



Jane Hutt AS/MS  
Deputy Minister and Chief Whip  
Welsh Government  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

**MoJ ref:** ADR 082553

19 October 2020

Dear Jane,

### **RESIDENTIAL WOMEN'S CENTRE IN WALES**

Thank you for meeting me on 14 October. We agreed I would write to confirm what we discussed about the pilot Residential Women's Centre (RWC) in Wales.

Firstly, I would like to say again that I welcome the very positive partnership working that has been in train between our officials and which is essential to delivery of our first RWC. This partnership working has already led us to take some important steps.

We discussed the evidence around offender numbers that has led me to make my decision that we should site the Wales RWC in South Wales. This will ensure that the centre will work at or near capacity, providing up to 48 residential spaces per year for women who might have otherwise received a short custodial sentence. The centre will need to be easily accessible to as many women as possible to enable them to engage with the service particularly once they have moved on from the RWC into settled accommodation but are still accessing the RWC for support. We agreed that before I write to members of the Advisory Board for Female Offenders with my decision you would discuss it with your Ministerial colleagues. Officials will then begin working with local services to explore potential sites, likely to be within the South Wales and Gwent Police Force areas, which have good access to transport links and other critical services.

I also confirmed that I have asked the National Probation Staff to manage the RWC day to day, including the enforcement of sentences, and to commission bespoke, trauma-informed, locally-led interventions through the dynamic framework or commission them directly for attendees. I believe this will offer the best combination of skills and experience to support the rehabilitation of women sentenced to attend there.

Finally, we discussed my ambition for the RWC to accommodate women with resident dependent children where appropriate and to be a resource for women across the community who are at risk of offending or who may wish to self refer. I am keen that we support women as early as possible in their interaction with the criminal justice system in line with the commitments to early intervention and support throughout a woman's justice journey made in the Female Offenders Strategy. However, this broader scope means that it is unlikely that the RWC will be operational by the end 2021 but that, as the first step, we are keen to identify and secure a site as quickly as we can. I will continue to ask officials to work at pace.

I am now very keen that we progress our design specification for the RWC and we will shortly be sharing a draft version with Welsh Government, and key partners in Wales and England to seek views and input.

I am very grateful for your continued support and interest in this exciting project.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lucy Frazer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**LUCY FRAZER QC MP**