



Policy name: Women's Policy Framework

Re-issue Date: 19 December 2024

Implementation Date: 26 June 2021

Replaces the following documents which are hereby cancelled*: Guidance on Working with Women in Custody and Community (2018)

Introduces amendments to the following documents: None

Action required by:

X	HMPPS HQ	X	Governors
X	Public Sector Prisons	X	Heads of Group
X	Contracted Prisons	X	The Probation Service
	Under 18 Young Offender Institutions	X	Other providers of Probation and Community Services
X	HMPPS Rehabilitation Contract Services Team		

Mandatory Actions: All groups referenced above must adhere to the Requirements section of this Policy Framework, which contains all mandatory actions.

For Information: By the implementation date Governors¹ of Public Sector Prisons and Contracted Prisons must ensure that their local procedures do not contain the following:
Governors must ensure that any new local policies that they develop because of this Policy Framework are compliant with relevant legislation, including the Public-Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act, 2010).

Section 6 of the Policy Framework contains guidance to implement the mandatory requirements set out in section 4 of this Policy Framework. Whilst it will not be mandatory to follow what is set out in this guidance, clear reasons to depart from the guidance should be documented locally. Any questions concerning departure from the guidance can be sent to the contact details below.

In this document the term Governor also applies to Directors of Contracted Prisons

Scope

This framework applies to staff and leaders working with women in prison and with women in contact with probation:

- HMPPS probation services for women (Including CAS1 Approved Premises provided directly or by contract)
- Contracted services for women in the community
- HMPPS public sector prisons, in the women's estate
- Contracted prisons with female populations

It does not apply to:

- HMPPS run Immigration Removal Centres

- Under 18 Young Offender Institutions
- Prisons in the male estate working with prisoners who identify as women

How will this Policy Framework be audited or monitored:

Probation Service – compliance is monitored regionally by Regional Probation Directors and Regional Women’s Leads

Contracted Services for women in the community – compliance will be monitored regionally by the regional Head of Community Integration and the Regional Women’s SPO lead.

HMPPS Public Sector prisons, in the women’s estate – compliance will be monitored by the Women’s Group PGD team and Prison Governors will work together to ensure that the principles in this policy are being followed in public prisons.

Contracted prisons with female populations: monitoring of compliance will be through the standard contract managing process.

Quality assurance is provided by HMPPS Performance, Assurance, Evidence, Risk and Resilience Group.

Resource Impact: This policy framework describes and mandates the application of the shared core principles for working with women in a Gender-Specific, Trauma-Informed (GSTI) manner. The accompanying operational guidance uses a framework throughout the document to demonstrate practice suggestions and best practice examples of how the GSTI principles can be delivered operationally. Other than requirements to take reasonable steps to apply the principles, the policy framework does not add any prescriptive new mandatory actions. This strikes a balance between setting clear and high aspirations, without imposing rigid new requirements that have resource impacts. Leaders have the discretion to work towards the possible practice suggestions where local resources allow.

Associated Documents List:

- Sentence Management Policy Framework
- Child Safeguarding Policy Framework
- Domestic Abuse Policy Framework
- Enforcement of Community Orders, Suspended Sentence Orders and Post-Sentence Supervision Policy Framework
- Probation Court Services Policy Framework
- Home Visit Policy Framework
- Licence Conditions Policy Framework
- Management of Young Adults Policy Framework
- National Standards
- OSP Practitioner Guidance
- Polygraph Examination Licence Condition Policy Framework
- Foreign National Offenders on Licence, PSS and IS91 Policy Framework
- Release on Temporary Licence Policy Framework
- Sentence Planning - expired but still valid PI 13/2014
- The Care and Management of Individuals who are Transgender Policy Framework
- The Information Sharing Policy Framework
- PI 04/2019 Unpaid Work
- Duty to Refer Policy Framework.
- Human Trafficking and Modern Day Slavery Policy Framework (When published)

- S42 Care Act (Adult Safeguarding)
- PI 04/2016 Determining Pre-Sentence Reports
- Approved Premises Policy Framework
- Community Accommodation Service (CAS): Tier 2 Policy Framework
- Post Sentence Supervision Requirements Policy Framework
- Pre-Release and Resettlement Policy Framework
- Managing the Custodial Sentence Policy Framework.
- Discretionary Friday/Pre-Bank Holiday Release Scheme Policy Framework.
- Pregnancy, MBUs and Maternal Separation in Women's Prisons Policy Framework
- Women's Estate Case Advice and Support Panel (WECASP) Policy Framework
- PSI 39/2011 - Categorisation and Re-categorisation of women prisoners
- Searching Policy Framework
- Use of Force Policy
- Categorisation PF (pending)

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Deputy/Group Director sign-off: Alan Scott, Executive Director, North West Greater Manchester & Women

Approved by OPS for publication: Helen Judge, Chair, Operational Policy Sub-board

Revisions

Date	Changes
26 June 2021	With effect from 26 June 2021 all Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) contracts will be terminated, with the responsibility for all offender management activity transferring to the Probation Service.
17 December 2024	Following a full and comprehensive review, this new Policy Framework describes and mandates the application of HMPPS core principles to support working with women in prison and in contact with probation.

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1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 This Policy Framework describes and mandates the application of the HMPPS core principles to support working in a Gender Specific, Trauma-Informed (GSTI) way with women in prison and in contact with probation. The accompanying Operational Guidance supports front line staff and leaders to apply the principles in practice.

2. EVIDENCE

- 2.1 The Ministry of Justice *Female Offender Strategy Delivery Plan (2023)* recognises that women in contact with the criminal justice system are amongst the most vulnerable in society. Many women experience trauma, domestic abuse, mental health problems or have a history of alcohol and drug misuse. Factors that can lead men and women to commit crime, and to reoffend, can vary significantly. An approach that takes account of the different needs and backgrounds of women is most effective in addressing their offending behaviour.ⁱ
- 2.2 The Principles in this Policy Framework and the associated Operational Guidance were developed through extensive consultation with HMPPS Women's Group leaders, with a panel of women with lived experience of the criminal justice system, with approximately 200 operational staff working with women in prison and on probation, and with approximately 90 subject matter experts spanning most areas of HMPPS policy. Third sector partners specialising in work with women in the criminal justice system were also consulted on the principles.
- 2.3 'Better Outcomes for Women' summarises the best available evidence of 'what works' in helping women who offend to live safe, offence-free lives, promoting desistance, managing the effects of domestic abuse, and helping women to exit sex work.

3. OUTCOMES

This Policy Framework aims to:

- 3.1 Describe the core principles and mandates that reasonable steps are taken to apply them when working with women in HMPPS.
- 3.2 Support the Female Offender Strategy (2018), Female Offender Strategy Delivery Plan (2023) and the One HMPPS visions by describing our common approach to the care and rehabilitation of women at all stages in their criminal justice journey from court, community solutions, custody and resettlement.
- 3.3 Support equality of opportunity for women, by promoting gender specific, evidence-based services for women in the criminal justice system.
- 3.4 Provide front line services with direction on how to put the principles into practice, through associated Operational Guidance.

4. REQUIREMENTS

- 4.1 Staff working with women in prison and in contact with probation must make every effort to apply the core principles (see section 5) in their work. Guidance on how to apply the principles can be found in the adjoining operational guidance.
- 4.2 Leaders and managers responsible for work with, or decision-making applying to, women in prison and in contact with probation must make every effort to apply the core principles (see section 5) in their work. Guidance on how to apply the principles can be found in the adjoining operational guidance.

5. COMMUNITY

- 5.1 Women should be offered the option of a female Probation Practitioner.
- 5.2 When attending meetings with their Probation Practitioner women should be offered the option of being seen in a women-only environment.
- 5.3 Women should be offered the option of not being placed in an all-male work environment as part of an Unpaid Work requirement.
- 5.4 Women should be offered the option of not being placed in an all-male environment when undertaking any group work.

6. CORE PRINCIPLES FOR WORKING WITH WOMEN

- 6.1 **We aim to provide personalised woman-centred care.**
- a. ***We will adopt a gender-specific, trauma-informed (GSTI) and trauma-responsive approach.*** Many women in the criminal justice system have been victims of much more serious offences than those they are accused of committing, and a majority have experienced trauma in the form of emotional, physical, sexual or domestic abuse. We will make every effort to provide services characterised by the trauma responsive service principles of safety, trustworthiness, choice, collaboration, empowerment and cultural consideration.
- b. ***We will build relationships and work collaboratively with each woman.*** As far as possible, each woman will be involved in the planning and decision-making about her own care and support. We want to help women recognise and understand their individual strengths and aim to empower them make a positive contribution to wider society. Where possible, we aim to provide continuity of relationships between a woman and the HMPPS staff she works with.
- c. ***We will take account of women's family and caring responsibilities.*** We will proactively support women in these roles, whilst considering the best interests of any children involved.
- d. ***We aim to provide holistic support to women.*** Women in the criminal justice system have often experienced multiple disadvantages and therefore benefit from joined-up, multiagency support. Wherever possible, we will work in partnership with health, education, family services, third sector organisations and other partners to create coherent, consistent, and sequenced plans that consider the woman's individual intersecting needs. We aim to create a seamless journey for women from custody into the community.

6.2 We will equip our staff with bespoke training and support for working with women.

- a. We will equip ourselves with specific knowledge and skills for working with women in criminal justice, so that we can work compassionately and effectively with women and their intersecting needs.
- b. Working in an environment with complex individuals can be challenging, but equally rewarding. We recognise the potential emotional impact working with women can have, including the risk of vicarious trauma. We will ensure support is available to help each other remain healthy and resilient.

6.3 We aim to take an evidence-informed approach to service design and interventions.

- a. Wherever possible, we will design and commission our policies, regimes, services and interventions for women around evidence relating to outcomes for women,
- b. We will actively consult women, listen to their voices and co-design with them wherever possible.

7. GUIDANCE

- 7.1 Operational Guidance has been developed to support staff and leaders to apply these principles across the four phases of the criminal justice journey from Court to Community Sentences, to Custody, and Resettlement.

ⁱ From FODP p 3