

Female Offender Strategy Commitments

The Female Offender Strategy (2018) set out a range of commitments in support of three key strategic aims: fewer women entering the criminal justice system; more women managed in the community in place of short custodial sentences; and better conditions for women in custody. Below is a summary of progress against those commitments showing where these have been completed, where work has been embedded as business as usual or otherwise will continue through the Female Offender Strategy Delivery Plan 2022-25 (FOSDP).

Female Offender Strategy 2018 commitments			
Priority	Deliverable	Update	State of delivery
Early Intervention	Opportunity to offer a single needs assessment for vulnerable women in contact with police whether or not they are arrested.	Single needs assessment was set out in police guidance published alongside the Strategy and the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) has established a female offender working group to improve outcomes for women in contact with the police.	Completed
Early Intervention	Working with non-police prosecutors, monitoring non-police prosecutions, including TV licence fee evasion.	The Delivery Plan commits to further work with non-police prosecutors to explore options for addressing the high number of women prosecuted for offences such as TV licence evasion.	Taken forward in DP / BAU
Early Intervention	Promoting retail-based diversion.	Considered options for a wider pilot of an initial Bury retail theft diversion approach, but not pursued because of small sample size and lack of evaluation data.	Completed
Early Intervention	Implementation of new adult Out of Court Disposal (OCD) framework giving police the opportunity to set rehabilitative or reparative conditions for early intervention to address the underlying issues that contribute to offending behaviour.	Two-tier OCD framework operational in some areas. Survey identified that 15 forces had a female diversion scheme. The Delivery Plan commits to review the use and effectiveness of OCDs in responding to the particular needs of women, including opportunities to attach women specific conditions such as referral to a women's centre for support to address her needs.	Taken forward in DP / BAU
Early Intervention	Roll out of NHS England commissioned Liaison & Diversion (L&D) Services with women's lead in each service and enhanced approach to women, with a similar plan in Wales.	Secured 100% L&D coverage across England in March 2020 and each service has a nominated female lead.	Completed
Early Intervention	L&D to address barriers faced by particular groups including sex workers and foreign national women in accessing services.	Sex Workers Workshop held on 14 October 2021. The Delivery Plan commits to undertaking work with police and Liaison and Diversion (L&D) partners on better identifying and diverting women out of the criminal justice system into support, where appropriate, including undertaking a review of the L&D women's service.	Taken forward in DP / BAU
Early Intervention	Funding community provision and domestic abuse services for women.	Invested £9.5 million (£2.5 million in FY2021/22) in women's community services across England and Wales. More than £15m invested through the Delivery Plan to improve community support for women in or at risk of contact with the justice system.	Taken forward in DP / BAU

Early Intervention	Comprehensive guidance for the police on working with vulnerable women, developed in partnership with the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC).	Guidance disseminated within forces and a Police & Crime Commissioner questionnaire circulated in November 2019, creating action plan that has been agreed. This included establishment of NPCC working group on women in the criminal justice system.	Completed
Community Solutions	Strengthening links between probation and women's centres to improve delivery of Through the Gate (TTG) services.	Former Through the Gate staff and community probation practitioners have been provided with a directory of women's services available across all probation regions. Under the new resettlement approach, women's resettlement prisons have an embedded pre-release provision delivered by the Probation Service. The Pre-Release Teams help to address immediate resettlement needs and provide pre-release support for all women in the prison, including the unsentenced, along with those released outside the neighbouring probation region.	Completed
Community Solutions	Improved support for women to disclose their needs and (with consent) better sharing of information between L&D services and criminal justice partners.	Publication of guidance for police on working with vulnerable women and rollout of specific approach to female offenders in all L&D services. Publication and roll out of PSR Aide Memoire to aid practitioners in identifying women's needs and personal circumstances at sentencing stage in 2022. Further work is underway on police guidance and the female L&D pathway.	Taken forward in DP / BAU
Community Solutions	Developing a residential women's centre (RWC) pilot in at least five sites.	Planning permission for an RWC site in Swansea was rejected and an appeal submitted on 2 March 2023. Further residential provision being funded through the female offender community grants funding competition launched in September 2022.	Taken forward in DP / BAU
Community Solutions	Creating a probation workforce professional register.	His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) has developed a professional register framework for probation qualified practitioners. The professional register will safeguard standards of practice and increase public confidence in probation services.	Completed
Community Solutions	HMPPS to implement Lammy review recommendation 31: 'To increase staff awareness of cultural diversity and diverse needs'.	HMPPS is developing cultural awareness training for staff that work with women, which will look at the impacts of culture, faith and sustaining family relationships.	Taken forward in DP / BAU
Community Solutions	Provide one training package on women with complex needs for prison staff, National Probation Service (NPS) staff and CRCs.	New training package Positive Outcomes for Women: Empowerment and Rehabilitation (POWER) was developed and rolled out in October 2019 and has subsequently been redesigned. The <i>Empowering Change: Working Well with Women</i> digital learning package replaces POWER, went live in January 2023 and is for staff working with women in both custody and community, exploring how a gender specific approach to working with women can improve outcomes for those in our care.	Completed
Community Solutions	Update instructions to probation staff on offender childcare - so childcare issues are not a barrier to compliance.	EQuIP (Excellence and Quality in Processes) section on female offenders has been fully reviewed and updated to ensure process maps and guidance consider the needs and circumstances of women (including childcare) are carefully considered. We will keep under ongoing review to ensure new policies, processes and guidance remain up to date.	Completed

Community Solutions	Improved Pre-Sentence Reports (PSRs) through Effective Proposal Tool (EPT), with local sentence options available. PSR interview checklist and reporting template and training package for all PSR writers.	Practitioners completing PSRs on women utilise the aide memoire (rolled out in Autumn 2019) and the Effective Proposal Framework (EPF) to ensure sentencing proposals consider the individual's needs and locally available requirements/interventions. We have completed a PSR pilot within 15 magistrates' courts, which targeted the delivery of written PSRs for cohorts including female offenders. The pilot evaluation will inform the future development of PSRs.	Taken forward in DP / BAU
Community Solutions	A new Bail Accommodation Support Service (BASS) contract with a minimum of 10% of its property designated for women.	The supplier (Nacro) and the HMPPS contract management team has established a female working group to ensure women feel safe and secure in their placement and properties are sourced in locations where women's needs are best met. In relation to CAS2 (formerly BASS), a minimum of 10% of the 650 bed spaces are contractually reserved for women, the provision overall will be expanded during 2023/24 to 850 beds.	Completed
Community Solutions	Reviewing approved premises (AP) capacity with a specific focus on London and Wales.	Hestia Battersea was changed from male to female AP to give better geographic spread of AP provision for women, and Eden House in Bristol opened in June 2021.	Completed
Community Solutions	Appointing a dedicated senior officer as women's lead in each NPS region.	Each Probation region has a Senior Lead with thematic responsibility for women, a dedicated Senior Probation Officer with responsibility for supporting the implementation of the Female Offender Strategy, and a number of local women's 'champions' to further support this activity.	Completed
Community Solutions	All Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs) have a strategic women's lead.	All CRCs appointed a strategic women's lead. [Probation Service was unified in 2021 - update as above]	Completed
Community Solutions	Ensure courts receive all information to inform the sentencing process. Interviews will be conducted with district judges and magistrates about their sentencing of women.	Interviews conducted in 2017 and 2018, and feedback incorporated into pre-sentence report (PSR) checklist; contributed towards the pilot to improve PSR quality and timelines. [PSR pilot update as above]	Completed
Community Solutions	Roll out Dr Minson's DVD Safeguarding children when sentencing mothers.	Films shared with PSR authors.	Completed
Community Solutions	Closer integration of BASS and established women's centres - pilot in Greater Manchester.	March 2018 pilot completed; Proof of concept proposal extending the bail information officer developed.	Completed
Community Solutions	Protocol to increase the use of Community Sentence Treatment Requirements (CSTRs) in England, being tested in 5 sites (one women specific).	CSTR protocol - process evaluation report published June 2019; 5 women only sites.	Completed
Community Solutions	Creative use of electronic monitoring (including for remand) to support and divert women from custody and increased use of alcohol tags for women being piloted.	Evaluation of GPS pilot published July 2019; Roll out of GPS tags completed September 2019; alcohol abstinence monitoring requirement introduced in Wales Oct 2020 and rolled out across England in March 2021. Alcohol Monitoring on Licence introduced in Wales and three women's prisons releasing into Wales in November 2021, expanding to England in June 2022.	Completed

		The Police, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022, strengthen the curfew option, allowing for longer and more flexible curfews to be imposed. Also introduces limited power for probation to amend the curfew start/end times (hours must remain the same) and change the place of curfew (where no residence requirement in place) – reducing the need for a return to court and the allowing for more timely changes to be made.	
Better Custody	Developing a trauma informed environment; women prisoners being trained to conduct peer led training in healing trauma.	Healing Trauma was in operation in most women's prisons prior to pandemic regime restrictions. Healing Trauma is being re-introduced in sites prioritised by the Director for Women, where appropriate governance, training and support is in place, to allow for evaluation of effectiveness.	Completed
Better Custody	Replicated holistic care models across prison healthcare in the women's estate.	HMPPS and NHSE/I jointly commissioned a Women's Prisons Health and Social Care review, which is due to report in Spring 2023. The Review is looking at primary healthcare, mental health, substance misuse and social care provision.	Taken forward in DP / BAU
Better Custody	Aim to reduce female prison places.	Between the year ending June 2018 and the year ending June 2022, the number of women sentenced to immediate custody fell by 37% (from 6,737 to 4,237). The Delivery Plan sets out how Government will deliver four key priorities to reduce women's offending over the next three years.	Taken forward in DP / BAU
Better Custody	Improving women's safety in custody through implementing the Independent Advisory Panel (IAP) on Deaths in Custody (IAP) and Prison and Probation Ombudsman (PPO) recommendations.	Women's Estate Self Harm Task Force was set up in April 2020 to address the levels of self-harm. Evidence-based approach to reducing self-harm with the aim to coordinate and drive work and research as well as providing specialist support to prisons. Independent review of task force has been completed and commissioned review of Health due to report with recommendations in Spring 2023.	Completed
Better Custody	Completing a review of the interventions available across the women's estates, to ensure we are delivering the most effective treatments for this cohort.	HMPPS and NHS England jointly commissioned a Women's Prisons Health and Social Care review, which is due to report in Spring 2023. This includes consideration of health needs and provision of primary care, mental health and substance misuse services.	Taken forward in DP / BAU
Better Custody	Increase the use of and reliability of video links to court.	Over 70% [90%] of all [Crown] courtrooms are now equipped with the video conferencing hardware to run our video hearings platform, enabling up to 20,000 cases to be heard virtually every week at the height of the pandemic. There are currently 14 high-capacity modern video conferencing centres (VCCs) in prisons, with a further 2 to become operational in summer 2023. These include the first VCC in the women's estate at HMP Bronzefield, which will be operational from 15 May 2023. We have plans for up to another 6 VCCs by 2025 HMPPS has invested, over the past two years, in a 100% increase in video capacity across the Women's Estate. This increase in capacity has included provisioning video links for official visits	Completed
Better Custody	Recruiting gender informed prison officers	Development of a bespoke approach to the recruitment of prison officers into the Women's Estate is in place. A version of the Prison Officer Success Profile for women's prisons has been developed with an adapted assessment process.	Completed

Better Custody	Completing a literature review to ensure the 'Challenge, Support & Intervention Plan' (CSIP) is successful in prisons.	CSIP has been implemented in women's prisons. In addition, and informed by the literature review, female sites run StEM (Support through Enhanced Management) which provides enhanced case management with specialist psychological oversight.	Completed
Better Custody	New Offender Management in Custody Model (OMiC) for women, with the inclusion of 'key worker time'.	The Women's Specific OMiC model was rolled out across Women's prisons from 30 April 2021.	Completed
Better Custody	Reforming prison education to give governors more oversight and control over their education provision.	Education and Employment Strategy took full effect from April 2019. Governors have control of their establishment's education budget, determine the curriculum on offer, how it is structured and organised, and decide who their education providers will be.	Completed
Better Custody	Lord Farmer's Review for Women.	Report published June 2019.	Completed
Better Custody	Publishing the Family Policy Framework.	'Strengthening Prisoners' Family Ties Policy Framework' published 31 January 2019.	Completed
Better Custody	HM Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) Lead Inspector for Children & Family.	Lead Inspector appointed.	Completed
Better Custody	Reviewing the operation of Mother and Baby Units (MBUs) and management of complex cases.	Review published July 2020. A new policy framework for Pregnancy, MBUs and Maternal Separation from children up to the age of two was published in 2021. Chief Social Worker review of	Completed
Better Custody	Appointment of dedicated Group Safety Lead for the women's prison estate.	Group Safety Lead appointed.	Completed
Better Custody	Creating an ethical practice reference group to resolve practice issues and ensure practice guidelines are consistent and addressing current issues.	Ethics group established however this has not taken place since the start of the pandemic. Key issues have been dealt with through relevant policy teams to ensure alignment with policy and inform policy.	Completed
Better Custody	Develop a New Futures Network (NFN), a partnership between employers and prisons.	Network in place since 2018.	Completed
Better Custody	Reviewing Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL) rules.	ROTL framework published May 2019.	Completed
Leadership and Joined up working	Reformed Advisory Board of Female Offenders (ABFO).	Stakeholder members and ABFO Terms of Reference refreshed Autumn 2018. Role of ABFO reviewed in Autumn 2021, and Board replaced by a ministerial Women in the Criminal Justice System Board (WCJS) supported by an Expert Group of stakeholders.	Completed
Leadership and Joined up working	Work with areas already operating Whole System Approaches (WSA) to build an evidence base to support this approach and share best practice. Devolve power and responsibility to local areas so they have the levers for the wider rollout of this model.	The Concordat was published in January 2021 and brings together evidence and best practice from areas already operating WSAs to help to inform their development in local areas where they don't already exist. A progress report was published alongside the Delivery Plan setting out progress and next steps.	Taken forward in DP / BAU
Leadership and Joined up working	Cross-government groups to address the complex needs of vulnerable people; Whitehall Vulnerable Persons Directors Group, the Cross-Departmental Complex Needs Group and the Reducing Reoffending Group.	The MoJ has refreshed cross government governance structures. We have a Women in the CJS Board chaired by a MoJ Minister and attended by Ministers from other relevant Government departments; an expert group of external stakeholders; and a working level Women in the CJS Delivery Board.	Taken forward in DP / BAU

Leadership and Joined up working	Evidence based: Sharing and supporting further data and evidence.	Strategic plan for progress monitoring against key FOS commitments published in the FOS DP. Where appropriate evaluation plans for key workstreams are being developed. Dashboard tracking key outcomes for women published as part of the biennial Women in CJS statistical release.	Taken forward in DP / BAU
Leadership and Joined up working	Driving forward the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy Action Plan.	Home Office published new VAWG Strategy in July 2021, and a separate cross-Government Domestic Abuse Strategy in March 2022.	Completed
Leadership and Joined up working	Share findings and good practice for local area work from Troubled Families [since relaunched as the Supporting Families programme]	Troubled Families relaunched in 2021 as the Supporting Families programme with £695m in funding up until 2025, with the aim of reaching a further 300,000 vulnerable families during this period.	Taken forward in DP / BAU
Leadership and Joined up working	Engage black and minority ethnic (BAME) women with lived experience of the criminal justice system to inform policy development for multi-agency approach.	User centred research complete and findings informing the work of the Female Offender Minority Ethnic working group.	Taken forward in DP / BAU
Leadership and Joined up working	Develop a National Concordat on Female Offenders.	Published January 2021.	Completed
Leadership and Joined up working	Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government) review of funding and commissioning of domestic abuse services across England, audit of current provision by Ipsos MORI.	MHCLG (now the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities) responded to the consultation on future delivery of support to victims and their children in accommodation-based domestic abuse services October 2019.	Completed
Leadership and Joined up working	The government consultation Transforming the Response to Domestic Abuse to inform the work taken forward.	Domestic Abuse Act 2021.	Completed
Leadership and Joined up working	Homelessness Reduction Act - duty to refer and prevent homelessness.	In force from October 2018. The Homelessness Code of Guidance in England has been updated to address the issues of intentionality and local connection, included specific chapter relating to the support of female offenders.	Completed
Leadership and Joined up working	The cross government rough sleeping strategy will take action to support particularly vulnerable groups including women offenders.	Published August 2018 and includes specific commitments for supporting female offenders.	Completed
Leadership and Joined up working	Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government(MHCLG) to allocate funds to 83 areas to boost the immediate support available to people living in the streets and help them into accommodation. Funds will be used to provide an additional 1,750 bed spaces for rough sleepers and an additional 531 dedicated homelessness workers.	Funds announced September 2018 and in following years more funding rounds for the Rough Sleeping Initiative have been announced and delivered.	Completed
Leadership and Joined up working	Investigating how Housing First pilots currently underway in both England and Wales could help to ensure that offenders with complex needs can secure suitable accommodation.	Housing First evaluation published in 2020. Still operating in West Midlands, Wales and Greater Manchester.	Completed

Leadership and Joined up working	Funding Clinks to develop networks of support and communication in specialist areas.	Clinks awarded the HMPPS and MoJ grant for infrastructure support for small and medium-sized voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations 2022-25.	Completed
Leadership and Joined up working	Guidance on the development of local whole system approaches (WSA).	Published June 2018.	Completed
Leadership and Joined up working	A Blueprint for Wales - for women in, and at risk of entering the criminal justice system.	Launched June 2019.	Completed
Leadership and Joined up working	MHCLG to announce further significant funding for domestic abuse services including refuges.	£22 million allocated to 63 projects.	Completed
Leadership and Joined up working	Replacing Prison Service Order (PSO) 4800 with a Women's Policy Framework, work will focus on women across criminal justice system not just in prison.	Women's Policy Framework published December 2018.	Completed