



Ministry
of Justice

Lord Bellamy KC
Parliamentary Under-Secretary
of State for Justice

Jenny Rathbone MS
Chair
Equality and Social Justice Committee
Senedd Cymru
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

MoJ ref: ADR105254

12th June 2023

Dear Ms Rathbone,

EQUALITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE REPORT: WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

Thank you for your letter of 28 April and for providing me with a copy of the Welsh Government's response to your report on women's experiences in the criminal justice system.

As requested, please find below my comments on the recommendations that are relevant to my portfolio.

Recommendation 1: The Welsh Government should map out the cost of the services it provides to identify those that it is responsible for as part of the current devolution settlement and those that currently fall within the responsibility of the Ministry of Justice. This work should be carried out by June 2023 and the Welsh Government should keep us informed of progress.

I note the Welsh Government is undertaking a mapping exercise on the cost of services it provides and that this will be completed by the Autumn. With regard to services that fall within the responsibility of the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), reserved authorities and devolved authorities work extremely effectively together to deliver the services for which they are responsible, but it is important to note that the MoJ funds all services for which it is responsible.

Recommendation 7: The Welsh Government should work with the Ministry of Justice and HMPPS to identify gaps and to ensure there are sufficient community-based alternatives to custody available specifically for women across Wales.

His Majesty's Prisons and Probation Service (HMPPS) officials already work closely with the Welsh Government and other partners to deliver objectives set out in the joint MoJ and Welsh Government Women's Justice Blueprint. HMPPS leads the Community Sentences workstream which is developing, improving, and raising awareness of the community-based alternatives to custody by working with partners, providers and sentencers to ensure robust and effective community options for women appearing in Court.

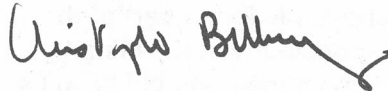
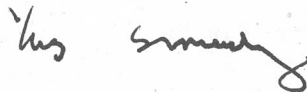
Recommendation 8: The Welsh Government must work with counterparts in the Ministry of Justice and with HMPPS to more clearly articulate the purpose and services the proposed Residential Women's Centre will offer.

Recommendation 9: The Welsh Government should work with the Ministry of Justice to ensure that Wales is represented in the development of the operational instructions and guidance relating to Residential Women's Centres.

We are grateful for the Welsh Government's support for our plans to establish the Residential Women's Centre. Following the rejection by the Swansea planning committee on 4 October 2022 of the planning application for the refurbishment and extension of the proposed site for the Residential Women's Centre in Swansea, the MoJ submitted an appeal against the planning committee's decision on 2 March 2023 and we expect a decision in the Autumn.

In the meantime, the Residential Women's Centre team in HMPPS continues to work closely with Welsh Government officials on the development of plans for the Centre, which will include communicating its purpose and the services it will provide. The Welsh Government is represented on the project board and there has been regular engagement to ensure that the Centre will meet the needs of women and their families.

I am sure the Senedd debate on your report, which I understand is scheduled to take place on 24 May, will be an excellent opportunity for Members of the Senedd to discuss the excellent work on women's justice that is taking place in Wales.



LORD BELLAMY KC