She is an advocate of integrated local commissioning underpinned by an evidence-based women's strategy. As National Lead for WomenCentre, her advice is often sought on how to achieve successful multi-agency commissioning for women.

- Local authorities have a key role in delivering the services that can make the difference for women at risk of (re) offending. Alice Kavanagh, Community Safety Commissioning Manager for Westminster City Council describes why and how the London Tri-borough commissioned a new service for short-sentenced prisoners, including a specific service for women, while Jade Holvey of Lambeth's Community Safety Service, describes how co-operative commissioning, partnership working and joint funding has led to the opening of a new women's centre in the London borough with the highest rate of female reoffending.
- Dr Annie Bartlett, an expert in women's mental health, highlights the need for all criminal justice and health services to be both trauma-informed and gender-aware. Violence and abuse at the hands of a man who professes to love her, in the context of intimate

relationships, is the most common source of trauma for women. Dr Bartlett also shares helpful insights as a researcher about the challenges of evaluating interventions for women offenders.

- Developments for women offenders in Scotland are described by Beth Macmaster, Planning and Development Officer for Glasgow Community Justice Authority and offer a useful comparator. Of particular interest is the design of a system to track and measure the cost-benefits of the new women's justice centre and 'put women at the heart of funding decisions'.

In researching the *Brighter Futures* briefing, I was both impressed and inspired by the number and range of innovative partnerships between police, local women's services and other agencies that are working together to provide constructive community solutions for women involved in low level offending. This brings enormous benefits

not



only to women themselves, but also to their children and to communities as a whole. However, we need a more even spread of these initiatives across England and Wales and we need much more routine use of multi-agency commissioning for women.

More information about the Prison Reform Trust's work to reduce women's imprisonment, and the report *Brighter Futures*, is available on the website www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/women

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Sign up to the monthly Prison Reform Trust Newsletter on our website
www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/women

NEW! Introduction to Commissioning elearning course

This course is free to Academy members and offers an introduction to commissioning public services at both national and local level.

By the end of the 45 minute course you will be able to: Understand the four stages of the commissioning cycle; Identify the benefits commissioning could bring when applied to public services; Understand how to apply good commissioning practice in your role; Find further information and guidance about commissioning

For more details please visit the Academy website

WomenCentre and multi-agency commissioning



*Clare Jones
National Lead
WomenCentre*

WomenCentre in Calderdale and Kirklees, West Yorkshire provides a one-stop shop of services and activities to improve the wellbeing and safety of women and their families. It has centres in Halifax and Huddersfield and a satellite centre in Dewsbury as well as widespread community-based outreach programmes.

Women come to WomenCentre through a number of different routes – via Probation, Courts, Children’s Social Care, GPs, police, domestic violence referrals and many others. Their needs are often multiple and complex, and where they have been unacknowledged and unmet the consequences can become ever more serious. WomenCentre provides an integrated and holistic service that:

- Helps women escape dependency on drugs and alcohol
- Ensures the safety of women and children from violence and abuse
- Supports women to transform their own mental and physical health
- Gets women learning, volunteering and moving out of poverty

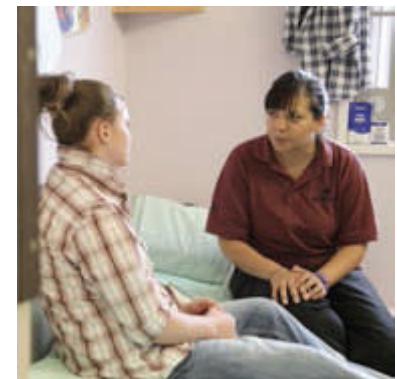
It provides a resource for women at every stage in their lives, offering preventive and resilience-building approaches, alongside information and advice, specialist interventions and casework, counselling and therapies, advocacy and life skills courses.

We support 3,500 women each year, as well as 520 children and young people either directly or indirectly (through improved parenting). *Women at the Centre*, an impact report on our services published by the Centre for Welfare Reform in 2011 found that:

- Reoffending rates were reduced to less than 5%
- Almost all the women reported a significant improvement in their life as a whole, quantifying this as an average 66% improvement from when they first engaged
- 80% of women surveyed showed substantial improvements in their mental wellbeing
- There were improvements across many other dimensions – relationships, work, housing, neighbourhood, money, physical health and relationships with their children.

Evolve, a core WomenCentre service commissioned by West Yorkshire Probation Trust, works

directly with women in the criminal justice system, including those on court orders. Performance monitoring from the last 6 months shows that at least 83% of the women Evolve works with complete their order successfully, whilst at least 85% of women on community sentences achieve improved scores in relation to the needs identified in their supervision plan.



Betty’s story

Betty, aged 47, was a long-term heroin user who was referred to Evolve after being charged with theft, having a history of shoplifting to fund her heroin use. Her abusive partner was also a heroin addict and forced her to have sex with his friends for money to buy drugs. At WomenCentre she was supported to access counselling, health care, and rebuild her life. She said "I have tried to come off heroin

before but no one ever looked at why I got into it in the first place and now I have left my partner and am coming to WomenCentre I am starting to look at my past. I have been on the methadone programme for longer than ever and feel that I am over the worst. I haven't needed to steal and am really determined to stay well. I have never had support like this before."

Currently WomenCentre has 42 separate funding streams from numerous commissioning areas, including the Police and Crime Commissioner, Clinical Commissioning Group, local authority (both mental health and Children and Families services), Home Office, and Probation Trust. Opportunities to deliver services under the Transforming Rehabilitation programme will be a separate funding stream. Revenue sources also include charitable trust grant funding, independent funders and other fundraising activity. This diversity enables WomenCentre to remain independent and sustainable and to keep its focus on all aspects of a woman's life. However there is a price to pay in meeting so many separate monitoring and accounting requirements that relate to disparate commissioner and funder objectives and systems.

WomenCentre has long advocated for an integrated approach to local commissioning. Co-commissioning delivers contract management efficiencies as well as a better framework for capturing multiple outcomes, the hallmark of our service delivery model. In my experience this is best achieved where a 'women's strategy' is developed across

"Women's community services are a cost-effective alternative to custody: at a cost of less than 5% the cost of a prison place per women, alternatives to custody provide a strong economic argument for investment and value for money."

Women's Community Services – A Wise Commission
New Economics Foundation, 2012

commissioning bodies, based on a shared understanding of the multiple and compound issues experienced by women in need, a common commitment to women-specific provision, and agreement to shared funding of an integrated service model. The strategy requires an underpinning evidence base which includes local data on domestic violence, mental health, including self harm and suicide, substance misuse, child protection and safeguarding, maternal and sexual health, child health and mental health, homelessness, debt, employment and skills, convictions and reoffending patterns.

Leaders and commissioners across Calderdale are working with WomenCentre towards single commissioning for vulnerable women. An evidence base of the needs of women was developed for the area's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and some rationalisation of contracts was achieved. For example the separate domestic violence and counselling funding delivered through the Primary Care Trust was combined and commissioners from public health and children's care services now share and review details of four contracts supporting children and young women. The local authority collaborated with us to hold a multi-agency "What Women

Need" consultation event. This opened up very productive conversations and linked WomenCentre provision with local early intervention and prevention strategies for both safeguarding and health and wellbeing.

However, this has not yet delivered the integrated local Women and Girls Strategy that we need. To date, WomenCentre has retained many of its core contracted services but where service level agreements continue to be replaced by commissioning, we anticipate that the lack of a women's strategy will lead to the loss of some of our women-specific services to generic contracts.

The local solutions provided by women centres can best be supported strategically and financially through joined-up approaches to commissioning. This may be through pooled funding arrangements, commissioner alignment, community budgets or place-based approaches. However the starting point for any of this needs to be recognition of "what works for women." Whilst there is a consistent body of evidence to support such an approach, and helpful legal underpinning in the public sector equality duty, gendered commissioning is still the exception in many areas.

WomenCentre has benefited from increased gender-awareness among some commissioners, from women's champions amongst local council members to senior managers within partner organisations, including housing and probation. As a result of women-specific commissioning, WomenCentre successfully bid for and now runs a Women's Mental

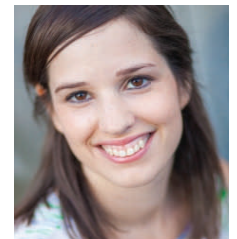
Health and Wellbeing contract on behalf of the Clinical Commissioning Group and local authority, and the Gender Specific Services for Women Offenders contract for the Probation Trust. Both enable us to deliver services that can transform women's lives.

Commissioning in silos is rarely compatible with the delivery of

holistic women-focused provision. By facilitating integrated, gender-aware multi-agency commissioning, we can unlock the potential of services like WomenCentre and deliver real change for women, their families, and the wider community.

Clare Jones
National Lead
WomenCentre

Reducing women's reoffending in London



*Alice Kavanagh
Community Safety
Commissioning
Manager
Westminster City
Council*

Against a backdrop of increasing reoffending rates, the Tri-borough local authorities of London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster City Council have recently transformed the services provided to reduce reoffending by our residents. We have recognised that female offenders have different needs to their male counterparts and have commissioned a distinct service to meet these needs.

Role of local authorities in reducing reoffending

Local authorities provide many of the services and pathways that can help turn an offender's life around and therefore local

authorities need to take ownership of the reducing reoffending agenda. It is local authorities who help to tackle the root causes of offending, through the services we run and commission, such as housing, employment support, drug and alcohol treatment and social services. We also facilitate and participate in local partnership working with criminal justice agencies and voluntary sector organisations. In addition, we have the responsibility to ensure that our communities are safe for our residents and businesses.

Through the Community Budgets programme, led by the Department for Communities and Local Government, the Tri-borough local authorities had the opportunity to look at what was being spent across our

three boroughs to address reoffending, understand who our most problematic cohorts of reoffenders were and analyse the effectiveness of the current programmes working with offenders. This work highlighted that there were a plethora of services, all working with different cohorts, funded through different funding sources, with a variety of outcomes to be achieved. We concluded that the focus of resource should transfer to short sentenced prisoners who commit a large proportion of offences across the Tri-borough, have a negative impact on local communities and, at the time, received no supervision upon release from custody.

We decommissioned existing programmes, such as our Drug Interventions Programme and

pooled resources to fund a new approach. (Funding used was predominantly Public Health funding and London Crime Prevention Fund money from the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime). We then designed and developed a specification for a new service, alongside key partners, stakeholders and service users. We commissioned a streamlined service for those in police custody and developed a brand new service offer for Tri-borough short sentenced prisoners.

Distinct service for female offenders

In recognition of the distinct and complex needs that female offenders have, we decided to commission a female specific service separate to the service commissioned for male short sentenced prisoners, in order to provide a holistic, individual 'women-centred' approach to meeting their needs. This approach also ensured that female offenders were not overlooked in a payment by results contract, as they make up a small percentage of the overall cohort (estimated at approximately 7%). There was also a risk that they may become victims of 'cherry picking' by a provider in favour of the male offenders with less challenging and complex needs and who may be more likely to deliver the desired outcome.

In January 2014, we commissioned ADVANCE Minerva to provide support to women sentenced to under 12 months in custody. ADVANCE

Minerva are a long-established Hammersmith-based charity that provide a range of practical and emotional support and advocacy to women offenders and those at risk of offending. The aim of the new project is to reduce reoffending by women receiving short custodial sentences by 10% over 2 years.

The service begins when women are in prison, supporting them through the gates and beyond. Key workers provide specialist assessments, referrals to services such as substance misuse and mental health for those who need them, and through the gate support. Intensive work takes place in the critical two weeks upon release from custody, in order to ensure women released from prison are engaged with local support services that will aid resettlement. There is a focus on building basic life skills, rebuilding relationships with family and friends and group work at the service's centre in Hammersmith to develop peer support, social skills, resilience and empowerment. In short, women are given both the opportunity and support to make positive changes in their lives.

Key workers also have access to a personalised commissioning fund which is a pot of money held by the local authority commissioners. The fund can be used where a client's need cannot be met through existing provision, where the service user does not meet the required threshold, or where the key



worker and service user have come up with an innovative approach to addressing the client's needs. This is in recognition of the fact that offenders do not always meet the eligibility criteria for local services. It enables us to have a better understanding of the needs of service users and will help inform future commissioning of services in the Tri-borough.

What is unique about the ADVANCE Minerva service is that we are now able to provide an end-to-end service for female offenders across the three London boroughs with ADVANCE Minerva being the gateway for all female offenders requiring support. As well as working with those already sentenced, we also fund Minerva to provide an earlier intervention approach to support women arrested and brought to Tri-borough police station custody suites, in order to provide key worker support before their offending escalates.

In recognition of the distinct needs of young adults in the criminal justice system, we also provide a small amount of match-funding to the Transition to Adulthood 3 year pilot run by Minerva, which aims to work with 150 young women (18-24 years old) in the Tri-borough

area who have been stopped by the police, arrested by the police, subject to an anti-social behaviour order or are in police custody. Police officers are being trained to ensure that their work is informed by an understanding of gender and equality issues. We are currently working with Minerva and the Metropolitan Police Service to potentially expand this element of the service to those aged 25 and over. The National Probation Service also fund Minerva to provide additional support to statutory clients.

The future

It is difficult to know what the future for local service provision will look like when the Transforming Rehabilitation changes come into effect. It is positive that those bidding to win the Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) contracts will be required to outline how they will provide a distinct service for female offenders. There is a risk that providing services for this group may prove less attractive to providers because not only do women make up a small

percentage of the overall offending cohort, they have complex needs and often require more intensive support. It is vital that the experience and expertise of specialist women's services, such as ADVANCE Minerva, are not lost and that CRCs consider these services within their supply chains and that local areas are not disincentivised to continue funding these services.

Alice Kavanagh
*Community Safety
Commissioning Manager,
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Mental Health Services for London's women offenders: sensitive and sustainable?



*Annie Bartlett
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London is home to about 13% per cent of the women under Probation supervision in England and Wales and, HMP/YOI Holloway and HMP Bronzefield house around 1,000 women between them - a quarter of all women in prison in England and Wales.

London is a rich city but women at risk of entering the criminal justice system mainly come from marginalised groups and over a third of women in prison

in London are foreign nationals. Many are mothers with day to day responsibility for small children. Many have experience, both as children and adults, of serious violence at home and are vulnerable to violence from partners and sexual exploitation in adult life. A small number are profoundly mentally ill in a way that requires hospitalisation. Many more suffer the mental health consequences of adverse experiences in childhood and respond to the stress of contact

with the criminal justice system and its attendant family upheaval with depression and anxiety.

Mental health services to this needy population of women in the capital are provided by a range of large NHS Trusts, sometimes in combination with Third Sector providers. Primary mental health care and substance misuse services are crucial. Right now, NHS England is working hard with criminal justice agencies to ensure that



women who are caught up in the criminal justice system only come into custody if there is a good reason. Funding for liaison and diversion schemes on the street, in police cells and at courts has increased. Some of these schemes focus on women, including on their need for accommodation rather than custody. In the past, the rates of remand into custody have been higher than for men despite women generally committing minor offences. Women's imprisonment for non-violent offending is also contrary to economic good sense as women's imprisonment costs 15 times more than community supervision.

Commissioners are doing their best in a complex commissioning environment to prioritise women's mental health needs (both as perpetrators of crime but also as victims); women can be neglected as services focus on the men who constitute such a large proportion of the offender population. The small number of women who offend means few practitioners are able to develop expertise in this area. The challenge in the next 12 months is to ensure women's needs are addressed as Transforming

Rehabilitation, the government's attempt to improve community supervision and extend it to short-sentenced offenders, often women, is implemented.

The complexity of women offenders' needs is in part due to their frequent histories of trauma. The recent visit by American expert Stephanie Covington reminded us all to pay attention to this. She highlighted not only the need for trauma informed practice to be part of the mind-set of practitioners, be they criminal justice or health professionals, but also built into the hard and soft "landscaping" of the environments in which we work with women. Her tale of her dentist's chair, where the dentist explained what was happening and allowed the patients to say what frightened and what suited them, will long stay in my mind. As she said, if her dentist can get it right (and there are dentists in prisons) so can we all. She argues, compellingly, that trauma informed environments are essential for women offenders; this enables us to acknowledge the possible relevance of historical trauma, work out what reactivates linked feelings and thoughts and adjust the organisational response accordingly. This proposition clearly inspired participants in her workshops. Her case was even stronger for the evidence of the impact of improving custodial settings. Results from

MCI Framingham in the US suggested that women harmed themselves less and were less violent in a trauma informed prison. It would be a triumph if we had similar data in the UK. Her visit has thrown down a gauntlet to researchers, providers and commissioners to see if we can justify our current and emerging approaches.



Building an evidence base with women offenders is a challenge. Inclusive research in London requires us to be multilingual, culturally competent and able to ask sensitive questions about women's experiences. The distribution of women around 32 London Boroughs and the patchwork quilt of services in their communities, make for small numbers in any one place. This means depth not breadth in research terms; there is real merit in individual and organisational case studies and robust qualitative work. This can be strengthened by identifying meaningful outcome measures. Capitalising on positive relationships in the handful of women's centres, we could get women there involved in building evidence about what works for them. This fits neatly with the philosophy of

empowerment in women's services, building it into the evaluation process as well as service delivery. Service user involvement in NHS research design has moved from tokenism to being an accepted strand of routine inquiry. This requires serious resolve and a push from commissioners/ research funders to embed it in the criminal justice system. Reducing reoffending is bound to be top of the list of outcome measures for the Ministry of Justice but success surely includes staying well, staying out of debt, staying off street

drugs and keeping up contact with your children.

The London Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime has established the London Observatory to inform commissioning with timely, responsive research. They are reaching out to the academic community to ensure synergy between the work of the Mayor's office for Policing and Crime and the best academic work on effectiveness. NHS England has an opportunity, with its new advisory and commissioning structures, to do something similar in relation to

this vulnerable group. In the end, the sustainability of gender sensitive services depends on amassing a defensible evidence base, something not yet achieved in the UK. If this does not happen, a great deal of good will and hard work may be wasted and that would be a shame.

Annie Bartlett
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A gender informed service - Lambeth Council commissioning a new approach



Jade Holvey
Community Safety
Service
London Borough of
Lambeth

Background

Lambeth has the highest rate of female reoffending in London and the 15th highest in the country¹. Each year in Lambeth, nearly 1,000 women are arrested, 10% of whom have a previous arrest history. Data from our custody suites shows that 20% of those identified with a significant mental health issue on arrest are women.

Our response to women involved in or at risk of offending has historically been fragmented, with various interventions and referral points. This was confusing both to them and to practitioners. The majority of our services, including Integrated Offender Management (IOM), Probation and the Youth Offending service, were mixed gender. Concerned that a significant number of women were on the

periphery of offending, including those involved in prostitution, action was needed to prevent them entering the criminal justice system (CJS).

While the need for a new approach to tackle these issues, and enable us to provide more responsive and effective services for women was well recognised, traditional services and commissioning arrangements had not adapted to it. Lambeth has made

significant progress in supporting victims of Violence against Women and



Girls (VAWG) and our services for female offenders needed to learn from this integrated approach. We recognised that by dealing with offenders in a gendered way we could address the drivers behind women's offending and divert them from the CJS as early as possible. If successful, this would create large cost savings across the public sector, ranging from local social service and care budgets to central prison costs to the immeasurable benefits to individuals and families.

Using the evidence base, we have developed a new and innovative service, and through cooperative commissioning and action-based research we hope to truly understand what works for women so this can be applied to future practice and service provision.

Aims of the service

The aim of this service, which is jointly funded by Lambeth Council and the Mayor's Office for Police and Crime (MOPAC)² London Crime Reduction Fund, has been to develop and commission a gender-informed approach to meet the needs of female offenders and those at risk of offending. This involves identifying and supporting all women who

come to the attention of criminal justice agencies in the borough or the specialist prostitution outreach resource that forms part of the service. Those coming through custody suites for acquisitive crime or prostitution-related offences, women in prison, those identified by court diversion workers, those on statutory orders with Probation or Youth Offending and those referred through other routes such as housing, social services or the Police are all included. The Service expects to see around 400 women per year.

The service implements the Corston Review recommendations locally and seeks to address offending behaviour on the basis that, in many circumstances, traditional enforcement activities are likely to be ineffective or counterproductive. The overarching aims are:

- Coproduction with service users and partner agencies to ensure that the service is effective, integrated and grounded;
- Reducing reoffending amongst women;
- Diverting women from the criminal justice system and from custody;
- Preventing family breakdowns as a result of offending or imprisonment;
- Offering holistic support to meet the needs that often drive offending, including domestic and sexual violence;
- Providing one referral pathway and one service from

the first point of contact with the Criminal Justice System

The Beth Centre

Following a competitive tendering process the contract was awarded to a partnership between Women In Prison and Eaves. Women in Prison are the lead partner and have significant expertise in working with women in the criminal justice system whilst Eaves are an experienced violence against women and girls organisation.

The new service, called the Beth Centre, includes:

- A women-only space to foster safety and a sense of community;
- End-to-end pro-active integrated case management including psycho-social interventions focusing on relationships and attitudes;
- Peer mentoring and service-user involvement in service development;
- Effective links to courts to promote robust community sentences and diversion schemes;
- Through the gate prison in-reach and resettlement service;
- Dedicated mental health support;
- Prostitution outreach;
- Group and therapeutic work;
- Parenting and family support work – linked to Lambeth children's social care and troubled families agenda;
- Seconded Probation Officers who undertake statutory work and all Pre-Sentence Reports;
- Co-located Youth Offending

- Officers (YOS); and
- Childcare and crèche arrangements to promote engagement

Case managers, informed by the nine resettlement pathways³ and research on the recognised drivers to women's offending⁴, provide an integrated and individualised case management approach to working with women.

Moving forward

The Beth Centre opened its doors on 2 January 2014. We have secondment arrangements in place with London Probation and co-location arrangements with Lambeth YOS. Importantly, we have a single, streamlined referral pathway providing a gender-informed response to



all women involved in and/or at risk of offending in Lambeth.

Alongside this we have commissioned Revolving Doors to run an action-based research project. This will develop an evidence base of effective practice across the service. A collaborative process will actively engage participants in driving service improvement and identifying areas for development. At the end we hope to truly understand what works for women, and why.

We are anticipating the changes and challenges that the Transforming Rehabilitation agenda will bring and are optimistic that the London Community Rehabilitation Company and National Probation Service will recognise the benefits of our innovative approach and work with us to strengthen this.

By re-designing our services from the ground up, and putting women at the heart of that process, we will deliver a better service for them and their families and deliver savings across the public sector purse.

*Jade Holvey
Violence Against Women and
Girls Programme Manager,
Community Safety Service,
London Borough of Lambeth*

REFERENCE

1. Ministry of Justice
2. The Mayor of London is the London Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC).
3. Accommodation; Employment, Training and Education; Health; Drugs and Alcohol; Children and Families; Finance, Benefits and Debt; Attitudes, Thinking and Behaviour; Women Affected by Abuse and Violence; Women Involved in Prostitution.
4. A Distinct Approach: A guide to working with women offenders (NOMS Women and Equality Group 2012)

Wanted

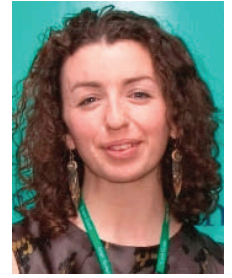
Commissioning Learning Group Topics

Do you have a commissioning topic to explore that would work well in a learning group environment?

The Academy hosts self directed, self supported learning groups led by expert facilitators. We are currently looking to set up further learning groups and are seeking new, relevant commissioning topics to explore.

For more information on how to get involved or to submit a learning group topic for consideration please email academy@noms.gsi.gov.uk

Finding a better way to fund services for women in Scotland



*Beth Macmaster
Glasgow Community
Justice Authority*

Whilst crime has fallen, Scotland's prison population has increased, with the number of women in prison doubling over a decade. A series of commissions, reviews and audits, most recently 2012's Reducing Reoffending in Scotland (Audit Scotland, 2012) and the Report of the Commission on Women Offenders (Angiolini et al, 2012) have sought to make sense of this. A common thread has been criticism of how criminal justice money is spent, and how this perpetuates rather than breaks the cycle of women's imprisonment.

The response to this criticism has been an unprecedented opportunity for genuinely flexible and innovative justice expenditure on women. Although currently under review by the Scottish Government's Reducing Reoffending II Programme, criminal justice budgets have been largely unchanged for almost a decade. Community-based justice services in Scotland are funded by the section 27 grant, a ring-fenced fund allocated to Local Authorities via Community Justice Authorities (CJAs),

covering Criminal Justice Social Work's core service delivery such as court reports and supervision of court orders, and 'non-core' services covering a range of specialist support like addictions services and supported accommodation. Without uplift, in recent years the section 27 grant has mostly been tied up ensuring core service delivery around the courts. Non-core section 27 funding has varied across areas, relating as much to historic service provision as need. To date, there has been little scope to adopt a genuinely different approach for women.



The availability of two new pots of funding are changing this. The Reducing Reoffending Change Fund, one of three from the Scottish Government, augmented by additional funds from the Robertson Trust and Scottish Prison Service (SPS), has seen the development of public social partnerships (PSPs) in the justice field, such as

Shine PSP, a national mentoring service for women released from custody or on community-based orders. PSP's pull together a wide range of third sector and statutory services. They allow commissioning-free space to test different approaches, underpinned by a commitment from statutory partners to support future commissioned services based on evidence generated. By March 2015, Shine will have received £2.7 million.

The Scottish Government has also dedicated £3 million (until March 2015) to implement the Commission on Women Offenders recommendations. This has enabled the development of flexible, innovative services for women, underpinned by the key principles and features set out by the Commission. In some areas, this has delivered new community centres for women and in others 'virtual' multi-agency networks and processes. Some of these services provide gender-specific interventions and support in areas that previously had none. Others are building on already strong models of service delivery.

Freed from the need to link service provision to a system output or statutory requirement, they are providing support to help meet the needs and risks driving women's involvement in the justice system.

Alongside these developments, the policy focus on women has encouraged innovative use of existing resources amongst statutory agencies. For instance, at HMP Greenock, prison officers are delivering through-the-gate support, a creative approach that recognises the role the SPS play in reducing reoffending.

Whilst availability of gender-specific services was previously dictated by women's postcodes and sentences, these new resources are allowing agencies across the system to deliver a genuinely different approach, driven by early identification of, and response to, women's needs rather than deeds.



However, these are all de-facto pilots with short-term funding streams (up to three years). While they offer an opportunity to road-test new flexible approaches, there is no promise of enhanced resources, protected funding or legislative change. In respect of both the Change Fund and Women's Commission funding streams, local areas are expected to develop new sustainable funding routes while the pilots are underway, to ensure

effective practice continues once funding ends.

Simple enough in calmer financial and structural waters – but justice in Scotland is in a state of upheaval. The Scottish Government has confirmed that CJAs – the current delivery route for community justice funding in Scotland – will be abolished in 2016, replaced by a dual-model of enhanced local authority-level control overseen by a new national body. The fine detail of where commissioning, funding allocation and spending decisions will sit in the new structure is unconfirmed.

In response to this uncertainty, the new services are developing creative approaches to support future commissioning options. Glasgow, recipient of £663,000 over two years for delivery of a new women's justice centre, set up a sustainability pathway at project initiation. In addition to national evaluation and local logic-model based outcomes framework and indicators, a separate 'benefits tracking' exercise has been developed. Permission from 15 service users was secured and a detailed chronology of their use of city services developed. These women will be tracked throughout their involvement with the centre and afterwards, through use of social work services, primary and acute NHS services, appearance in police custody and at court and, of course, in prison.

This exercise will enable local justice partners to translate the 'big picture' numbers into specific examples of costs avoided as a result of women

engaging with the new service, indicating where the system as a whole makes savings. The data collection will also develop persuasive stories of qualitative differences in outcomes – e.g. steady engagement with primary care reducing A&E visits, and the impact this has for the woman involved. This approach could provide both the business and human case for doing things differently.

It also overcomes some of the uncertainty about justice delivery structures and commissioning bodies – drawing a straight line instead to the beneficiaries of the new service. However, challenges remain. If evidence of system savings is to support future funding for the service, partner agencies will need to consider whether savings are 'cashable' in real terms and transferable. This second point links to questions about funding streams and pathways. For instance, how can central funding of national courts be re-routed to support small local projects provided by a local authority? Identifying ways to transfer funding and reinvest savings at other points in the system is imperative.

The Scottish Government has provided funding to test improved responses to women who offend. The forthcoming redesign of community justice delivery structures provides the opportunity to put women at the heart of funding decisions.

Beth Macmaster
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**Planning and
Development Officer,
Glasgow Community
Justice Authority**

Academy Events

These events are free and open to Academy members and provide important context for our work as commissioners & providers, open up networks of contacts and promote the role of the Academy amongst participants from other sectors.

If you would like to attend, please ensure you have registered as a member of the Academy prior to requesting a place. Registration is free and only takes a couple of minutes. Please follow this link to the [member registration form](#) on our website

To book your place please email your job title and organisation to Janet at:
academy@noms.gsi.gov.uk

Please note that delegate places are limited and are offered on a first come first served basis

MANCHESTER EVENING SEMINAR

Offenders and Welfare Reform

Monday, 21 July, 2014

featuring

Kirsty Scholefield

**Disadvantaged Groups Team, Social Justice Directorate
Department for Work and Pensions**

This seminar will focus on why the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) are reforming welfare and the case for Social Justice.

Kirsty will discuss the changes being made and how they relate to the offending population (Work Programme, Transforming Rehabilitation, Universal Credit). She will also highlight where offenders fit into the story and stimulate discussion regarding the direction DWP need to take in terms of employment support.

Venue: Manchester Metropolitan University

The Academy is taking a break from events during August but will return in the Autumn with a full programme of events including:

London monthly evening seminars

Annual Conference

Manchester evening seminars

NEW! South West Evening seminars

Further details will be released in due course

Academy Information

The Academy for Justice Commissioning seeks to source and promote excellence in justice commissioning.

By setting standards and raising commissioner capability we will support the transformation of justice services to enable improved effectiveness and increased public confidence in the justice system.

Academy events - delegate feedback

"Content & delivery of the presentations was informative, relevant & thought provoking. "

"Excellent calibre of speakers and a good mix of attendees from all sectors."

"Very good to have an all day event with a range of speakers offering something that was directly relevant to you and giving the opportunity to learn about other areas and meet people with different perspectives."

"All the discussed topics were interesting and very relevant to my job. It was interesting to meet others and make contact."

Excellent speaker, brilliant subject

A selection of past Seminar topics

Criminal Justice Reform: The Future of Police and Crime Commissioners

Corporate Social Responsibility

Personalisation in the Criminal Justice System

Information Sharing for Violence Prevention: the Cardiff Model

Transforming Justice Strategy

Alliance Contracting

Implementing the Public Services (Social Value) Act

Commissioning for Public Health England

A Year in the Life of Police and Crime Commissioners

Integrated Offender Management

Women Offenders

If you would like a full list of presentations or a summary of a particular one please visit the Resources section of our website

www.academyforjusticecommissioning.org.uk

**or contact Janet via email:
academy@noms.gsi.gov.uk**

Academy Strategy Group Members

**Simon Marshall, National Offender Management Service
(Chair)**

Martin Blake, Ministry of Justice (Vice Chair)

Patsy Northern, Department for Health (Vice Chair)

Janet Cullinan, Academy for Justice Commissioning

David Keegan, Legal Aid Agency

**Sally Lewis, Bristol, Gloucestershire & South West
Community Rehabilitation Company**

Caroline Marsh, Caroline Marsh Management Solutions

Tessa Webb, BeNCH Community Rehabilitation Company

Kerry Wood, Legal Aid Agency

Contributions and feedback are most welcome.

If you are interested in submitting comments, relevant information or an article for inclusion in a future edition please contact Janet at academy@noms.gsi.gov.uk

or call Janet on 01733 443 191

Disclaimer

Please note that the views in this bulletin are expressed by individuals and are not necessarily the views of the Academy for Justice Commissioning