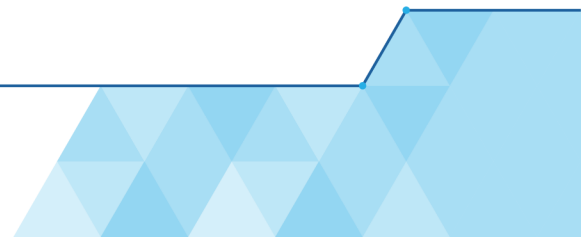




Ministry  
of Justice

# **Women's Justice Board**

## **Terms of Reference**



## **Purpose**

The Women's Justice Board's (WJB) purpose is to reduce the number of **women in prison** and **increase the number supported in the community**.

It will provide the vision and direction on how to reform women's justice **to address the distinct needs of women in or at risk of contact with the criminal justice system (CJS)**.

The WJB's primary initial focus will be on:

- work to intervene earlier, and divert women away, from the criminal justice system where appropriate;
- community solutions to increase the use of robust community sentences and support resettlement from custody including:
  - engagement with sentencers to promote increasing the use of community options, where appropriate; and
  - consideration of approaches such as intensive supervision and problem solving courts and development of alternative models to custody and the role of women's community services
- addressing issues specific to pregnant women and mothers with dependent children in the CJS, including those in prison; and
- reducing the number of young adult women entering the CJS and improving outcomes for them across the CJS, including self-harm amongst young adult women in prison.

Work on each of the Board's priority areas will consider the needs of all women, including any issues arising from their circumstances, as well as the particular needs of women who are both offenders and also victims of sexual or domestic abuse.

## **Responsibilities**

The WJB will:

- Set high-level, national priorities for addressing the needs of women and agree actions to deliver those priorities, ensuring alignment with any priorities set by the Criminal Justice Board and cross-government work on addressing violence against women and girls.
- Ensure that any work to deliver priorities takes a fully trauma informed approach.
- Consider the financial implications of any work to deliver priorities, with an emphasis on identifying cost neutral and low cost options and, where invest-to-save options are proposed, ensuring that they are supported by robust evidence demonstrating VfM. Priorities will need to be delivered within 2025/26 allocations and the settlement following phase 2 of SR25, ensuring affordability, and financial decisions remain the responsibility of ministers.
- Horizon scan to identify new or emerging priorities impacting on women.
- Commission work to the Women's Justice Partnership Delivery Group (PDG) as necessary to deliver its priorities, recognising that many of the solutions are not limited to the criminal justice system and collaboration will be crucial across key government departments, criminal justice agencies and external stakeholders (including the women's community sector).

- Publish a strategic plan by spring 2025.
- Publish an annual report and ad hoc reports on progress against individual Government commitments.

When necessary, consider and respond to other MoJ-led governance fora. The WJB will escalate issues to the Criminal Justice Board as appropriate.

### **Membership**

Core membership as follows (with specialist areas of expertise):

- **Chair** - Lord Timpson, Minister of State for Prisons, Probation and Reducing Reoffending, Ministry of Justice (MOJ)
- Claire Fielder, Director of Youth Justice and Offender Policy, Ministry of Justice (MOJ)
- Dame Vera Baird DBE KC – Wide breadth of relevant experience, including victim focus, particularly important in terms of women who are both victims and offenders
- Michaela Booth, National Head of Participation (patient and family involvement and experience) and Health Promotion Lead at Practice Plus Group Health in Justice division - Professional expertise, including a portfolio of delivering service evaluation to understand the health needs and challenges faced by prisoners, establishing and improving health and wellbeing promotion in prisons, prisoner health literacy awareness and lived experience perspective on the CJS
- Bernie Bowen-Thomson, Chief Executive of Safer Wales – Addressing the specific needs of women in the CJS in Wales, including through delivering whole system approaches and gender and trauma-informed services in prisons and the community at Safer Wales
- Anne Fox, Chief Executive, Clinks – Experience in a wide range of relevant areas relating to the women's voluntary and community sector, gained through developing and leading voluntary sector coalitions through Clinks
- Kate Green, Deputy Mayor of Greater Manchester (GM) for Safer and Stronger Communities - Knowledge in a wide range of relevant subject areas, including in whole system approaches and gender-informed provision gained through a variety of senior leadership roles, including current position in Greater Manchester
- Lady Edwina Grosvenor, Founder and Chair of One Small Thing charity – Expertise in the provision of residential accommodation for women and their children at Hope Street and trauma informed and gender responsive training across the prison estate.
- Dr Tom McNeil, CEO JABBS Foundation (improving lives for women and girls) and previously West Midlands Assistant Police & Crime Commissioner – Multi-agency partnerships in community rehabilitation, court reform and early help for families in crisis, especially for women and girls
- Dr Shona Minson, Research Associate, Faculty of Law, Centre for Criminology, Oxford – Specialist expertise in research and legal matters relevant to women in the CJS, and in-depth knowledge of sentencing, family justice and the impact of maternal imprisonment on children
- Pia Sinha, Chief Executive of Prison Reform Trust – Wide breadth of relevant experience in relevant areas and knowledge of prison-specific issues, gained from leaderships roles in HMPPS and the Prison Reform Trust

- Katy Swaine Williams, freelance consultant, including for Centre for Women's Justice – Wide breadth of relevant experience in research, policy and legal matters, and of developing new approaches to improve outcomes for women and girls in the CJS.

Members will be appointed for an initial 18 months when there will be a review of membership. Existing members may have their appointment extended for a further 18 months following review.

Other attendees can be invited as the agenda requires.

### **Meetings**

Lord Timpson will chair the meeting and the MoJ will provide the Secretariat.

The WJB will meet four times a year. Wherever possible, the agenda and relevant papers will be circulated three weeks in advance of the scheduled meeting.

### **Review arrangements**

The Secretariat will formally review these terms of reference periodically to ensure the arrangements are effective in delivering on the agreed priority areas. Any amendments will be discussed with the WJB and agreed by the Chair.

### **Confidentiality**

MoJ may share confidential information, data and ideas that are at an early stage of development. To encourage free and open discussions, information which is not already in the public domain must not be shared publicly or with other third parties.

Members should not expose drafts or sensitive materials prepared by the Ministry of Justice to third parties before publication.

### **General**

For any queries regarding the WJB, please contact: [womensjusticeboard@justice.gov.uk](mailto:womensjusticeboard@justice.gov.uk).