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Evaluability Assessment for the Wales Women's Justice and Youth Justice Blueprints

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Views expressed in this report are those of the researchers and not necessarily those of the Welsh Government.

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Glossary

Acronym/Key word	Definition
ACE	Adverse Childhood Experience
APVA	Adolescent to Parent Violence
BOLD	Better Outcomes Through Linked Data (programme)
CJS	Criminal Justice System
CMS	Case Management System
CRL	Childcare Resettlement Licence
DfE	Department for Education
EA	Evaluability Assessment
ECM	Enhanced Case Management
ETE	Education, Training, and Employment
FTE	First Time Entrant (to the youth justice system)
HMPPS	Her Majesty's ¹ Prison and Probation Service
IOM	Integrated Offender Management
MAPPA	Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
NRC	National Research Committee
OASys	Offender Assessment System
ONS	Office for National Statistics
ORS	Opinion Research Services
PCC	Police and Crime Commissioners
PNC	Police National Computer
PSR	Pre-Sentence Report
ROTL	Release on Temporary License
RRI	Relative Rate Index
SMDS	Substance Misuse Data Set
VAWDASV	Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence

¹ When this project's fieldwork was conducted, "HMPPS" was "Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service". HMPPS has now changed to "His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service", to reflect that King Charles is now reigning monarch.

WG	Welsh Government
WJAP	Wales Justice Advisory Panel
WYJI	Welsh Youth Justice Indicator
YJAF	Youth Justice Application Framework
YJB	Youth Justice Board
YJS	Youth Justice System
YOI	Young Offender Institution
YOS	Youth Offending Service
YOT	Youth Offending Team

1. Background

- 1.1 In 2019, Welsh Government (WG) and Ministry of Justice (MoJ) published Women's Justice² and Youth Justice³ Blueprints to improve partnerships between devolved and non-devolved services and consequently improve the services delivered to women aged 18+ and children and young people aged 10 to 17 in the justice system in Wales. The implementation of the Blueprints will build on existing structures (and implement new approaches) to target support more effectively, avoiding gaps or duplication in service provision, and aid women and children and young people to successfully access appropriate support and interventions.
- 1.2 The thematic areas of the Women's Justice Blueprint are early intervention and prevention, courts and sentencing, community-based solutions, custody and resettlement, governance, and research and evaluation. The thematic areas of the Youth Justice Blueprint are prevention; pre-court diversion; community; custody; resettlement and transitions; and system oversight.
- 1.3 The justice system in Wales is complex. While the UK Government has responsibility for criminal justice functions, including courts, prisons and the probation service, the Welsh Government is responsible for devolved areas that intersect with the justice system, such as housing, health, and education. As a result of this complexity, any evaluation of the Blueprints will prove challenging. Consequently, the commissioning partnership established between Police and Crime Commissioners (PCC), Her Majesty's⁴ Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) in Wales and WG have invested in and committed to the delivery of the Evaluability Assessment (EA) of the Women's Justice and Youth Justice Blueprints on which this report is based.

² [Women's Justice Blueprint](#)

³ [Youth Justice Blueprint](#)

⁴ As noted, when this project's fieldwork was conducted, "HMPPS" was "Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service". HMPPS has now changed to "His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service", to reflect that King Charles is now reigning monarch.

- 1.4 EA is a way of collaboratively planning and designing evaluations to ensure that they produce relevant and robust evidence to inform decision making and contributes to the wider evidence base (Brunner, Craig, & Watson, 2019⁵).
- 1.5 The overall aim of this EA is to establish how the Blueprints can be effectively evaluated, detailing six different evaluation options. These options consider the feasibility of the proposed evaluation and the stage the various projects are at in being implemented.
- 1.6 The EA will be used to understand whether there is scope to undertake these evaluations in a reliable and valid way, the extent to which the Blueprints can be evaluated (e.g., process, impact, economic) and what data is available and usable for evaluation purposes.
- 1.7 The voice and needs of the user (i.e., women and children and young people) are at the heart of the Blueprints, which means that the EA (and evaluations') methodology necessitates also centring the users at the point of design.
- 1.8 The specific objectives of the EA are to:
 - Undertake a holistic review of existing monitoring information in the areas of activity embraced by the Blueprints, but also, due to the human rights and future generations aspects of our interpretation of the aims, going further to include related, but sometimes non-traditional, partner agencies;
 - Analyse and understand key messages from ongoing Blueprint integration work across a range of workstreams in partner agencies and to assess these in terms of good practice, challenges, resource/cost implications, logic models, and theories of change;
 - Introduce a strong qualitative element into understanding what already exists and how current Blueprint work is progressing, by engaging with children and young people; women; senior stakeholders service managers; and practitioners, to better comprehend the operationalisation of the Blueprints; and

⁵ [Evaluability assessment: An application in a complex community improvement setting](#)

- Use findings from the review and analysis of existing data to generate potential evaluation models, offering choice and divergent foci for the MoJ and WG.

1.9 The rest of this report sets out the EA's methodology and key findings. It concludes by presenting the six potential evaluation models and a discussion of their feasibility.

2. The Evaluability Assessment process

2.1 The EA consisted of a four-stage methodology. It was implemented by researchers from Opinion Research Services (ORS) with support from expert consultants Dr Helen Hodges, who worked with ORS on an independent basis, and Dr Anthony Charles, from Swansea University. The research received full National Research Committee (NRC) approval and took place between March 2021 and February 2022.

Stage 1: Statistical and policy mapping (March – June 2021)

2.2 During this stage, the team produced a statistical map and reviewed relevant women's and youth justice policy being taken forward in Wales and the UK.

2.3 The statistical map details and provides patterns and trends for all key performance measures across the youth justice system (YJS) and for services that support women offenders in Wales. This creates a 'whole system' set of indicators.

2.4 To develop the statistical map, ORS explored relevant published datasets, data catalogues, and statistical publications to identify which data about children and young people and women who are involved with the YJS/Criminal Justice System (CJS) is currently available and is likely to be available in future for research and evaluation purposes.

2.5 ORS also had numerous in-depth discussions with data and policy experts and researchers regarding the current and future availability, accessibility, quality, and completeness of other data which could be used for these purposes but is not in the public domain.

2.6 The policy map contains a meta-analysis of key legislation, policy, guidance, research, and strategy in Wales. Once complete, the statistical and policy maps were amalgamated to identify the potential barriers and opportunities to implementing the Blueprints. A summary of this exercise is presented upfront in section 3 of this report.

Stage 2: Development of womens' and children and young peoples' evaluation design groups to contextualise and develop EAs (June – September 2021)

2.7 During this stage, the team engaged with children and young people and women to explore key messages from stage 1, reviewed existing evaluation approaches, designed evaluation questions, and proposed arrangements for service user participation in future evaluations of the Blueprints.

2.8 This involved the research team conducting one-to-one interviews with:

- Six male children and young people aged 16-18 who were currently engaging with two Welsh Youth Offending Teams (YOTs). To provide a varied dataset which captured a wide range of experiences and perspectives, these children and young people had experience of different stages of the YJS from (pre-court/diversion/prevention, to court order/statutory level, to custody, to when children and young people are released on licence/engage in resettlement or rehabilitation but are still engaging with the YOT, including where they do so voluntarily).
- Seven women who were currently engaging with the Pathfinder regional diversion scheme in Wales. They engaged with the Pathfinder programme through a variety of pathways, including the diversion schemes, the probation service in Wales and voluntary referrals. This helped to provide a range of experiences and perspectives.

2.9 ORS spoke to each child/young person and woman individually in person or over the phone. The interviews followed a children and young people's and women's rights-based, trauma-informed, co-productive approach, using prompts based on the priorities identified in stage 1 to guide discussion rather than a structured or semi-structured topic guide. The interviews:

- Reflected on experiences of the YJS/CJS and identified which aspects of them could and should be measured;
- Identified what good would look like in terms of successful Blueprint implementation;
- Explored how the key activities within the Blueprints can best be measured and integrated into future evaluations, and
- Identified how and when children and young people and women wanted to be consulted so that their voices can be heard and incorporated into future Blueprint evaluations.

Stage 3: Agency and stakeholder engagement (September – December 2021)

2.10 During this stage, the ORS team built on the messages from stage 2 to undertake semi-structured, one-to-one, remote interviews with the following stakeholders, service managers, practitioners and service users:

- **Nine senior stakeholders** who have decision-making power concerning the legal, policy and strategic frameworks which impact upon youth justice and women's support services in Wales.
- **Eight service managers** who manage operational arrangements to support Welsh children and young people and women.
- **Seven practitioners** who work directly with Welsh children and young people and women who need support.
- **Seven children and young people** (all male) below the age of 18 who have engaged with youth justice services.
- **Four women** over the age of 18 who have received services that support women offenders/ex-offenders.

2.11 To provide a range of views, the children and young people and women interviewed at stage 3 were different to those interviewed at stage 2. They were selected based on their experience of the following stages of the YJS/CJS:

- Statutory level: in receipt of a court order, but not currently in custody.

- Statutory level: currently in custody.
- Statutory level: post-custody: released on licence or engaged in resettlement or rehabilitation.

2.12 All stage 2 and 3 participants received tailored information sheets in advance of the interviews. All gave their opt-in, written permission to take part in the interviews.

2.13 The interviews with for senior stakeholders, service managers, and practitioners were tailored to reflect and focus on the thematic areas and priorities in the Youth Justice and Women’s Justice Blueprints, exploring:

- The relative importance of the thematic areas, priorities, and outcomes in the Blueprints;
- The limitations and uncertainties within the Blueprints;
- The shape and scope of potential future evaluation models: how the thematic areas, priorities and outcomes can best be measured;
- The challenges which may exist in terms of achieving the Blueprints (notably in relation to enabling cross-departmental and inter-agency collaboration to facilitate a Whole Systems Approach).

2.14 The interviews with children and young people and women explored:

- What ‘worked well’ for children and young people and women during their time in contact with YOTs/other agencies and what could be improved upon in terms of process and service provision;
- The types of services offered to children and young people and women and whether other, complementary services could be identified by them as desirable within a ‘whole system approach’ to justice;
- The aspirations of children and young people and women when they come into contact with youth justice and/or women-focused justice services;
- Understandings of ‘success’ identified by children and young people and women who have come into contact with the justice system;

- What children and young people and women may consider to be fair in terms of their journeys and engagement in service provision;
- What could be done to help YOT/other agency staff meet the needs of children and young people and women.

2.15 These interviews resulted in additional insights that went beyond the scope of the main objectives, as listed in paragraph 1.8. However, these insights may still be useful when planning and delivering any future evaluation of the Blueprints. Therefore, *Evaluability Assessment for the Wales Women’s Justice and Youth Justice Blueprints: additional insights to support future evaluation* will be published alongside this main report.

Stage 4: Development of Evaluation Models (December 2021-February 2022)

2.16 The purpose of this stage is to reflect upon the previous stages to design six viable models for the evaluation of the Blueprints, which are presented in section 6 of this report.

3. Statistical mapping exercise

3.1 To evaluate the impact of the Youth Justice and Women’s Justice Blueprints, it is necessary to have an accurate baseline against which to measure. Whilst the Blueprints and accompanying Implementation Plans reflect how the respective systems have evolved, there are also similarities in their aspirations and overarching principles. Fundamentally both Blueprints articulate the aims of reducing the numbers entering the CJS, reducing reoffending, and addressing criminogenic need through a whole system approach. The starting point therefore has been to consider what is currently available in the public domain to enable this picture to be compiled.

Youth Justice

3.2 Following the recommendations from the UK Statistics Authority (2010), the annual *Youth Justice Statistics* bulletin guides the user through the flows of children and young people aged 10-17 years through the justice system in England and Wales. The themes from the Youth Justice Blueprint have been mapped against the

published data from this and the associated MoJ publications relating to the secure estate. Since the underlying data is largely drawn from the individual YOTs, it is possible to aggregate these, to a degree, to create a picture of Wales offending⁶. However, due to low numbers in different sub-cohorts including those defined by protected characteristics, it is not always possible to drill down below the headline figures. Notably, this particularly affects the presentation of Welsh data by sex/gender for this age group.

- 3.3 The most significant information gap relates to the diversion theme, with publications focusing on those who have been charged. Locally YOTs will capture workflow information about those that they have worked with who are considered to be at risk of offending. However, it has not be possible to establish the nature and extent of this.

Women's Justice

- 3.4 The Secretary of State is obligated to publish criminal justice statistics relating to sex. The biennial publication *Statistics on Women and the Criminal Justice System* brings together information on the representation of women (and men) among victims, suspects, defendants, and offenders within the CJS. Last published in November 2020, it also provides details of practitioners within the CJS. To do this it draws on a range of different administrative systems.⁷ The number of sources both in terms of organisations and the different case management systems involved makes compiling the picture of offending among Welsh women more challenging. The position is compounded by the comparatively low numbers involved.
- 3.5 At different stages in the CJS, there are mechanisms in place to collect personal information about the offending population to enable an intersectional approach to be taken which takes into account not just sex/gender, but also one or more of age,

⁶ Chapter 2 of [Evaluability Assessment of the Women's Justice and Youth Justice Blueprint: Statistical Mapping](#) provides a more detailed discussion of the extent to which each publication contributes to our understanding of Welsh youth justice including whether or not it is possible to ascertain a breakdown by gender and ethnicity.

⁷ Chapter 3 of [Evaluability Assessment of the Women's Justice and Youth Justice Blueprint: Statistical Mapping](#) provides a more detailed discussion of the extent to which each publication provides a breakdown by gender and is provided in a way that enables a picture to be compiled of Welsh female offending. Additionally, this chapter includes information about the types of data captured in the various administrative sources used by the MoJ (and others) which could be used to provide a more complete picture.

race, religion, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity and disability. Of the protected characteristics, the more commonly used presentations are by age group although this is frequently simply to differentiate between adults and juveniles, by sex and by race. The exception to this is custody data which additionally reports on religion, sexual orientation (where disclosed) and disability. Indicative figures are provided around the number of transgender prisoners although it is anticipated that published figures are an underestimation of the true figure.⁸ The only figures around pregnancy and maternity relate to mother and baby units although the MoJ has committed to improving its reporting.

3.6 The phase of the CJS that the data relates to and the volumes involved influences the geographical level at which it is presented. As a result, it is possible to aggregate up to Wales by combining data linked to the administration of justice and the profile of those who have offended is published at a police force, court, probation, or local justice board area. However, custody data tends to be published by establishment. Since there are no women's prisons in Wales, this makes it difficult to establish the size of the Welsh women prisoner population. The MoJ relies on the where the prisoner spent the night before reception to identify if the prisoner is Welsh. If this is 'No Fixed Abode', the location of the court where the individual was sentenced is used. The situation is different in Youth Justice where there is a specific field within the Case Management System (CMS) for recording if the child or young person lives within the same local authority as the YOT they are working with.

3.7 In contrast to the youth offending data which is routinely published at a local YOT level alongside the annual statistics, there is more limited published sub-national data on women's offending. Additionally, the structural changes associated with the transition from the National Offender Management Service to HMPPS and unification of the Probation Service in Wales have led to discontinuities in data collection which impact upon the ability to monitor flows through the criminal justice

⁸ A distinction is made between those individuals known within prisons to be currently living in, or presenting in, a gender different their sex assigned at birth and have had a local case board, and those who already transitioned and have a full Gender Recognition Certificate.

system for and some aspects of performance over time. This has had more of an impact on adult offending.

- 3.8 Data is also held locally by different criminal justice organisations which has the potential to contribute to understanding the current picture, especially in relation to prevention and diversion. This includes data from the police and commissioned services as well as probation and the courts. Access to this data would need to be negotiated with the respective data owners. Notably, police data is the responsibility of the Home Office rather than MoJ. In addition to the data governance issues, consideration would also need to be given to the burden placed on the respective organisations to respond to requests.

Minority and Priority Groups

- 3.9 The Lammy (2017) and Laming Reviews (Prison Reform Trust, 2016) respectively highlighted that whilst children who are looked after and ethnic minority⁹ people are over-represented in the CJS, these are not homogenous groups. By treating these two groups as being homogenous, it masks the levels of disparity that exists, fails to acknowledge the enduring impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), and individual circumstances. This is also the case amongst adult offenders. As a result of these reviews there is now a greater emphasis on presenting data around ethnicity and an increased awareness around the need to adopt an intersectional approach. The release of the Census 2021 data provides an opportunity to establish the extent to which those sharing different characteristics are over-represented relative to the profile of the local population.
- 3.10 Routinely collecting data about the protected characteristics in a consistent manner allows comparisons to be made both between agencies but also across the CJS and beyond. This is particularly important where there are commissioned services and/or multi-agency approaches such as working with health, social services or education. Two mechanisms exist for this: the use of the harmonised questions developed by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and the CJS Exchange Data

⁹ Although the term, 'racially and ethnically minoritized' is preferred to 'ethnic minority' or 'Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic' (BAME) by some, and is seen in quotes in this report, 'ethnic minority' is used elsewhere in the report.

Standards Catalogue. The latter sets out the commonly agreed set of data standards to support ICT communications between the systems used by criminal justice organisations. Use of these, for example when devising referral and/or assessment forms, is therefore key if a common language is to be developed across different policy areas. This is more of an issue in the context of adult offending as the Youth Justice Application Framework (YJAF)¹⁰ is now well established across the youth justice system.

- 3.11 Since date of birth is captured for identification purposes, the age of the offender is typically known or can be calculated. However, the MoJ utilises sex rather than gender, reflecting the way in which individuals are treated within the different phases of the justice system. Race, religion, sexual orientation and disability tend to rely on self-identification. This is also the case with membership of Integrated Offender Management (IOM) priority groups¹¹. Whilst there are legislative and statutory obligations associated with the IOM Cymru priority groups, the effectiveness of initiatives aimed specifically at these groups is similarly dependent on the accurate and consistent recording of membership so that progress against metrics can be monitored relative to other groups.

Vulnerability

- 3.12 The increasing awareness of the impact of childhood adversity, neurodisability, abuse, mental ill health and addiction means that pertinent questions are now routinely asked by practitioners as part of ongoing assessments and are taken into consideration when making sentencing decisions. This data, captured in systems such as AssetPlus and the Offender Assessment System (OASys), is helping to inform understandings of the complexity of the lives of those who have offended and hence shape responses from across the wider CJS. In the context of those considered at risk of offending and those involved in less serious offending, there is

¹⁰ The Youth Justice Application Framework is an online platform created for YOTs and the secure estate to communicate effectively (including sharing AssetPlus, case diary entries etc) and download formal documents and templates from the YJB that are not suitable for sharing with the wider public. The YJAF replaced YJMIS in April 2015. The system also contains summary and case level data on children and children and young people cautioned or sentenced for an offence.

¹¹ The 'Framework to support positive change for those at risk of offending in Wales 2018-2023' outlines [six priority groups for partners](#) to focus their collaborative efforts.

also a need to understand the relationship between individuals' circumstances, structural issues such as poverty and their offending behaviour. In addition to systematically collecting demographic data, the progressive shift towards a fairer, more equal CJS necessitates the need to establish the needs and vulnerabilities of the population.

- 3.13 Both Blueprints acknowledge the complexity of the needs of the offending population, identifying strategies for promoting awareness of these needs and developing appropriate, timely responses. As such there are specific actions within the respective Implementation Plans associated with introducing commissioning evaluations of key initiatives. Knowledge of these will inform the evidence base especially in the context of the diversion/early intervention and prevention, and community-based themes where there are currently very few official statistics.
- 3.14 Assessments of vulnerability form part of the youth justice and women's offending assessments made by practitioners at different stages of the CJS. In the context of youth justice, the experimental statistics *Assessing the Needs of Sentenced Children* published alongside the annual *Youth Justice Statistics* in 2020 and 2021 includes a specific breakdown for Wales giving the number and proportion experiencing the concern types by age, gender and race. More detailed information is held by individual Welsh YOTs. The Probation Service Wales also captures information about criminogenic needs using OASys. However, this information is not published. The experimental Liaison and Diversion data which formed part of the release *Statistics on Women and Criminal Justice System* gives an indication of what could be possible. However, this is based on data from NHS England.
- 3.15 If the individual is to be supported as they travel through the CJS, it is important that information about their needs should flow with them. Having to repeatedly collect this information places a considerable burden on practitioners and the individual. Therefore, an appropriate balance needs to be struck between sharing information between (and within) agencies and ensuring that systems reflect how circumstances have changed over time. There are opportunities to assess the flow of information and identify where there are opportunities to improve the effectiveness and timeliness of the information being shared. The starting point for

this is key transition points, e.g., between the police and the courts and upon release from prison. However, it is just as important to understand how effective the flow is of information between the CJS and other agencies especially in relation to offenders with mental health and/or substance misuse needs. In addition to the need for multi-agency information to be included within pre-sentencing reports, awareness of these issues can affect decisions around the suitability of specific programme and interventions. Not only does this have implications for assessing whether there are gaps in service provision, but the different levels of need amongst those participating in interventions needs to be taken into account when evaluating their effectiveness in preventing/reducing offending behaviour.

Indicators and Metrics

- 3.16 In addition to the workflow data which exists at different points in the CJS providing trends around the numbers involved and rates of reoffending, a raft of different indicators are reported on by the various agencies involved in the administration of justice. These include measures of non-compliance such as police contact, breaches and recalls, and are often broken down by key demographic group and/or membership (or otherwise) of priority groups so that equality and diversity can be monitored,¹² These provide a starting point for thinking about which metrics might be the most important to measure the effectiveness of the activities set out in the Youth Justice and Women's Justice Blueprints. Having identified a number of sub-cohorts and priority groups, an important part of the baselining process is to establish the profile of these groups and getting a sense of reoffending rates by sentence and/or offence type.
- 3.17 A key challenge here is the comparatively small numbers involved since this could mean that the reported figures, especially when presented at a local level, could fall to a level where they would be subject to statistical suppression. Converting small numbers into rates can also be problematic over time since month on month (or even annual) trends can be highly variable. Lammy has advocated the use of the

¹² Chapter 4 of [Evaluability Assessment of the Women's Justice and Youth Justice Blueprint: Statistical Mapping](#) provides a more detailed discussion of the existing indicators and metrics including those used to measure public health performance. The report also provides information about the suite of measures used to monitor the fairness and effectiveness of the criminal justice system.

Relative Rate Index (RRI) to make comparisons of the relative difference in rates between two fixed populations. Whilst he did this in the context of considering the experiences of ethnic minority groups, this approach can also be applied when comparing any minority or priority groups to the 'majority'.

- 3.18 Given the emphasis on a whole system approach, there are also opportunities to adapt existing metrics from other policy areas. For example, until recently there was a Welsh Youth Justice Indicator (WYJI) which related to children and young people accessing timely support for their substance misuse issues¹³. However, this did not reflect the 'success' of this support. There is, however, a public health performance measure which could be adapted to do this. A similar WYJI existed in relation to referrals for mental health support. There is scope for these measures to be adopted for the women offending population and/or for these to be used as a template for other forms of intervention.

Opportunities

- 3.19 Data from the Census 2021 will be available from March 2023 providing an opportunity to establish the extent to which different groups are under-/over-represented at different points in the CJS. In addition to questions being asked about the protected characteristics, enabling an intersectional approach to be adopted, questions were also asked about use of the Welsh language and for the first time if the individual is ex-armed forces. Having detailed data at a local level will help in the targeting of resources.
- 3.20 Considerable strides are also being made in relation to the linkage of routinely collected data including data from the CJS. Two developments provide opportunities to enhance the evidence based using anonymised data linked to health, education, social services, housing and potentially benefits data. The first of these is the MoJ-Department for Education (DfE) data. Whilst this is England only, there are common themes which can inform thinking in Wales. The second is Data First. Funded by ADR-UK, Data First is currently a three-year project running until 2022, with plans to share different criminal, civil and family justice datasets

¹³ A review of indicators used in the youth justice system is currently underway, led by the YJB

throughout its duration. The first of the Data First datasets was recently brought into SAIL enabling data from the family courts to be linked to social services and Cafcass data (England and Wales) and Welsh specific data. It is anticipated that this will soon be followed by criminal justice datasets¹⁴. Once provisioned, this will enable researchers accredited under the Digital Economy Act 2017 who can demonstrate that their research is for the public good to link to other datasets held in SAIL, including those covering devolved policy areas.

3.21 Linkages to other datasets from other government departments are also being explored including DWP data. Notably the MoJ is working with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, the Department for Health and Social Care, Public Health England, Public Health Wales and the ONS to link data on vulnerable people. Named the Better Outcomes through Linked Data (BOLD) programme¹⁵, it is aimed at providing more joined up services and improving the evidence base for policy creation and operational decision making. It is understood to have begun a three-month discovery project, budgeted at £1.4 million, to scope and create a strategy for the 3-year programme (Digital Marketplace, 2021). Whilst the timing of this programme is such that the data may not be available to inform an evaluation of the Blueprints, from a data governance perspective, it is anticipated that BOLD will open the door to other data linkage opportunities as government departments begin the process of preparing to share their data in trusted research environments such as SAIL. Increased use of different administrative datasets for research purposes will also drive innovation in terms of anonymisation and analytical techniques.

¹⁴ At the time of writing, the MoJ has made magistrate court, crown court, prison and probation data available via the ONS Secure Research Service. Researchers accredited under the Digital Economy Act 2017 are able to apply to use this to increase knowledge and understanding of the CJS across England and Wales. Whilst the prison and probation datasets relate only to adults, the court data includes details of proceedings involving both adults and young people. The way in which the Data First data in the ONS SRS has been prepared means that it is not possible to link it to other datasets. In contrast, data provisioned for use in SAIL includes an anonymised linkage field or 'ALF' enabling linkage with data from other policy areas, subject to approval from the respective data owners via the Information Governance Review Panel.

¹⁵ BOLD uses de-identified data from the MoJ, the Department for Health and Social Care, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, Public Health Wales, and the Welsh Government to show how linking it can improve support for people with complex needs. It builds on learning from other initiatives, such as Administrative Data Research (ADR) UK, and will run until the end of 2024.

4. Youth Justice Blueprint

- 4.1 In this section, we discuss the findings from the interviews with stakeholders and children and young people about each of the Youth Justice Blueprints' priorities' importance, challenges, limitations, uncertainties, and evaluation. Each priority is addressed in turn: prevention; pre-court diversion; community; custody; and resettlement and transitions.
- 4.2 System oversight was originally included as a priority in the Youth Justice Blueprint but has been discontinued since this research took place. Stakeholder interviewees were asked what oversight of the youth justice system in Wales should look like, and their feedback is summarised in the separate annex to this report.

Prevention

- 4.3 The Youth Justice Board (YJB) defines prevention is defined as 'Support and intervention with children (and their parents/carers) who may be displaying behaviours which may indicate underlying needs or vulnerability. In practice, this involves a tiered approach of **early** and **targeted prevention**, with the aim of addressing unmet needs, safeguard, promote positive outcomes, and stop children entering the formal youth justice system' (YJB, 2021).

The Youth Justice Blueprint states that targeted prevention activity in Wales should continue to be prioritised through dedicated funding to prevent children and young people from entering the youth justice system.

It states that this should be done through aligning preventative services offered to children and young people with those aimed at reducing the number of children who are looked after; the prevention of school exclusions; and homelessness. The subsequent Blueprint implementation plans also recommend that a national framework for targeted YOT prevention activity is developed.

Where possible, effective monitoring of prevention activity should also be developed to demonstrate impact and align reporting to Welsh Government, YJB, and Crime Commissioners.

Challenges, limitations, and uncertainties in prevention

- 4.4 Stakeholders highlighted a range of key challenges, limitations, and uncertainties related to the prevention priority in the Youth Justice Blueprint.
- 4.5 Several reflected on the need to clearly define which activities and approaches are included in prevention to target them appropriately and maximise benefit to service users and cost-effectiveness. Distinguishing between primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention, in line with a public health approach, was said to be crucial, as was separating out prevention from diversion.

'We now need to think about what does a public health approach need to look like when it comes to prevention? Thinking about the primary, secondary, and tertiary aspects of what prevention constitutes and then where does preventing children coming into the youth justice system then fit within that? So, this isn't the Blueprint doing something about prevention in isolation; it's really thinking about it on the broader strategic footing'

- 4.6 Others felt that strong or stronger collaboration was needed between agencies delivering prevention activities, and between the statutory bodies responsible for commissioning them. Recognising their role in and contribution to these activities was crucial, it was said, along with clear and consistent communication, and a shared vision of their structure and purpose.

'I think the parts of the sector that are obviously to do with justice, then it's easier to get them to buy in. It's part of what they should be doing anyway. But then when you're talking about broader areas like housing, health, education, social services, for example, it can be trickier to recognise that they have that role to play in, or persuading them to recognise that they have that role to play in the prevention and early intervention agenda'

- 4.7 Strengthening links with community safety partnerships was seen as important in improving prevention services. Broadening the role of education/schools and youth work and fostering greater links with youth offending services for children and young people who were excluded from school or who were at risk of exclusion was also said to be central to this.

4.8 Several challenges were discussed around the availability and accessibility of prevention services for children and young people. Having the right interventions, services, and pathways in place to meet individual's needs was key. This was linked to the need for more skilled staff such as mental health nurses, substance misuse specialists, and psychologists. The need for gender-responsive services which were designed for women and girls was also emphasised.

'I think it is a lot easier with children and young people in the sense that you can just continue to upscale professionals, you can continue to build early intervention services and build youth justice capacity within pre-existing early intervention structures...continue to advertise the services that are available in YOTs because I think that is hugely misunderstood...But with adults, I think that you really just have to rely on community interventions [and] identification'

4.9 The COVID-19 pandemic had made delivering prevention services more difficult, according to some stakeholders. Making more use of virtual delivery platforms could help to mitigate this challenge, it was said.

4.10 Regarding the focus of prevention services, improving dialogue, planning, and linkages between the Youth Justice and Women's Justice Blueprints to support 18–25-year-olds was cited as a challenge. It was also noted that the recent increase in serious violence among children and young people should be considered within the Youth Justice Blueprint.

4.11 Staffing and resources were mentioned by several stakeholders as one of the key challenges facing prevention in youth justice in Wales. To sustain and improve prevention services, the need to train and upskill delivery staff was emphasised. Having sustained strategic support and buy-in across all Blueprint workstreams was seen to be central to their success, especially when ministers and governments change. Building collaboration, relationships, and a shared vision between the Welsh and UK governments was also seen to be key in keeping prevention on the agenda.

4.12 Having sustainable funding to deliver and improve services was crucial, according to some stakeholders, some of whom also reflected on the cost-effectiveness of

prevention. Coordinating funding and resources to ensure that services remained relevant and were not duplicated was also said to be important going forward.

'There are multiple commissioning partners in that area [yet] there is little to no coordination regarding the respective funding and that can lead to duplication, gaps, and place pressure on delivery partners having to report on multiple funders and delivery area'

- 4.13 The increased competition for resources between partner agencies was raised as an additional challenge. This could be addressed through strong partnership working and joint ownership across all relevant agencies, it was said. Improving funding accountability structures would foster understanding of where money was being spent on prevention services and enable a clearer picture of the impact of this funding to be established.
- 4.14 Identifying those who need prevention services was said to be difficult for partner agencies. Stakeholders also felt that schools could help to strengthen prevention through reducing exclusions and working with youth justice services by intervening early to identify and support children and young people who are at risk of entering the YJS.
- 4.15 The voluntary nature of some early intervention and prevention services made it harder to engage those in need of them, according to some stakeholders. Services provided to those further into the YJS reportedly had better engagement due to their statutory nature.

Evaluating prevention

- 4.16 Stakeholders suggested a range of outcome measures for evaluating the prevention priority of the Youth Justice Blueprint. These are listed in section 6.
- 4.17 Stakeholders identified the following **considerations** for evaluating prevention:
- Some stakeholders highlighted the need to re-think how prevention is measured. They felt that existing measures of prevention were limited and outdated, whereas others considered measures like performance management and service inspection frameworks to be useful;

- Identifying quantitative outcome measures for prevention services is challenging because, 'How do you measure something that you are stopping from happening?';
- Identifying true FTEs can be difficult because children and young people may have previously been diverted away from the YJS;
- Developing a shared multi-agency outcomes framework for prevention is complicated by the devolved and non-devolved nature of the services which are involved.

4.18 In the following table, we combine the interview findings with those of the statistical mapping exercise that we conducted at stage 1 of this EA to form some recommendations for evaluating prevention.

- WYJI indicator data for Education, Training, and Employment (ETE) engagement, access to suitable accommodation, substance misuse, and mental health services are published alongside the annual Youth Justice Statistics Bulletins. There is scope for developing equivalent measures to the WYJI indicators to measure access to other services which support specific needs, e.g., speech and language therapy, programmes to enhance life skills, etc for those engaging in prevention activities. Assuming pertinent data was routinely collected in a consistent manner, it would then be possible to use these figures to gain insights into any issues relating to accessing services. Data on referral to treatment times for services such as CAMHS can also help to determine service supply vs. demand for different groups and geographies.
- Proxy measures such as school attendance could be used to assess engagement with school. Validated Welsh Government-recommended measures such as the SDQ (Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire), SWEMWBS (Short Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale), CGAS (Children's Global Assessment Scale), GBOs (Goal Based Outcomes), Social Services and Wellbeing Care and Support Plan 10-point scale and CHI-ESQ (Children's Experience of Service Questionnaire) could similarly be used to determine whether improvements have been made with respect to children and young people's health and well-being.
- Using FTE to assess prevention and diversion can be problematic because it is based on proven offending and does not necessarily reflect where there has been

previous contact with the CJS. An alternative metric to capture first contact with the YJS should be considered when evaluating prevention, drawing on the approach used in public health Analysis Methods Notices, which incorporates agreed definitions for prevention and diversion, and overcomes any inconsistent recording of diversionary disposals between police and YOTs.

- Cost savings as a result of prevention initiatives can be demonstrated but depend on having available data and the ability to monetise the impacts. Data on costs for some crime types, prosecution, and prison places are available, and may be helpful for this.
- NHS Wales measures staff training completion rates. Partner agencies could use similar approaches to capture completion rates for relevant training, e.g., around ACEs, trauma-informed practice, and YJB practitioner qualifications.
- Data linkage may enhance evaluation of prevention. For example, individuals who have accessed services or initiatives could be tracked through administrative data for a pre-defined period (e.g., five years) to determine reoffending, entry/re-entry to custody, engagement with services, etc.
- Given the wish to align prevention services offered to children and young people (including those targeted at reducing the number of children who are looked after, the prevention of school exclusions and homelessness), there is also scope to use the administrative data to enhance understandings of where there are shared risk or intervention triggers.
- Once the criminal justice data has been provisioned in SAIL Databank, linking YOT/MoJ data with education, housing, family court and social services records has the potential to enhance understanding of service user's needs and circumstances around the time of their offending and in the past. This will inform prevention (and diversion) activities. Having provisioned data from the family courts as part of the Data First programme in July 2022, it is anticipated that the criminal data will follow.

Pre-court diversion

The Youth Justice Blueprint states that existing pre-court diversion models and practice are a strength and should continue to be supported and funded because of their proven impact in reducing first-time entrants.

Options will be explored to:

- Further develop diversionary practices and a more co-ordinated approach to establish consistent rights-based practice across Wales. This includes notification between the police and YOTs when community resolutions are issued.

Challenges, limitations, and uncertainties in pre-court diversion

4.19 Pre-court diversion was said to present challenges to policing. These were detecting and referring those in need of pre-court diversion services (although the introduction of the two-tier out of court disposal framework in south Wales and Gwent had apparently helped facilitate this), and managing the conflict between adopting a child-first approach and the need to detect crime and process offenders.

‘One of the biggest difficulties we find is that work with our partnership agencies...the challenges and barriers could be that the police are very much focused on getting detections and processing those children as offenders’

4.20 Adopting a non-punitive, child-first mindset was also said to be something that police, some partner agencies, and the public, struggled with when considering prevention, early intervention, and pre-court diversion.

‘Sometimes there is a lack of understanding of the process of prevention, early intervention, and diversion...there is a huge evidence base behind some of the decision making, but people yet will still think you are being soft on crime, you are being soft on people who offend, you are being soft on children and young people’

4.21 Stakeholders acknowledged that pre-court diversion must consistently meet the needs of all children and young people, including girls, those who are looked after, and ethnic minority children and young people. Some approaches and interventions were said to have been originally developed with boys’ needs in mind because most of those coming into contact with Youth Offending Services (YOSs) are male. However, the relationship-based, trauma-informed approach advocated by the Enhanced Case Management (ECM) approach¹⁶ and adopted by YOSs across

¹⁶ Enhanced Case Management (ECM) is a psychologically led approach that sits alongside other initiatives which aim to reduce reoffending among children and young people. Based on the Trauma Recovery Model (TRM) (Skuse and Matthews, 2015), it uses multi-agency case formulation to understand children’s history, their developmental needs, strengths, and protective factors, to inform how YOT practitioners work with children and young people to achieve better outcomes.

Wales was said to be particularly effective at delivering needs-led support to all children and young people, regardless of their background or characteristics.

- 4.22 Changes should be made to corporate parenting¹⁷ to reduce the criminalisation of children and young people who are looked after, stakeholders suggested. Police and carers may also benefit from training which highlights looked after children and young people's vulnerabilities and the potential impact of their experiences on their behaviour.

'Children particularly in residential care who escalate through the system because...they may have assaulted a member of staff, or they may have caused some criminal damage...where they live. And I think we have always got to ask ourselves, what would be the response of a parent to that sort of behaviour? And would it be to involve the police? Nine times out of ten it probably would not be'

- 4.23 Out-of-court disposals are used to a greater extent with children and young people who are looked after relative to those who are not, according to some stakeholders. This contributed to the latter group's criminalisation and should be tackled in future, it was said. More broadly, the importance of using inspections to monitor the quality and consistency of out-of-court disposals to uphold consistency and confidence in their use was emphasised.
- 4.24 To increase its effectiveness in diverting children and young people away from the YJS and in recognition of the complex issues faced by those who offend, there was some suggestion that pre-court diversion should be available for repeat offences, for more serious offences, and for younger children¹⁸.
- 4.25 Echoing feedback on the prevention priority within the Youth Justice Blueprint, some stakeholders reiterated that proportionate commitment and buy-in from all agencies was needed to ensure the continued effectiveness and consistent implementation of pre-court diversion, as was more input from general services,

¹⁷ Welsh Government has recently published [an All Wales Protocol on reducing the criminalisation of children in care and care leavers](#).

¹⁸ The Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders (LASPO) Act 2012 introduced a framework for diversion and out-of-court disposals, which arguably goes some way to reduce the criminalisation of children.

third sector, and voluntary sector organisations, and common information sharing protocols (as covered by section 115 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998).

'I think it's making sure that all of the organisations who are involved buy into it in the same way. So, we know that the police need to recognise it as important and, and something that they prioritise, but also all of the youth offending services, so that it's not something that gets applied inconsistently'

- 4.26 To achieve this, some stakeholders highlighted the need to clearly define the objectives and activities included within pre-court diversion and communicate this to all relevant agencies. This would help to clarify understanding of the commitment required from them. Implementing child-centred, children and young people's rights-based, trauma-informed policing which dovetailed with YOT's work was also important. Delivering appropriate training was said to be key to achieving this, as was involving police from service design stage through to implementation.
- 4.27 Trauma-informed pre-court diversion services¹⁹ were said to need to be sufficiently flexible to meet the needs of all children and young people who offended; consider their backgrounds and reasons for offending; to be available in a timely manner; and to be equally available to all children and young people, regardless of where they live in Wales. Children and young people in England and Wales should also have the same pre-court diversion service offer, which was apparently not the case.
- 4.28 Another challenge for pre-court diversion going forward was said to be the need for it to respond to the changing nature of youth crime, especially since the pandemic. For example, a possible increase in violent and sexual crimes may be less appropriate for a pre-court diversion route.
- 4.29 Echoing a point made in relation to prevention, stakeholders highlighted the need for continued, consistent funding to maintain the success of pre-court diversion for children and young people in Wales. The disproportionate funding received by local authorities had led to inconsistent service provision, according to some:

¹⁹Services may vary considerably in line with young people's needs and could be delivered by Youth Offending Services or by community-based organisations, e.g., schools, youth groups, or community projects. They could include aspects like mentoring or recreational activities.

‘One of the biggest challenges is in smaller local authorities. The amount that [is] given to diversion and prevention means that they are not able to develop a really robust diversion service...For example, Cardiff have got a far superior prevention diversion service just because they get the most money’

4.30 The short-term funding models on which most voluntary and third-sector organisations currently operate also affected the sustainability of pre-court diversion services. Joint commissioning of services could help to address these issues, it was felt.

Evaluating pre-court diversion

4.31 Stakeholders suggested a range of outcome measures for evaluating the pre-court diversion priority of the Youth Justice Blueprint. These are listed in section 6. Stakeholders identified the following **considerations for** evaluating pre-court diversion:

- Evaluation should explore whether white children and young people are any more likely to be diverted than ethnic minority children and young people to ensure fairness in the system;
- Evaluating pre-court diversion can be difficult because interventions are usually short, potentially limiting the scope for evaluation²⁰;
- There are sometimes differences in the reoffending figures recorded by youth justice services or YOTs and those recorded by the MoJ in the Police National Computer (PNC). Youth justice service/YOT figures were seen by one stakeholder to be more reliable, because they show the true data at local level rather than an aggregated picture.

4.32 In the table below, we combine the interview findings with those of the statistical mapping exercise that we conducted at stage 1 of this EA to form some recommendations for evaluating pre-court diversion.

- Little published data is available around pre-court diversion. However, local records should be consistently maintained and curated of those who have participated in pre-

²⁰ Scope for evaluating the effectiveness of shorter interventions may be limited because evaluations inevitably take time to be designed, commissioned, and conducted.

court interventions. Reoffending rates could therefore be determined for those individuals within specified time periods, e.g., six months; two years; ten years depending upon how well established the activity/intervention is and its objectives. Use of this data will also support the evaluation of the effectiveness of pre-court diversion activities in improving other potential measures of 'success' (engagement in employment and training, securing employment, health outcomes etc).

- Data linkage could be used to track all children and young people who had been through Bureau/Triage into early adulthood to determine their outcomes. To do this, the relevant police/YOT data would need to be brought into the SAIL databank, building on the point made in relation to prevention about using data linkage to track children and young people longitudinally to determine impact.
- As noted in relation to prevention, an alternative metric to FTE should be developed to capture first contact with the YJS. Since the existing measure is contingent upon the individual having been given a formal caution or court disposal, its use is problematic in the context of pre-court diversion. Use of this metric should also overcome any inconsistent practices with respect to use of diversionary disposals such as community resolutions, no further action, and outcomes 21 and 22.

Community

The Youth Justice Blueprint states that children and young people in the system can experience complex needs including a background of emotional trauma and ACEs.

Options will be scoped to:

- Roll out a trauma-based approach in Wales, which is embedded as systematic practice, starting with the identification of and response to ACEs when children and young people first come to the attention of police.
- Develop the ECM approach nationally for complex and high-risk cases, a psychology led, multi-agency approach, enabling effective tailoring and sequencing of interventions, recognising the trauma and adverse events children and young people have experienced.
- Align with the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015, to benefit children and young people who have become victims through

experiencing or witnessing domestic abuse or sexual violence in their home environment and reduce the risk of perpetrating such offences²¹.

- Support the youth justice sector with resources, training, and qualifications to improve practitioner skills in recognising and responding to trauma.

Challenges, limitations, and uncertainties in the Youth Justice Blueprint community priority

- 4.33 Good progress was seen to have been made in providing viable trauma-informed, community-based alternatives to custody for children and young people in Wales. However, as is discussed subsequently, it was felt that more needed to be done to achieve the same success for women who offend.
- 4.34 Strong strategic partnerships between YOTs, Community Safety Partnerships, and PCCs were said to have helped facilitated the embedding of trauma-informed practice in Wales. However, although relationship-based, child-centred, trauma-informed practice which acknowledged life experiences was already thought to have become ‘standard practice’ in YOT practice, there was some feeling that there was room for it to become further embedded in some partner agencies. This should be addressed in future through targeted training and support to achieve this element of the Youth Justice Blueprint.
- 4.35 It was noted that YOTs throughout Wales may be in different places with implementing ECM, so may need varying levels of training and support to roll it out fully²². ‘Trauma champions’ with dedicated time to embed ECM and trauma-informed practice and to keep it high on YOTs’ and partner agencies’ agendas were also said to be central to achieving this.

‘We need to maintain momentum around the ACEs agenda. That ...has to be a whole system response...We have this training, this upskilling, and this focus on trauma informed practice across organisations and I know we’ve done such a great job to try and establish that, but it can’t just be a one-off thing that we do. It

²¹ This element of the Blueprint is now likely to be picked up through the development of the national prevention workstream.

²² At the time of writing the YJB is introducing a trauma-informed practice qualification for the youth justice sector.

has to continue to be delivered across Wales, across services, different roles and sectors'

- 4.36 A minority of stakeholders felt that there was too much emphasis on trauma-informed practice within the Youth Justice Blueprint, which risked omitting other important aspects. The community priority should also focus on social justice and inclusion outcomes for children and young people, namely improving how children and young people can live positively in their communities, it was said.
- 4.37 Providing effective trauma-informed family support and reducing reoffending should also be key foci of the Youth Justice Blueprint community priority, according to some stakeholders. Awareness of how children and young people can react differently to trauma and exhibit different needs as a result of their experiences should also be borne in mind when designing and delivering services to ensure that all children and young people's needs are met.
- 4.38 As in relation to other priorities in the Youth Justice Blueprint, stakeholders also emphasised that appropriate trauma-informed services must be in place to support children and young people in the community to live positive lives. To achieve this, services must be accessible, funded sustainably over the long term, and receive equal buy-in from all relevant agencies. To maximise engagement, services should also be tailored to children and young people's preferences and strengths, as well as their needs, it was said.

'Quite often, a child will have to turn up to a particular sporting activity put on their community services. Well, that child may not want to go there.... They [may] have transport problems. We haven't looked at those issues for each person. So, making sure it's something the child (or the woman) wants or needs and that they can access, realistically, before we put it on an order or offer it to them'

- 4.39 In line with a trauma-informed approach, children and young people should not be 'overloaded' with input from different professionals but should be supported by a

small number of trusted key professionals, it was said. In turn, these professionals need adequate support²³.

- 4.40 Integrated multi-agency governance and accountability arrangements were again mentioned as a challenge facing the Youth Justice Blueprint. Political buy-in was also seen to be required to establish and sustain the necessary trauma-informed community services for children and young people.
- 4.41 Gaining communities' input into shaping trauma-informed services for children and young people was seen to have been challenging, yet important, to ensure that services are appropriate. Stronger engagement was said to be needed to strengthen communities' input into shaping services, and participative approaches like co-production used more, in line with a trauma-informed, child-first approach.
- 4.42 Having enough psychologists and mental health services to support ECM was raised as an issue by several stakeholders. Psychologists' input was felt to be extremely valuable in advising YOT case managers on how best to support complex children and young people, yet their small numbers and issues around their recruitment and retention were currently limiting their potential input into this.
- 4.43 Raising children and young people's awareness of trauma-informed community services to encourage them to engage early to address the issues underlying their offending was another challenge which stakeholders highlighted.

'You need to bite the bullet here and break the cycle. Some of the challenge is getting help to people before even they know they need it. And not only being able to access services by committing offences'

- 4.44 Stakeholders were asked how the Youth Justice Blueprint could best link with the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) (Wales) Act 2015, to benefit children and young people who have become victims and reduce the risk of them perpetrating such offences. They noted that:

²³ As part of the [Youth Justice Blueprint Implementation Plan](#) Welsh Government and the Ministry of Justice are liaising with Traumatic Stress Wales regarding support (and resources) for the youth justice sector.

- Services for children and young people should be age and developmentally appropriate, acknowledging that boys, girls, and children and young people in general mature at different rates.
- Appropriately tailored interventions and resources were required to meet families' often very different needs. A particular gap was identified for interventions and resources which focus on Adolescent to Parent Violence (APVA).
- As noted more generally in relation to the community priority in the Youth Justice Blueprint, services should intervene earlier to break the cycle of domestic abuse in families. To achieve this, youth justice services should work more closely with Community Safety Partnerships, schools, family services, and health services to align and strengthen approaches.
- Messaging should be consistent across all services and should be led by those which children and young people choose to engage with.

'If you're a child [who is involved with the youth justice system] ...you are brought up to fear the police and to see them in a different way. But [children and young people] do go to each other, so that peer to peer relationship, they do go online, do go to see youth work or community clubs and things like that as areas where they will seek support and advice. Rather than banging the same drum, we should look at the areas where children do go and seek advice from and ask questions to make sure that those are the areas in the justice system also focuses on and to make sure the right messages are getting through'

- Messaging should reinforce that abuse is not inevitable: it is a choice.

'There needs to be a link between the understanding [that] this is not the path that you will end up on because [that] is just reenforcing that message that there's no hope and things are never going to change... we need to think about what the Act says around the support that's needed for children and...think, does that enforce that you can have the power to choose differently?'

Evaluating the Youth Justice Blueprint community priority

4.45 Stakeholders suggested a range of outcome measures for evaluating the community priority of the Youth Justice Blueprint. These are listed in section 6.

4.46 Stakeholders identified the following **considerations for** evaluating the Youth Justice Blueprint community priority:

- Where formulations take place as part of children and young people's initial assessment by a psychologist, evaluations should incorporate them to identify how far the services provided are meeting their needs.

'Very early assessment and identification of needs is essential, but rather than having a list, making that a meaningful kind of narrative that...a young person has collaboratively contributed to. That should then inform the services that they receive and should be revisited as part of the evaluation process'

- Evaluation should explore where practice has been strengthened or changed through more widespread implementation of trauma-informed practice across universal and specialist services.
- YOTs already collect a variety of data on children and young people in the community, such as AssetPlus records, and ECM-specific data (which include detail on trauma experienced by children and young people) for those participating in the approach. Some stakeholders felt that this data could provide valuable insight into the outcomes that these children and young people are achieving.
- Trauma-informed practice is said to be difficult to evaluate²⁴ because:
 - YOTs may be taking different approaches to delivering trauma-informed practice.

²⁴Although some stakeholders mentioned some of the issues with evaluating trauma-informed practice, the authors suggest that learning could be gained from the previous evaluations of ECM (Cordis Bright, 2017; Bangor University, 2021; the [Trauma and ACE \(TrACE\) informed Organisations Toolkit](#) (Public Health Wales, 2021); and the Trauma-Informed Practice Evaluation (Ingeus, 2021).

- Trauma-informed practice is a ‘cultural’ approach to caring for children and young people rather than something which is the same regardless of where and by whom it is delivered.
- YOTs and partner agencies may be unclear on how they are expected to contribute to trauma-informed practice and to achieving the other elements of the Youth Justice Blueprint community priority, and linked to this, which outcomes they are supposed to help improve for children and young people. YOTs should have clear guidance about this to ensure consistency in and clarity around their approaches, it was said²⁵.

4.47 In the table below, we combine the interview findings with those of the statistical mapping exercise that we conducted at stage 1 of this EA to form some recommendations for evaluating the Youth Justice Blueprint community priority.

- Children and young people should be consulted at the start and at the end of their engagement with community-based support, and after a period of reflection. This could be built in when commissioning services. Complaints and grievances should also be explored, along with service’s responses to them.
- Conducting qualitative research (e.g., interviews, focus groups, and case studies) with children and young people who have, and have not, taken up community-based support will be key to understanding its effective and less effective elements, and any barriers to access.
- Public health referral to treatment time measures can be used alongside metrics from partner services (and user feedback) to help understand unmet need for services, including any variation across Wales. Partner agencies such as those providing treatment for mental health conditions and substance misuse would need to collect shared metrics in a consistent way to achieve this.
- Baseline and over-time reoffending rates should be explored at an organisational level and linked to equality and diversity measures.

²⁵Operational guidance for YOTs on delivering trauma-informed practice is available in the [ECM guidance produced by the YJB](#), and in the [Relationship Based Practice Guidance](#) produced by Cwm Taf YOT for the YJB.

- The reasons for breaches and recalls (including specific requirements or conditions) should be explored qualitatively. However, there is also scope to learn more about volumes, the characteristics and circumstances of those who are subject to breach proceedings through analysis of administrative data from the courts.
- To inform evaluation, services should collect data on the numbers of staff receiving relevant training. This could also be linked to the performance management of commissioned services.
- As noted, linkage of YOT/MoJ data with education, housing, family court and social services records held within SAIL Databank would enable greater understanding of service user's needs and circumstances around the time of their offending and in the past. This can inform the support which is available to them in the community (as well as prevention and diversion activities). Unfortunately, this is not yet possible in Wales.

Custody

The Youth Justice Blueprint states that there have been long-standing concerns about the distant placing of Welsh children and young people away from their home area.

Options will be explored for:

- All Welsh-resident children and young people being placed in secure accommodation in Wales and near to their home communities. This will include reciprocal arrangements with England so that cross-border arrangements are in place for individual cases on an exceptional basis.
- Trauma-informed secure provision, drawing on best practice in multi-agency working to develop a centre of excellence with delivery of mental health, health care education and training.

Challenges, limitations, and uncertainties in the Youth Justice Blueprint custody priority

- 4.48 As already noted, stakeholders praised the move towards trauma-informed practice in secure settings. Parc Young Offender Institution (YOI) was said to have made considerable progress in achieving this through starting to deliver psychology-led provision; delivering staff training on children and young people's rights, talking to

children and young people about their rights, and moving away from punitive practices like restraining children and young people and taking away their privileges.

- 4.49 However, the picture was said to be inconsistent in other secure settings where children and young people from Wales are placed. This led stakeholders to suggest that all secure settings should provide a more child-centred environment which consistently delivers children and young people's rights focused, trauma-informed care, rather than a punitive approach, as embodied in the Blueprint.

'I worry about the future, where we still have a custodial provision that is based on a punitive approach... I am concerned about whether we can really offer a true trauma informed approach where we have punitive practice operating. For example, if the children don't attend education, there are consequences put in and those consequences sometimes go against the idea that we should be nurturing children...if we're looking at that through a true trauma informed lens, we would be considering where the child was in their pathway'

- 4.50 The need for all the agencies providing support to children and young people in custody to provide a consistent rather than contradictory approach, and to have a shared vision of what success for children and young people in custody looked like was also emphasised. In addition, a multi-disciplinary approach should be used to plan and deliver holistic support for children and young people in custody, it was said.
- 4.51 Similarly, some noted that there should be greater collaboration between secure settings and schools and other education providers to improve the skills and employment focused interventions and services delivered to children and young people within secure settings to better harness the time spent there and achieve better outcomes in those areas. Others acknowledged that the COVID-19 pandemic had restricted the delivery and impact of face-to-face interventions to children and young people in secure settings.
- 4.52 The lack of appropriate secure settings for girls in/from Wales was cited as a particular issue. This cohort was said to have especially complex needs which would be best met within a safe and therapeutic environment rather than a YOI.

Another limitation was the lack of Welsh medium services in secure settings for children and young people whose preferred language is Welsh.

- 4.53 Stakeholders' opinions differed regarding whether all children and young people from Wales should be co-located in the same secure settings. Some felt that it was not appropriate to co-locate those who had committed offences of differing severity together. Others felt that co-location would better enable children and young people's needs to be met, provided the necessary risk assessments and safeguarding provisions are made, and children and young people's ages were considered.
- 4.54 To improve the quality of interactions between children and young people in custody and their families, settings should be more welcoming and family friendly, stakeholders said. The Invisible Walls project at Parc Prison and YOI was said to have made good progress in achieving this. Secure settings could make more use of video calls to maintain links between children and young people and their families.
- 4.55 Although stakeholders welcomed the reduction in the numbers of Welsh children and young people who are in custody, they acknowledged that those who remained were the most complex and challenging, so needed a high level of support to ensure that they could achieve the best possible outcomes upon their release. Adequate funding was therefore said to be needed to deliver the support they require.

'Nine times out of ten those...children will be our most complex challenging children who have had the worst experiences in their lives. And consequently, even though the numbers are low, there will need to be a higher level of investment in them to try and set them up for when they come out of custody'

- 4.56 The complex nature of youth justice in Wales was cited as another challenge to achieving the Youth Justice Blueprint's custody priority. Working in close partnership to align and deliver the justice and welfare elements of the priority between the Welsh and UK Governments within an acceptable timeframe was said to be crucial.

4.57 The custody priority should explicitly incorporate looked after and criminally exploited children and young people. Some stakeholders would welcome further clarity on when the key elements of the Youth Justice Blueprint custody priority will be delivered.

Evaluating the Youth Justice Blueprint custody priority

4.58 Stakeholders suggested a range of outcome measures for evaluating the custody priority of the Youth Justice Blueprint. These are listed in section 6.

4.59 Stakeholders highlighted the following **considerations** for evaluating the Youth Justice Blueprint custody priority:

- Evaluations should incorporate the proposed model of custody used for children and young people in Wales in future, which is for, ‘All Welsh resident children and young people remanded or sentenced to custody to be in small units in Wales, based on a trauma-informed model, with hub and spoke service delivery to the community for complex and high-risk cases under YOT supervision and on resettlement’²⁶.
- Understanding the needs of and measuring outcomes for Welsh children and young people in custody should be manageable given their small numbers, a stakeholder suggested. Some stakeholders also noted that children and young people tend to be easier to engage in research and evaluation when they are in custody. This allows a rich understanding of their perceptions, experiences, and outcomes.

‘Perversely, children in the secure estates are really, really easy to get alongside and talk with. It is worth acknowledging that those children – few in number though they are these days – are some of the most challenging, damaged children in our society but the more restrictive the regime, the easier it is to actually begin to understand how those children are feeling because of the contact you have’

²⁶ This recommendation is noted in the [Youth Justice Blueprint Implementation Plan](#).

4.60 In the table below, we combine the interview findings with those of the statistical mapping exercise that we conducted at stage 1 of this EA to form some recommendations for evaluating the custody priority of the Youth Justice Blueprint.

- It would be important to explore reoffending rates by sentence/disposal type (community vs. custodial) in terms of any differences between children and young people with different/protected characteristics.
- Evaluation should explore the profile of disposals for different groups, by offence type and severity; whether this has changed over time; and whether there has been an increase in the use of out of court disposals and a fall in the use of custody. The RRI can be used to identify where children and young people with particular characteristics and/or membership of priority group are over-represented. Census 2021 data (available from March 2023) will also show the local picture.
- Secure establishment's compliance with the Welsh Language Standard and Social Services and Well-being Act (Wales) 2014 should be included in an evaluation, i.e., children and young people should have access to Welsh language health and social care services, assessments, and support when in custody without having to request them.
- Evaluation of this priority should also incorporate the use of remand; early release (when on a Detention and Training Order [DTO]) and continuity of care measures, including the views of young people, their families and practitioners, are considered to gauge the quality and consistency of support received within the wider youth/criminal justice system.

Resettlement and transitions

The Youth Justice Blueprint states that resettlement is most effective when there is multi-disciplinary, collaborative working between agencies providing support in custody and the community.

Considerations will be how:

- A 'Constructive Resettlement' approach can be adopted, so work with children and young people is constructive, co-created, customised, consistent, and co-ordinated.

- Resettlement practice can be broadened to encompass family-focused work to prepare the home environment for the child or young person's return, improving reintegration.
- Multi-agency responses to reintegration and resettlement can be further strengthened.
- Transition arrangements to adult criminal justice services and other adult services such as mental health and substance misuse can be improved.

Challenges, limitations, and uncertainties in resettlement and transitions

4.61 Stakeholders felt that more services were available for children and young people than adults to support resettlement. As soon as children and young people reached 18, they said that many children and young people experience a considerable drop-off in the services that were available to them. This was a gap that needed addressing, they noted.

'When it comes to youth to adult transition...it is such a huge change in legislation...you go from being a child at risk to being an adult...Provision is a cliff edge. There is often quite significant provision available for under 18s but not when you turn 18, but yet the criminal justice approach is different. You could just be a day [over] your 18th birthday, and [experience] a huge difference in terms of how you are dealt with'

4.62 The thresholds and criteria for adult services were also said to be higher than for children's services, which meant that many children and young people who needed lower-level support did not receive it.

4.63 Children and young people should co-produce their resettlement plans to ensure that they are needs-led and therefore have the greatest chance of helping them to achieve better outcomes, stakeholders suggested. In line with trauma-informed practice, resettlement should also be based on a consistent relationship with one key member of staff, who should broker and coordinate appropriate support for children and young people. The appropriateness of interventions delivered to children and young people to support their resettlement was questioned by some stakeholders. They noted that interventions should be realistic, reflecting children and young people's needs and preferences and harnessing the services which are available in their communities. The sequencing of interventions was also said to be

important: children and young people must be developmentally ready to engage with them in order to benefit.

- 4.64 The need to involve families and pro-social role models to a greater extent in resettlement planning and delivery was also highlighted by stakeholders.

'It does need to be broadened to family focused work, but it also needs to be focused outside of that because sometimes the important adults are pro-social connectors in a child's life, not family members. So, we need to look for who those pro-social people are that are going to help the child. And if they're not in the family, maybe we can do some work with the family to mould them more and help them be able to deliver what the child needs'

- 4.65 Maintaining positive relationships to support resettlement was said to be more difficult for children and young people who did not have families and who were looked after by local authorities, some stakeholders felt. Finding appropriate accommodation for these children and young people could be a particular challenge because they were often not able to return to their previous foster care placements.

- 4.66 Accommodation was also raised as an issue for children and young people leaving custody more generally, as was the availability, suitability, and timeliness of services and opportunities to support them into suitable ETE upon leaving custody. The need for a flexible approach to resettlement in line with children and young people's age, needs, and location in Wales was highlighted.

'It is quite difficult to implement the same principles and guidance across all practice areas in Wales because of the difference in types of areas. So, you cannot necessarily apply the same principles to an urban city as you can to a huge rural area where there might be massive travelling distances'

- 4.67 YOTs were consequently said to need permission to deliver flexible resettlement provision to meet the needs of children and young people in their areas.

- 4.68 As noted in relation to the custody priority of the Youth Justice Blueprint, some stakeholders said that custody staff should assist with providing trauma-informed transitions back into the community, harnessing the relationship they have built with children and young people to prepare them for life upon release. Currently, YOT

workers were said to take most of the responsibility for this, whereas custody staff could and should do more to support resettlement.

- 4.69 Again, as noted in relation to other priorities in the Youth Justice Blueprint, the importance of a strong multi-agency partnership approach to resettlement was emphasised by stakeholders, where all agencies understand which outcomes they are supporting children and young people to achieve and collaborate effectively to achieve them. The Blueprint was said by some to have helped coordinate activity between the relevant public bodies which support resettlement and transitions.
- 4.70 The placing of Welsh children and young people in custody in England made resettling them back into their communities in Wales more challenging, stakeholders said. This was because of the differences in the policies, services, and funding arrangements between Wales and England.
- 4.71 The reduced numbers of children and young people resettling from custody into the community mean that a more flexible and responsive resettlement approach is needed, it was said. Instead of holding resettlement panels every two months, discussions about children and young people leaving custody should take place on a case-by-case basis, possibly combining with the remit of an existing meeting or group to make best use of resources, stakeholders suggested.
- 4.72 Psychology-led, multi-agency formulations (which are an integral element of ECM and Secure Stairs) were suggested as a way of improving resettlement support for children and young people. Formulations should be conducted upon entry to custody and should identify neuro-developmental needs, possible mental health issues, and known history of trauma. This ensures that all staff involved in supporting children and young people have a holistic understanding of their needs and understand their role in meeting them.

Evaluating resettlement and transitions

- 4.73 Stakeholders suggested a range of outcome measures for evaluating resettlement and transitions for children and young people. These are listed in section 6.
- 4.74 Stakeholders highlighted the following **considerations and challenges** to evaluating resettlement and transitions.

- YOTs across Wales were said to offer different approaches to resettlement because of variations in the numbers and demographics of the children and young people they supported, as well as the YOTs' size and structure. These differences could make evaluating resettlement and transitions across all YOTs challenging.
- Agencies' different systems for, and approaches to, monitoring children and young people's journeys through the YJS makes evaluating resettlement more challenging. To address this, all relevant agencies should adopt common systems and approaches.
- There was some feeling that reliable, detailed data on resettlement and transitions was lacking in general. This is consistent with the findings of the statistical mapping exercise.

4.75 In the following table, we combine the interview findings with those of the statistical mapping exercise that we conducted at stage 1 of this EA to form some recommendations for evaluating the resettlement and transitions priority of the Youth Justice Blueprint.

- As noted in relation to the custody priority, it would be important to explore reoffending rates by sentence type (community vs. custodial) in terms of any differences between children and young people with different needs and/or protected characteristics.
- Time to justice (time from arrest to court) should be incorporated into evaluating the resettlement and transitions priority.
- Access to support services, including health care and substance misuse, should be comparable with that in the community, with planned transitions to services on release. The low numbers of Welsh children and young people held in the secure estate limits the amount of data that can be released into the public domain. However, for planning purposes, having an internal intersectional profile, including needs would be advantageous.
- As with the community priority, compliance with community sentences should be explored, including breaches and recalls, and the reasons for non-compliance.
- Evaluation of this priority should also incorporate the use of remand especially in light of the increased emphasis on applying the real prospect test to ascertain the appropriateness of custodial remand rather than being remanded in the community and Released on a Temporary License (ROTL).

- Exploring the suitability of accommodation, ETE opportunities and access to community-based treatment agencies (where appropriate) upon release is key, as is recognition of the need to maintain ongoing relationships with key professionals to ensure the smooth/co-ordinated transition. As a result, it is recommended that continuity of care measures are considered to gauge the quality and consistency of support received within the wider youth/criminal justice system.

Research and evaluation

4.76 Research and evaluation is cross-cutting throughout the Youth Justice Blueprint. Stakeholders were asked the following questions about research and evaluation in relation to the Youth Justice Blueprint. Their feedback is summarised in the rest of this section.

What are the key considerations for evaluating the Youth Justice Blueprint?

4.77 Stakeholders made several recommendations for evaluating the Youth Justice Blueprint. Some of these points were made elsewhere in relation to the Blueprint's priorities.

- Evaluation must have input and buy-in from all relevant statutory, voluntary, and third sector organisations which are involved in overseeing the Blueprint and delivering related services.

'Some people see [research and evaluation] as something that's not for them or not as useful for them or as important, but every single one of them has to grapple with this...Some areas are desperate to have the time of a researcher to come in and look at all the stuff they are doing and that's fine, but why aren't they doing that anyway?'

- Making research and evaluation an explicit priority within the Youth Justice Blueprint as it is within the Women's Justice Blueprint and having a shared research strategy across both Blueprints could help to keep research and evaluation high on the agenda, it was said. This is a consideration for the Blueprint research and evaluation group.

'Key considerations are a structured approach and having a shared strategy to research and evaluation that builds on existing knowledge and expertise in this area, that identifies what the gaps are and seeks to find ways of addressing

those gaps and, and contributing meaningfully to our wider knowledge of what is best practice with all of these populations that we're talking about and about having that culture of open learning'

- Data for research and evaluation must be made easier for researchers to access than is currently the case.

'It is a limitation to the whole Blueprint in some respects, particularly when we are talking about this Blueprint being cross organisation in its ambitions for delivery... A person could be engaged in multiple services, and we struggle to be able to look at a person and pull that data in relation to that single individual. That is a limitation and will be a limitation in being able to evaluate the impact of all the different elements. You would think in this day and age we could have sorted that side of things out, but quite clearly not'

- Different pieces of research and evaluation which are conducted into the Youth (and Women's) Justice Blueprints should be more closely aligned with each other. Researchers leading these projects should communicate with each other to share learning and to ensure that their respective projects dovetail with rather than duplicate each other.

'We are going to have other projects under the Blueprints that are going to have evaluations that need to be aligned, and communication is key, I think. Otherwise, we'll just end up with a whole group of evaluations that don't reflect each other which will not put us in a good place'

- Research and evaluation must be properly funded and inbuilt into core business from the outset to ensure that outcomes can be measured.

'How do you make people who are really not interested in some of this stuff make it their core business because if we don't do that, and if we don't build it in right at the beginning how do we know what we are doing is having the right impact in the end because we aren't able to measure it?'

- Research and evaluation should be used to influence practice to a greater extent.

'Generally, in youth justice, people are working on the ground without any real knowledge of the data and the statistics. I don't think that's routinely incorporated into practice, but it should be. And some of the relevant legislation...people don't really understand'

- Research with children and young people should be meaningful rather than tokenistic.

'Participation with children and young people is not informed by children and young people. It is often to tick boxes after their intervention. This doesn't go towards creating interventions'

- Quantitative or 'hard' outcome measures such as reoffending only tell part of the story. Consequently, evaluations of the Youth (and Women's) Justice Blueprints should incorporate strong qualitative elements which capture 'softer' outcomes, based on feedback from service users and providers, families, and communities.

'The evaluation really needs to be a multi-faceted evaluation and it needs to concentrate not just on measurable outcome, which is has this person stopped committing offences? It's narrow. I think the evaluation needs to be much wider than that: are they accessing services? Are they going to school? Are they working? Do they have housing?'

- Research and evaluation should be independent and objective and led by external researchers and research organisations where possible.

'It's so valuable to have external partners involved in research and evaluation, to keep it objective, to keep it open to scrutiny, and to ultimately give us valid and reliable results and recommendations around next steps. I think data and good data is such a cornerstone of this'

- Evaluation of the Youth (and Women's) Justice Blueprints should seek to identify how effective multi-agency partnership working has been in helping to achieve the Blueprint's aims.

'The broader question for me is, is this a good example of partnership working or not? That is probably a bit of asking key people what barriers have come up,

have you managed to overcome them? Did you feel like you could get what you needed?'

- Longer-term evaluation should be invested in because many outcomes will take time to emerge, and children and young people and their families may benefit from having some time to reflect on them. Stakeholders felt that children and young people (and women) would be prepared to take part in longitudinal research, but that researchers would need to build trusting relationships with them to facilitate this.

'With how people feel about how they've been treated, it needs some context, and it needs some retrospective distance. So, I think more investment should be looking at what children and families say after five, seven, nine, ten years. Are they in a better place? Are they happier? Did offending lessen for them? Did they feel they had the skills? What did having a criminal record do to them? Would they want their children to get a criminal record? Are they bothered? Have they invested in their own trajectory, in terms of do they want to break that pattern for their children?'

What works well when conducting research with children and young people?

4.78 Stakeholders recommended several approaches, techniques, and considerations which should be borne in mind when planning evaluation(s) of the Youth Justice Blueprint.

- Engaging children and young people as peer researchers and mentors to do research with/support children and young people who are in the YJS. One stakeholder suggested that children and young people of similar ages to those in the YJS or at risk of entering it who had similar experiences or backgrounds to them could be positive and inspirational role models.

'We should make more use of people like students to become peer mentors, particularly for prevention...it builds self-esteem enormously, and it builds that understanding of, "Oh, now I see what I was doing wrong"...But you have to choose them carefully; if you choose people that all come from privileged backgrounds, then it becomes a them and us, like it's easy for you. Whereas if

you choose peer mentors who have come through similar issues, who have had to face similar problems and environments, you build up a better understanding'

- Researchers should engage with children and young people in an age/stage-appropriate way rather than using the same methods as they would with adults.

'And as long as we engage with them in a child-centred way and don't just mimic our approach with adults with those children and children and young people, we should be able to get quite rich information about how they are experiencing our services but also their life in general and what it is that they need and would help them'

- Children and young people should be consulted on what research methods they prefer, e.g., more traditional methods such as interviews, and/or more innovative approaches like co-creation forums, or using social media, videos, or music.
- In line with trauma-informed practice, having a trusted person, e.g., a case manager, to introduce researchers, to support children and young people to engage with the research. This should include helping to brief children and young people in advance to ensure that they fully understand the scope and requirements, and to alleviate any concerns they have about it.
- Researchers ensure that children and young people feel validated through taking part in research, and understand that their feedback will be used to help improve support for others who are in their position in future.
- Where possible, research should be conducted in a location where children and young people feel safe.
- Research may need to be conducted over several sessions, as children and young people may miss appointments.
- Offering incentives is important to recognise children and young people's time and effort. These often include gift cards, but are not always financial, and could also include time credits, opportunities to share their work in front of wider audiences, skill development, and training courses.

- Avoid paper-based, self-completion methods like worksheets when conducting research with children and young people.

Young people's feedback on research and evaluation

4.79 Most of the young people we spoke to valued having the opportunity to take part in research and to have their views heard by all of the relevant agencies. Some had taken part in research before. Most of these young people also said that they would be open to participating in research again in future, to try and to improve things for other young people who are in their position in future.

'I've got a lot of friends that get in trouble, and I know it's kind of hard for some people so obviously if I can make things a bit better for them it would be better in my eyes because I've done something then'

4.80 Some were unconvinced whether their voices would 'make a difference', although one young person felt that hearing the perspectives of peers in custody may deter others from committing crime and entering custody in future.

'My voice will go out to people who are in a situation where they could be on that borderline of ending up in custody, and they could hear it from people who have actually been in that situation...and now are getting on with their lives and have got through their sentence. Whether they choose to listen is their choice and if they listen, they'll avoid it as much as they can and if they don't listen then they'll do something stupid and end up in custody and realise that they should have listened to what they were being told by people in custody previously'

4.81 Researchers' age, gender, and ethnicity were said to be unimportant to the young people we spoke to.

'I don't categorise people. A person is a person, no matter whether they are black, or white. It doesn't matter'

4.82 Understanding young people's needs and preferences (including how and when the research should take place), and treating them with respect when engaging them with research, was said to be more important.

'As long as they have a neutral understanding of how that young person is and what their needs are and how to talk to them in a way they will understand, then it should be okay'

- 4.83 Another young person highlighted the importance of considering young people's emotional state before engaging them in research.

'It depends on how a person's doing. If this was back about three months ago, I wouldn't be sat here right now, I'd probably be on a nicking because I was in a dark place when I first came in, but it depends where that person is'

- 4.84 A few young people said that they would rather avoid participating in research in the morning and would instead prefer an afternoon or evening session. Several thought that peer-led research would be easier and *'more chat-able'* because young people may be more open with someone with similar experiences.

- 4.85 When asked how they would like to give feedback in future, most young people would not be keen to give feedback via a panel. Some said that they would consider sharing information via social media, such as TikTok.

- 4.86 Some young people said that they would feel uncomfortable participating in a group research session and would rather speak to a researcher one-to-one.

'I don't know about a group because I'm not really a fan of a lot of people'

- 4.87 However, others said that they would be interested in listening to others' experiences and opinions in a group setting.

'I'd like to see what their experiences are like... I only know what my mates have been through, and my mates are not like me... Because my mates are not like me, their opinions and their outlook is probably completely different to mine'

- 4.88 Young people were not very keen on producing diaries as part of research projects.

'I think I'd get lost; I have a habit of putting things safe and never finding them again'

'I don't know about writing because that's quite a lot of time and quite a lot of effort. I'm happy to have a chat'

How feasible would it be to evaluate the Youth Justice and Women's Justice Blueprints together?

- 4.89 Most stakeholders suggested that a similar thematic approach to evaluate both Blueprints could be used because both Blueprints involve largely the same stakeholders and organisations and target similar outcomes. However, they tended to recommend that the evaluations of both Blueprints should remain separate to recognise the differences between the Blueprints.

'Whilst we are trying divert both of those groups away from the criminal justice system, so perhaps you could do an evaluation on diversion, but you still need two chapters because the action we are taking is very different compared to those two cohorts'

- 4.90 A proportion of stakeholders said that some parts of the Youth Justice and Women's Justice Blueprints could be evaluated together to reflect their common aims and themes, but other parts should be evaluated separately to reflect the specific needs of children and young people and women.

'I wouldn't want to see them looked at separately because there is clear overlap on the broad principles even if the way of delivering the activity is different and the detail is different. The overarching principle is to prevent the offending in the first place and if it does, prevent reoffending and rehabilitate. That is the same for both'

- 4.91 One stakeholder suggested that this evaluation approach could take a 'Venn diagram' format which recognises the similarities yet captures the differences between the Blueprints. For instance, both evaluation approaches should be trauma-informed, but for children and young people, the approach would be child-centred, recognise developmental stage; and the role of education. For women, the approach should recognise caregiver status; trauma experienced as a child and as an adult; the possibly more entrenched nature of their offending; and be gender informed.

- 4.92 If such an approach was implemented, evaluators should work together to share and incorporate learning from their respective evaluations, some stakeholders said.

'We need to keep an eye on what can be done together and what is different, completely different. There are aspects that could be looked at together. I certainly think that they could learn more from each other. So even if you evaluate them totally separately, I think that parts from the female system should be built into the child's system. And learning from the child system should be built into the female system. I think when you look at the aspects they pull out under each other of the themes they could've learnt more from each other along the way'

- 4.93 Some stakeholders felt that, although they recognised that the Youth Justice and Women's Justice Blueprints had some similar priorities, it would only be possible to fully capture the Blueprints' distinct priorities and actions and what was working well, and less well, for both Blueprints through conducting separate evaluations.

'The method may be the same, or similar, but I think you need to keep them apart. If one [of the Blueprints] is a real success and the other one isn't, you can actually measure the success separately for one or the other'

- 4.94 A combined evaluation of the Youth Justice and Women's Justice Blueprints could be over-complicated, expensive, and difficult to implement in practice, others said. Some stakeholders felt that a combined evaluation would not work because the structure and governance of youth and women's e justice in Wales is too different.

- 4.95 According to some others, combining the evaluations could overlook important differences in the activities delivered and impacts achieved by both Blueprints. They therefore advocated separate evaluations which were flexible enough to detect the nuances in both Blueprints. Some also advocated keeping the evaluations separate but producing an overarching document once the evaluations are complete which compares and contrasts the findings of both evaluations to aid policy making and wider learning.

'I think you'd need to do [the evaluations of both Blueprints] slightly differently...As a result of that you could produce something that...is accessible and talks to policy groups or ministers. The more detailed, academic studies could be done separately. Really get into how you would approach this with

children versus how you would approach this with adults. I also think we will lose too much, as [a combined evaluation] won't be flexible enough'

Are there any gaps in the evidence base around children and young people's journey through the youth justice system?

4.96 Stakeholders suggested that the following gaps in the evidence base existed in relation to children and young people's journey through the YJS²⁷.

- The experiences of ethnic minority children and young people within the YJS, to establish whether the Youth Justice Blueprint is as effective in improving outcomes for these children and young people relative to their white peers²⁸.
- The wider impact of inequality on children and young people's (and women's) journey through the system, e.g., poverty, discrimination, poor mental health, the impact of protected characteristics.
- How far the Youth Justice Blueprint's provision meets the need of neurologically diverse children and young people, and those with learning disabilities and disabilities²⁹.
- Why diversion is not used more instead of courts and sentencing for children and young people³⁰.
- The public's understanding of what children and young people's (and women's) journeys through the system look like, to help reduce stigmatisation of those who commit crime, and to facilitate understanding that perpetrators are often victims, too.

²⁷ Although some evidence does exist on these topics, stakeholders may not have been aware of it. Some relevant existing evidence is provided in footnotes, although this is not exhaustive.

²⁸ No published research to date has specifically explored the Youth Justice Blueprint's impact on improving outcomes for ethnic minority children and young people relative to their white peers. Related evidence includes [Tacking Racial Injustice: Children and the Youth Justice System](#) (JUSTICE, 2021); and ["Black is guilty in their eyes": Experiences of black ad mixed race boys in youth justice services](#) (User Voice, 2021).

²⁹ See [Young Lives Behind Bars: The health and human rights of young people detained in the criminal justice system](#) (British Medical Association, 2014); and [The Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists Justice Evidence Base](#) (2017). A more [recent review of evidence on neurodiversity in the criminal justice system](#) (HMICFRS, 2021) is available which relates to adults.

³⁰ See [Disparities in youth diversion – an evidence review](#) (Centre for Justice Innovation, 2021); [Annual report: Inspection of youth offending services](#) (HMIP, 2019); [Six steps forward for diversion in the youth justice system](#) (Centre for Justice Innovation, 2022).

- Examining the experiences of children and young people in custody³¹.
- Understanding the needs and experiences of girls in the YJS³².
- Understanding the journey of Welsh children and young people.
- The criminalisation of looked after children and young people³³.
- The criminal exploitation of children and young people³⁴.
- Harmful/inappropriate sexual behaviour among children and young people and how services can address it³⁵.
- The effectiveness of information sharing between partner agencies to ensure that children and young people's needs are understood and met.
- What triggers offending behaviour, and what leads it to stop.

How can we improve the flow of information which is collected on children and young people through the youth justice system?

4.97 Stakeholders recommended that the flow of information which is collected on children and young people through the YJS could be improved by:

- Having consistent approaches to data collection, shared systems, and data sharing protocols and agreements between all relevant agencies, as noted elsewhere, was strongly emphasised by stakeholders;
- Agencies (e.g., YOTs/youth justice services; secure establishments; social services; schools) agreeing on shared indicators that they should collect data on to evidence a clear set of outcomes for children and young people, at specified time points;

³¹ HMIP's [thematic reviews](#) and [inspection reports](#) incorporate the views of children and young people in custody. Also see The House of Commons Justice Committee [Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#) reports.

³² See [Girls and Youth Justice](#) (Hodgson, 2022); [Girls in the Criminal Justice System](#) (HMIP, 2014).

³³ See [Ending the criminalisation of children in residential care](#) (Howard League for Penal Reform, 2017); [All Wales Protocol: Reducing the criminalisation of care experienced children and young adults](#) (MoJ, Home Office, and Welsh Government, 2022).

³⁴ See ["It was hard to escape": Safeguarding children at risk from criminal exploitation](#) (The Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel, 2020); [No Place at Home](#) (All Party Parliamentary Group for Runaway and Missing Children and Adults, 2020).

³⁵ See [Harmful sexual behaviour](#) (Barnardo's Cymru, 2021); and [Research briefing: harmful sexual behaviour](#) (NSPCC, 2017);

- Developing a ‘passport’ containing key information that follows children and young people (and women) on their journey through the system. This would remove the need for agencies to keep asking children and young people (and women) to repeat the same information and would enable agencies to ‘timeline’ children and young people’s lives and to identify how support needs may change over time;
- Investing in technology to assist with collecting qualitative and quantitative data from children and young people³⁶;
- Building trust and rapport with children and young people (and women) to extract detailed information from them about their needs and histories;
- Data experts supporting those working directly with children and young people by providing them with relevant tailored information to support research and evaluation on request.

5. The Women’s Justice Blueprint

5.1 In this section, we discuss the findings from the interviews with stakeholders and women about the Women’s Justice Blueprint priorities’ importance, challenges, limitations, uncertainties, and evaluation.

Women’s Justice Blueprint: Early intervention and prevention

According to the Women’s Justice Blueprint, the priorities for early intervention and prevention in addition to working with partners to tackle root causes of crime should be:

- Diverting women, where appropriate, away from crime and into women-centred, community-based, sustainable support services that meet their needs.
- Explore options for trauma-informed services which can best meet the needs of vulnerable women, and families, affected by ACEs and at risk of entering the system, learning from the ECM approach.

³⁶ The decision regarding who should invest in technology should be made by Welsh Government in partnership with the relevant agencies.

Challenges, limitations, and uncertainties in early intervention and prevention

- 5.2 Stakeholders highlighted a range of key challenges, limitations, and uncertainties related to the early intervention and prevention priority in the Women's Justice Blueprint.
- 5.3 Several reflected on the need to clearly define which activities and approaches are included in early intervention and prevention to target them appropriately and maximise benefit to service users and cost-effectiveness. Distinguishing between primary and secondary prevention was said to be particularly crucial in this regard.

'... Primary prevention is not stopping something from happening again; it's stopping something from happening in the first place ... In the criminal justice world, often there are no levers or power for those people ... to get into what we call primary prevention. That usually sits within social services, housing and things that involve the Welsh Government. So, when criminal justice comes into contact with people ... the things you tried to prevent already happened because that's why they are there. Often, we find ... a lot of sectors suggesting that they know what primary prevention is and that they are doing it but actually what they are doing is secondary [prevention] ... That's the first thing ... fundamental understanding of the definition of what it means'

- 5.4 Others felt that strong or stronger collaboration is needed between agencies delivering prevention activities, and between the statutory bodies responsible for commissioning them. Recognising their role in and contribution to these activities was crucial, it was said, along with clear and consistent communication, and a shared vision of their structure and purpose.

'I think some of the key challenges are around getting all areas of government and public service to recognise the role that they have to play in prevention and early intervention. I think the parts of the sector that are obviously to do with justice, then it's easier to get them to buy in. It's part of what they should be doing anyway. But then when you're talking about broader areas like housing, health, education, social services, for example, it can be trickier to recognise that they have that role to play in, or persuading them to recognise that they have that role to play in the prevention and early intervention agenda'

- 5.5 Moreover, strengthening links between criminal justice organisations and community safety partnerships was seen as especially important in improving prevention/early intervention services – particularly given the essential role communities must play in achieving the aims of the Women’s Justice Blueprint.
- 5.6 On a related note, several stakeholders stressed the important role played by core or universal services in prevention. Indeed, these services were thought to be best place to offer prevention at the most primary level, as by the time women are in contact with those within criminal justice it is ‘too late’ to be considered so.

‘ ... criminal justice services are coming into contact with people ... once they have already started offending, so it is not really early intervention and prevention. You really need to get people before they have started offending, which may not necessarily sit within the remit of a criminal justice service. That probably sits within things like education or like voluntary organisations rather than the criminal justice service ...’

- 5.7 Early intervention and prevention were said to present particular challenges to policing, particularly in terms of: ‘buy-in’ from the front-line; establishing who might benefit from *early intervention and prevention services*; and knowing what referral avenues are available for these women (although the introduction of the two-tier out of court disposal framework in south Wales and Gwent has apparently helped facilitate this).

‘ ... how can police respond to females who are demonstrating high levels of vulnerability that can eventually escalate into offending behaviour and respond to those individuals. Especially ... because getting them access to support within a local authority is a lot more challenging than getting children access to support, because I don’t know if there is an equivalent of early intervention services for adults like there is for children’

‘... That is the challenge for us ... [the frontline] not understanding or accepting the messaging and the whole ethos behind it, [and] how we then convert that into practical, operational solutions ...’

5.8 Identifying which women need prevention services - and which interventions are most appropriate for them - was also said to be difficult for other agencies, especially as they are often complex individuals with many different needs and there is little opportunity to identify them pre-offending. Comparisons were made with children and young people, and the many more opportunities there are to identify and prevent via schools.

'... with adults it is a little bit different identifying those who are displaying behaviours that could lead onto offending than it is with children. Because with children they are all required to go to school so they are ... observed by professionals ... but with adults ... you cannot start identifying those behaviours unless they start offending as children going into adulthood. I think that is the biggest challenge, certainly for the women's Blueprint ... identification and opportunities to identify those individuals'

5.9 Adopting a non-punitive mindset and different ways of working were also said to be challenges for the police, some partner agencies, and the public when considering prevention. As one stakeholder put it, the rehabilitation approach taken by the Blueprints is often seen as a 'soft' one. This was said to be compounded by a lack of knowledge as to what exactly a rehabilitative 'journey' through the system entails, as well as the long-standing 'tough on crime' rhetoric from central Government.

'The tagline, the spin, 'Tough on crime, tough on the causes of crime' ... if that is the standpoint from the government ... sometimes there is a lack of understanding of the process of prevention, early intervention and diversion ... There is a huge evidence base a lot of time behind some of the decision-making, but people yet will still think you are being soft on crime, you are being soft on people who offend ...'

5.10 Several challenges were discussed around the availability and accessibility of prevention services for women. Having the right interventions, services, skills and pathways in place to meet individual needs was thought to be key – as was the availability of resources (financial and human) to deliver them.

'I think there's a number of challenges ... sometimes it's not even about money; it's about availability. However much money you've got, getting a psychiatric

nurse at times is really difficult, getting psychiatric reports is incredibly hard so ... finance is one thing but it's actually having enough skilled people out there in the field, irrespective of money. Even if you had, which we haven't, a bottomless pot of money that doesn't mean that the services are going to be available or that we have enough people to deliver those services'

5.11 The forthcoming development of the multi-disciplinary women's centres was considered positive in this regard, particularly in relation to having a facility to divert women away from custody into community-based provision, where their needs can be ascertained and addressed, and their gradual return to independence facilitated.

5.12 Nonetheless, the issue of inequality of provision across Wales was raised by several stakeholders, who stressed the importance of geographical consistency of offer in relation to prevention and pre-court intervention.

' ... The delivery will change in relation to landscape and availability of interventions [but] the offer around diversion, the offer around prevention and the offer around intervention should not change just because you live in north Wales or south Wales; you should have the same access to the service'

5.13 The whole system approach in south Wales and Gwent which has resulted in a 'robust and gender-specific pathway' was thought to exemplify this inequality, which was perceived to be brought about as a result of a lack of funding and investment in the other areas of Wales.

' ... it is all very well to have options to assess and triage women ... but you need to have pathways in which to divert them to ...In south Wales and Gwent and north Wales and Dyfed Powys arrangements for diversion for women are different. That is by and large down to the fact that investment for north Wales and Dyfed Powys was not there to be able to deliver the whole system approach'

5.14 On the subject of inequality, a lack of consideration for the needs of women with protected characteristics was also noted in relation to whether different preventative interventions are required for women from ethnic minority backgrounds or those with additional learning needs.

5.15 Regarding the focus of prevention services, improving dialogue, planning, and linkages between the Youth Justice and Women's Justice Blueprints to support 18–25-year-olds was cited as a challenge. Specifically, if children and young people are responding well to particular provisions, the need to continue offering these during the transition to adulthood was stressed.

' ... That actually goes not just for prevention but all the way through these Blueprints; at every level we need to make sure that there is some overlap about the way and the type of service involved. It's great to see that that has been happening to an extent'

5.16 Having sustained strategic support and buy-in across all Blueprint workstreams was seen to be central to their success, especially when ministers and governments (and their priorities) change. Momentum, it was said, can be lost during such transitional periods. Building collaboration, relationships, and a shared vision between the Welsh and UK governments was also seen to be key in keeping prevention on the agenda – and there was some suggestion that the aforementioned national prevention framework would help with this.

' ... what we need in Wales [is] a prevention [framework] and ... developing that ... would very quickly see devolved and non-devolved organisations aligning themselves to that commitment'

5.17 Having sustainable funding to deliver and improve services was crucial, according to some stakeholders, some of whom also reflected on the cost-effectiveness of prevention. Coordinating funding and resources to ensure that services remain relevant and are not duplicated was also said to be important going forward.

'There are multiple commissioning partners in that area [yet] there is little to no coordination regarding the respective funding and that can lead to duplication, gaps, and place pressure on delivery partners having to report on multiple funders and delivery area'

5.18 The increased competition for resources between partner agencies was raised as an additional challenge that could be addressed through strong partnership working and joint ownership across all relevant agencies. Moreover, improving funding

accountability structures would foster understanding of where money is being spent on prevention services and enable a clearer picture of the impact of this funding to be established.

' ... I'm not confident that we have an oversight [of] the total amount of money that's being invested in either prevention or [diversion] ... we couldn't articulate what it's been spent on or what it's aiming to achieve and whether we're getting best value for money on it ... Really getting to the bottom of it and building a more integrated funding and reporting mechanism that is outcomes-based is really important'

- 5.19 Finally, the voluntary nature of some early intervention and prevention services makes it harder to engage those in need of them, according to some stakeholders.

' ... any support and services that you put in place has to be by consent ... because they are not likely to be at a level where they have [reached] the ... statutory service level. So, that is the biggest challenge ... getting them engaged in services that they have to volunteer or consent to engage with. Whereas at a more tertiary level, if they have got social service involvement then they are required to do certain things to manage risk ...'

Evaluating early intervention and prevention

- 5.20 Stakeholders suggested a range of outcome measures for evaluating the early intervention and prevention priority of the Women's Justice Blueprint. These are listed in section 6.
- 5.21 Stakeholders highlighted the same **considerations** for evaluating early intervention and prevention as they did in relation to the Youth Justice Blueprint. These were that:
- Identifying quantitative outcome measures for prevention services is challenging because, *'How do you measure something that you are stopping from happening?'*
 - Developing shared multi-agency outcomes framework for prevention is complicated by the devolved and non-devolved nature of the services involved.

5.22 In the following table, we combine the interview findings with those of the statistical mapping exercise that we conducted at stage 1 of this EA to form some recommendations for evaluating early intervention and prevention.

- Statistics on reoffending and entry/re-entry into custody are readily available. However, the published data does not always provide a gender split or is presented in a way in which a picture of the position in Wales can be identified³⁷. Locally services are able to monitor performance using their own data including that information about the circumstances of the individual captured through referral and/or assessment processes. The extent to which comparisons can be made is dependent on the completeness and quality of this data, and the extent to which questions are asked and standardised definitions used. Police hold data on arrests and other contacts that they have had such as stop and search.
- Data on referral to treatment times for services can help to determine supply vs. demand.
- Cost savings as a result of initiatives can be demonstrated but depend on having available data and the ability to monetise the impacts. Data on costs for some crime types, prosecution, and prison places are available, and may be helpful for this. As with locally produced analysis and performance monitoring, this is contingent upon the quality and completeness of the data, especially if there is a wish to do this on a larger scale and consider multiple organisations.
- Using FTE to assess prevention and diversion can be problematic because it may not detect all previous contact with the CJS. An alternative way of capturing first contact with the CJS should be considered when evaluating prevention, drawing on the approach used in public health Analysis Methods Notices.
- Data linkage may enhance evaluation of prevention. For example, individuals who have accessed services or initiatives could be tracked through administrative data for a pre-defined period (e.g., five years) to determine reoffending, entry/re-entry to custody, engagement with services, etc
- Data linkage could also be used to explore differences in outcomes for women who were arrested and not charged, and who had different out of court disposals. There could also be scope to track girls who had been through Bureau/Triage into early

³⁷ For a more detailed discussion of the sources and coverage of this data, see Chapter 3 of [Evaluability Assessment of the Women's Justice and Youth Justice Blueprint: Statistical Mapping](#).

adulthood to determine their outcomes. To do this, the relevant police/YOT data would need to be brought into the SAIL databank.

Courts and sentencing

The Women's Justice Blueprint states that the whole-system approach will focus on building confidence in alternatives to short-term custody and remand by:

- Working with courts and sentencers to build a clearer understanding of community services available to directly tackle causes of offending
- Training front-line professionals to recognise and respond to women and families experiencing trauma.

- 5.23 Stakeholders agreed that alternatives to custody should be considered for almost all women who offend, and especially those committing low-level offences that typically attract short sentences. Essentially, it was argued that women should not be sent to prison except for the most serious offences, and that the negative implications of short-term custody for not only the offender themselves, but also their family, far outweigh any benefits.

'They're not going to do anything meaningfully rehabilitative in that short time in prison. And again, it's that separation from children, wider families that we know can be particularly harmful for women and obviously that ripple effect that it has on the people in their lives'

- 5.24 Encouragingly, the availability of alternatives was thought to be improving continuously. Stakeholders mentioned not only specific initiatives like Future 4 Women's Pathfinder Whole System Approach (commissioned under the Women's Justice Blueprint), but also the electronic monitoring facilities that enable women to continue to lead their lives within their communities.

Challenges, limitations, and uncertainties in courts and sentencing

- 5.25 The custodial threshold for low level offences was thought to be much lower for women than it is for men, perhaps, it was suggested, due to a lack of understanding among sentencers of the *'futility'* of short-term sentencers in reducing reoffending.

5.26 In fact, one of the key themes emerging from the discussions around courts and sentencing is that the role of sentencers is pivotal in reducing the use of custody for women offenders. So, it was considered crucial that judges and magistrates have good awareness of the distinct issues around women's offending and why custodial sentences should be avoided where possible – as well as of the viable and effective community-based alternatives available to them.

5.27 Importantly also, the need to enhance sentencers' knowledge and understanding of how specific interventions can influence positive change was noted in terms of increasing confidence in using them and overcoming the preference for custodial sentences among some.

'I think with women ... they tend to be sent to custody more often for low-risk offences. And when you investigate the reasons for that ... a lot of it is because we do not have robust female-appropriate community sentences which people feel confident are going to address behaviour ... So, that first sentence point is really vital to give sentencers confidence in what we are going to be doing and avoiding short custodial sentences ...'

5.28 Linked to all this is examining how the sentencing of women varies across Wales in order to establish why prison sentences are given more frequently in some areas than others, whether this is affected by the availability of community alternatives and/or sentencers' awareness of them, and, if awareness (or even reluctance) is the issue, to enable targeted and 'diplomatic' education on the benefits of being less punitive.

'... We know from the data that it looks like there are certain courts who are more punitive towards women. So perhaps doing a focused targeting ... really diplomatically and sensitively. We know that it doesn't always go down well when we speak to the judiciary and say things as blatantly as, 'Stop sending women to prison for such a short time.' We have to respect their position and the pressures that they are under and the duty that they have to the public, but persuade them of why the alternatives are likely to be effective ...'

- 5.29 Encouragingly, while it was acknowledged that changing mindsets will take time, there was said to be an ‘*appetite*’ for learning and change among the judiciary as a whole.
- 5.30 Again though, the issue of public and media mindset was raised in the context of attitudes toward women who offend who, it was said, are frequently treated (and sentenced) more harshly and with more judgement than males who commit the same offences. The need to develop understanding of what achieves success in reducing reoffending was thought to be key in overcoming these often cultural attitudes.
- 5.31 Moreover, making police officers aware of effective alternatives to charging and emphasising that they should always be considered prior to charge to avoid criminalisation was stressed. While acknowledging that it will not be easy to change entrenched behaviours (i.e., ‘*What have we always done? We’ve charged people with offences*’) it was considered a worthwhile effort in terms of understanding the reasons for particular behaviours, rehabilitation and reducing re-offending. Indeed, this was thought to apply not only to police officers, but any front-line professional who encounters women who offend.
- ‘ ... often the way in which women are approached is not appropriate because of the lack of understanding of women’s vulnerability and the issues that might surround their trauma, their behaviour and their offending ... Which is why, for me, the training for those first contact frontline professionals whose decision-making affects the rest of the journey in the system is absolutely imperative ’*
- 5.32 There was some question as to whether women-only courts should be offered to ensure the best outcomes for women, who would be sentenced by judges and magistrates with expertise in this area of offending.
- 5.33 Finally, the dichotomy between the Blueprint’s emphasis on reducing custody and increasing rehabilitation and the more punitive messaging from central Government was highlighted. This apparently causes some difficulty for those working in non-devolved areas in ‘*pushing through*’ initiatives that are inconsistent with the official Government line.

Evaluating courts and sentencing

- 5.34 Stakeholders suggested a range of outcome measures for evaluating the courts and sentencing priority of the Women's Justice Blueprint. These are listed in section 6.
- 5.35 In the following table, we combine the interview findings with those of the statistical mapping exercise that we conducted at stage 1 of this EA to form some recommendations for evaluating courts and sentencing.

- The evidence base on the needs and vulnerabilities of women who offend needs to be increased in order to evaluate courts and sentencing (and to assess whether supply meets demand for community-based solutions). Achieving this is dependent on the quality of the data held by different organisations on their service users, which should be compiled and coordinated by a lead agency.
- Evaluation of courts and sentencing should harness the existing ways in which women can feed back on their experiences, engaging with women who are in custody, on probation, and receiving support services (i.e., focus groups and workshops, lived experience forums, 'touchpoint' checklists, and exit interviews).
- Evaluation of this priority should establish if there is evidence that the custodial threshold is indeed lower for women who have committed low-level offences relative to men who commit similar offences. Data First data from magistrates and crown courts could show this.
- Establishing any differences in the sentencing of women with protected characteristics would also be important. The anonymised probation and court datasets made available by the MoJ through the Data First programme includes age at time of offence, race and gender enabling some intersectional analysis whilst the prison dataset includes additional variables relating to religion, marital status and nationality. Geographic variables include police force/probation area, court location as well as the area of residence. Information is also available which allow profiles by offence type, type of proceeding, outcome type and length of sentence, Whilst it is possible to link the various datasets, until the criminal justice data is provisioned in the SAIL Databank, it is not possible to link this to other datasets to ascertain membership of priority groups or to learn more about other protected characteristics.

- When exploring reoffending rates by sentence type, it would be important to establish whether there are any differences between women with different/protected characteristics; whether trends change over time; and to explore compliance issues such as breaches and recalls. This also links to the appropriateness of sentencing in relation to women's circumstances and criminogenic need.
- Evaluation should explore the profile of disposals for different groups, by offence type and severity; whether this has changed over time; and whether there has been an increase in the use of out of court disposals and a fall in the use of custody. The RRI can be used to identify disparity, notably where women with particular characteristics and/or membership of priority group are over-represented. Census 2021 data (available from March 2023) will also show the local picture.
- Time to justice (time from arrest to court) should be incorporated into evaluating the courts and sentencing priority. This is especially important in the context of the backlog in cases reaching court due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Decision-making and attitudes among sentencers and wider court staff (e.g., legal advisors, solicitors, and barristers) could be explored through in-depth qualitative interviews. This research could be repeated at an agreed time point to capture any shifts.
- The effectiveness of training for practitioners, partner agency staff, and the judiciary could be assessed through conducting pre- and post-surveys combined with qualitative interviews to explore key issues raised in more depth.

Community-based solutions

The Women's Justice Blueprint states that the whole-system approach will focus on supporting women, including those at risk of offending, to engage with services in the community by:

- Exploring a range of options for secure, safe, and reliable accommodation for women in Wales.
- 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.

- 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.

Challenges, limitations, and uncertainties in the Women's Justice Blueprint community priority

5.36 The provision of secure, safe, and reliable accommodation for women in Wales was strongly supported by stakeholders as the fundamental building block of rehabilitation.

'... We know that in terms of successful rehabilitation or intervention that it starts with individuals having a secure and stable base from which they then can engage with other support services. It is futile and a practical impossibility for individuals to engage with series of interventions if they are homeless, and or are in a chaotic, unsuitable or unsafe environment ...'

5.37 There was, however, a definite sense that more holistic supported accommodation is needed for those with complex needs, with Trevi House in England offered as an example of a successful model of rehabilitation that seeks to understand the specific motivations and needs of women who offend.

5.38 Suitable accommodation for women with dependants was also thought to be in short supply. It was said that separation from children can be the biggest contributor to poor mental health among women in prison, and that offering housing that allows them to be reunited at the earliest opportunity on release is crucial to effective rehabilitation. Moreover, those at risk of offending were also considered much less likely to do so if appropriately housed with their children, close to appropriate services and interventions, and away from any malign influences.

'... suitable accommodation, support provision for women from a parenting point of view is absolutely critical. Both in a prevention space but also to be able to maximise rehabilitation...'

5.39 One stakeholder highlighted the increasing scarcity and cost of private rented sector accommodation across Wales, and another suggested a need for more strategic

oversight of accommodation availability across Wales to ensure commissioning is based on evidence of need.

'... there exists a number of dedicated female bed space and accommodation provision across Wales, but I am not 100% convinced that those services have been commissioned in a strategic way... with evidence behind them... We have provision in the system that needs to be better understood and better utilised, and... we have a need to increase that provision but proportionately and with the evidence to plug the gaps that are already there'

5.40 Finally in terms of accommodation, the proposed women's residential centre was discussed again as a potential solution for women in some areas, but also as a possible risk for those in others. That is, without having a number of these centres all over Wales, there was concern that women from, say, north Wales will not benefit in any way from the concept – and could, in fact, end up being sent to 'community provision' hundreds of miles from home.

'... is there a risk ... that women who are sentenced in north Wales are sent down to that residential women's centre? So, you're actually not achieving some of those elements about being supported, your local family arrangements...'

5.41 More generally, the availability of funding and capacity to properly deliver community-based services and interventions was described as an ever-present challenge. Indeed, stakeholders again emphasised that appropriate services must be in place to support women in the community to live positive lives – and to achieve this they must be accessible, funded sustainably over the long term, and receive equal buy-in from all relevant agencies across the statutory and voluntary sectors.

'... My want [is] to make sure that statutory and specialist services are also engaged with local universal service providers so that people are being signposted into the right service at the right time. That all partners are working together to support each other, as opposed to handing off a woman into a service who then gets lost even though they have got a plethora of complex needs that still exist'

- 5.42 On the issue of buy-in, Women's Pathfinder case conferences were considered a positive model in offering women a single gateway into the system and the opportunity for partners to problem solve at a local level. However, they were thought to be somewhat lacking in terms of hearing and reflecting the voice of the woman herself, and what she sees as her needs.
- 5.43 The issue of resourcing was considered especially relevant to services provided by the third sector, which were described as *'inconsistent'* in terms of quality and their capacity to work innovatively to deliver the Blueprint objectives. The need to improve and support their service delivery was thought to be key, as fulfilling the community priority is evidently best done by community organisations themselves.
- 'A lot of third sector organisations have struggled with funding and sustainability, so I think it is really important for us to be able to overcome that by supporting them ... we have done some financial support, resource support, some advisory support to organisations to help us embed things into the community because it does need to be led by community groups ...'*
- 5.44 In this context, the issue of short-term funding was raised as a significant challenge for the third sector. Three-year settlements or ringfenced funding would, it was felt, go some degree to overcoming the impacts of a lack of long-term sustainability and certainty, such as high staff turnover, and the consequent loss of skills and expertise.
- 5.45 Integrated multi-agency governance and accountability arrangements were again mentioned as a challenge facing the Women's Justice Blueprint. Political buy-in was also seen to be required to establish and sustain the necessary community services for women.
- 5.46 Gaining communities' input into shaping services for women was seen to be challenging, yet important, to ensure that services are locally appropriate. Stronger engagement was said to be needed to strengthen community groups' input into shaping services, and participative approaches like co-production used more.

5.47 Especially important to stakeholders was better engaging with all sectors of communities to ensure diversity and individual experience is properly considered in the provision of services.

'... the golden thread that should go through all of this is the understanding of inequality ... We are grafting with the same problem because our engagement with diverse communities is poor across the board ... So, until we recognise that the community is a group of individuals ... and not a homogenous group ... we are never going to reach those more marginalised groups and start to tackle that inequality ... There is still not enough emphasis, and I don't think we understand because we don't co-produce and we don't collaborate enough with the communities themselves. For example, if we are talking about, 'What does rehabilitation in the community look like for a black woman who has come here from an immigration route', do we understand that? I don't think we do'

5.48 Raising women's awareness of community services to encourage them to engage early to address the issues underlying their offending was another challenge highlighted by stakeholders. This, it was said, is essential in addressing offending in some circumstances because:

'How many times have we heard ... 'I had to commit the offence because that's the only way I could get the help I needed' ... Some of the challenge is getting help to people before even they know they need it, and not only being able to access services by committing offences'

5.49 On a related note, one stakeholder highlighted that it is often community-based workers such as beauticians and hairdressers who first spot the signs of a woman being abused, but they are generally unaware of what to do or where to go with the information. They suggested having community support around that information-sharing via *'hubs where people can go and ask for help, or people can hand out supportive information ...'*

5.50 As noted elsewhere, cultural change was said to be a challenge that needs to be overcome to achieve the Women's Justice Blueprint community priority. Many members of the public were thought to remain in a punitive mindset, meaning there is a lack of understanding and tolerance for rehabilitation and re-education.

' ... we're quite an unforgiving society in some ways ... some of the issues we will face is, "What does Joe Bloggs on the street think about somebody, in their view, having a slap on the wrist?" ... So, I think part of the challenge is ... education to the general public that actually, this is about preventing reoffending ... [that] working with people doesn't always mean punishing them, it actually means building someone ready for a future where they can be productive ...'

5.51 There was thought to be significant interdependency between the courts and sentencing and community priorities within the Women's Justice Blueprint: that is, reductions in the number of women receiving custodial sentences can only be achieved by means of good community-based alternatives that sentencers have confidence in. There was some feeling, though, that the separation of the two into separate 'themes' within the Blueprint could result in disconnection between the workstreams delivering them.

' ... I think the community, custody and the sentencing all need to be looked at together ...'

5.52 Finally, there was some feeling that while the focus on community-based solutions within the Women's Justice Blueprint is undoubtedly positive, there should be something similar in place for male offenders. Indeed, it was said that while the focus in women's offending is ensuring fewer women are entering custody and looking at community-based alternatives, the opposite is true of men whereby *'a lot of the drive is for better criminal justice outcomes, having more men in prison'*.

5.53 This was thought to be particularly pertinent for adult male perpetrators of VAWDASV, whose need for a trauma-informed, less punitive approach is apparently often dismissed for fear of being seen to justify and minimise their behaviour. It was suggested that, over time, research and evaluation will show the effectiveness of this approach and influence the provision of different approaches to dealing with adult male offenders, which will, in turn, also have a positive impact on women's offending.

' ... It's no good tackling the problems of women if we are not also tackling the needs of men, because women live with men and they are often living with men who are also difficult, needy individuals, so it is all very well us supporting the

women ... but there are a lot of men out there who need exactly the same sort of approach and we do not give them that ... we do it for children and young people, we do it for women, but [men are] a big part of the jigsaw that we still do not tackle well ...'

Evaluating the Women's Justice Blueprint community priority

5.54 Stakeholders suggested a range of outcome measures for evaluating the community priority of the Women's Justice Blueprint. These are listed in section 6.

5.55 Stakeholders highlighted the following **considerations** for evaluating the Women's Justice Blueprint community priority:

- The need to include those with lived experience of community-based interventions will be difficult but crucial to any evaluation activity – as will be asking those who did not take up an offer of support for their reasons why and learning from those.

'... We keep going out and saying, 'Are there women who are involved in diversion who can ... hold us to account on the delivery of our services but also work in a more co-produced way?' and we've really struggled to identify ... a cohort of women who can do that [because] if you're at that point of coming into the criminal justice system your priority is going to be on ... doing the work you need to, to deal with [the] chaotic episodes you're experiencing that's led to your offending ... What we probably need to do is think about ... how we build the infrastructure to allow people with lived experience to be part of the co-production and monitoring of services'

- An exercise that maps the services available to women in the community should be conducted as a precursor to or as part of an evaluation of the Women's Justice Blueprint community priority to establish what is already available where.

5.56 Stakeholders identified the following **challenges** to evaluating the Women's Justice Blueprint community priority:

- Establishing what is meant by ‘community’ and taking account of the fact that while the definition should be universal – the solutions will not be.

‘I think one of the biggest problems is the definition of community and if you mean that at a population level, or whether you mean on a science level, or an individual community ... There is a need for universal definition, but models and ways of working also need to be flexible and to adapt to the circumstances that you find yourself in ...’

- Ensuring a proper and consistent definition of what is meant by ‘community-based solutions’, and whether they include statutory services such as education and health.
- Again, isolating the impact of particular community-based solutions could be challenging, as many women who offend are in receipt of several different services.

5.57 In the following table, we combine the interview findings with those of the statistical mapping exercise that we conducted at stage 1 of this EA to form some recommendations for evaluating the Women’s Justice Blueprint community priority.

- There are overlaps with the outcome measures suggested against this priority and with those in the courts and sentencing priority in relation to volumes and reoffending rates by sentence type. Evaluation should focus on women’s ability to access timely support to address criminogenic needs. This links to interview feedback about the availability of trauma-informed services and psychologically informed formulations.
- Public health waiting time measures can be used alongside metrics from partner services (and user feedback) to help understand unmet need for services, including any variation across Wales. Partner agencies would need to collect shared metrics in a consistent way to achieve this.
- Baseline and over-time reoffending rates should be explored at an organisational level and linked to equality and diversity measures.
- Compliance with community sentences should be explored, including breaches and recalls, e.g., the reasons for non-compliance; whether these are the same for women as for men; whether women understand the conditions and requirements; and

whether they consider childcare responsibilities and child custody arrangements.

Linked to this are forms of enforcement such as electronic monitoring, and the use of requirements such as drug testing.

- To inform evaluation, services should collect data on the numbers of staff receiving relevant training. This could also be linked to the performance management of commissioned services.
- There is an opportunity to use probation data, which has been made available to researchers through Data First, and the introduction of the (BOLD programme, to find out more about service user's needs and circumstances around the time of their offending and in their past (e.g., ACEs, social services and/or family court involvement, engagement in ETE, mental health issues, learning disabilities and/or neurodevelopmental issues), and the consequences of their sentence. If lists are available of those who have been referred to various community-based services, this could enable future tracking of outcomes related to housing, ETE, and impact on children and young people/families.

Custody and resettlement

The Women's Justice Blueprint states that the whole-system approach will focus on supporting women in custody and resettlement back into the community by:

- Working with rehabilitative services to deliver effective pre- and post-release interventions in prisons where women from Wales are located.
- Establishing services to improve and maintain links with children and families.

Challenges, limitations, and uncertainties in the Women's Justice Blueprint custody and resettlement priority

- 5.58 Although no stakeholder advocated for a women-only prison in Wales, the fact that Welsh women are currently sent to custody in England was said to pose significant challenges to maintaining family and community contact.

'At the moment, women are taken out of Wales. I'm sitting on the west coast in mid Wales ... for me ... it would be 200 miles ... For me to retain family links, particularly if I'm from a poor family who have no money for travel ... there's no possibility. Keeping those links with children and families is unrealistic ...'

- 5.59 The benefits of family contact have been discussed earlier in this report, but those resulting from maintaining community contact more widely were also noted. There was said to be a great deal of stigma attached to returning from prison to a 'small-town' community, which may be overcome to some extent if a woman is able to retain pro-social links with at least one person there.
- 5.60 As such, smaller, more local custodial options were thought to be needed to enable family visiting and the retention of community links (though, as noted earlier, there was some concern about their potential over-use for low-level offences). It was also suggested that the Invisible Walls project that operates in HMP Parc should be adapted for use with women in custody to help them maintain family relationships.
- 5.61 Other challenges were noted around resettlement, firstly that secure estates in England must work alongside devolved services in Wales (healthcare, education, and housing for example) to ensure a robust and seamless transition for women. Knowledge of these services was recognised as likely lacking among prison staff, as was their awareness of devolved legislation and what that means for Welsh women.

'I think there is always a challenge ... because the female custody estate does not reach into Wales. You have predominantly got establishments and regimes that are very much England-facing. So, you are always dealing with that culture, the lack of understanding ... in terms of what is available to women in Wales ... how the context of Wales might mean that resettlement pathway is different ...'

- 5.62 HM Prison Styal has an open element, which means women are able to gain employment and access to support services in the local area. More generally, women often gain educational qualifications while in custody. However, on return to Wales their learning and connections are often lost, and it was said that unless similar opportunities are available within their home communities, there will evidently be challenges to ensuring successful transitions for women who offend.

'I do notice that education can be forgotten about; they don't build on what might have been gained in custody in terms of education or work skills, and in assisting them to get into employment or further education ... it's about building on their skills and strengths'

5.63 In light of all this, the importance of having resettlement workers and providers in prisons that understand the Welsh context in terms of landscape, geography, legislation and service provision was stressed, as was the need for joined up working between resettlement teams, prisons and Welsh service providers to ensure the design of community-based solutions that are also embedded in the custodial estate.

5.64 On the issue of geography, the fact that the women returning to Wales are from such a wide area means it is difficult to co-ordinate and ensure equity of resettlement service provision, especially given the availability of these services is variable according to location.

‘Often, they’re going back to areas where ... they’re not necessarily getting the holistic support because of where they live and the access to it’

5.65 On a related note, in areas where provision is plentiful, stakeholders cautioned against duplication and stressed the need for organisations to refer to each other so that women receive the most appropriate service at the right time. This has apparently been difficult to achieve historically due to competition for funding and resources.

5.66 Stakeholders also cautioned against overwhelming women with services and interventions on release, especially those dealing with some form of trauma that can affect their ability to learn, work, and parent. Having realistic outcomes for women and ensuring they are able to access the fundamental building blocks to successful resettlement - including suitable accommodation, employment and educational opportunities, and drug and alcohol treatment if required – in a sequenced way was thought to be key to success.

5.67 The issue of accommodation was raised again here, with stakeholders highlighting shortages of housing stock and a lack of funding to buy or rent suitable properties. They were concerned that this will lead to women being placed in undesirable areas of low-cost housing and high deprivation, potentially reinforcing their offending behaviour and leaving them unable to access, say, support services, employment opportunities and schooling for their children.

'We'll start clustering people into those sorts of communities which will drive and reinforce those offending behaviours ... The model of putting people into the community, a real community, is the right one. I think the challenges are securing enough properties and enough places with diverse backgrounds close enough to rail and travel for work and schools ... '

- 5.68 Short-term sentences were thought to pose their own challenges since they do not allow time for the implementation of interventions for women - around substance misuse treatment, accommodation, benefits etc. - meaning the required support is not available to them immediately on release. Again, then, the transition process is far from seamless.
- 5.69 The lack of provision for Welsh-speaking women offenders in English prisons was also said to be an issue in enabling them to keep in touch with their language and culture. Indeed, it was said that even relatively simple requests like those for Welsh-language reading material tend to take a long time to be fulfilled.
- 5.70 Encouragingly, however, it was said that the Blueprint and the pathfinder whole system approach in Gwent and south Wales has helped bridge the gap between custody and resettlement, meaning a much-improved situation. As such, continuing to ensure Future 4 Whole System Approach Service and Dyfodol³⁸ (two critical providers within the Pathfinder programme) are properly resourced and equipped to work with women on release from prison was considered essential.

'... we are heavily dependent on [them] to pick up those prison releases and it is probably the biggest referral pathway into their service ... for us, it was the crack in the pavement that a lot of people fell through at that moment on release from prison'

Evaluating the Women's Justice Blueprint custody and resettlement priority

³⁸ A triage, assessment, diversion, treatment, and support service for offenders in contact with the criminal justice system. It provides the drug and alcohol referral mechanisms to criminal justice and health partners out of the prison estate and into the community for all prisoners released in Wales and in need of support on release into Wales and the rest of the UK.

- 5.71 Stakeholders suggested a range of outcome measures for evaluating the custody and resettlement priority of the Women's Justice Blueprint. These are listed in section 6.
- 5.72 Stakeholders highlighted the following **considerations** for evaluating the Women's Justice Blueprint custody and resettlement priority:
- Psychological reports could contribute to any evaluation in the form of rich, woman-specific risk assessments and formulations that are revisited along the pathway of a woman's journey.
 - There is a need to focus on 'revolving door' cases to understand and evaluate their motivations and what might need to be done differently.
- 5.73 In terms of **challenges**, it was said that some of the outcome measures which could be used to evaluate the custody and resettlement priority may be difficult to untangle and measure effectively and accurately.
- '... women are taking more responsibility for themselves ... for their actions and their lives. They are seeking help more. You've got to look at those outcomes ... and [how they have] made the effort to look at how to relate and how to communicate with their own children, or a new partner or partners going forward. It's very complicated ... and it's difficult to measure'*
- 5.74 Moreover, the fact that there are Welsh women in every woman's prison in England could, it was felt, complicate the evaluation process in that each establishment will have different approaches to how they work with their women and different ways of collecting information and monitoring progress. It was hoped, though, that there would be some degree of consistency given they are all part of HMPPS.
- 5.75 In the following table, we combine the interview findings with those of the statistical mapping exercise that we conducted at stage 1 of this EA to form some recommendations for evaluating the custody and resettlement priority of the Women's Justice Blueprint.

- As noted elsewhere, it would be important to explore reoffending rates by sentence type (community vs. custodial) in terms of any differences between women with different/protected characteristics.
- Evaluation should also explore the profile of disposals for different groups, by offence type and severity; whether this has changed over time; and whether there has been an increase in the use of out of court disposals and a fall in the use of custody. The RRI can be used to identify where women with particular characteristics and/or membership of priority group are over-represented. Census 2021 data (available from March 2023) will also show the local picture.
- As with the courts and sentencing priority, time to justice (time from arrest to court) should be incorporated into evaluating the custody and resettlement priority.
- Access to support services, including health and pre-natal care, should be comparable with that in the community, with planned transitions to services on release. Having a mechanism to identify Welsh prisoners in different systems including Prison-NOMIS (the IT system on which prisons record individual inmate's details) will enable an intersectional profile to be developed, including needs.
- Whilst numbers may be small, being able to identify aspects like applications for and placements in Mother and Baby Units (MBUs) by Welsh women will inform service commissioning. Using maternity indicators to evidence where there appear to be issued could also contribute to the evidence base.
- Knowing the numbers of women who are accessing specific initiatives when in custody could also be used for planning the services which are needed when women return to the community. This includes treatment/support for substance misuse and mental health issues, and life skills-related training.
- Secure establishment's compliance with the Welsh Language Standard and Social Services and Well-being Act (Wales) 2014 should be included in an evaluation, i.e., women should have access to Welsh language health and social care services, assessments, and support when in prison without having to request them.
- As with the community priority, compliance with community sentences should be explored, including breaches and recalls, e.g., the reasons for non-compliance; whether these are the same for women as for men; whether women understand the

conditions and requirements; and whether they consider childcare responsibilities and child custody arrangements.

- Evaluation of this priority should also incorporate the use of remand; ROTL; and continuity of care measures.
- Exploring the suitability of accommodation upon release is key, especially where women have dependent children and in light of legislative changes to who is prioritised for social housing.

Research and evaluation

5.76 Research and evaluation is an explicit priority of the Women’s Justice Blueprint, and stakeholders were asked the following questions around it. Their feedback is summarised in the rest of this section.

What are the key considerations for evaluating the Women’s Justice Blueprint?

5.77 Stakeholders made several recommendations for evaluating the Women’s Justice Blueprint. Some of these points were made elsewhere in relation to the Blueprint’s priorities, and some also relate to the Youth Justice Blueprint.

- Evaluation must have input and buy-in from all of the relevant statutory, voluntary, and third sector organisations that are involved in overseeing the Blueprint and delivering related services.

‘It needs to involve all parts of the system, it needs to take soundings from HMPPS, HMCTS, Crown Prosecution Service, the police, the youth offending services, the probation services ... I also think we need to involve the third sector because they have a huge part to play in these things ... we need to involve the ... defendants ... we need to involve perhaps the victims of crime ... and if you live next door ... have they seen a change in the behaviour, has it helped, has it assisted?’

- There is a need to foster a culture of open learning, especially within the third sector where there can be a reluctance to evaluate for fear of poor practice being exposed – which can impact on organisations’ ability to secure resources and funding in future. Moreover, accepting that interventions may

not always be successful was considered important in avoiding *'dampening down that appetite for innovation or evaluating something really robustly'*.

- Having a shared research strategy across both Blueprints could help to keep research and evaluation high on the agenda.

'Key considerations are a structured approach and having a shared strategy to research and evaluation that builds on existing knowledge and expertise in this area, that identifies what the gaps are and seeks to find ways of addressing those gaps and, and contributing meaningfully to our wider knowledge of what is best practice with all of these populations that we're talking about and about having that culture of open learning'

- Data for research and evaluation (Wales-specific data in particular) must be made easier for researchers to access than is currently the case.

'It is a limitation to the whole Blueprint in some respects, particularly when we are talking about this Blueprint being cross-organisation in its ambitions for delivery... A person could be engaged in multiple services, and we struggle to be able to look at a person and pull that data in relation to that single individual. That is a limitation and will be a limitation in being able to evaluate the impact of all the different elements. You would think in this day and age we could have sorted that side of things out, but quite clearly not'

- Different pieces of research and evaluation which are conducted into the Women's Justice (and Youth Justice) Blueprints should be more closely aligned with each other. Researchers leading these projects should communicate to share learning and ensure that their respective projects dovetail with rather than duplicate each other.

'We are going to have other projects under the Blueprints that are going to have evaluations that need to be aligned, and communication is key, I think. Otherwise, we'll just end up with a whole group of evaluations that don't reflect each other which will not put us in a good place'

- Research and evaluation must be properly funded and inbuilt into core business from the outset to ensure that outcomes can be measured.

'How do you make people who are really not interested in some of this stuff make it their core business because if we don't do that, and if we don't build it in right at the beginning, how do we know what we are doing is having the right impact in the end because we aren't able to measure it?'

'... Sometimes the value of research and evaluation is recognised too late. It can get seen as something that's expensive and an added extra and a luxury that we don't really need or something that should be done on the cheap and in house and without people who have the expertise ...'

- Quantitative or 'hard' outcome measures such as reoffending only tell part of the story. Consequently, evaluations of the Women's Justice (and Youth Justice) Blueprints should incorporate strong qualitative elements which capture 'softer' outcomes, based on feedback from service users and providers, families, and communities.

'The evaluation really needs to be a multi-faceted evaluation and it needs to concentrate not just on measurable outcome, which is has this person stopped committing offences? It's narrow. I think the evaluation needs to be much wider than that: are they accessing services? Are they going to school? Are they working? Do they have housing?'

- Research and evaluation should be independent and objective and led by external researchers and research organisations where possible.

'It's so valuable to have external partners involved in research and evaluation, to keep it objective, to keep it open to scrutiny, and to ultimately give us valid and reliable results and recommendations around next steps. I think data and good data is such a cornerstone of this'

- Evaluation of the Women's Justice (and Youth Justice) Blueprint should seek to identify how effective multi-agency partnership working has been in helping to achieve the blueprint's aims.

'... there is so much reliance on different partners coming together to do their bit ... it is quite an interesting element of the evaluation to understand whether that partnership working has worked as well as it could ... if any barrier has come up

during the delivery of stuff, what have they been and why have we not been able to overcome them either through the governance or just through partnership working? Because one of the exciting things about these pieces of work is, it it's really quite multi-agency ... The broader question for me is, is this a good example of partnership working or not?'

- Longer-term evaluation should be invested in because many outcomes will take time to emerge.

'... we need to do something around more longitudinal pieces of work. Because what we are talking about here [is] addressing and tackling root causes of issues that are long-standing ... And equally we need to be able to understand how that is impacted over time. We often give change a 12-month to yield its benefits. Well, we all know that even if it is eating habits or exercise ... it is not easy necessarily to sustain and it is not a valuable or accurate measure of time...'

- There is a need to recognise the complexities of any evaluation that involves individuals with many different motivations, needs and desired outcomes.
- Again, it was noted that isolating the impacts of the Blueprint from those of already existing initiatives (such as the Women's Pathfinder) will be difficult – but also that identifying the achievements of these other interventions will be important for any Blueprints evaluation because *'we want to claim that this is helping us to deliver the Blueprints as well...'*

What works well when conducting research with women?

5.78 Stakeholders recommended the following approaches, techniques, and considerations which should be borne in mind when planning evaluation(s) of the Blueprint.

- Engaging women ex-offenders as peer researchers and mentors to undertake research with/support women in the CJS and act as positive and inspirational role models.

'Nobody understands what you're going through like someone who has already been through it. And I think that if we want to have better outcomes, we need to

pull on the skills of those that that know what they need ... what would have made a difference to them'

- In line with trauma-informed practice, having a trusted person to introduce researchers, and to support women to engage with the research. This should include helping to brief participants in advance to ensure that they fully understand the scope and requirements, and to alleviate any concerns.

'... working through agencies who they have a trusted relationship with I think is absolutely vital'

- Researchers ensure that women feel validated through taking part in research, and understand that their feedback will be used to help improve support for others who are in their position in future.

'What is often the case is that the women have given the information, but ... the outcome of the research is not shared back with the women. That is a huge thing ... And considering that they've taken the time to give their voice, and everybody talks about them having a voice, they don't share it back again'

- Creative, visual methods such as video-making to bring women's experiences to life.

'... we've got a video that was done on creative work probation in Kent and Sussex and Surrey ... it makes me feel really emotional with the goose bumps. And then we've got another video that we've got from the whole system approach which is ... 'This is what happened, this is how it changed my life' ... Nothing educates you more than somebody who is going, 'This is my experience' ...'

- Selecting the 'right' women to give the fullest picture of need.

'... it all depends on the stability of the women that you're engaging with ... some of them [who are] nearing their release date [are] really quite calm, detoxed and ... then others [are] still quite chaotic ... And you need that balance because you need to know about the immediate pressure, but you also need to be able to speak to those that you're going to get that quite articulate view of what is going on'

- Offering incentives is important to recognise time and effort.

5.79 Stakeholders were also asked about the feasibility of including women in prison or on licence in research and evaluation. For the former, access was thought to be the main consideration, and the latter were said to (naturally) prioritise their resettlement over research invitations. If it is to be attempted though, it was again stressed that approaches should be made by a trusted worker either in prison or in the community.

Women's and stakeholder's feedback on research and evaluation

5.80 When asked whether there are any existing ways in which women can feed back on their experiences of courts and sentencing, stakeholders noted the following:

- Focus groups and workshops with women in custody – including with ethnic minority women to understand their particular experiences.
- 'Lived experience' forums of women offenders.
- Third sector projects that talk to the women they work with to understand what works and what more is necessary.
- 'Touchpoint' checklists whereby organisations can check that a woman offender has been given appropriate support at various important points in her journey.
- 'Exit interviews' with those who have been involved with women who have been on IOM schemes (offender managers and police officers for example).

5.81 Two stakeholders said they were in the process of creating a database/network of women with lived experiences of criminal justice, who will be periodically asked to provide their views on various aspects of the system. In fact, developing more structured and systematic involvement models such as these was considered a key feature of the Blueprint that will allow women to offer feedback on a regular basis.

5.82 Pre-sentence reports (PSRs) were also considered by stakeholders to be a form of feedback mechanism, providing the probation officer writing them properly engages the woman to incorporate her experiences and make meaningful recommendations to the court.

5.83 Most of the women we spoke to said that they did not mind being asked about their protected characteristics by criminal justice agencies and support services. They felt that this was necessary to fully understand their needs and to provide tailored support in response to them.

'I felt that was normal procedure. Even when you go into benefits it's all of that, so I just thought it was normal because they need to get the whole profile of you. I don't judge them for asking all those questions'

5.84 However, one woman said that she was reluctant to disclose that she was a former care leaver when applying for jobs because it had disadvantaged her when doing so in the past.

'I don't look upon it as a negative thing at all, but...when you speak to people and say, "Oh yeah, I'm a care leaver" they look at you and think 'You're not getting a job here'. I do find it a little bit annoying sometimes'

5.85 Few of the women interviewed had been asked for their views on what might have improved their experiences of the CJS, nor had they ever been involved in any research on the topic before now.

5.86 One woman, currently in custody, said she had spoken to many researchers over the course of her many years within the CJS. While she has found discussing her experiences difficult, she considered it important to do so to ensure her voice is heard. Importantly also, they were offered support during and after the interview.

'... they were brilliant. They sat with us for a good few hours for each day to be fair, until they had everything they needed and after it they said, 'If you need more support let us know, and we will speak to the one who has organised all this to see if there is anything that we can do for ...'

5.87 Most of the women we spoke to said that they valued the opportunity to feed back on their experiences and emphasised the importance of involving service users in research. This, it was said, would help those with experience of the CJS to feel that they had helped to improve things for themselves and for other women in similar situations in future.

'I think it's an amazing thing. We all want to feel needed or wanted and feel that we're playing some part in society and contributing to it and I believe that for all of us. If we lived in an ideal world then it's what we would all be doing for each other. It's a good feeling'

'... so you can have an experience of what my life is like in prison, so you've got the picture of it ...'

I'd like to think it would be quite important ... If any research I do here with you now or even in the future helps stop just one person, it's one person that's been helped isn't it? And if there's other people that can do the same thing and just help one person, it turns out a lot of people then'

- 5.88 A couple of women in custody said they were particularly keen to tell their 'stories' to policymakers in order to give a voice to the large number of women in prison currently.

'That would make me happy, and I think it'll make the other girls who are in my sort of situation happy as well; so, understanding of what women are going through because ... There are more women now than ever'

- 5.89 Moreover, one woman, who had been sentenced as a minor, considered it especially important that decision-makers are aware of her experiences: she felt that no-one had helped her as a child, and despite writing to MPs several times, she did not feel listened to. She felt that formal research would be taken more seriously by those who can affect change.

'I think a lot more needs to be done for children in similar situations like I was. Nobody helped me. The amount of times I wrote to the members of parliament, I've tried doing this and nobody listens to me ...but I think that when it comes to research, it makes more of a difference ...'

- 5.90 Some women said that, although they were unlikely to seek out opportunities to provide feedback, that they would be happy to provide it if asked, expressing that the best way to measure women's experiences of the CJS is simply to speak to them.

'The only thing you can do is doing what you're doing today, and having the feedback off us'

- 5.91 Some said that they would prefer to engage with research one-to-one, whereas others would prefer to take part in a small, informal group discussion with refreshments.

'I think it might be a good thing to have a group discussion ... there could be the cake in the hall, and we could sit around and have a meeting ...'

'Me, personally ... I'm not good at groups. If there's five or six people I'm ok, but if there's more than that then I have anxiety and won't be able to do it'

'... it would be better sitting in a group with women who have had similar experiences'

- 5.92 Talking to service users directly was preferable to conducting a survey or other quantitative research, according to some women. One participant explicitly stated that she would prefer to engage face-to-face as emotions can be gauged much more easily.

'Talking to them. I'm not sure about ticking things off on scales. It may well work to build up a statistical picture, but I just think that having proper head-to-head conversations is how you learn and how you build on experiences that people have had and are having... the human touch'

'I prefer face-to-face, just because then you can pick up on whether it's upset them or you can judge what their mood is, whereas if you're on the phone you can't go 'Are you crying?' I've done things online and it's just crap'

- 5.93 Others we spoke to were more open to conducting surveys. Those who advocated this approach stressed that surveys should be anonymous, and that social media could be a good way of publicising and/or hosting surveys. The importance of maintaining anonymity was also emphasised in relation to research with women more broadly.

'...You don't have to be named or anything, and I think that's good, because sometimes when people are like, "this person from this area", and you think, "really? Did they have to put that?"'

5.94 It was also suggested that women should be invited to complete a short survey about their experiences of police custody following their time there, and that suggestion boxes could be placed at police stations to collect feedback.

5.95 Keeping a written diary appealed to some women:

'I wouldn't keep a video diary, but I'd keep a [written] diary. I'm all about writing and typing and stuff'

'I think that when I do go home, if for example someone from Welsh Women came to me and said, 'Here's a diary for a year, could you write out the challenges that you are facing being a newly released prisoner?' then that's not a problem. I'll give it you in a year, no worries'

5.96 Others, though, said that they would prefer to compile a video diary because it would be less time-consuming.

'Maybe the video but I'm not too sure about a written diary because sometimes people don't have the time to be sat there writing something, and not many people write'

5.97 There was quite strong feeling that there were no 'good' or 'bad' times to get involved in research. Instead, some women stressed that researchers should aim to speak with women at all stages of their journey through the CJS, even when they are at their lowest. Several also said they would be happy to take part in some form of longitudinal research to enable their experiences to be captured over time.

'I don't think it really matters. If somebody is willing to do it, it doesn't matter at what stage they are at. Sometimes if they are in an acutely fragile or vulnerable or suicidal or anything at all, on the more positive steps to feeling that they are in real recovery and things are going well for them, I think it's all grist to the mill and it can all be invaluable on all counts as well'

'I would be quite happy to do it over a longer period of time. If it helps somebody else to stop them going through the system or going to prison, I'd be all for it'

5.98 Indeed, speaking with women when they are feeling low was said to be particularly beneficial, because they are more open and honest.

'I think the best time for people to be getting involved in stuff like this is when they are at their lowest because they seem to be a lot more open I think and then a lot more comes out....women tend to be the same like that...When you're at your lowest, you've got no filter left...you don't care – you say it how it is'

- 5.99 There was considerable value in conducting peer research, according to most of the women we spoke to. This, it was said, was because women can relate better to those who had been in similar situations to themselves. They would also find it easier to trust them, and would not feel judged by them, which would be conducive to the research.

'What really helps the most is having a peer who has been through similar experiences. I think the experiences you have been through is the most crucial point of all for it to resonate with someone else, because then you can really relate properly to somebody and trust them 100% all the way down the line with what you are telling them and how you are expressing yourself; you're not going to be judged'

'If they have been through it – maybe they have had a family member go through it – and it's someone who understands. If it's someone who hasn't gone through it, then they are the worst people to talk to'

- 5.100 One woman cautioned that peer researchers should be clear about the purpose of the research, which should be focused on helping others in similar positions, rather than being intrusive. Another felt they should not focus too much on their own experiences at the expense of hearing others' views, and that a professional researcher might be a more appropriate option due to their 'detachment' from the system.

'I'm quite happy to sit and help them, but if I think they are being sat there trying to get things out of me to be nosey, it's different. So, it can go the right way with setting a group up and it can go the wrong way at the same time'

'... I think that after a while of somebody saying to you, 'these officers don't listen to me blah, blah, blah' you just kind of switch off ... So, to ask the questions and listen probably best ... a researcher'

5.101 An alternative view was that although women might be better placed to conduct research with other women who have been in contact with the CJS, it was not essential for researchers to have experienced the system themselves. Also in relation to gender, a few participants said that it should not necessarily be assumed that women who offend will prefer to speak to a woman researcher, for some connect better with men.

5.102 In addition, most interviewees emphasised that the researcher's racial or ethnic background is not important.

'I would think any women that's got the ability to do it. It doesn't rule you out what race and what country you come from or anything like that. It doesn't matter if you've been in trouble yourself or if you are an employee. I just feel that any women can help somebody else'

How feasible would it be to evaluate the Women's Justice and Youth Justice Blueprints together?

5.103 Most stakeholders suggested that a similar thematic approach to evaluate both Blueprints could be used because they involve largely the same stakeholders and organisations and target similar outcomes. However, they tended to recommend that the evaluations should remain separate to recognise the differences between the Blueprints.

'... We are trying divert both of those groups away from the criminal justice system, so perhaps you could do an evaluation on diversion, but you still need two chapters because the action we are taking is very different compared to those two cohorts'

5.104 As one stakeholder put it: *'it would probably be a wider piece of work than just doing one or the other, though probably less than doing both separately. I think there is a lot to be learned from looking at both together ...'*

5.105 A number of stakeholders said that some parts of the Youth Justice and Women's Justice Blueprints could be evaluated together to reflect their common aims and themes, but other parts should be evaluated separately to reflect the specific needs of women and children and young people.

'I wouldn't want to see them looked at separately because there is clear overlap on the broad principles even if the way of delivering the activity is different and the detail is different. The overarching principle is to prevent the offending in the first place and if it does, prevent reoffending and rehabilitate. That is the same for both'

5.106 One stakeholder suggested that this evaluation approach could take a 'Venn Diagram' format which recognises the similarities yet captures the differences between the Blueprints. For instance, both evaluation approaches should be trauma-informed, but for women, the approach should recognise caregiver status; trauma experienced as a child and as an adult; the possibly more entrenched nature of their offending; and be gender-informed. For children and young people, the approach would be child-centred, recognise developmental stage; and the role of education.

5.107 If such an approach is implemented, evaluators should work together to share and incorporate learning from their respective evaluations, some stakeholders said.

'We need to keep an eye on what can be done together and what is different, completely different. There are aspects that could be looked at together. I certainly think that they could learn more from each other. So even if you evaluate them totally separately, I think that parts from the female system should be built into the child's system. And learning from the child system should be built into the female system. I think when you look at the aspects they pull out under each other of the themes they could've learnt more from each other along the way'

5.108 Some stakeholders felt that although the Youth Justice and Women's Justice Blueprints have some similar priorities, it would only be possible to fully capture their distinct priorities and actions and what is working well, and less well, through separate evaluations.

'The method may be the same, or similar, but I think you need to keep them apart. If one [of the Blueprints] is a real success and the other one isn't, you can actually measure the success separately for one or the other'

5.109 A combined evaluation of the Youth Justice and Women's Justice Blueprints could be over-complicated, expensive, and difficult to implement in practice, others said. It was also suggested that a combined evaluation would not work because the structure and governance of youth and women's justice in Wales is too different – and because the Blueprints themselves are at different stages in their implementation.

'... it may seem like there [are] more outcomes from the female offending Blueprint [sic.] ... the residential centre, the whole system approach, things like that ... But there were discussions around that when the female offending Blueprint [sic.] was being developed. I think it is maybe about long-term and short-term ... a lot of the youth justice outcomes are a lot more long-term ...'

5.110 According to some others, combining the evaluations could overlook important differences in the activities delivered and impacts achieved by both Blueprints. They therefore advocated separate evaluations that are flexible enough to detect the nuances across both Blueprints. Some also advocated keeping the evaluations separate but producing an overarching document once they are complete which compares and contrasts the findings of both to aid policy making and wider learning.

'I think you'd need to do [the evaluations of both Blueprints] slightly differently ... As a result of that you could produce something that ... is accessible and talks to policy groups or ministers. The more detailed, academic studies could be done separately. Really get into how you would approach this with children versus how you would approach this with adults. I also think we will lose too much, as [a combined evaluation] won't be flexible enough'

Are there any gaps in the evidence base on women's journey through the criminal justice system?

5.111 Stakeholders suggested that the following gaps in the evidence base existed in relation to women's journey through the CJS³⁹.

³⁹ Although some evidence does exist on these topics, stakeholders may not have been aware of it. Some relevant existing evidence is provided in footnotes, although this is not exhaustive.

- The experiences of ethnic minority women within the CJS, to establish whether the Women’s Justice Blueprint is as effective in improving outcomes for these women relative to their white peers⁴⁰.

‘I think we’re pretty good at understanding the journeys, but I would say we need to make sure that we’re not having a homogenous understanding ... the racially and ethnically minoritized women’s lived experience of being from a Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic group [sic.] and going through the criminal justice system ... There [are] particular things ... about racial trauma that would be different to our understanding of a white woman’s journey through the criminal justice system’

- The wider impact of inequality on women’s (and children and young people’s) journey through the system, e.g., poverty, discrimination, poor mental health, the impact of protected characteristics and intersectionality.
- How far the Women’s Justice Blueprint’s provision meets the need of neurologically diverse women, and those with learning disabilities and disabilities⁴¹.
- Disproportionality, both in terms of over- and under-representation of specific groups within specific elements of the system.
- The public’s understanding of what women’s (and children and young people’s) journeys through the system look like, to help reduce stigmatisation of those who commit crime, and to facilitate understanding that perpetrators are often victims, too.
- Understanding the journey of Welsh women specifically.
- The effectiveness of information sharing between partner agencies to ensure that women’s needs are understood and met.

⁴⁰ No published research to date has specifically explored the Women’s Justice Blueprint’s impact on improving outcomes for women. Related evidence includes Developing Appropriate Strategies for Supporting Racially and Ethnically Minoritized Women within the Criminal Justice System in Wales (Thomas and Miles [Forthcoming]); the Farmer reports (2017 and 2019); and [The Concordat on Women in or at risk of contact with the Criminal Justice System](#) (MoJ, 2020).

⁴¹ See [Neurodiversity in the criminal justice system](#) (HMICFRS, 2021), although this does not relate specifically to women.

- What triggers offending behaviour, and what leads it to stop.
- What opportunities are typically missed in preventing offending.

‘... understanding of pre-criminal justice and bringing in the research and the evaluation around what happens to people, where did they go and who are they accessing and all these missed opportunities for doing something ...’

How can we improve the flow of information which is collected on women through the criminal justice system?

5.112 Stakeholders recommended that the flow of information collected on women through the YJS could be improved by:

- Having consistent approaches to data collection, shared systems, and data sharing protocols and agreements between all relevant agencies.
- Organisations (the police especially) overcoming any reticence of data sharing, and building on information-sharing pilots that are improving the process and reducing re-traumatisation for women by reducing the number of times they must tell their ‘stories’.

‘I don’t think we share enough information ... sometimes we are almost too fearful of oversharing, and I think that the knock-on effect of that is that women get a disservice. We’ve been piloting information-sharing at the point of arrest and engaged with the whole system approach to try and pass that trauma history if there is one and also just basic information from caseworkers to the court team ... it’s been really positive in reducing the re-traumatisation of our women ...’

- Agencies agreeing on shared indicators on which to collect data to evidence a clear set of actions and outcomes for women, at specified time or ‘touch’ points.
- Developing a ‘passport’ containing key information that follows women (and children and young people) on their journey through the system. This would remove the need for agencies to keep asking women (and children and young people) to repeat the same information and would enable agencies to ‘timeline’ their lives and to identify how support needs may change over time.

‘ ... having passports ... collecting the key information on a person that goes with them on their journey ... Because they have so much experience of having to start from scratch with people and services ... And we know that it can be traumatising for them to have to do that ... So, I think anything that allows sharing across systems and travelling with the person but also recognising that a ... person's experience is fluid and changeable and needs to be revisited ... ’

6. Evaluation models

- 6.1 In this section, we bring together our own recommendations which have been informed by the statistical mapping exercise conducted Spring 2021; suggestions made by those spoken to in stages 2 and 3 between June and December 2021; and the activities identified within the respective blueprint implementation plans. In doing this it is acknowledged that in the period since the blueprints were published in 2019, UK and Welsh Government policy has continued to evolve and both society and the criminal justice system have had to adapt in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 6.2 A number of the shorter-term activities identified in these original implementation plans have been now completed whilst responsibility for others have been subsumed into different policy agendas. Updated implementation plans were published in May 2022,^{42,43} providing a summary of the activities completed to date, updates on longer term actions still in progress and where applicable the timelines were refreshed.
- 6.3 Both implementation plans include activities that contribute to enhancing understandings of youth justice and women’s offending in Wales and document ways in which the UK and Welsh Government, along with key strategic partners are working together to transform services to create a fairer, more equal society with better outcomes and justice for all. This includes aligning strategy across different policy areas; the roll-out of ECM following the trial across YOTs in South Wales and building upon the diversion models (The Women’s Pathfinder Whole System

⁴² [Youth Justice Blueprint Implementation Plan](#)

⁴³ [Women’s Justice Blueprint Implementation Plan](#)

Approach Service Delivery Model across South Wales and Gwent, and the Checkpoint Model across Dyfed Powys and North Wales); agreeing governance arrangements and responsibilities with respect to system oversight.

- 6.4 In the context of this EA, it is anticipated that learning from the various pieces of research, evaluations, and mapping exercises referenced on the two plans will be shared with those tasked with completing an evaluation of the blueprints, since much of this work is not in the public domain. We also understand that Welsh Government will invite key stakeholders to confirm the prioritisation of the outcome measures that we have proposed ahead of an evaluation.

Recommended approach

- 6.5 Broadly, stakeholders advocated evaluating the Youth Justice and Women's Justice Blueprints separately to capture each Blueprint's nuances, with an accompanying accessible summary drawing out the common themes from the evaluations, to inform policy and practice going forward. A range of data is already being collected which could be used to evaluate the Blueprints with stakeholders providing examples of where routine monitoring data is being used to support activity across some criminal justice organisations e.g., the IOM Dashboard and internal analysis undertaken by YJB Cymru's analytical team. However, permission would need to be sought by data owners for this to be used to support evaluation activity⁴⁴.
- 6.6 There is some data in the public domain in the form of aggregate tables published by the MoJ, YJB and Home Office. However, as evidenced in [*Evaluability Assessment of the Women's Justice and Youth Justice Blueprint: Statistical Mapping*](#), there continue to be gaps. Where these cannot be addressed through use of routine data which is used by individual organisations for performance monitoring purposes, there is scope for addressing these gaps through additional data collection and linkage. This would support a more thorough evaluation.

⁴⁴ The UK GDPR gives extra protection to the personal data of offenders or suspected offenders in the context of criminal activity, allegations, investigations, and proceedings. Those wishing to use criminal offence data for research purposes are required to comply with all the legal requirements relevant to the processing activity (e.g., common law of confidentiality) and specify the legal basis for processing the data. In addition to having the appropriate data governance and security measures in place to process criminal offence data, the need to have access to sensitive data items in relation to race, religion, health and sexual orientation adds an additional level of complexity.

- 6.7 Notably, the Women’s Justice Blueprint implementation plan outline activities to ensure consistent recording practices are used across the CJS; the development of core datasets to enable the better monitoring of trends; and work towards putting information sharing protocols in place to facilitate the sharing of data between partner organisations. Both plans acknowledge the importance of identifying needs such as ACEs in order to better support practice with children, young people and women. Completion of these activities, additional data collection and use of data linkage would support a more thorough evaluation, particularly of the Women’s Justice Blueprint.
- 6.8 We therefore recommend a separate evaluation model for each Blueprint. Ideally, each model would incorporate process and outcome strands that seek to identify the effects of the Blueprints and the mechanisms by which these effects were achieved by collating and combining insight from quantitative data with that from qualitative engagement with service users, their families, stakeholders, and practitioners.
- 6.9 The process strand would acknowledge that activities and interventions depend on the interaction between them and their context. It would also take account of service users’ characteristics and other activities and interventions they might be participating in. The outcome strand would capture changes in specific outcomes for service users. Including both process and outcome strands would increase understanding of how outcomes are achieved and contribute to improving the activities and interventions which are delivered under the Blueprints.
- 6.10 We have also considered several other options for evaluating the Youth Justice and Women’s Justice Blueprints, which are set out in the following table. Each of these have different pros and cons, and resource implications. Option 6 is the recommended evaluation model.

Table 1: Potential Blueprint evaluation models

Option	Description	Pros	Cons
Option 1	Process and outcome evaluation using existing data sources only (case-level data and datasets)	Cheapest and quickest option No primary data collection/linkage required	Gaps/inconsistencies in data collection and issues around data sharing (as outlined elsewhere in this section)

		No resource-intensive engagement with service users	would enable only a partial evaluation Lack of 'softer' qualitative data from service users on process and impact
Option 2	Process evaluation only, using: - Case-level data - Interviews and/or focus groups with women/children and young people, families, stakeholders, and practitioners	Less costly and time-consuming than process and outcome evaluation Would deliver quantitative and qualitative data on delivery mechanisms and contextual factors, and insights into impacts for service users	Would require access to case-level data and significant engagement with service users (resource implications) Lack of 'hard' and 'soft' data on outcomes for women/children and young people
Option 3	Outcome evaluation only, using: - Analysis of existing data sources - Interviews and/or focus groups with women/children and young people, families, stakeholders and practitioners	Less costly and time-consuming than process and outcome evaluation Would deliver quantitative and qualitative data on outcomes for women/children and young people No additional data collection/linkage required	Lack of 'hard' and 'soft' data on delivery mechanisms and contextual factors, and insights into the way the Blueprints are received by a range of audiences Gaps/inconsistencies in data collection and issues around data sharing (as outlined elsewhere) would result in an incomplete outcome evaluation Would require significant engagement with service users
Option 4	Process and outcome evaluation (one-off), using: - Case-level data - Analysis of existing data sources - Interviews and/or focus groups with women/children and young people, families, stakeholders and practitioners	More complete evaluation, delivering both quantitative and qualitative data on processes and outcomes for women/children and young people No additional data collection/linkage required	More costly and time-consuming than individual process or impact evaluations Would offer a 'snapshot' rather than a long-term view of success or otherwise Would require access to case-level data Gaps/inconsistencies in data collection and issues around data sharing (as outlined elsewhere) would result in an incomplete outcome evaluation

			Would require significant engagement with service users
Option 5	<p>Full process and outcome evaluation (one-off), using:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Case-level data - Analysis of existing data sources and additional data collection to address gaps - Interviews and/or focus groups with women/children and young people, their families, stakeholders and practitioners (qualitative) 	<p>More complete evaluation, delivering both quantitative and qualitative data on processes and outcomes for women/children and young people</p> <p>Would address gaps/inconsistencies in data collection (as outlined elsewhere)</p>	<p>More costly and time-consuming</p> <p>Would offer a 'snapshot' rather than a long-term view of success or otherwise</p> <p>Effort would be needed to address gaps/inconsistencies in data collection (as outlined elsewhere)</p> <p>Data linkage would require additional data sharing protocols/agreements</p> <p>Would require access to case reviews</p> <p>Would require significant engagement with service users</p>
Option 6 RECOMMENDED	<p>Full process and outcome evaluation (longitudinal), using:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Case-level data - Analysis of existing data sources and additional data collection/linkage to address gaps - Interviews and/or focus groups with women/children and young people, their families, stakeholders and practitioners (qualitative) 	<p>Most complete evaluation, delivering both quantitative and qualitative data on processes and outcomes for women/children and young people</p> <p>Outcomes will be measured at different points in time, offering the ability to benchmark and giving a more long-term overview of success or otherwise</p> <p>Would address gaps/inconsistencies in data collection (as outlined elsewhere)</p>	<p>Most expensive and resource intensive option</p> <p>Effort would be needed to address gaps/inconsistencies in data collection (as outlined elsewhere)</p> <p>Data linkage would require additional data sharing protocols/agreements</p> <p>Would require access to case-level data</p> <p>Would require significant engagement with service users</p> <p>Would require incentivisation to maintain service users' engagement and mitigate against research fatigue</p>

Underpinning principles

6.11 There are some principles which should underpin any evaluation of the Youth Justice and Women's Justice Blueprints, which should be observed within any chosen evaluation model. They are as follows, and are based on the statistical mapping exercise and feedback from participants at stage 2 and 3 of this EA. They are also in line with the principles of the Magenta Book, Central Government guidance on evaluation (2020).

- Combine qualitative and quantitative approaches to get a full picture of outcomes, obtaining detailed feedback from children and young people, women, and their families. This could include existing service user case studies, Blueprint workstream reports, and Wales Justice Advisory Panel (WJAP) reports. Complaints and grievances should also be explored, along with service's responses to them. Where relevant, gathering feedback from victims of crime about the appropriateness and effectiveness of reparation work is also important.
- Outcome measures should reflect individual's journeys and progress and should capture service user's strengths as well as their weaknesses. For example, simply attending an appointment could be a huge achievement for one child/young person or woman, whereas for another, it would be relatively minor.
- Baselineing and tracking service users' progress through the various elements of the Blueprints' priorities is fundamental to understanding the extent of their success. Ideally, a multi-agency performance and monitoring framework should be developed prior to any evaluation, which outlines shared definitions and goals over time; attracts strong and equal buy-in from all relevant agencies; does not duplicate effort between agencies; has pre-agreed governance and coordination, rather than just terms of reference; and undergoes data quality audits.
- The performance framework should also be resourced sufficiently in terms of analytical capacity; oversight and governance; and accountability for IT, data

security, human rights, ethics, and access arrangements. Consistent data recording across all relevant agencies is also essential.

- Evaluation should take an intersectional approach to identify and understand any disparity in outcomes for those from priority groups and those with protected characteristics. Youth and overall crime statistics should also be separated out to ensure that the scale of youth offending is understood. To identify protected characteristics and priority group membership, agencies should ask harmonised questions in a sensitive way as part of a holistic assessment. The RRI can be used to identify where people with particular characteristics and/or membership of priority group are over-represented. Census 2021 data (available from March 2023) can also be used to understand local needs.
- Research and evaluation should be built into services, approaches, and interventions from commissioning stage. The effectiveness and suitability of existing outcome measures, such as those in existing self-assessment frameworks, should be explored before creating new ones.
- Agencies should clearly define in advance of evaluation what ‘success’ looks like for all initiatives implemented as part of the Youth Justice and Women’s Justice Blueprints (e.g., cessation or reduction of behaviours, attending sessions or engaging fully with them).
- All relevant data sharing agreements and/or memorandums of understanding should be established before evaluation takes place, outlining arrangements for the mechanics of data sharing, data security, and timelines.
- Evaluation should be actively supported by the youth/criminal justice workforce, including partner agencies. To achieve this, the workforce should feel valued, and have the time, skills, training, and experience to enable them to understand the need for and role of evaluation in service improvement. Service providers should also provide relevant data and harness their relationships with service users to engage them effectively and meaningfully in evaluation.

- A ‘passport’ containing key information that follows children, young people, and women on their journey through the YJS/CJS should be developed. The passport should contain relevant data relating to children and young people’s, and women’s needs and circumstances. It should be appropriately detailed, and should be updated regularly, especially at key points such as before entry to custody, before release, and at various points post-release. This would help to standardise data collection and would reduce the risk of re-traumatisation through asking service users to repeat key information multiple times.
- The Blueprints should have a coherent underpinning evaluation strategy. This would help to ensure that evaluation findings inform the Blueprint’s delivery on an ongoing basis and that evaluation is prioritised accordingly.
- Research and evaluation should build on the findings from existing monitoring and evaluation.
- Evaluation should be conducted by appropriately skilled independent researchers to ensure objectivity.
- In line with the Welsh Language Standards established by the Welsh Language Commissioner, everyone taking part in publicly funded evaluation should be able to do so in Welsh if they so wish.
- Evaluation should be pragmatic and realistic about the extent to which the effects of the Blueprints can be isolated from other activities that might be contributing to change; which organisations hold the levers for change; and the extent to which change can occur in a devolved context.

The Youth Justice Blueprint evaluation model

- 6.12 We recommend a children’s rights-focused, trauma-informed, mixed method, process and outcome evaluation of the Youth Justice Blueprint. The process strand would explore how initiatives and activities have been implemented under the Blueprint, and how they have contributed to various outcomes for children and young people – which would themselves be evaluated via an outcome strand.

- 6.13 Under the process strand, qualitative methods, such as interviews, focus groups, and case studies could be used to explore the views and experiences of children and young people, their families, stakeholders, and practitioners. The outcome strand would combine quantitative data with further qualitative data to assess changes in outcomes for children and young people.
- 6.14 For example, interviews and focus groups could explore how and why (if at all) the frequency/severity of children and young people's offending has changed as a result of initiatives/actions delivered under the Blueprint, from the perspective of children and young people, their families, stakeholders, and practitioners (process strand); and what impact(s) any changes in reoffending frequency/severity has had on the children and young people and their families (outcome strand). Quantitative data (MoJ Proven Reoffending Statistics) would then show actual changes in reoffending frequency/severity in this cohort (outcome strand).
- 6.15 Interviews and focus groups should be conducted with children and young people at various stages of their journey through the YJS. Children and young people who have not received specific kinds of community-based support should also be invited to participate in the evaluation to understand its effective and less effective elements.
- 6.16 In line with a children's rights and trauma-informed approach, children and young people who are involved at various stages of the YJS (e.g., prevention, pre-court diversion, custody, and resettlement) should co-produce the research instruments and questions for subsequent interviews/focus groups. This could be achieved through holding children and young people's design groups where they prioritise the issues for discussion and suggest appropriate questions. Design groups should also explore children and young people's preferences for how they would like to engage in evaluation, covering aspects like (but not limited to) format, setting/location, and timing. The use of alternative research methods such as videos/video diaries should also be explored with the children and young people.
- 6.17 The design groups should also be used to build trust and rapport between the children and young people and with the researchers who are leading the evaluation, and to foster children and young people's engagement with the evaluation.

Engaging trusted support workers to broker relationships with children and young people and support the evaluation would also be key to its success.

- 6.18 Peer-led research should be considered for certain elements of the evaluation, whereby children and young people with lived experience lead some interviews and focus groups, for example. Peer researchers would need thorough initial and ongoing training, support (from independent researchers and trusted support workers) and appropriate remuneration and recognition.
- 6.19 Ideally, the evaluation should be longitudinal. This should involve tracking children and young people's outcomes over specified periods of time and (ideally) engaging the same children and young people in qualitative research at different time points, such as at the start and at the end of their engagement with community-based support, and after a period of reflection. Appropriate incentives would be needed to ensure sustained engagement. If resources and time are limited, a one-off 'snapshot' evaluation could be conducted, but its findings would be less insightful. A one-off evaluation of the Youth Justice Blueprint could be completed in around six months, provided all of the principles noted earlier in this sub-section are addressed before commissioning.
- 6.20 As previously described, data about those under the supervision of the youth justice service is systematically collected as part of the YJAF with some of the key information being collated by the MoJ and YJB Cymru. Further information is held by the respective teams which is often used to monitor performance locally. However, governance arrangements are such that much of this is not available to researchers. Additionally, where aggregate published data is available, the comparatively low numbers who share particular protected characteristics means that it is not possible to compile the kind of intersectional picture of behaviours and outcomes required in order to baseline and evaluate the aspirations set out in the Blueprint.
- 6.21 Given that individual level data exists, this affords a number of opportunities depending upon budget and timescales. The first of these is to dedicate resources within the YJB Cymru to undertake a systematic baselining exercise and establish the mechanism to enable trends to be monitored over time with particular focus on

identifying potential disparity and local variation. The second is to negotiate with the MoJ to create a dedicated resource to undertake this exercise. Should either of these options be pursued, there would need to provide appropriate oversight and co-ordination to ensure that local YOTs and those in the secure estate share all the necessary information in a timely and consistent manner. Of these two options, the recommendation is that creating a dedicated resources within the MoJ to analyse Welsh data will afford the greatest opportunities as this would complement the existing commitment to the Welsh Language Standards and enable access to data from across the wider CJS including the courts. Under this option, there would be scope for the YJB Cymru and/or Welsh Government to provide oversight and challenge to drive performance. The only costs associated with both these options relates to recruitment, salary and training costs.

- 6.22 The third option is dependent upon the timing of the criminal justice data being provisioned within SAIL as part of the MoJ's Data First Programme. Whilst there are not currently plans to make youth justice service data available as part of this programme, the MoJ has made magistrate, crown and family court data available along with prison and probation data. With the exception of the probation data, this includes information about under 18s. Once provisioned in SAIL, it will be possible to link these datasets with education, social services and health data to learn more about the needs and circumstances of those who have had contact with the YJS/CJS using an anonymised linkage field. There is scope for external data to be taken into SAIL for research purposes. This affords the opportunity to undertake longitudinal tracking of those who have engaged in prevention and diversionary activity – two significant gaps in the current evidence base.
- 6.23 Whilst the wealth of data which will be in SAIL represents a significant opportunity to enhance the evidence base, its full potential will not be recognised if there is not the analytical capacity to undertake this work. This includes ensuring that there are adequately skilled data scientists with sufficient understanding of the YJS and its links with other policy areas.
- 6.24 The Welsh Government in collaboration with the MoJ may wish to consider funding Fellowships similar to those offered by ADR UK to promote the use of the Data First

data once in SAIL to promote its use by researchers in order to address key research issues linked to the evidence base around Welsh Youth Justice.

Researchers can apply for a fellowship grant of 12 months in duration, up to a maximum of £130,000 per annum at 100% full economic cost (FEC). ADR UK will fund 80% full economic costs subject to ESRC's funding policy. The alternative avenue for providing funding for independent research is the ESRC Secondary Data Analysis Initiative. This allows teams of researchers to apply for a maximum of £300,000 for two-year projects at 100% FEC.

- 6.25 All three options are dependent upon data being made available for evaluation and research. At present, only two of the Welsh YOTs have signed up to the Wales Accord on the Sharing of Personal Information (WASPI). However, all four Welsh police forces and the Offices of the Police Crime Commissioners have signed along with HMPPS and the IOM Service.
- 6.26 Common definitions for monitoring performance need to be agreed. As highlighted in the Stage 1 report, the YJB's definition of an FTE is particularly problematic in the context of prevention and diversion since it is based on proven offending. It is therefore recommended that a new metric is agreed upon which reflects first time system contact. The approach taken should mirror that employed in the development of Analytical Methods Notices within NHS Wales. As part of this exercise, the appropriateness of the current WYJIs should also be considered, with steps being taken to align these with existing measures used by public health. Notably in keeping with the child first aspirations of the Youth Justice Blueprint, consideration should be given to expanding the range of metrics beyond mental health, substance misuse and accommodation, for example to include referrals to and waiting time for treatment for speech language therapists and other specialist support services.
- 6.27 Table 2 sets out the outcome measures suggested by stakeholders against each of the Youth Justice Blueprint's priorities. It indicates whether the outcome measures relate to the process and/or outcome strands of the evaluation and lists data sources which could be used in an evaluation. All of the data sources listed are currently available, although we have indicated where these data sources could be

supplemented by data linkage or replaced by more insightful data in future. Supplementing the existing data would have additional resource implications.

6.28 The outcome measures include a mix of quantitative and qualitative metrics. By their very nature, ‘softer’ outcomes are subjective and more difficult to measure. However, the complexity of the current data governance arrangements and need to standardise in the way in which routine data is collection by different organisations also has implications for the ease at which ‘harder’ outcomes can be monitored. Therefore Table 2 also includes an indication of the feasibility of measuring the proposed outcome measures – on a three-point scale where 1 is difficult and 3 is easy, as well as a sense of how high a priority they are to include in an evaluation (High-Medium-Low).

Table 2: Outcome measures for evaluating the Youth Justice Blueprint

Priority	Feasibility		
H	High	3	Easy to achieve – mechanisms for evaluating this are in place
M	Medium	2	
L	Low	1	Difficult to evaluate - metrics are subjective and/or the costs involved are high

Outcome measures	Youth Justice Blueprint priority					Process/outcome evaluation strand		Indication of Priority/Feasibility	Possible data sources (* indicates future/potential sources)
	Prevention	Pre-court diversion	Community	Custody	Resettlement and Transitions	Process	Outcome		
Priority:	High (H)					←————→		Low (L)	
Feasibility:	Easy (3) <i>(Mechanisms are already in place to facilitate evaluation)</i>					←————→		Difficult (1) <i>(Mechanisms do not currently exist/complex task/costly)</i>	
Reoffending – the statutory aim of the youth justice system:									
- Reduced frequency/severity of offending	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	H3	P/O: Interviews with children and young people; practitioners; family

Outcome measures	Youth Justice Blueprint priority					Process/outcome evaluation strand		Indication of Priority/Feasibility	Possible data sources (* indicates future/potential sources)
	Prevention	Pre-court diversion	Community	Custody	Resettlement and Transitions	Process	Outcome		
Priority:	High (H)					←————→		Low (L)	
Feasibility:	Easy (3) <i>(Mechanisms are already in place to facilitate evaluation)</i>					←————→		Difficult (1) <i>(Mechanisms do not currently exist/complex task/costly)</i>	
									O: Proven Reoffending Statistics (MoJ); Reoffending Toolkit (YJB) *Data linkage could be used to enhance understanding of prevention and diversion services, through tracking service users' reoffending over time using administrative data
- Different disposals		✓		✓		✓	✓	H2	P/O: Interviews with police; YOTs O: Youth Justice Statistics 2020-21 (YJB); Reoffending Toolkit (YJB); Criminal Court Statistics
- Protected characteristics and priority groups		✓					✓	H2	O: Youth Justice Statistics 2020-21 (only race data is available at present) *Linking PLASC, social services and family court data, health and YJAF/MoJ data would increase insight *Linking reoffending data to equality and diversity measures would increase insight * Using 2021 census (available from 2023) will enable a more accurate

Outcome measures	Youth Justice Blueprint priority					Process/outcome evaluation strand		Indication of Priority/Feasibility	Possible data sources (* indicates future/potential sources)
	Prevention	Pre-court diversion	Community	Custody	Resettlement and Transitions	Process	Outcome		
Priority:	High (H)					←————→		Low (L)	
Feasibility:	Easy (3) <i>(Mechanisms are already in place to facilitate evaluation)</i>					←————→		Difficult (1) <i>(Mechanisms do not currently exist/complex task/costly)</i>	
									assessment of under-/over-representation to be determined in different geographies, taking an intersectional approach
Sentence length/type:									
- Patterns of sentence length/type			✓			✓	✓	H2	P/O: Interviews/focus groups with judiciary O: Youth Justice Statistics 2020-21; Assessing the Needs of Sentenced Children in the Youth Justice System (YJB); Youth Custody Report O: Staff training completion figures (from organisation)
- Entry and re-entry into custody	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	M2	P/O: Interviews/focus groups with stakeholders; judiciary O: Youth Justice Statistics 2020-21; Youth Custody Report; Reoffending Toolkit (YJB); Criminal Court Statistics
- Use of custody	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	M2	P/O: Interviews/focus groups with stakeholders; judiciary O: Youth Justice Statistics 2020-21; Youth Custody Report; Reoffending Toolkit

Outcome measures	Youth Justice Blueprint priority					Process/outcome evaluation strand		Indication of Priority/Feasibility	Possible data sources (* indicates future/potential sources)
	Prevention	Pre-court diversion	Community	Custody	Resettlement and Transitions	Process	Outcome		
Priority:	High (H)					←————→		Low (L)	
Feasibility:	Easy (3) <i>(Mechanisms are already in place to facilitate evaluation)</i>					←————→		Difficult (1) <i>(Mechanisms do not currently exist/complex task/costly)</i>	
									(YJB); Criminal Court Statistics
Monitor the numbers and characteristics of:									
- Stop and search	✓					✓	✓	M2	P/O: Interviews with police; YOTs O: Youth Justice Statistics 2020-21 (YJB) <i>* Increased data sharing between the police/Home Office and partners to include a breakdown by age and gender as well as race</i>
- Arrests	✓	✓				✓	✓	H2	P/O: Interviews with police; YOTs O: Youth Justice Statistics 2020-21 <i>* Increased data sharing between the police/Home Office.</i>
- FTEs/Repeat Entrants	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	H1	P/O: Interviews with police; YOTs O: Youth Justice Statistics 2020-21 <i>*An alternative metric to capture first contact with the YJS should be considered, drawing on the approach used in Public Health Analysis Methods Notices</i>

Outcome measures	Youth Justice Blueprint priority					Process/outcome evaluation strand		Indication of Priority/Feasibility	Possible data sources (* indicates future/potential sources)
	Prevention	Pre-court diversion	Community	Custody	Resettlement and Transitions	Process	Outcome		
Priority:	High (H)					←————→		Low (L)	
Feasibility:	Easy (3)					←————→		Difficult (1)	
	<i>(Mechanisms are already in place to facilitate evaluation)</i>							<i>(Mechanisms do not currently exist/complex task/costly)</i>	
- Diverted vs. sentenced (including for ethnic minority children and young people)		✓				✓	✓	M1	P/O: Interviews with children and young people; families; YOTs; judiciary P/O: Service level data (for diversion programmes) P: Youth Justice Statistics 2020-21; Assessing the Needs of Sentenced Children in the Youth Justice System; Youth Custody Report; Criminal Court Statistics *As noted, data linkage could be used to enhance understanding of prevention and diversion services, through tracking service users' reoffending over time using administrative data
- Out of court disposals		✓				✓	✓	H2	P/O: Interviews with children and young people; families; police; YOTs O: Criminal Justice Statistics
- Breach/Recall			✓			✓	✓	L2	P/O: Interviews with children and young people; families; police; YOTs O: MAPPA Annual Report (for those who are

Outcome measures	Youth Justice Blueprint priority					Process/outcome evaluation strand		Indication of Priority/Feasibility	Possible data sources (* indicates future/potential sources)
	Prevention	Pre-court diversion	Community	Custody	Resettlement and Transitions	Process	Outcome		
Priority:	High (H)					←————→		Low (L)	
Feasibility:	Easy (3)					←————→		Difficult (1)	
	<i>(Mechanisms are already in place to facilitate evaluation)</i>							<i>(Mechanisms do not currently exist/complex task/costly)</i>	
									managed by MAPPA); Criminal Court Statistics * Analysis of the court level data made available via Data First will provide additional insights about breaches and their links both vulnerability and custodial sentences.
- Location (Wales vs. England)				✓		✓	✓	L3	P/O: Interviews with children and young people; families O: Youth Custody Report
- Needing resettlement					✓	✓	✓	L2	P/O: Interviews with children and young people; families; secure estate staff; YOTs O: Youth Custody Report; Assessing the Needs of Sentenced Children in the Youth Justice System
Other outcomes:									
Reduced safeguarding referrals from police			✓			✓	✓	2	P/O: Interviews with police O: Police referral data
Engagement with specified services/interventions (ETE, substance misuse, mental health, attending health checks)	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	HM 2	P/O: Interviews with children and young people; practitioners; family. P/O: Service-level data O: WYJI 4 (engagement with ETE); WYJI 5 (access to suitable

Outcome measures	Youth Justice Blueprint priority					Process/outcome evaluation strand		Indication of Priority/Feasibility	Possible data sources (* indicates future/potential sources)
	Prevention	Pre-court diversion	Community	Custody	Resettlement and Transitions	Process	Outcome		
Priority:	High (H)					←————→		Low (L)	
Feasibility:	Easy (3) <i>(Mechanisms are already in place to facilitate evaluation)</i>					←————→		Difficult (1) <i>(Mechanisms do not currently exist/complex task/costly)</i>	
									accommodation); WYJI 6 (access to specialist substance misuse services); WYJI 7 (access to specialist mental health services) *Equivalent measures to WYJI data could be developed to measure access to other services/interventions *Proxy measures e.g., school attendance could also be used to assess engagement with school. *Other validated measures, e.g., the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ), the SWEMWBS (Short Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale), The CGAS (Children's Global Assessment Scale), the Social Services and Wellbeing Care and Support Plan 10-point Scale, and the CHI-ESQ (Children's Experience of Service Questionnaire) could also be used to

Outcome measures	Youth Justice Blueprint priority					Process/outcome evaluation strand		Indication of Priority/Feasibility	Possible data sources (* indicates future/potential sources)
	Prevention	Pre-court diversion	Community	Custody	Resettlement and Transitions	Process	Outcome		
Priority:	High (H)					←————→		Low (L)	
Feasibility:	Easy (3)					←————→		Difficult (1)	
	<i>(Mechanisms are already in place to facilitate evaluation)</i>							<i>(Mechanisms do not currently exist/complex task/costly)</i>	
									measure improvements in children's wellbeing *As noted, data linkage could be used to enhance understanding of prevention and diversion services, through tracking service users over time using administrative data
Increased voluntary engagement with YOTs			✓			✓	✓	3/2	P/O: Interviews with children and young people; families; YOTs O: YOT data (AssetPlus; case-level data)
Use of specified interventions/forms of practice (ECM, psychological assessments, trauma/clinically informed practice)			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	3/2	P/O: Interviews with children and young people; families; YOTs; service/support staff O: YOT data (AssetPlus; case-level data); psychological reports (e.g., ECM case formulation/review reports)
Reduced drug and alcohol use	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	HM 3/2	P/O: Interviews with children and young people; families; service/support staff; YOTs O: YOT data (AssetPlus); HMPPS Annual Digest; service-level data;

Outcome measures	Youth Justice Blueprint priority					Process/outcome evaluation strand		Indication of Priority/Feasibility	Possible data sources (* indicates future/potential sources)
	Prevention	Pre-court diversion	Community	Custody	Resettlement and Transitions	Process	Outcome		
Priority:	High (H)					←————→		Low (L)	
Feasibility:	Easy (3) <i>(Mechanisms are already in place to facilitate evaluation)</i>					←————→		Difficult (1) <i>(Mechanisms do not currently exist/complex task/costly)</i>	
									Substance Misuse Data Set (SMDS). *Data linkage including the SMDS has the potential to enhance understanding the effectiveness of treatment and its impact on offending behaviour
Reduced risk and vulnerability to exploitation			✓		✓	✓	✓	HM 3/2	P/O: Interviews with children and young people; families; service/support staff; YOTs O: Assessing the Needs of Sentenced Children; YOT data (AssetPlus)
Reduced violence in home environment			✓			✓	✓	1	P/O: Interviews with children and young people; families; service/support staff; YOTs O: IOM Cymru data (relating to perpetrators of domestic violence)
Improved mental and physical health (including speech and language issues)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	3-2	P/O: Interviews with children and young people; families; service/support staff; YOTs O: WYJI 7 (access to specialist mental health services); YOT data (AssetPlus).

Outcome measures	Youth Justice Blueprint priority					Process/outcome evaluation strand		Indication of Priority/Feasibility	Possible data sources (* indicates future/potential sources)
	Prevention	Pre-court diversion	Community	Custody	Resettlement and Transitions	Process	Outcome		
Priority:	High (H)					←————→		Low (L)	
Feasibility:	Easy (3) <i>(Mechanisms are already in place to facilitate evaluation)</i>					←————→		Difficult (1) <i>(Mechanisms do not currently exist/complex task/costly)</i>	
									*Equivalent measures to WYJI data could be developed to measure access to other services/interventions. However, these need to be aligned to existing public health metrics
Timely access to services	✓		✓			✓	✓	3-2	P/O: Interviews with children and young people; families; service/support staff. O: WYJI 6 (access to specialist substance misuse services); WYJI 7 (access to specialist mental health services); NHS Wales Delivery Measures (referral to treatment times) and Delivery Framework; service-level data (e.g. complaints and grievances) *Equivalent measures to WYJI data could be developed to measure access to other services/interventions *Including referral to treatment time measures could help determine

Outcome measures	Youth Justice Blueprint priority					Process/outcome evaluation strand		Indication of Priority/Feasibility	Possible data sources (* indicates future/potential sources)
	Prevention	Pre-court diversion	Community	Custody	Resettlement and Transitions	Process	Outcome		
Priority:	High (H)					←————→		Low (L)	
Feasibility:	Easy (3)					←————→		Difficult (1)	
	<i>(Mechanisms are already in place to facilitate evaluation)</i>							<i>(Mechanisms do not currently exist/complex task/costly)</i>	
Completion of interventions	✓					✓	✓	3-2	P/O: Interviews with children and young people; service/support staff; YOTs O: YOT data (AssetPlus); service-level data
Accommodation (availability, suitability, wait times, tenancy/placement duration, distance from home)	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	3-2	P/O: Interviews with children and young people; service/support staff; YOTs O: WYJI 5 (access to suitable accommodation)
Economic spend/savings/impact	✓					✓	✓	1-2	P/O: Interviews with strategic-level stakeholders O: Service-level data on spend; data on costs of crime types (Home Office), prison places (MoJ), and prosecution (CPS)
Feedback from service users on the availability, accessibility, and effectiveness of services	✓	✓				✓	✓	3-2	P/O: Interviews with children and young people O: Service-level data (including exit surveys/interviews; complaints/grievances)
Feedback from the families of service users on the effectiveness of support received by them		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	1-2	P/O: Interviews with families O: Service-level data (including exit surveys/interviews; complaints/grievances)
Person-centred, softer outcomes (family and peer	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	1-2	P/O: Interviews with children and young people;

- 6.30 As with children and young people, interviews and focus groups should be conducted with women at various stages of their journey through the CJS. Women who have not received specific kinds of community-based support should also participate in the evaluation to understand its effective and less effective elements.
- 6.31 A co-productive approach to developing research instruments and appropriate interview/focus group questions is also recommended for evaluating the Women's Justice Blueprint, reflecting a women-first, trauma-informed approach. To this end, women at different stages of their CJS journey would attend design groups where they inform the priority areas for discussion, research instrument design (including questions), and methods of engagement. The use of written methods such as diaries and feedback forms should also be explored with women in design groups prior to evaluation taking place, but these methods (if used) should complement rather than replace interviews and/or focus groups to ensure that sufficiently insightful qualitative data is obtained.
- 6.32 Again, as with the Youth Justice Blueprint, peer-led research should be considered, where women with lived experience lead some interviews and focus groups. Peer researchers would need thorough initial and ongoing training, support (from independent researchers and trusted support workers) and appropriate remuneration and recognition. Trusted support workers should introduce the evaluation to participating women and assist with its implementation.
- 6.33 Ideally, the evaluation should be longitudinal. This should involve tracking women's outcomes over specified periods of time and (ideally) engaging the same women in qualitative research at different time points, such as at the start and at the end of their engagement with community-based support, and after a period of reflection. Appropriate incentives and feedback mechanisms would be needed to ensure sustained engagement. If resources and time are limited, a one-off 'snapshot' evaluation could be conducted, but its findings would be less insightful. A one-off evaluation of the Women's Justice Blueprint could be completed in around six months, provided all of the principles noted earlier in this sub-section are addressed before commissioning.

- 6.34 Relative to the YJS, the evidence base around women's offending in Wales is less developed. In addition to the issues associated with identifying Welsh women serving their sentences in prisons in England, there have been a number of changes in the probation function in recent years which has led to discontinuities in the data. As a result, it is more difficult to monitor trends over time.
- 6.35 Where published data is available to quantify the volume in and flows through the CJS, the comparatively low numbers of women especially those from ethnic minority groups means that it is not currently possible to compile a comprehensive picture of Welsh women's offending. The analysis undertaken in the stage 1 report highlights that in some instances it is possible to aggregate data presented for different administrative areas (police forces, courts, local justice boards etc), to create a national picture, it is not always possible to then disaggregate the figures by gender or vice versa. Individual level data, including a breakdown by age and race is now collected by many criminal justice organisations and collated centrally by either the Home Office or MoJ. The extent to which data is collected about the other protected characteristics and membership of priority groups varies, making comparisons over time problematic. Work is being undertaken to harmonise the way in which questions are being asked, but low numbers mean that we are likely to continue to see conflated groups and statistical suppression in the published data.
- 6.36 Given that individual level data exists within different services means that it is possible to start the process of baselining and identifying where there is disparity. However, as with the youth justice data there are notable gaps in the evidence base around diversion and community-based interventions. Here there is scope to gain insights from collating the data captured within screening/referral forms. However, this is dependent upon the quality and completeness of the information collected, with organisations often having their own performance metrics which reflect the nature of the service/needs of their clients. It is therefore advocated that questions are harmonised and that common definitions utilised. The approach used within Public Health to create Analysis Methods Notices is therefore recommended.
- 6.37 As previously noted, having individual level data means that there are a number of opportunities to expand the evidence base and evaluate the Women's Justice

Blueprint. The first of these is negotiate with the MoJ to create a dedicated resource to undertake baseline and monitor performance over time, potentially creating a Welsh version of Women in the Criminal Justice System. Ideally, data collected from the Welsh police forces and commissioned services could be incorporated into this. However, it is recognised that issues around data security, governance and oversight would also need to be resolved. In addition to the costs associated resourcing the analytical work, it is anticipated that a strategic lead would need to be appointed to negotiate timely access to the data and ensure compliance with data standards.

- 6.38 The second option is dependent upon data being provisioned within SAIL as part of the MoJ's Data First Programme. The MoJ has made magistrate, crown and family court data available along with prison and probation data. Once provisioned in SAIL, it will be possible to link these datasets with education, social services and health data to learn more about the needs and circumstances of those who have had contact with the CJS using an anonymised linkage field. There is scope for external data to be taken into SAIL for research purposes. This affords the opportunity to undertake longitudinal tracking of those who have engaged in diversionary activity and community-based interventions – in each instance, lists of service users would need to be provided via Digital Health and Care Wales (SAIL's trusted third party) so that they can be depersonalised prior to being provisioned. The creation of an anonymised linkage field (replacing identifiable data) enables the data subject's records to be linked with data already held in SAIL. The cost implications of bringing external data into SAIL would need to be explored.
- 6.39 As previously suggested in the context of the Youth Justice Blueprint, the Welsh Government in collaboration with the MoJ may wish to consider funding Fellowships similar to those offered by ADR UK to encourage approved researchers to utilise the Data First data to address evidence gaps which will support the evaluation of the Women's Justice Blueprint.
- 6.40 Given the number of different criminal justice organisations involved in providing services to women in the Welsh CJS, there is a need for common definitions for monitoring performance need to be agreed. Whilst a number of metrics have been

identified in the stage 1 report, including the adaptation of existing indicators from the YJS and public health, key to understanding where there is unmet demand for services to support women at different stages of the CYJ will be understanding what their needs are and identifying where there is disparity. Access to the Census 2021 data will help with this, providing an accurate picture of the characteristics of the underlying population in each geography including the need to provide services aimed at minority groups and/or in the Welsh language.

- 6.41 Table 3 sets out the outcome measures which were suggested by stakeholders in the stage 3 interviews and by women in the stage 2 and 3 interviews, against each of the Blueprint's priorities. It indicates whether the outcome measures relate to the process and/or outcome strands of the evaluation and lists some data sources which could be used in an evaluation. All of the data sources listed are currently available, although we have indicated where these data sources could be supplemented by data linkage or replaced by more insightful data in future. Supplementing the existing data would have additional resource implications.
- 6.42 As with the equivalent table for youth justice, an indication of the feasibility of measuring the proposed outcome measures – on a three-point scale where 1 is difficult and 3 is easy, as well as a sense of how high a priority they are to include in an evaluation (High-Medium-Low).

Table 3: Outcome measures for evaluating the Women’s Justice Blueprint

Priority	Feasibility		
H	High	3	Easy to achieve – mechanisms for evaluating this are in place
M	Medium	2	
L	Low	1	Difficult to evaluate - metrics are subjective and/or the costs involved are high

Outcome measures	Women’s Justice Blueprint priority				Process/outcome evaluation strand		Indication of Priority/Feasibility	Possible data sources (* indicates future/potential sources)
	Prevention and early intervention	Courts and sentencing	Community	Custody and resettlement	Process	Outcome		
Priority:	High (H)				↔		Low (L)	
Feasibility:	Easy (3) <i>(Mechanisms are already in place to facilitate evaluation)</i>				↔		Difficult (1) <i>(Mechanisms do not currently exist/complex task/costly)</i>	
Reoffending:								
- Reduced frequency/severity of offending	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	H3	P/O: Interviews with women; practitioners; family O: Proven Reoffending Statistics; Women in the Criminal Justice System (MoJ) * Individual organisations including commissioned services will hold internal data which could be collated to monitor trends over time *Data linkage could be used to enhance understanding of prevention and diversion services, through tracking service users’ reoffending over time using administrative data
- Different disposals		✓			✓	✓	H2	P/O: Interviews with the police, courts and probation O: Criminal Justice Statistics; Offender Management Statistics;

Outcome measures	Women's Justice Blueprint priority				Process/outcome evaluation strand		Indication of Priority/Feasibility	Possible data sources (* indicates future/potential sources)
	Prevention and early intervention	Courts and sentencing	Community	Custody and resettlement	Process	Outcome		
Priority:	High (H)				←————→		Low (L)	
Feasibility:	Easy (3) <i>(Mechanisms are already in place to facilitate evaluation)</i>				←————→		Difficult (1) <i>(Mechanisms do not currently exist/complex task/costly)</i>	
								Women in the Criminal Justice System (MoJ)
- Protected characteristics and priority groups		✓				✓	H1	<p>* Individual organisations including commissioned services hold internal data which could be collated to monitor trends over time. To enable this, questions to determine membership of priority groups and protected characteristics will need to be harmonised and collected routinely.</p> <p>* Using 2021 census (available from 2023) will enable a more accurate assessment of under-/over-representation to be determined in different geographies, taking an intersectional approach</p> <p>* Bespoke analysis by the MoJ to replicate Women in the Criminal Justice System for Wales.</p> <p>* Data linkage to establish retrospectively membership of priority groups</p>
Sentence length/type:								
- Entry and re-entry into custody	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	H2	P/O: Interviews/focus groups with the judiciary O: Offender Management Statistics (MoJ) and internal data held by Probation. However,

Outcome measures	Women's Justice Blueprint priority				Process/outcome evaluation strand		Indication of Priority/Feasibility	Possible data sources (* indicates future/potential sources)
	Prevention and early intervention	Courts and sentencing	Community	Custody and resettlement	Process	Outcome		
Priority:	High (H)				←————→		Low (L)	
Feasibility:	Easy (3) <i>(Mechanisms are already in place to facilitate evaluation)</i>				←————→		Difficult (1) <i>(Mechanisms do not currently exist/complex task/costly)</i>	
								there remain difficulties in identifying Welsh Prisoners. * Data linkage could be used to enhance understandings around entry and re-entry into custody using administrative data
- Those given community sentences who later receive custodial sentences		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	H2	P/O: Interviews/focus groups with the judiciary * Data linkage could be used to enhance understandings around patterns of sentencing over time
- Use of custody		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	H2	P/O: Interviews/focus groups with the judiciary and probation O: Criminal Justice Statistics * Bespoke analysis by the MoJ to replicate Women in the Criminal Justice System for Wales and/or to provide a gender breakdown within the Criminal Court Statistics. * Data linkage could be used to enhance understandings around patterns of sentencing over time
- Trends between/across courts		✓			✓	✓	M2	P/O: Interviews/focus groups with the judiciary and probation * Data linkage could be used to enhance understandings around patterns of sentencing over time in different localities, taking into account offence type and the gender of the defendant.

Outcome measures	Women's Justice Blueprint priority				Process/outcome evaluation strand		Indication of Priority/Feasibility	Possible data sources (* indicates future/potential sources)
	Prevention and early intervention	Courts and sentencing	Community	Custody and resettlement	Process	Outcome		
Priority:	High (H)				←————→		Low (L)	
Feasibility:	Easy (3) <i>(Mechanisms are already in place to facilitate evaluation)</i>				←————→		Difficult (1) <i>(Mechanisms do not currently exist/complex task/costly)</i>	
Monitor the numbers and characteristics of:								
- Arrests		✓			✓	✓	H2	P/O: Interviews with police, Probation * Individual forces hold internal data which could be collated to monitor trends over time. * Bespoke analysis by the MoJ to replicate Women in the Criminal Justice System for Wales and/or to provide a gender breakdown within Police Powers and Procedures (Home Office)
- FTEs/Repeat Entrants	✓	✓			✓	✓	H1	O: Criminal Justice System Statistics Quarterly series (MoJ) * An alternative metric to capture first contact with the CJS should be considered, drawing on the approach used in Public Health Analysis Methods Notices. * Data linkage could be used to enhance intersectional understandings using administrative data.
- Diverted vs. sentenced		✓			✓	✓	M1	P/O: Interviews with women; families; probation; commissioned services/PCCs; judiciary P/O: Service level data for diversion for programmes. O: Reoffending Statistics (MoJ)

Outcome measures	Women's Justice Blueprint priority				Process/outcome evaluation strand		Indication of Priority/Feasibility	Possible data sources (* indicates future/potential sources)
	Prevention and early intervention	Courts and sentencing	Community	Custody and resettlement	Process	Outcome		
Priority:	High (H)				←————→		Low (L)	
Feasibility:	Easy (3) <i>(Mechanisms are already in place to facilitate evaluation)</i>				←————→		Difficult (1) <i>(Mechanisms do not currently exist/complex task/costly)</i>	
								<p>* Data linkage could be used to enhance understanding of the effectiveness of diversion services, through tracking service users' reoffending over time using administrative data</p> <p>* Data linkage could be used to enhance understandings of the needs and circumstances of these two groups, making use of social services, family court, health and education data</p>
- Out of court disposals		✓			✓	✓	M2	<p>P/O: Interviews with women; families; probation; police and judiciary</p> <p>O: Criminal Justice Statistics; Criminal Court Statistics</p>
- Breach/Recall		✓	✓		✓	✓	M2	<p>P/O: Interviews with women; families; police and probation</p> <p>O: MAPPA Annual Report (for those who are managed under MAPPA)</p> <p>O: Service level data held by probation</p> <p>* Bespoke analysis by the MoJ to replicate Women in the Criminal Justice System for Wales and/or to provide a gender breakdown within Criminal Court Statistics</p> <p>* Analysis of the court level data made available via Data First will</p>

Outcome measures	Women's Justice Blueprint priority				Process/outcome evaluation strand		Indication of Priority/Feasibility	Possible data sources (* indicates future/potential sources)
	Prevention and early intervention	Courts and sentencing	Community	Custody and resettlement	Process	Outcome		
Priority:	High (H)				←————→		Low (L)	
Feasibility:	Easy (3) <i>(Mechanisms are already in place to facilitate evaluation)</i>				←————→		Difficult (1) <i>(Mechanisms do not currently exist/complex task/costly)</i>	
								provide additional insights about breaches and their links to both vulnerability and custodial sentences.
- Community sentences vs. Custody		✓	✓		✓	✓	H2	P/O: Interviews with women; families; police and probation O: Service level data held by probation; Criminal Justice Statistics (MoJ) * Analysis of the court level data made available via Data First will provide additional insights about sentencing patterns
- Location (England vs. Wales) (YP)				✓	✓	✓	M1	P/O: Interviews with young women; families and practitioners O: Youth Custody Report
Other outcomes:								
PSRs: numbers; content/proposals; compliance		✓			✓	✓	3	P/O: Interviews with probation and the judiciary O: Previously included as part of the Community Performance series (MoJ); service level data; HMPPS Inspection reports
Proportionality of crimes and sentences	✓				✓	✓	H 1-2	P/O: Interviews with women; families, probation, and the judiciary * As noted, analysis of the court level data made available via Data First will provide additional insights about sentencing patterns for different offences

Outcome measures	Women's Justice Blueprint priority				Process/outcome evaluation strand		Indication of Priority/Feasibility	Possible data sources (* indicates future/potential sources)
	Prevention and early intervention	Courts and sentencing	Community	Custody and resettlement	Process	Outcome		
Priority:	High (H)				←————→		Low (L)	
Feasibility:	Easy (3)				←————→		Difficult (1)	
	<i>(Mechanisms are already in place to facilitate evaluation)</i>						<i>(Mechanisms do not currently exist/complex task/costly)</i>	
								and enable comparisons to be made by gender
Compare outcomes between women receiving community-based services and those who are not			✓		✓	✓	1-2	P/O: Interviews with women; families, probation, commissioned services, and PCCs * Thematic inspections and robust contract management against pre-determined performance measures which reflect the aims and objectives of the intervention. * Data linkage will enable women to be tracked over longer period to determine if objective measures have been achieved. In addition to considering re-offending, this could include a wider range of measures such as securing employment, accessing training; stable housing, positive health outcomes, no further interventions from social services etc
Reduced drug and alcohol use	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	H/M 2	P/O: Interviews with women; families; service/support staff; probation O: Probation data (OASyS); HMPPS Annual Digest; service-level data; Substance Misuse Data Set (SMDS).

Outcome measures	Women's Justice Blueprint priority				Process/outcome evaluation strand		Indication of Priority/Feasibility	Possible data sources (* indicates future/potential sources)
	Prevention and early intervention	Courts and sentencing	Community	Custody and resettlement	Process	Outcome		
Priority:	High (H)				←————→		Low (L)	
Feasibility:	Easy (3) <i>(Mechanisms are already in place to facilitate evaluation)</i>				←————→		Difficult (1) <i>(Mechanisms do not currently exist/complex task/costly)</i>	
								<p>*Data linkage including the SMDS has the potential to enhance understanding the effectiveness of treatment and its impact on offending behaviour</p> <p>* There is scope for an equivalent measure to WYJI 6 (access to specialist substance misuse services) to be developed, drawing upon the approach used in Public Health Analysis Methods Notices.</p>
Improved mental and physical health	✓			✓	✓	✓	2	<p>P/O: Interviews with women; families; service/support staff; probation</p> <p>O: Probation data (OASyS); HMPPS Annual Digest; service-level data</p> <p>*Data linkage to health datasets has the potential to enhance understanding the effectiveness of criminal justice interventions and their impact on health.</p> <p>* There is scope for an equivalent measure to WYJI 7 (access to specialist mental health services) to be developed, drawing upon the approach used in Public Health Analysis Methods Notices.</p> <p>* Use of validated measures such as the SWEMWBS (Short</p>

Outcome measures	Women's Justice Blueprint priority				Process/outcome evaluation strand		Indication of Priority/Feasibility	Possible data sources (* indicates future/potential sources)
	Prevention and early intervention	Courts and sentencing	Community	Custody and resettlement	Process	Outcome		
Priority:	High (H)				←————→		Low (L)	
Feasibility:	Easy (3) <i>(Mechanisms are already in place to facilitate evaluation)</i>				←————→		Difficult (1) <i>(Mechanisms do not currently exist/complex task/costly)</i>	
								Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale) and the Social Services and Wellbeing Care and Support Plan 10-point Scale to measure personal outcomes
Increased referrals for support services pre-court			✓		✓	✓	1-2	P/O: Interviews with women; families; service/support staff; probation * Data linkage to the lifelong learning, health and social services datasets has the potential to enhance understanding the needs and circumstances of women in the CJS. * Mapping of referral pathways to establish supply vs. demand in different localities; use of referral data held at service level to consider trends over time.
Increased ability to form healthier relationships/increased ability to self-safeguard	✓		✓		✓	✓	1-2	P/O: Interviews with women; families; service/support staff; probation * Use of validated measures such as the SWEMWBS (Short Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale) and the Social Services and Wellbeing Care and Support Plan 10-point Scale to measure personal outcomes

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Priority:	High (H)				←————→		Low (L)	
Feasibility:	Easy (3)				←————→		Difficult (1)	
	<i>(Mechanisms are already in place to facilitate evaluation)</i>						<i>(Mechanisms do not currently exist/complex task/costly)</i>	
Engagement with specified services/interventions (ETE, substance misuse, mental health)	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	2	P/O: Interviews with women; practitioners; family. P/O: Service-level data * There is scope for equivalent measures to WYJI 4 (engagement with ETE); WYJI 5 (access to suitable accommodation); WYJI 6 (access to specialist substance misuse services); WYJI 7 (access to specialist mental health services) *Other validated measures, e.g., the SWEMWBS and Social Services and Wellbeing Care and Support Plan 10-point Scale, could also be used to measure personal outcomes *As noted, data linkage could be used to enhance understanding of the needs and circumstances of those accessing these services, with outcomes ascertained by tracking service users over time using administrative data
Use of specified interventions/forms of practice (ECM, psychological assessments, clinically informed practice)			✓	✓	✓	✓	2	P/O: Interviews with women; practitioners; family. O: Service-level data

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	<i>(Mechanisms are already in place to facilitate evaluation)</i>				<i>(Mechanisms do not currently exist/complex task/costly)</i>			
Timely access to and receipt of services			✓		✓	✓	2	P/O: Interviews with women; practitioners; family. O: NHS Wales Delivery Measures (waiting times) and Delivery Framework; Service-level data (e.g. complaints and grievances)
Improved knowledge of support services			✓		✓		1-2	P/O: Interviews with women; practitioners * Mapping of referral pathways to establish supply vs. demand in different localities including the criteria for referral. There is scope for this to be collated and shared with partners. * CPD to increase awareness of local provision.
Complexity of need upon re-entry to CJS	✓				✓	✓	1-2	P/O: Interviews with women; families; service/support staff; Probation O: Probation data (OASys data); service-level screening tools * Linking PLASC, social services and family court data, health and Data First data would increase insight. However, OASys data does not currently form part of the data share. * In order to collate data from the various service-level screening tools, harmonised questions will

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	<i>(Mechanisms are already in place to facilitate evaluation)</i>						<i>(Mechanisms do not currently exist/complex task/costly)</i>	
								need to be used along with common definitions.
Demand for services over time	✓				✓	✓	2	P/O: Interviews with women; families; service/support staff including those from commissioned services; PCCs * Including referral to treatment time measures could help determine supply vs. demand for services
Completion of interventions	✓				✓	✓	2-3	P/O: Interviews with women; families; probation, service/support staff including those from commissioned services; PCCs O: Probation data (OASys); service-level data * For commissioned services, there is scope for robust performance management to support this.
Maintenance of support received/skills developed when in custody				✓	✓	✓	1-2	P/O: Interviews with women; families; probation and community based service/support staff * Depending upon the nature of the support received/skill developed, it may be possible to use administrative data to track this over time.

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	<i>(Mechanisms are already in place to facilitate evaluation)</i>				<i>(Mechanisms do not currently exist/complex task/costly)</i>			
Effective transition to community from custody				✓	✓	✓	1-2	P/O: Interviews with women; families; probation and community based service/support staff O: Service level data (e.g. complaints and grievances)
Accommodation (availability, suitability, wait times, tenancy/placement duration)	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	2	P/O: Interviews with women; families; probation and community based service/support staff O: Service level data *There is some information collected as part of the Treatment Outcome Profile/SMDS about the risk of eviction which may provide insights.
Economic spend/savings/impact	✓				✓	✓	1-2	P/O: Interviews with strategic-level stakeholders O: Service-level data on spend; data on costs of crime (Home Office); prison places (MoJ) and prosecution (CPS)
Feedback from service users on the availability, accessibility, and effectiveness of services; and to understand the context of offending	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	3-2	P/O: Interviews with women O: Service-level data (including exit surveys/interviews, complaints/grievances); Commissioned evaluations (where undertaken and publicly available) and Inspections.
Feedback from the families of service users		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	1	P/O: Interviews with families

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								O: Service-level data (including exit surveys/interviews, complaints/grievances)
Impacts on/outcomes for children and families [exploring differences by sentence type] (reductions in numbers taken into care when mother is in custody; feeling that their needs are being met)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	H1	P/O: Interviews with families and children; interviews/focus groups with key stakeholders representing the interests of children and/or imprisoned mothers; social workers * Bespoke analysis by the MoJ of ROTL and applications /approvals to MBUs (currently published as part of the HMPPS Equalities report) * Service-level data could be used to identify where there are dependents. However, there is currently no established mechanism for counting the numbers taken into care as a result of parental imprisonment. * Data linkage could be used to enhance understanding of the impact on children and families, using data from the family courts as well as a combination of education, health and social services to track children affected by maternal imprisonment over time.

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Person-centred, softer outcomes (relationships [including maintaining relationships when in custody], decision-making, agency/taking responsibility for own lives and actions, emotional expression, well-being, ability to identify support needs, parenting skills, personal safety, progress in addressing criminogenic needs; self-worth and self-esteem	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	1-2	P/O: Interviews with women; families; service/support staff; probation Service-level data (including exit surveys/interviews; complaints/grievances); Probation data (OASys)
Community-centred, softer outcomes (community safety, cohesion, perceptions, satisfaction)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	1	P/O: Interviews with women and their families; neighbours/community residents; service/support staff; PCC
Practitioner-related outcomes (sentencing decision-making; knowledge transfer between professionals)		✓		✓	✓	✓	2	P/O: Interviews with practitioners from across the wider criminal justice system and the judiciary

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