

Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i'r y [Pwyllgor Cydraddoldeb a Chyfiawnder Cymdeithasol](#) fel tystiolaeth ychwanegol [Profiadau menywod yn y system cyfiawnder troseddol](#)

This response was submitted to the [Equality and Social Justice Committee](#) as additional evidence on [Women's experiences in the criminal justice system](#)

Ymateb gan: HM Prison & Probation Service | Response from: HM Prison & Probation Service



1) Data on the comparative number of women in custody before and after all the applied interventions

Data on the number of women in custody is based on a snapshot taken on a single day, and therefore can be subject to fluctuations depending on release dates. Custodial sentencing trends (see Q3) are therefore likely to provide a stronger illustration of Blueprint impact. However, by way of indication, the number of Welsh women in prison on a single day October 2021 was 226, whereas the figure (based on a snapshot on a single day) in September 2022, was 193. This data suggests there were 33 fewer Welsh women in prison on the specific dates, in September 2022, compared to a single date in October 2021.

2) Data on MOJ funding for Wales (and whether this is specific to women)

- *Funding has been made available from the MoJ for organisations to support women in or at risk of contact with the criminal justice system. On 01 September 2022, the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) announced that up to £24 million will be invested over the next three years across England and Wales to support women in or at risk of contact with the criminal justice system. The first will offer £4 million in each of the financial years 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25 to pay the core costs of women's voluntary sector organisations. This competition will closely follow the model used successfully in the last two financial years. In 2020/21 the regional budget for Wales core cost funding was £193,750 but bids awarded to Wales totalled £237,700, using money left over from other regional pots.*
- *The second competition will offer £2.8 million in each of the financial years 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25 to women's voluntary sector organisations to offer new services or interventions for women in or at risk of contact with the criminal justice system.*
- *The third competition will provide funding for statutory organisations to implement a Whole System Approach.*

3) Data in relation to sentencing (particularly short sentencing)

The number of women sentenced at court in Wales appears to have reduced during the course of the Blueprint. Further work is required to fully understand this (including impact of COVID pandemic/comparisons between national England and Wales data), however data from local management systems suggests that in 2019, there were 2,605 sentences of women, in 2020 the figure was 2,076, and in 2021 the figure was 1,941. At the time of analysis, the full data set for 2022 was not yet available, however between January 2022 and September 2022, there has been an average of 472 sentences of Welsh women each quarter, compared to 651 sentences of Welsh women each quarter in 2019 (pre-Blueprint implementation). Increasing the number of women diverted away from the criminal justice system and into appropriate early intervention support to meet women's needs prior to court, and thereby reducing demand on courts and upstream criminal justice services, is a key ambition of the Women's Justice Blueprint.

There have been fluctuations in the female custodial sentencing data over the past few years, however internal management data from 2019-2021, has pointed towards an improving picture in terms of a reduction in the overall volume of female custodial sentences and short custodial sentences (of 12 months or under). Local data indicates that there were 552 custodial sentences of women in Wales in 2019. In 2021, the figure had dropped to 380. This data has also indicated a reduction in custodial sentences of women of 12 months and under, from 439 in 2019 to 278 in 2021. Longer-term analysis of the data, and a review of

the most recent full years data for 2022, will be required to provide assurance of positive long-term trends in sentencing

4) The research which suggested that 12 weeks is the optimum level for intensive support (i.e. at the proposed Residential Women's Centre)

In developing the model we (MoJ) looked at similar existing good practice in determining the length of time women should reside at the RWC. We are anticipating that women attending the RWC would otherwise have received a custodial sentence of up to a year and it is an eligibility requirement that they will have multiple complex needs. We have previously established that the majority of these women will have a combination of different needs as identified below and it will take time to address these:

- *Mental Health*
- *Substance Misuse*
- *Education, Training and Skills*
- *Relationships*
- *Attitudes, Thinking & Behaviour*
- *Trauma*
- *Domestic Abuse*
- *Finance and Debt*
- *Parenting*
- *Accommodation*

Whilst the RWC will not be able to meet all these needs in a 12 week period the intention is that women will be well supported to enable them to tackle the drivers of their offending. In addition provision existing at the time of our initial research included:

- *Changing Lives model in Northumbria where individuals are initially placed in an assessment centre for up to 12 weeks.*
- *Willowdene Farm in West Mercia where attendees reside at the farm for between 7 and 12 weeks*
- *Nelson Trust's therapeutic residential addiction treatment for women lasts about 12 weeks*

12 weeks was deemed a maximum so that women would be able to return to settled accommodation should they have it. We will be evaluating the effectiveness of the pilot RWC.

5) A list of all the women's centres that exist in England Scotland, or Northern Ireland. To be confirmed.

6) Further information on the Cardiff office (as an example of working with women away from general probation offices).



Why Women's
Centres work_Evidenc

In relation to the Cardiff centre specifically, we started a women's centre approach in Cardiff in 2014 with the Women's Pathfinder initiative which followed the recommendations from the Corston Report.

The benefits of this approach are that we provide a 'one stop shop' with co-located services that women may already be accessing or benefit from, so that we take a joined up holistic approach and avoid re-traumatising women by forcing them to re-tell their 'story' to multiple professionals. It also provides a safe, women only environment. Women can often be intimidated or even re-traumatised by reporting to traditional probation offices, where they risk facing perpetrators of abuse or violence, targeting by people who may exploit them or expose them to substance misuse. Whilst we recognise these risks can also occur within a women only environment, it can be at least reduced within a women's centre.

There are two examples of Women's Centre in Cardiff, and established multi agency centre based at Safer Wales in the City Centre. This has over the years provided access to support and advice around VAWDSV, post release education and training, support for those involved in sex work through Streetlife, Probation supervision, police liaison and other areas of support. Women on Probation have been reporting here for a number of years, and our women's case management team is based here full time.

The second centre is a new development with Nelson Trust supported by SMAF funding, providing a centre for women involved in the criminal justice system to attend rehabilitative interventions and support. HMPPS aim to work with this centre to support women with CRS interventions and other areas of need.

Evidence from women with lived experience indicates that they feel much safer and more relaxed at these centres, are more likely to report and engage with services, accept referrals to other organisations, and form supportive networks for better wellbeing and outcomes.