



Terms of Reference

Women's Estate Case Advice and Support Panel (WECASP)

HMPPS Women's Team Statement

HMPPS Women's Team supports HMPPS to protect the public and help women lead law abiding and positive lives by working across prisons, probation and with partners to ensure that the specific needs of women are reflected in all that HMPPS does. Our work is informed by research and evidence and by the lived experience of women in the criminal justice system. We aim to be both gender and trauma responsive in all that we do and we seek to work in ways which respect diversity and promote inclusion.

Purpose

The aim of this document is to set out and manage the principles and expectations of the WECASP and its Governance.

Background

The Women's Custodial Estate Review was published on 25 October 2013 and the review recognised the differing needs between male and female offenders and these needs were reflected throughout the recommendations. Implementation of the review's recommendations would allow women offenders, where appropriate, to be held as close as possible to where they will live on release and provide interventions to reduce the risk of re-offending.

The Centralised Case Supervision System for restricted status women and women with complex needs (*PSI 23/2015*) was developed and implemented in 2015 and worked alongside existing offender management, prison processes and Personality Disorder treatment services to provide a co-ordinated approach to their care, management and progression.

As part of its first fundamental review, commissioned by the MOJ, the PSI was converted into a Policy Framework and the system was re-branded to the Women's Estate Case Advice and Support Panel to help reflect the nature of the work.

Principles

The underpinning principle of the WECASP is to provide multidisciplinary support to prisons in the management of a small number of complex individuals within the Women's Estate, who are not progressing in their sentence plan; with the aim of stabilising their behaviour, improving their wellbeing and supporting the surrounding staff groups; to help reduce their risk accordingly, as well as enabling them to progress.

The WECASP is:

A resource to provide additional advice and support to staff in relation to the complex needs of individuals where current care and management approaches are not seeing progression through sentence.

A multidisciplinary opportunity to share good practice and ideas in the effective management of identified individuals

A resource available to all those located in the women's estate irrespective of sentence length or recall status, in line with the referral guiding principles.

The WECASP does not:

Replace the prison's role in the care and management of individuals under existing offender management/prison structures.

Replace the provision for key work or Prison Offender Manager (POM) activity under OMiC

Replicate the Women's Offender Personality Disorder (WOPD) Pathway but rather complements it. Many of the those who are screened in to the pathway will be working towards stabilisation through their participation in WOPD services.

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The underpinning principles of this framework are:

The Prison Group Director (PGD) Women's Estate is responsible for the placement of individuals throughout the Women's Custodial Estate.

The PGD will be supported by advice and recommendations from the WECASP Board

The recommendations will be focused on considering the wellbeing and progression of the WECASP caseload and supportive measures for staff groups.

The HMPPS Women's Team will coordinate the multidisciplinary WECASP Board meetings, undertake a secretariat function and provide relevant data to the PGD and Regional Probation Directors, as required.

The operational management of individuals referred to the WECASP will remain the responsibility of the Governor/Director. The roles and responsibilities of other staff involved in managing the individual (e.g. Prison Offender Manager (POM) and Community Offender Manager (COM)), will be clearly specified in WECASP minutes and the individual case record.

Objectives

A central oversight mechanism is in place for those with complex needs that provides direction for the care and management, and ensuring those categorised as Restricted Status (RS) have access to the most appropriate regimes and interventions in line with their security status

Staff are able to access additional support through the WECASP process to ensure the safety and wellbeing of individuals referred into the arrangements and professionals working closely on the case

To ensure that movement around the women's estate, for individuals on the WECASP caseload, balances both the best interests of the individual and operational requirements. Individuals within the women's estate should be held as close to home as is possible, with access to the right interventions and opportunities for meaningful resettlement.

Care and management approaches to individuals on the WECASP caseload are formulation focused and trauma responsive

There are effective transitions between prison and community staff, to ensure continuity of support

Positive relationships with stakeholders, such as the Parole Board and NHS, are formed and maintained to support the delivery of the outcomes from the WECASP process

Core Board Membership

- The Head of Women's Team
- Prison Group Director representatives
- Women's Estate Psychology service, Lead Psychologist
- Head of Enhanced Case Management Team
- HMPPS Health and Care Partnerships Team, including NHS England & Improvement partners from the Joint OPD Team
- WECASP case manager and operational support
- Long Term and High Security Prison Group (RS women only)

All core board members and prison establishment representatives (Public and Private) will be required to sign a confidentiality statement.

Where board members are unable to attend, they can send a delegate to attend on their behalf.

The group may consult other parties and stakeholders, as required, such as:

- Offender Managers (Community and/or Prison), personal officers or key workers
- WEPS prison-based psychologists
- Mental Health Casework Section
- Health and Social Care Lead for Women's Estate
- Safer Custody Representative from Women's Estate regional office team
- National Transgender Lead
- Chaplaincy
- Diversity and Inclusion representatives
- Learning Disability representatives
- Treatment and / or Intervention managers

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- WOPD operational and clinical practitioners
- Specialist Practitioners including those with specialisms in areas such as autism or neurodiversity
- Consultant Psychiatrists
- Safeguarding representatives
- Health and Social Care representatives
- HMPPS Residential (AP/BASS) and Accommodation Support Services
- National Approved Premises Team
- Representatives from Welsh service deliveries, where applicable
- Social Workers for care leavers
- Youth Custody Service (YCS), *YCS transition cases only*
- Youth Offender Team (YOT) workers, *YCS transition cases only*
- Representatives from Secure Training Centres (STC) or Secure Children's Home (SCH), *YCS transition cases only*
- Any other professionals or advocates involved in the case management and/or support

It is expected that those who attend the board meetings are subject matter experts with delegated authority to make provisional decisions in order to help case progression. Attendees will be expected to provide updates on any required actions and share information to keep a trauma and formulation focused direction to meetings.

Frequency

The WECASP Board meets monthly and the board meetings are held in three geographical locations, covering the North (Leeds), the South (London) and the Midlands (Stafford) areas of the country. Where a physical meeting cannot take place then telephone conference facilities will be utilised.

Additional multi-disciplinary meetings may take place either in person or via telephone conference. The Women's Team will be represented at all multi-disciplinary meetings for WECASP cases.

Attendance

Attendance in person is encouraged, for those people for whom this is not possible teleconference or virtual meeting attendance facilities will be provided. In exceptional operational situations where a physical meeting is not possible, remote meetings will take place using teleconference or other virtual meeting facilities.

Chair

The WECASP is chaired by the Deputy Director / Head of HMPPS Women's Team, or a nominated senior manager.

Information sharing

Information Sharing Agreements (ISAs) are in place under existing agreements between HMPPS, contracted prisons, NHS/E and the CRCs. Sharing information is a fundamental factor in risk management and the safety of the individuals. The sharing of knowledge is essential to facilitate decision-making, collaborative working and efficient communications in the care and management of the women.

Release of information must be strictly on a need-to-know basis. The agenda items and minutes of the WECASP meeting should not be photocopied or the contents shared outside of the meeting without the prior agreement of the Chair. Any information shared, including emails, should be marked OFFICIAL: SENSITIVE.

Secretariat

The Secretariat function and is provided by HMPPS Women's Team

Governance

The MOJ own the WECASP Policy Framework however the meeting is accountable to two SRO's, the Prison Group Director (PGD), who is responsible for placement of individuals throughout the women's estate and the Deputy Director of HMPPS Women's Team who is responsible for the work of female offenders across probation, prisons and HQ.

Review

The MOJ own the Policy Framework and will commission policy reviews however the WECASP or MOJ may seek to commission further auditing, monitoring or qualitative exercises outside of any policy review period.