



# Female Offending Blueprint for Wales

The minority of offenders in England and Wales are women, yet many of these women are victims of crime themselves, often having experienced physical or emotional abuse. Baroness Corston’s Report, Review of Women with Particular Vulnerabilities in the Criminal Justice System (2007) identified that women can present as extremely vulnerable with a range of complex needs that have been found to be distinct from the needs of men who commit crime. Involvement in the Criminal Justice System can have far-reaching and long-lasting effects on the women themselves, their families and the communities in which they live. The challenges they face

are at risk of being exacerbated by a short custodial sentence (often for low risk offences) that can disrupt important social bonds with children and family members, contributing to social exclusion and having an adverse impact on future generations. The challenge is to provide a joined-up approach that acknowledges the gender-specific needs of women, promotes positive wellbeing and supports successful long-term outcomes to reduce reoffending.

To achieve this, Welsh Government, UK Government and policing in Wales are working

together with justice partners to develop Blueprints for delivery of Female Offending and Youth Justice services. This Blueprint for Female Offending sets out the ambition to accelerate the transformation of services to create a fairer, more equal society with better outcomes and justice for all. It will create sustainable community-based solutions to keep women and communities safe and free from criminal behaviour.

<p><b>Our aspirations are to:</b></p> <p>Support women to live crime free, positive and healthy lives, improving well-being and making communities safer.</p> <p>Reduce the number of women in the system by intervening earlier to keep them safe and address the vulnerabilities that often lead to crime.</p> <p>Deliver a bold ambitious approach with transformative, sustainable services that are distinct to Wales and locally-led, building on and learning from the successful Women’s Pathfinder Whole System Approach model.</p> <p>Create safe environments in which children and women are protected/guarded from harm and supported to thrive.</p> <p>Integrate services to offer targeted support for women, from start to finish, recognising the far-reaching, long-term impact resulting from the imprisonment of women when there are more effective alternatives to tackle the causes of offending behaviour drawing on relevant research and data.</p> <p>Work with the Youth Justice Board and partners to share learning that can be adopted for girls under the age of 18 and work together to ensure continuity of interventions in respect of young women who transition into adult services.</p> <p>Set the standard for future work and cooperation between the Welsh Government, Ministry of Justice and partners, applying the principles here to adopting a similar approach to adult males at risk of offending.</p>	<p><b>The Whole-system Approach will focus on:</b></p> <p><b>Early Intervention &amp; Prevention</b> In addition to working with partners to tackle root causes of crime:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diverting women, where appropriate, away from crime and into women-centred, community-based, sustainable support services that meet their needs</li> <li>• Explore options for trauma-informed services which can best meet the needs of vulnerable women, and families, affected by Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and at risk of entering the system, learning from the Enhanced Case Management (ECM) approach.</li> </ul> <p><b>Courts &amp; sentencing</b> Building confidence in alternatives to short-term custody and remand by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working with courts &amp; sentencers to build a clearer understanding of community services available to directly tackle causes of offending</li> <li>• Training front-line professionals to recognise &amp; respond to women and families experiencing trauma.</li> </ul> <p><b>Community-based solutions</b> Supporting women, including those at risk of offending, to engage with services in the community by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exploring a range of options for secure, safe and reliable accommodation for women in Wales</li> <li>• Developing women-focused services, including meaningful working relationships with a trusted key professional, building strengths and recognising the trauma or adverse events women may have experienced, understanding and addressing how this relates to their offending behaviour.</li> <li>• Embedding clear referral pathways and individualised, sequenced plans for vulnerable women in the community to provide interventions, by fully trained, skilled professionals in a timely manner.</li> </ul> <p><b>Custody and Resettlement</b> Supporting women in custody and resettlement back into the community by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working with rehabilitative services to deliver effective pre and post-release interventions in prisons where women from Wales are located</li> <li>• Establishing services to improve and maintain links with children and families</li> </ul> <p><b>Research and Evaluation</b> Further develop a Welsh evidence-base, with reference to existing national and international evidence of what works, to better understand the distinct needs and vulnerabilities of women who offend by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluating the Women’s Pathfinder whole system approach to inform future design and delivery of services for women at risk of offending;</li> <li>• Working with the Early Action Together Policing and Partnership Programme to research impact of ACEs on women in Wales and how trauma-informed services can best meet the needs of vulnerable women and families.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Our guiding principles</b></p> <p>A focus on Victims: together with seeing perpetrators brought to justice, Victims tell us they want to know this will never happen again. We are learning all the time about models of reducing reoffending. This evidence-based, innovative approach is guided by our desire to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensure fewer people are victims of crime</li> <li>• highlight that women who offend are often victims themselves – as outlined in the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse, Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015</li> <li>• understand the ripple-effect of crime in creating victims outside those directly involved</li> </ul> <p>Welsh Government’s well-being objectives and cross-cutting priorities in the national strategy Prosperity for All, maximise the contribution of partners to the well-being goals.</p> <p>A Public Health approach applying the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 Sustainable Development principle of improving Economic, Social, Cultural, Environmental well-being using the five ways of working:</p> <p><b>Long-term:</b> breaking intergenerational cycles of crime, creating a fairer society with more equal outcomes for all</p> <p><b>Prevention:</b> safeguarding women and children, tackling root causes of offending behaviour</p> <p><b>Collaboration:</b> working together to deliver transformative services</p> <p><b>Integration:</b> understanding the links across policy areas and how this approach can improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of our communities</p> <p><b>Involving people:</b> Ensuring the right approach to delivering effective services by involving those affected (victims, women, children and communities)</p> <p>Women-focussed, gender based and trauma-informed, responding to the specific, individualised needs of this diverse population (rather than as one homogeneous group) to reduce reoffending.</p>
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**What success looks like**

Achieving our ambitions to reduce crime, make communities safer and ease demand on services, such as policing and health, will make a lasting contribution to building the Wales we want: prosperous and secure, healthy and active, ambitious and learning, united and connected.

Our shared success means children will have a better start in life, reducing the impact of adverse childhood experiences such as domestic abuse or having a mother in custody.

Women and children will live in a safe and secure home and as a result will be less likely to commit crime. Women will have the skills they need to look after themselves and their children, enabling them to live rewarding, fulfilled and positive lives within their communities.

Our joined-up approach will result in better emotional, physical health and wellbeing, building positive, supportive relationships within families and strengthening our communities.

“ Sometimes people find themselves in a bad situation, life can spiral out of control. It’s good to give people a second chance because just one mistake can change your life

I need to be a more confident parent so it doesn’t have a knock-on impact on the children as well, they need help too

...just to be treated like a human being and you know, just listened to and have someone there for us ”