



Ministry
of Justice

The Importance of Strengthening Female Offenders' Family and other Relationships to Prevent Reoffending and Reduce Intergenerational Crime

by Lord Farmer

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Foreword from the Chair

Lord Farmer

Healthy, supportive relationships are not just a ‘nice to have’ for every woman in the criminal justice system. They are utterly indispensable if she is to turn away from criminality and contribute positively to society: relationships she can rely on are a ‘must-have’ for her rehabilitation. According to the MoJ’s own figures, the female reoffending rate is 23% (compared to males, who reoffend at a rate of 30%¹) but whether male or female, prisoners who receive family visits are 39% less likely to reoffend than those who do not. However, research suggests relationships are even more important for women than they are for men. Dr Stephanie Covington, a leading researcher on the effects of trauma, describes:

‘...the importance of relationships as the central, organizing feature in women’s development...Women develop a sense of self and self-worth when their actions arise out of, and lead back into, connections with others...Such connections are so crucial for women that women’s psychological problems can be traced to disconnections or violations within relationships – whether in families, with personal acquaintances, or in society at large.’²

Unsurprisingly therefore, whether they are serving a sentence in the community or in custody, issues around women’s relationships directly affect their likelihood of re-offending significantly more frequently than is the case with men. Addressing the fact that relationships are women’s most prevalent ‘criminogenic need’, and the reality that women tend to experience custody differently, is central to the aims and *raison d’être* of the Farmer Review for Women.

To set this Review in context, in 2016 the Government commissioned my original Review on the importance of strengthening male prisoners’ family ties to prevent reoffending and reduce intergenerational crime. After the final report was launched in August 2017, the Ministry of Justice set up a team with HMPPS to implement its 19 recommendations. Subsequently, as part of the Female Offender Strategy published in June 2018, they commissioned me to look at women in the criminal justice system through the lens of family and other relational ties.³ This demonstrates not just their unequivocal commitment to the family agenda but also their acknowledgement of the distinct needs of women who offend.

1 Table A2 in published proven reoffending statistics Jan-Mar 2017. Available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/proven-reoffending-statistics-january-to-march-2017>

2 Covington, S., (2007), ‘The Relational Theory of Women’s Psychological Development: Implications for the Criminal Justice System’ in Zaplin, R., (ed) (2007), *Female Offenders: Critical Perspectives and Effective Interventions, 2nd Edition*

3 Ministry of Justice, (2018), *Female Offender Strategy*. Available at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/719819/female-offender-strategy.pdf

For example, separation from children is generally a much greater hardship and stressor for women than it is for men and female offenders are, as the Government recognises, typically more vulnerable. This is a word one comes across so frequently in relation to female offenders that it is important to define. From the Latin *vulnerabilis*, it means 'wounding' and 'susceptible to; physical harm or damage; emotional injury, especially in being easily hurt; and to attack.' This describes very well many of the women I met in prison, or who were serving community sentences.

They have often experienced abuse and trauma which can profoundly impact their ability to develop and sustain healthy, trusting relationships, and this abuse can be ongoing. Therefore, whilst I emphasise, as in the original Review, that the importance of family and other relationships needs to be a golden thread running through the criminal justice system, it is essential to know which relationships are 'rehabilitation assets' in the life of a female offender and which are toxic. During this second Review, the need to gather information about these relationships, any children in her care and other circumstances, such as her accommodation, became particularly salient. Over half of women in custody have dependent children: if mothers are to be enabled to continue to shoulder these responsibilities, and encouraged to do so where necessary, we need to know who and where their children are.

We cannot underestimate the practical and emotional difficulties that 'mothering' from inside prison entails and recent estimates from Crest Advisory suggest as many as 17,000 children per year are affected by maternal imprisonment.⁴ I welcome the emphasis in the Female Offender Strategy on keeping women out of prison, given how damaging short sentences are to their family life and, typically, their well-being. There are also significant savings to be made to the public purse if vulnerable women can be effectively rehabilitated in the community instead of prison, and if we can reduce the number of their children who follow them into a life of crime.

My recommendations will need investment, from both national and local budgets, in women's centres, domestic abuse and other community services and inside prisons. However, the wellbeing and life chances of a disproportionately high number of children are at stake, as well as many vulnerable women and, as the women's estate is much smaller than the men's, a relatively modest investment will go a long way.

I am a relative newcomer to female offender policy, but I have been able to build on the ground-breaking report from Baroness Jean Corston's Review of Women with Particular Vulnerabilities in the Criminal Justice System, published in 2007. I have also been very well served by the expert group and wish to thank them all sincerely: Val Castell, Magistrates Association; Carlene Dixon, Governor of HMP Send; Jenny Earle, Prison Reform Trust; Gabrielle Lee, Governor of HMP Low Newton; Sarah Moore, User Voice; Julia Mulligan, Police and Crime Commissioner, North Yorkshire; Kate Paradine, Women in Prison; Tina Parker, Pact; Catherine Pearson, Madeleine Percival, Shena Clarke and Sylvie Rosseter, Ministry of Justice; Amy Rees, HMPPS Wales; Jane Trigg, HMPPS;

4 Kincaid, S. et al, (2019), *Children of Prisoners: Fixing a Broken System*, Crest Advisory

Claire Wiggins, HMPPS (Probation); and Nicola Drinkwater, who also led the Secretariat based at Clinks. She and their senior management provided invaluable supervision to our researcher Sophia Worringer, whose diligence, enthusiasm and hard work were massive assets to the Review and this report.

I am very grateful to HMPPS who generously contributed towards my costs, and to the significant number of people and organisations who responded to the Call for Evidence, including many prisoners and their families who wrote, joined focus groups or otherwise contributed valuable insights and ideas.

Final thanks go to my Parliamentary Adviser, Dr Samantha Callan, lead writer of the final report, who has worked unstintingly to ensure female offenders' family and other relational ties are given the prominence in government policy which they deserve.

Executive Summary

Chapter 1: Introduction

The main conclusion of my original Review on the importance of strengthening male prisoners' family ties to prevent reoffending and reduce intergenerational crime,⁵ was that good relationships are vital to reducing reoffending and the presence or lack of them can make or break other efforts to rehabilitate those who commit crime. As part of the Female Offender Strategy the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) asked me to review the report's recommendations through the lens of the needs of female offenders, given key quantitative and qualitative differences between men and women in the area of relationships.

Relationships are women's most prevalent 'criminogenic need'⁶ and issues around women's relationships directly affect their likelihood of re-offending significantly more frequently than is the case with men. Compared with men there is a far greater likelihood that women are primary carers when they come into contact with the criminal justice system and will remain so during their sentence. If a primary carer has to be in prison it is essential that she is helped to do that difficult job as well as possible – and encouraged, where appropriate and necessary, to take responsibility – given the many challenges her children face.

Also, a large proportion of female offenders have endured domestic and other abuse, often linked to their offending. If this is ongoing, it may mean some of their current relationships will not be conducive to their rehabilitation. I was asked to investigate how supporting female offenders (in the community and custody) to engage with their families can lower recidivism, aid rehabilitation and assist in addressing the issues of intergenerational crime.

The impact of maternal imprisonment on children due, for example, to the trauma of separation, social isolation, shame, and lack of support for their needs, increases the risk that they will follow their mother into the criminal justice system. My original Review highlighted a landmark study which found that 63% of male prisoners' sons went on to offend themselves⁷ and adult children of imprisoned mothers were more likely to be convicted than adult children of imprisoned fathers.⁸

5 Lord Farmer, (2017), *The Importance of Strengthening Prisoners' Family Ties to Prevent Reoffending and Reduce Intergenerational Crime*, Ministry of Justice.

6 Criminogenic needs are characteristics, traits, problems, or issues in an individual's life that directly relate to their likelihood of re-offending.

7 Farrington, D. P., Barnes, G., and Lambert, S., (1996), 'The Concentration of Offending in Families', *Legal and Criminological Psychology*, 1(1) pp47–63

8 Dallaire, D. H., (2007), 'Incarcerated Mothers and Fathers: A Comparison of Risks for Children and Families', *Family Relations*, 56, pp440–53

The Farmer Review for Women aimed to learn about:

- What works to help female offenders, their families and especially their children, to maintain and even improve family ties, where appropriate, while serving a custodial or community sentence, or post-release.
- The challenges of mothering and fulfilling this primary carer role either whilst at a distance from their children or in the community.
- What works to help those prisoners who do not have any family connections.
- How this learning can be translated into policy and commissioning for change.

The Review does not make specific recommendations for women from different Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities, or Foreign National Women (FNW), but I do want to acknowledge the distinct and discrete difficulties these women and their families face in the criminal justice system. For example, black women are disproportionately more likely to receive custodial and longer sentences than their white counterparts, and this of course affects the relationships with their families.

However, whilst I do not segment the female offender population, it is important that all the recommendations I make are implemented with an eye to equalities and with 'cultural competence' so that women from different minorities are not treated as a homogeneous group.

The policy backdrop to the Farmer Review for Women

I welcome the commitment in the Female Offender Strategy to working with partners across government to keep women out of prison, given how disruptive and costly short sentences are to their family life, and also their recognition that:

Whilst a substantial proportion of women that go to prison serve short-term sentences, women on longer sentences make up the majority of the prison population at any given time. Moreover, there will remain some women who, for reasons of public protection or due to the severity of their offending, must be in custody for a period of time.⁹

Whilst the emphasis in the Female Offender Strategy on early intervention and diversion of women away from the criminal justice system is much-needed, the focus on adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) which runs through social policy in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, needs to be given more salience in England. Reducing the number of ACEs in children's lives will not be achieved without the efforts of several other departments of government. Given that most ACEs are based in family and other relationships, policies to strengthen these are an indispensable means to that end. As the Governor of HMP Low Newton told this Review,

⁹ Ministry of Justice, (2018), *Female Offender Strategy*, p26

'I am working with the third generation of offenders. Even if drugs and alcohol are being tackled, endemic issues in the community related to the backdrop of family and relationship breakdown are not being dealt with.'

The MoJ are already aware that the full realisation of the Female Offender Strategy will require cross-government working, and the *raison d'être* of the National Concordat is to ensure this emphasis is mirrored at the local level, typically through the wider adoption of whole systems approaches. I refer to how a whole systems approach can better support family ties throughout this report.

Chapter 2: Early Intervention

Where trauma, abuse and multiple adverse childhood experiences are the backdrop to a woman's life, she will herself be more likely to go on to struggle with drug and alcohol abuse, mental health problems, financial lack, difficulties in sustaining employment, homelessness and a lack of supportive, healthy relationships. As all of these can contribute to offending behaviour, they all need to be addressed if liaison and diversion schemes are to be optimised, a key commitment of the Female Offender Strategy alongside supporting the police to work with women facing complex challenges.

Help to address such issues should not have to wait for women to come into contact with the criminal justice system. Vulnerable women rarely seem to have ready access to services and good peer support networks which could prevent offending and their children repeating the cycle they have become caught up in. Early help is also required to address poor mental health, relationship breakdown, substance misuse, educational failure and lack of skills which could make her unemployable, and the tyranny of serious personal debt.

Joining up all that is available locally – statutory services; private sector philanthropy and corporate social responsibility; voluntary sector providers and volunteers, including peer support from women who have turned their lives around – is a vital first step to addressing the multiple drivers of women's offending behaviour.

During the Review it became clear that for the importance of family and other supportive ties to run like a golden thread through all processes in the criminal justice system, we cannot waste any opportunity to capture information about a woman's family and relational background, including her children and other relationships which may be supportive. A grandmother, charity worker or other person significant to her might be instrumental in her rehabilitation (and it should not be assumed that all the men in her life have been abusive).

Recommendations:

1. Local Criminal Justice Boards (or equivalent strategic local groups) to take responsibility for building links and encouraging all services to take a joined-up approach to addressing the needs of female offenders (and women at risk of offending). Police and Crime Commissioners should take a leadership role in facilitating this collaboration between system partners, in pursuit of an effective, efficient response to local need.
 - i. Domestic abuse services, to be integrated, co-located where possible, and working in partnership with other help women are willing to access, including women's centres, and sustainable local funding, as part of the whole system approach, for a range of proven programmes to meet diverse needs.
2. Liaison and diversion services, and police (whether upon arrest or when an out of court disposal is being considered) to take opportunities to collect information on women's key relationships to ensure better outcomes for them and their families. With her consent this will be held in a personal electronic file (Personal Circumstances File) which will be carried with her and added to until she is no longer involved with the criminal justice system.
3. Family and relationship work to be routinely included in diversion/out of court disposal pathway programmes for women.
4. The Ministry of Justice's evidence landing page and the National Concordat to include the learning from successful pilots, so future commissioners know what is proven good practice.

Chapter 3: Community Solutions

This chapter covers three areas:

Supporting women's family and other relationships through the court process

Even if women are detained for only a short period on remand, there can be a devastating effect on families, tenancy arrangements and the ability to provide for their families. Therefore, even though a woman's status as a primary carer should not be determinative, the impact of remand on dependants should also be considered in any bail decision. The Personal Circumstances File will help to ensure that this information is available.

The bail period provides an important opportunity to help women address a range of problems which may have been present for a long time. The 'wake-up call' of an impending court case, and the need to prove to a sentencer that she has every intention of addressing the causes of her offending could catalyse many positive changes, including in the area of relationships.

Pre-Sentence Reports are needed whenever custody is an option to clarify the repercussions of a custodial sentence on dependants, and other mitigating factors such as domestic abuse should always be put in front of the sentencer.

Family and other relationships and community orders

The combination of support and accountability offered by a community sentence can be invaluable to women with complex needs and offending behaviour. Where a community sentence has been given it is essential that women whose criminogenic needs include relationships receive the necessary help, so this is no longer the case. Relationships are the foundation stone she can build her new life upon and all women need this to be an explicit element in their rehabilitation. Yet many women have endured devastating experiences in this area.

Family work is not properly embedded in Transforming Rehabilitation: CRCs are not routinely (or ever) commissioning organisations with a proven track record in helping male offenders maintain and strengthen their family ties. The plans to introduce a new model for probation, as announced in the *Strengthening Probation, Building Confidence* consultation response, across England and Wales provides an important opportunity to address this lack.¹⁰

Women's centres work on all the offending pathways, including 'Families and Children' but not all female offenders have access to them and the precarious funding position which many women's centres find themselves in jeopardises these services which are essential to the rehabilitation and rebuilding of lives. Residential women's centres could provide a stable base for many women, from which they can complete community orders whilst remaining with their children.

Family and other relationships post-release from custody

The requirement for all offenders who have served prison sentences of less than 12 months to undergo compulsorily a full 12 months of post-sentence supervision (under Section 2 of the Offender Rehabilitation Act 2014) can be highly problematic in practice and these requirements can be very difficult for women to fulfil alongside family responsibilities.

An inspection of Through the Gate resettlement services for short-term prisoners by HM Inspectorate of Probation and HM Inspectorate of Prisons, found that 13% of women were released from prison to no fixed abode and only 22% were released with secure permanent accommodation.¹¹ Social housing can often not be applied for while the women are still in prison which means it has to be resolved at short-notice on release. Different parts of the system need to be made to work better together at the local level.

10 Ministry of Justice, (2019), *Strengthening Probation, Building Confidence: Response to consultation*. Available at <https://consult.justice.gov.uk/hm-prisons-and-probation/strengthening-probation-building-confidence/results/strengthening-probation-consultation-response.pdf>.

11 House of Commons Briefing Paper, (2017), *Housing Support for Ex-Offenders (England and Wales)*, Number 2989, p14

Women leaving prison can be caught up in a 'Catch 22' situation with respect to securing accommodation for themselves and their children: they are ineligible for housing until their children are living with them, but their children cannot live with them until they have enough room.

Recommendations:

5. Manual Guidance (MG) forms to be amended by the Government to capture information about the dependants of offenders.
6. The impact of remand on dependants, information about whom will be available in a woman's Personal Circumstances File, to be considered in any bail decision.
 - i. If the decision is made to remand in custody a defendant who is a primary carer the opportunity to be given to make telephone contact before leaving court with family or other alternative carers to make arrangements for her dependants.
 - ii. Women sentenced to custody to be asked if they need to make telephone contact with dependants or organise childcare and allowed to do so before being put onto transport.
7. The Government to review regulations preventing children from living in Approved Premises.
 - i. Women in Approved Premises or housed by Bail Accommodation Support Services with children who are struggling with parenting or other family and relationship issues to be encouraged to engage (voluntarily) with Early Help or Family Hubs, either through self-referral or through referral from women's centres, social workers or other professionals.
8. Given the complexity of many female offenders' lives, and the greater likelihood that they are primary carers, obtaining a written Pre-Sentence Report to be made mandatory for all women (and male primary carers) before a custodial sentence is passed (if a recent report is not available).
 - i. Accurate information on relationships and the impact of custody on family ties systematically obtained through the PSR process to be made available to sentence planners to inform custody and other disposal decisions.
 - ii. Courts to indicate clearly when requesting Pre-Sentence Reports if the initial assessment is that the custodial threshold has been passed, and convicted women made aware of this by the person conducting the PSR Interview.
 - iii. As part of the whole systems approach, a lead professional to ensure support (typically from women's organisations) is available at the pre-sentence stage, to help women prepare their children, family members and friends who might be able to support them throughout a custodial period, for the possibility of imprisonment.
9. The National Concordat for Female Offenders to highlight the role women's centres can play in delivering whole systems approaches and examine opportunities to bring

together cross-government funding for the services they deliver, given the potential savings to the Ministry of Justice and other government departments.

10. Given the particular spending implications across government for women's offending, such as those relating to the greater likelihood that their children will end up in local authority care, the Reducing Reoffending Board (which takes a cross-Government approach to reducing reoffending) to have a ministerial lead for and pay regular attention to the specific needs of female offenders.
11. Funding for women's centres to be made sustainable, with core services paid for by those agencies which refer women (including Police and Crime Commissioners and Probation providers) and those which save through the interventions they provide, such as health and local authorities.
12. Residential women's centres to have places for women to bring their children, if they would not otherwise have sufficiently stable accommodation in which to complete community orders.
13. Models of custodial centres in the community to be considered as part of the Ministry of Justice's longer-term strategy for women whose crime is serious enough to merit a custodial sentence, but who are at low enough risk to retain care of their children.
14. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation to assess the impact of recommendations from the 2014 joint thematic review on Resettlement provision for female offenders, in light of the MoJ's female offender strategy.
15. HMPPS currently developing the new model for Probation to:
 - i. Ensure that services are available to support family and other relational ties under this new model.
 - ii. Address the problems of recall which can arise from the offender's relational background, such as their primary – and often sole – carer status: penalties other than recall to be used which reflect the rehabilitative intent of the 12-month supervision period with rehabilitation and relationships at the forefront of probation practice and recall a measure only taken proportionately and in light of these overarching considerations.
 - iii. Clarify who is locally responsible for securing post-release housing.
 - iv. Ensure all offenders receive appropriate resettlement support through the gate including by connecting them with outside services whilst they are still in custody.
 - v. Ensure there is sufficient flexibility in any new resettlement model to enable planning for accommodation post-release to start early enough to secure the best outcome. This will require acting on information contained in the Personal Circumstances File from the point of induction.
16. Allocation of accommodation guidance for local housing authorities in England to recognise the prospective housing needs of women leaving prison who are otherwise able to be reunited with their children, so local authorities can make these needs the basis for assessment.

Chapter 4: Better Custody

The Farmer Review for Women has considered the recommendations from the original Farmer Review, which were specifically for the male custodial estate, by looking through the lens of the markedly different needs of women in prison. The importance of supporting positive family ties is very clear. To reiterate, many women have experienced domestic abuse and this and other forms of toxic relationships may have been a contributor to or prime factor in their offending behaviour. Many have had very negative family experiences.

Women are more likely to be primary carers and mothers in prison experience significant anxiety because of the separation from their children. This impacts on their mental health and their responses to prison regimes, discipline and interventions. Unless and until women are reassured about their children they are unable to make progress in other areas.

The long distance many visitors have to travel to prison (women are held, on average, 63 miles from their homes, with a significant number held more than 100 miles from their home,¹² compared to an average of 50 miles for men¹³); the associated costs; and concerns that prisons are unsuitable environments for children are all significant barriers to families visiting women in custody. Even short distances greatly impede women's ability to fulfil primary carer and other responsibilities towards their families: imprisonment, by definition, breaks down family ties.

This chapter draws attention to recommendations from the original Review that require refining or revising in the light of these needs and make recommendations about what should be done additionally and/or instead. There are two areas for reform I want to highlight which would make a significant difference to women's ability to maintain and strengthen their family ties, where appropriate. These are:

- the need to deploy prison-based social workers as part of a multi-disciplinary custodial team and
- harnessing the benefits of communications technology, within bounds of appropriate safety and risk, by making virtual visits routinely available.

Recommendations:

17. HMPPS to make significant improvements to the Assisted Prison Visits scheme for (male and female) primary carers in prison including:
 - more generous rules
 - better advertising of how these operate, including advance payments

12 Ministry of Justice, (2018), *Supporting Data Tables for the Female Offender Strategy*, Table 5.1a

13 Written Question, House of Commons, 7 January 2010, C548W

- greater flexibility in who can claim expenses
 - piloting changes to ensure they result in the desired outcome of enabling more children to visit their mothers (or primary carers)
18. A separate standardised visitor's survey to be developed for women's prisons.
- i. Each prison to survey regularly the women in their care, and families/significant others who visit to find out:
 - how many were able to attend family days and other forms of extended visits compared with how many wanted to attend
 - if certain groups (such as foreign national women and care leavers) are excluded from extended visits because they have no family members able to attend but do have friends/significant others who would come if eligible
 - how many days would their families and significant others be able to attend each year
 - what times would be most suitable for children and young people
 - ii. Prisons to provide evidence that survey results have been discussed and any issues flagged by the survey to be addressed by an action plan for improvement drawn up with the residents' council and families forum.
19. Each prison to provide a physical space where women can spend private time with family members and significant others with appropriate risk assessment and safeguarding procedures in place (with the understanding that governors might need to prioritise this space for sensitive visits, including pre-adoption and those which are family court-related.)
20. The Gateway Communication System to be two-way so that women inside prison who have ongoing caring responsibilities can express concerns, thereby alleviating their own anxiety and making it clear to those on the outside that they have not been abandoned.
21. The recommendations from this Review to be added to the implementation plan for the original Farmer Review, with progress monitored and reported on in the same way. **This recommendation has already been accepted by the MoJ.**
22. Her Majesty's Inspector of Prisons to ensure the importance of family ties features prominently throughout the Expectations for women's prisons when they are reviewed, so governors know this has to be a cross-cutting priority in the running of their prison.
23. A family-related prison performance measure to be defined which is designed to:
- compare similar prisons and therefore used in a relative rather than absolute way
 - stimulate ongoing improvement in all prisons
 - be responsive to the distinct needs and issues in women's prisons

24. Ministry of Justice policy to allow governors in women's prisons to use ROTL more creatively and ambitiously to enable women to resume contact with family and undertake caring responsibilities, and HMPPS to look at the scope for using monitoring technology where necessary.
25. Eligibility for Child Resettlement Leave to not rest narrowly on sole carer status but be widened to include other family circumstances, so women in prison can continue in their caring responsibilities to the benefit of children, other carers and offender rehabilitation.
26. A Case Review of children removed from primary carers when they entered prison to be carried out by the Chief Social Worker for England (Children and Families), to ensure that decisions taken are always in the best interests of children. The review should examine social work practice, including the role of support services in keeping families together.
27. Funding to be allocated so that additional family engagement workers, working according to the evaluated model developed by the Family Support Alliance, are available in all women's prisons.
28. The Ministry of Justice to fund an on-site social worker as part of the multi-disciplinary team within each prison.
29. To ensure consistency in the operation of prisoner email schemes, all female establishments (which have not done so already) to develop an email reply system.
30. The Women's estate in its entirety to be prioritised for roll-out of virtual visits with all women routinely able to use facilities, where there are no security concerns, because of the disproportionately positive impact on children. There must be secure video conference facilities available in location managed by other government departments.
31. In-cell telephony (ICT) to be rolled out in all women's prisons as part of the next wave of installation given that so many women are primary carers.
32. Consideration to be given to piloting the use of simple, non-internet enabled mobile phones as a less costly solution.
33. Call providers to treat prisoners in the same way as other customers and provide 'frequent caller' and other packages which enable them to speak more with those who are most important to them.

Chapter 1: Introduction

'Seeing loved ones is definitely a reminder of life outside, keeps you focused and gives you a walking, talking reason to change and want better!'

Resident of HMP Send, responding to the Call for Evidence Survey

Relationships as criminogenic needs

1. Good relationships are vital to reducing reoffending and the presence or lack of them can make or break other efforts to rehabilitate those who commit crime. This was the main conclusion of the final report from my original Review on the importance of strengthening male prisoners' family ties to prevent reoffending and reduce intergenerational crime.¹⁴ Launched in August 2017 by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), an ongoing work programme was initiated to implement all of the report's recommendations.¹⁵ The MoJ has already committed to add the recommendations from the Farmer Review for Women to that work programme, demonstrating their unequivocal commitment to the family agenda. Their own research shows that for a prisoner (male or female) who receives visits from a family member the odds of reoffending are 39% lower than for those who do not.¹⁶
2. Good relationships are particularly important for women's rehabilitation as the table on page 4, showing the prevalence of criminogenic needs¹⁷ amongst offenders in the community and custody, makes clear. Relationships are the most frequent criminogenic need for women outside prison (72%) and, more or less jointly with the related area of lifestyle and associates (82%), the most frequent need for women in prison (81%). For women serving sentences of less than a year, the proportion is even higher (85%). The proportion of men with relationships as a criminogenic need is still high, but it is around 10% lower in every category.
3. Alcohol misuse needs have lowest prevalence for both men and women whether in custody or the community, yet in the interests of rehabilitation there are explicit means of meeting those needs through treatment on the prison estate and through community sentence requirements. This report does not argue for the deprioritisation of alcohol treatment or any other important rehabilitative activity. However, my aim has been throughout this second Review to ensure the importance of family and other relational ties to female offenders is adequately represented in the help and

14 Lord Farmer, (2017), *The Importance of Strengthening Prisoners' Family Ties to Prevent Reoffending and Reduce Intergenerational Crime*, Ministry of Justice

15 NICCO, *Updates on The Implementation of Recommendations Resulting from The Farmer Review*, Available online: www.nicco.org.uk/userfiles/downloads/5bc45729eb900-lord-farmer-review-updates.docx

16 May C., Sharma N. and Stewart D., (2008), *Factors Linked to Reoffending: A One-Year Follow-Up of Prisoners Who Took Part In The Resettlement Surveys 2001, 2003 And 2004*, Ministry of Justice

17 Criminogenic needs are characteristics, traits, problems, or issues in an individual's life that directly relate to their likelihood of re-offending.

services they are offered, from the moment they come into contact with the criminal justice system.

Prevalence of criminogenic needs among women and men by sentence type¹⁸

Sentence type/Status	Relationships need %	Lifestyle and associates need %	Alcohol Misuse Need %
All female offenders	74	66	25
Community order or suspended sentence order	71	56	29
On Licence	73	72	20
All Community	72	62	26
Remand Prisoners	84	89	36
Custodial Sentence <12 months	85	90	33
Custodial Sentence >= 12 months	80	79	22
All custody	81	82	25

Sentence type/Status	Relationships need %	Lifestyle & associates need %	Alcohol Misuse Need %
All male offenders	63	71	20
Community order or suspended sentence order	61	58	26
On Licence	59	70	15
All Community	60	64	20
Remand Prisoners	75	87	29
Custodial Sentence <12 months	76	85	36
Custodial Sentence >= 12 months	69	84	17
All custody	69	84	18

18 Ministry of Justice, (2018), *Supporting Data Tables: Female Offender Strategy Tables*, Table 4.2

4. For the purposes of this Review, there are key qualitative differences between men and women in the area of relationships which need to be made explicit, in particular:
 - the far greater likelihood that women are primary carers when they come into contact with the criminal justice system, and will remain so during their sentence, and
 - the high rates of domestic and other abuse many female offenders have endured which can be linked to their offending and, if ongoing, may mean some of their current relationships will not be conducive to their rehabilitation.
5. I will return to these below when I outline characteristics of women in the criminal justice system. Suffice to say that it was largely due to these differences that, in June 2018, as part of the Female Offender Strategy, I was asked by the MoJ to undertake a further piece of work to review the recommendations from the original Farmer Review through the lens of the needs of female offenders:

*'We know that there is an impact on families and children when a woman is involved in the CJS [Criminal Justice System] and that children of imprisoned mothers may be particularly affected by a custodial sentence. This review will enable us to understand what specific measures we can take to strengthen family ties, especially with their children, whilst serving sentences in the community, in custody and after they are released.'*¹⁹

Remit of the Farmer Review for Women

6. I was asked to investigate how supporting female offenders to engage with their families can lower recidivism, aid rehabilitation and assist in addressing the issues of addressing intergenerational crime. The impact of maternal imprisonment on children due, for example, to the trauma of separation, social isolation, shame, and lack of support for their needs, increases the risk that they will follow their mother into the criminal justice system.
7. The Farmer Review for Women aimed to learn about:
 - What works to help female offenders, their families and especially their children, to maintain and even improve family ties, where appropriate, while serving a custodial or community sentence, or post-release.
 - The challenges of mothering and fulfilling this primary carer role either whilst at a distance from their children or in the community.
 - What works to help those prisoners who do not have any family connections. For example, many women grew up in the care system (or their children have been taken into care); their families might refuse to have contact with them –

¹⁹ Ministry of Justice, (2018), *Female Offender Strategy*, p9

the shame of imprisonment can be particularly acute in some black, Asian, and minority ethnic (BAME) communities; and foreign national women (FNW) will often struggle to retain their family ties. FNW accounted for 11% of the female prison community in 2018, but this proportion can be appreciably higher: for example, when I visited HMP Bronzefield, almost a quarter of the women held were foreign nationals.²⁰

- How this learning can be translated into policy and commissioning for change.

The Review Process

The call for evidence was launched on 26th September 2018 and closed towards the end of November 2018. The Call for Evidence was circulated to a range of partners in the criminal justice system including members of the voluntary sector, through Clinks' Light Lunch newsletter and direct emails to key contacts. Respondents could email their responses direct to the Review team or fill in an online survey. The Prison Radio Association interviewed Nicola Drinkwater from Clinks, to support the launch of this Call for Evidence.

Views from women and their families were obtained through several methods. There were two hard copy surveys – one for women in prison or in the community and one for their families – which were distributed by voluntary organisations, who also assisted women in filling them in. These surveys allowed women to identify whether they (or their family members) were currently in prison, under probation license or under probation supervision. The surveys were returned via a free-post system coordinated by Pact.

I visited several prisons to hear directly from women and their families myself. I visited HMP Bronzefield twice, and on the second occasion I joined a group of prisoners' families who shared their experiences. I also visited HMP Askham Grange, HMP Send, HMP Drake Hall, HMP Foston Hall, HMP Low Newton, HMP Eastwood Park and HMP/YOI Hydebank Wood College (Ash House) in Northern Ireland as well as HMP Styal for the original Farmer Review.

I and other members of the Expert Group and Review team also visited women's centres (Anawim, the Nelson Trust Women's Centre in Gloucester, and Cardiff Women's Aid) and community services in Birmingham, Durham, North Yorkshire, Gateshead and Scotland. Five focus groups were conducted in HMP East Sutton Park, HMP Bronzefield, HMP Peterborough, HMP Askham Grange and Brighton Women's Centre where we heard from women and

²⁰ Ministry of Justice, (2018), *Offender Management Statistics Quarterly*, October to December 2017, Prison Population: 31 March 2018, Table 1.7

families in both open and closed conditions, and from women in the community. Voluntary organisations (including Birth Companions and Pact) were on hand to support the women who contributed to these focus groups.

The Expert Group heard oral presentations from specialists from the voluntary and statutory sectors and from women with first-hand experience of the criminal justice system. Additional written submissions were also made to the Review.

In total the Review received:

- 372 completed surveys from prisoners in 11 female prisons in England
- 109 surveys from prisoners' families and friends
- 16 responses from 15 voluntary organisations
- 2 responses from the Police
- 4 responses from HMPPS/MOJ
- 10 responses from 17 academics
- 1 response from a Governor
- 21 oral presentations to the Expert Group

However, the surveys did not make a distinction between families or friends, therefore we do not have the ability to distinguish whether visits were mainly from partners, children, parents or friends. Neither did we receive any responses from the family members of women serving sentences in the community.

Characteristics of female offenders and how these impact on their relationships

8. The female offender population is obviously very heterogenous. To this point, the Review does not make specific recommendations for women from different Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities, or Foreign National Women (FNW), or women with other protected characteristics. However, I do want to acknowledge that these women and their families face distinct and discrete difficulties in the criminal justice system. For example, black women are disproportionately more likely to receive custodial and longer sentences than their white counterparts, and this of course affects the relationships with their families.
9. However, whilst I do not segment the female offender population, it is important that all the recommendations I make are implemented with an eye to equalities and with

‘cultural competence’ so that women from different minorities are not treated as a homogeneous group. For example, African women’s experiences will differ from African-Caribbean women and women of African Heritage (Black British) and these differences also need to be respected.

10. Female offenders also tend to experience the criminal justice system in different ways to men. The original Review for men in prison stated that:

‘Supportive relationships with family members and significant others give meaning and all-important motivation to other strands of rehabilitation and resettlement activity...

Yet the unacceptable inconsistency of work that helps prisoners to maintain and strengthen these relationships across the estate shows it is not yet mainstream in offender management in the same way as employment and education. Family work should always be seen and referred to alongside these two rehabilitation activities as the third leg of the stool that brings stability and structure to prisoners’ lives, particularly when they leave prison.’²¹

11. Whilst that equally holds true for women in the criminal justice system, this second Review found that the complexity of many of their lives requires a more nuanced approach. The Female Offender Strategy draws attention to evidence that the complex challenges faced by women who offend, often contribute to their offending and influence how they engage with and respond to services and other forms of help, such as family interventions:

‘Female offenders can be amongst the most vulnerable of all, in both the prevalence and complexity of their needs. Many experience chaotic lifestyles involving substance misuse, mental health problems, homelessness, and offending behaviour – these are often the product of a life of abuse and trauma.’²²

12. According to Ministry of Justice figures, more than half of women in prison (53%) say they experienced emotional, physical or sexual abuse²³ and 57% reported being victims of domestic violence.²⁴ Fear of disclosing abuse may mean that these underestimate the prevalence of these difficult histories. Almost one third, 31% of women in prison spent time in care as children.²⁵ Given the pain that lurks in so many of their backgrounds, it is essential that from beginning to end the criminal justice

21 Lord Farmer, (2017), *The Importance of Strengthening Prisoners’ Family Ties to Prevent Reoffending and Reduce Intergenerational Crime*, Ministry of Justice, p7

22 Ministry of Justice, (2018), *Female Offender Strategy*, p5

23 Ministry of Justice, (2012), *Prisoners’ Childhood and Family Backgrounds, Results from The Surveying Prisoner Crime Reduction (SPCR) Longitudinal Cohort Study of Prisoners*, p9

24 Ministry of Justice, (2014), *Thinking Differently About Female Offenders, Transforming Rehabilitation, Guidance Document*, p3

25 Ministry of Justice, (2012), *Prisoners’ Childhood and Family Backgrounds, Results from The Surveying Prisoner Crime Reduction (SPCR) Longitudinal Cohort Study of Prisoners*, p8

system is trauma-informed, something the Female Offender Strategy is committed to delivering.

13. Whilst it is very important for their rehabilitation that women have family and friends they can rely on, and their bonds with their children are as strong as possible, even if they cannot live with them, these and other consequences of abuse and trauma will have profoundly impacted many women's ability to develop and sustain healthy, trusting relationships. Some women will need to recover from the damage they have suffered before they can fully re-engage in family life and, if their families have been the source of that abuse, this is not always possible or even desirable.
14. Responses to the Call for Evidence highlighted concerns that where unhealthy coping strategies such as substance misuse are rooted in unresolved trauma which has not been sufficiently acknowledged or addressed, it may be unrealistic to expect good outcomes from family interventions or other support.²⁶ However, whilst family work is undoubtedly not a panacea in the criminal justice system, it is an essential component in rehabilitation alongside other support which helps women to build trust and identify what healthy relationships should look like.
15. In comparison with men, women in prison are significantly more likely to have children under the age of 18 (at least 54% of women compared to 47% of men)²⁷ and to be primary or even sole carers. 58% of women with dependent children had been living with these children prior to sentencing.²⁸ 27% of women who had dependent children and who had been living with them before custody reported that their children were now living with their partner, compared to 94% of men who reported that this was the case.²⁹ Children frequently have to leave their family home and their education is disrupted when their mother goes into custody, indicating the tremendous and tragic upheaval to the whole family of maternal imprisonment. Many are looked after by grandparents and therefore brought to visits by them (although for many this can be far from easy due to the grandparents' own financial and/or physical limitations).³⁰ We must also not ignore the men 'holding the fort' with their young children who can also struggle to visit their wives and partners due to the distance and costs involved.
16. Unsurprisingly, as Dr Shona Minson told the Review:

'When a mother is in prison her primary source of stress and anxiety comes from worry about the wellbeing of her children. As the mother/primary carer she needs to know that her children are being given appropriate supports in the community and have the ability to continue to parent from within prison.'

26 Dr Natalie Booth, *Written Submission to the Farmer Review*

27 Ministry of Justice, (2018), *Statistics on Women and the Criminal Justice System 2017*, p72

28 2004 Resettlement survey quoted in, Ministry of Justice, (2012), *Prisoners' Childhood and Family Backgrounds, Results from The Surveying Prisoner Crime Reduction (SPCR) Longitudinal Cohort Study of Prisoners*, p19

29 2004 Resettlement survey quoted in, Ministry of Justice, (2012), p19

30 Raikes, B., (2016), 'Unsung Heroines: Celebrating the Care Provided by Grandmothers for Children with Parents in Prison,' *Probation Journal*, 63(3), pp320-330

17. One prison governor told me that when women say to her ‘How can I stop being a mother now that I am inside prison?’ her reply is, ‘we want you to continue being a mother,’ because they are still assets to their family and need to know it. Some may need to be encouraged to take responsibility for their children, and not assume they can no longer exert a positive influence. Yet the practical and emotional difficulties that ‘mothering’ from inside prison entails must not be under-estimated. Long-awaited, much anticipated visits are often highly charged events:

‘It is important to understand how complex mothers’ relationships with children will be. For women who are mothers it is their dependants who come to see them. Not their equals or peers or supportive others. It is the people they are responsible for. This therefore means that visits are set within the emotions of guilt, shame etc and their visitors come with equally complex emotions.’

Dr Minson, in evidence to the Review

18. If a primary carer has to be in prison it is essential that she is helped to do that difficult job as well as possible given the many challenges her children face in the here and now and the risk of poor future outcomes, including their own future involvement in the criminal justice system. Parental imprisonment is a potent risk factor for children following their parents into the criminal justice system: my original Review highlighted a landmark study which found that 63% of male prisoners’ sons went on to offend themselves³¹ and adult children of imprisoned mothers were more likely to be convicted than adult children of imprisoned fathers.³² Stopping the cycle of intergenerational offending is a key priority of the Female Offender Strategy, and also of the Farmer Review for Women.

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) in the backgrounds of female offenders and their children

19. For this reason, the emphasis on adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) which runs through social policy, including women’s justice policy, in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, needs to be given more salience than is currently the case in England. Being trauma-informed helps to ensure women’s past experiences and the effects these have had on them are met with understanding and sensitivity in the here and now. An ACE-informed approach helps to prevent their and other children from enduring harms which will scar their young lives and set them up very badly for the future.
20. According to the Early Intervention Foundation (EIF),

31 Farrington, D. P., Barnes, G., and Lambert, S., (1996), ‘The Concentration of Offending in Families’, *Legal and Criminological Psychology*, 1(1) pp47–63

32 Dallaire, D. H., (2007), ‘Incarcerated Mothers and Fathers: A Comparison of Risks for Children and Families’, *Family Relations*, 56, pp440–53

*'...research into adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) has furthered our understanding of the long-term impact of multiple risk factors within a child's home environment. ACEs include abuse or neglect, exposure to domestic violence, parental substance misuse and parental mental health problems [as well as parental divorce/separation, parental incarceration and, in some studies bereavement]. Studies have confirmed a strong association between the number of ACEs and the risk of mental health problems, chronic diseases, involvement in crime and other poor outcomes in later life.'*³³

21. As I discuss in the next chapter on Early Intervention, parental incarceration is an Adverse Childhood Experience frequently found in combination with several others such as parental separation, drug and alcohol abuse and mental illness. A study conducted by Public Health Wales found that adults are 20 times more likely to have been incarcerated at any point in their lifetime if they have experienced four or more ACEs.³⁴ However, the EIF express the important caveat that ACEs are not predictive at an individual level, but retrospective, and because the impacts of early life adversity differ widely from person to person, depend on their resilience and the presence of other protective factors. Moreover, the Welsh Government's 2018-2023 Framework to support positive change for those at risk of offending emphasises how good relationships can be transformational:

'The effect of adverse childhood experiences can be reversed when safe, stable, nurturing relationships are identified, hopefully breaking the cycle for future generations.' [my emphasis]³⁵

22. Lancashire Women's Centre (LWC) have recently analysed data from over 1500 women attending their service, over a three-year period up to 19th March 2018, most of whom were attending as HMPPS clients. They found particularly high levels of vulnerability, with 1352 recording ACE scores, and 41.3% recording 4+ ACEs. This is much higher than general population studies that have reported figures of 8% (England general population)³⁶ and 14% (Wales general population).³⁷ LWC women have similar ACE experiences to previous research published on vulnerable cohorts such as female inmates and youth offenders. However, it is worth noting that LWC use the extra ACE factor of 'family bereavement/significant loss of family member' as one of their ACE factors, which is not typically used in published ACE studies. Nearly half of those reporting ACEs indicated they had experienced

33 Early Intervention Foundation, (2018), *Realising the Potential of Early Intervention*, p7 Available online: www.eif.org.uk/files/pdf/realising-the-potential-of-early-intervention.pdf

34 Public Health Wales, (2015), *Adverse Childhood Experiences and Their Impact on Health-Harming Behaviours in The Welsh Adult Population*, p5

35 HM Prison and Probation Service in Wales, (2017), *A Framework to Support Positive Change for Those at Risk of Offending In Wales*, p11 Available online: <https://gov.wales/docs/dsjlg/publications/180301-framework-support-positive-change-risk-of-offending-wales-en-v1.pdf>, p12

36 Bellis, M., et al., (2014), 'National Household Survey of Adverse Childhood Experiences and Their Relationship with Resilience to Health-Harming Behaviours in England', *BMC Medicine* 12(72), p178

37 Public Health Wales, (2016), *Adverse Childhood Experiences and Their Association with Chronic Disease and Health Service Use in The Welsh Adult Population*, p2

parental divorce/separation (47.7%) and family bereavement/loss of a significant family member (46%).

23. The emphasis on early intervention and diversion of women away from the criminal justice system which I refer to in the next chapter is welcome and needed. However, this needs to be part of a much broader emphasis in social policy. Reducing the number of adverse childhood experiences in children's lives is a laudable goal which will not be realised without the efforts of most if not all other departments of government. Given that most ACEs are based in family and other relationships, policies to strengthen these are an indispensable means to that end.
24. As the Governor of HMP Low Newton told this Review,
'I am working with the third generation of offenders. Even if drugs and alcohol are being tackled, endemic issues in the community related to the backdrop of family and relationship breakdown are not being dealt with.'
25. The MoJ are already aware that the full realisation of the Female Offender Strategy will require cross-government working, and the *raison d'être* of the National Concordat is to ensure this emphasis is mirrored at the local level, typically through the wider adoption of whole systems approaches. I will refer to how a whole systems approach can better support family ties throughout this report.

Principles and themes for the Review

26. I want to lay out briefly the principles which have guided this Review and the themes which emerged from the Call for Evidence, which are intended to give coherence to the recommendations I make.
27. First, the importance of family and other relationships needs to be a golden thread running through the criminal justice system, from the moment someone comes to the attention of the police, to the point when they no longer need the support of probation services or after-care. Therefore, we need to know which relationships are valuable in the life of a female offender and which are toxic, and possibly characterized by abuse. Throughout this second Review I emphasise the importance of gathering information about these relationships and wider circumstances, particularly her accommodation. This is not unnecessary intrusion: the duty of care, particularly if you are imprisoning someone, should include asking who is out there, what is out there, with thought put into where she will live, from the outset. Families need homes, and these can be lost when a mother enters prison, even if just for a short time.
28. That is why, secondly, I welcome the emphasis in the Female Offender Strategy on keeping women out of prison, given how disruptive and costly short sentences are to their family life. Encouragingly, the backdrop to this Review is the broader commitment from the Ministry of Justice to reduce short sentences, and to make the necessary arguments in the media and elsewhere, so the public are persuaded that

this is a rational corrective to high incarceration rates, and not born of expediency or sentimentality regarding offenders.

29. The Female Offender Strategy says:

*'We want to reduce the female prison population, with fewer offenders sent to custody for short periods. We will therefore shift our emphasis from custody to the community... we want to ensure that the public and judiciary have confidence in non-custodial sentences - such as effective community orders - which directly tackle the causes of reoffending, including alcohol or drug abuse. We will be looking at what more we can do to emphasise that short custodial sentences should be viewed as a last resort.'*³⁸

30. Whilst acknowledging that the Government's broader commitment to reduce short sentences across all of the prison estate could provoke a backlash against 'soft justice' by people in his own party and the public, the Prisons Minister has said it is 'a debate I have to win.'³⁹ What I will focus on predominantly, however, is how to help women maintain and improve family ties wherever they are in the CJS, not how to keep them out of prison.
31. Thirdly, the emphasis in my original Review on ensuring all prisoners who do not have family or other support – for example if they have been in the care system – are helped to form relationships whether with people outside or peers inside, is ongoing.
32. Fourthly, whilst there are clear differences between men and women as I have explained earlier, I want the whole of the female criminal justice system to be a pacesetter for male prisons and community supervision in terms of how relationships are prioritized. Women offend more rarely, and the female prison estate, which is dwarfed by the male estate, provides opportunities for careful experimentation which can drive positive change. We can learn many transferrable lessons from reforms to this scaled-down system.

38 Ministry of Justice, (2018), *Female Offender Strategy*, p7

39 BBC News, 12 January 2019, *Ministers Consider Ending Jail Terms of Six Months or Less*, www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-46847162

Chapter 2: Early Intervention

'Policing understands the negative consequences of sending female offenders to prison. We're keen to work with other agencies to reduce this wherever possible. But this will require credible alternatives to be available to decision makers – pre- and post-conviction.'

Jon Stratford, National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC),
Lead for Integrated Offender Management

Recommendations:

1. Local Criminal Justice Boards (or equivalent strategic local groups) to take responsibility for building links and encouraging all services to take a joined-up approach to addressing the needs of female offenders (and women at risk of offending). Police and Crime Commissioners should take a leadership role in facilitating this collaboration between system partners, in pursuit of an effective, efficient response to local need
 - i. Domestic abuse services, to be integrated, co-located where possible, and working in partnership with other help women are willing to access, including women's centres, and sustainable local funding, as part of the whole system approach, for a range of proven programmes to meet diverse needs.
2. Liaison and diversion services, and police (whether upon arrest or when an out of court disposal is being considered) to take opportunities to collect information on women's key relationships to ensure better outcomes for them and their families. With her consent this will be held in a personal electronic file (Personal Circumstances File) which will be carried with her and added to until she is no longer involved with the criminal justice system.
3. Family and relationship work to be routinely included in diversion/out of court disposal pathway programmes for women.
4. The Ministry of Justice's evidence landing page and the National Concordat to include the learning from successful pilots, so future commissioners know what is proven good practice.

Introduction

33. I welcome the emphasis in the Female Offender Strategy on intervening earlier to address the vulnerabilities of some women which can lead to them coming into contact with the criminal justice system, and diverting them from it, thereby reducing the numbers who go through the ordeal of court proceedings. Clearly, conviction (or remand) can sever ties with employment, housing and families, all of which can

deepen women's difficulties and lessen her chances of rehabilitation. They also have profound effects on any children and young people she has in her care and can lead to their own future involvement in the criminal justice system. As I stated in the Introduction, parental imprisonment is an adverse childhood experience (ACE) frequently found in combination with several others, and adults are 20 times more likely to have spent time in prison if they experienced four or more ACEs when compared with those who experienced none.⁴⁰ Preventing intergenerational offending is a key priority of my Review.

34. Similarly, where trauma, abuse and multiple adverse childhood experiences are the backdrop to a woman's life, this makes it more likely that she will herself go on to struggle with drug and alcohol abuse, mental health problems, financial lack, difficulties in sustaining employment, homelessness and a lack of supportive, healthy relationships.⁴¹ As all of these can contribute to offending behaviour, they all need to be addressed if liaison and diversion schemes are to be optimised, a key commitment of the Strategy alongside supporting the police to work with women facing complex challenges.
35. Obviously help to address such issues should not have to wait for women to come into contact with the police and other aspects of the criminal justice system. I am concerned that vulnerable women rarely seem to have ready access to services and good peer support networks which could prevent offending and their children repeating the cycle they have become caught up in. Early help is also required to address poor mental health, relationship breakdown, substance misuse, educational failure and lack of skills which could make her unemployable, and the tyranny of serious personal debt.
36. I was repeatedly told that joining up all that is available locally – statutory services; private sector philanthropy and corporate social responsibility; voluntary sector providers and volunteers, including peer support from women who have turned their lives around – is a vital first step to addressing the multiple drivers of women's offending behaviour. The Government's emphasis on whole systems approaches and their intention to publish a National Concordat about how local partnerships need to work together to identify and address this complexity, responds well to this need.
37. Local accountabilities should be established to make sure the join-up of all services for female offenders (and women at risk of offending) actually happens in each area. Therefore, I recommend this becomes a clearly designated responsibility of local Criminal Justice Boards, typically chaired by Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs), or equivalent strategic local groups. They should also provide challenge, accountability and support to education, social services and other early help agencies to prevent the transmission of intergenerational crime. This should be as much of a

40 Public Health Wales, NHS Wales, (2015), *Adverse Childhood Experiences and Their Impact on Health-Harming Behaviours in The Welsh Adult Population*, p5

41 Ministry of Justice, (2018), *Female Offender Strategy*, p11

priority as preventing reoffending: the whole system approach should include women as parents, and their children.

38. As one senior police officer told the Review:

*'There's some great work going on across the country (for example the development of women's centres) but provision remains piecemeal and subject to the vagaries of third sector funding. To achieve a step change in the numbers of women going to prison, sustainable funding streams need to be identified and made available to those organisations who have proven they can provide effective diversionary, rehabilitative and supportive services to vulnerable female offenders...Providing services to a female offender in a women's centre is proven to be less expensive than housing in prison - the average cost of keeping a woman in prison for a year is £42,765 compared to a Community Order cost of £2,800 per year.'*⁴²

39. This would require robust contract management with PCCs leading on commissioning and performance management arrangements so that MoJ (and other government departments/funders) could monitor delivery against cost, through local criminal justice boards, or equivalent strategic local groups. Obviously, this means additional funding: this could be drawn down from monies allocated to build the new women's prisons, or receipts from the recent sale of the site of HMP Holloway, if these are still available. Otherwise it will require a 'spend to save' leap of faith which has been done before in Integrated Offender Management where reactive resource was shifted upstream to break the cycle of demand.

Recommendation

Local Criminal Justice Boards (or equivalent strategic local groups) to take responsibility for building links and encouraging all services to take a joined-up approach to addressing the needs of female offenders (and women at risk of offending). Police and Crime Commissioners should take a leadership role in facilitating this collaboration between system partners, in pursuit of an effective, efficient response to local need.

40. With these new arrangements in mind, I will focus on three issues which the Review found to be important at the earliest point when women come into contact with the criminal justice system:

- the need for domestic abuse services to be integrated and co-located with other help women are willing to access, including women's centres, and for sustainable funding for a range of proven programmes to meet diverse needs;

⁴² Jon Stratford, NPCC Lead for Integrated Offender Management, quoting Prison Reform Trust, (2017), *Why Focus on Reducing Women's Imprisonment?* p8

- the opportunities presented to liaison and diversion services and police to start collecting information on women's key relationships that can help to ensure better outcomes for them; and
 - the importance of diversion pathways including help to address family and relationships difficulties and ensure women are able to build strong relationships in the future.
41. The Female Offender Strategy emphasises the need to ensure female offenders with experience of domestic abuse have access to provision, and describes the importance of risk assessments which consider, among other issues, family and relationships. However, many women will also need help to build safe and supportive relationships with other adults, including men, and these should be treated as protective factors which are essential in diverting them away from crime.

Domestic Abuse Services

42. According to the Home Office:

*'The majority of female offenders have experienced domestic abuse and it is often linked to their offending, with 6 in 10 female offenders indicating that they currently are or have been victims.'*⁴³

43. The Female Offender Strategy's commitment to provide specific additional funding (£2m) dedicated to tackling domestic abuse among female offenders, and to focus on women who are BAME or who have protected characteristics is welcome. However, it became clear in the Review that existing domestic abuse services in the community, which female offenders also use, are fragmented and dependent on precarious funding streams.
44. Domestic abuse services need to be joined up and co-located, wherever possible, with women's centres, or other safe, women-only spaces which would provide access to paid-for places on appropriate programmes as well as ongoing support, for women attending them. Whilst co-locating staff does not cost much it could make a sizeable difference and will improve communications and information-sharing.
45. I constantly heard that a one-size fits all approach does not work for female offenders, given the complexity of their lives and this is certainly true in the area of support to tackle domestic abuse. Stopping current abuse and helping women to recover from its effects is obviously the immediate priority, but preventing future abuse is also essential. As well as help to exit a violent and/or abusive relationship safely, many women will need support in forming healthy relationships, to avoid being

43 HM Government, *Transforming the Response to Domestic Abuse Consultation Response and Draft Bill*, (2019), p36 Available online: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/772202/CCS1218158068-Web_Accessible.pdf

revictimized. Between 40 and 56 per cent of women experiencing domestic abuse have had a previously abusive relationship.⁴⁴

46. Programmes which help women who use violence in their relationships (and this may be the main reason why they have come into contact with the police) can help them to identify the reasons why they do so. These are important complements to other models, as are programmes which take a whole family approach by challenging the perpetrator to change and addressing the impact of domestic abuse on women, children, and other family members.
47. Whole family approaches help to ensure that even if different members of the family are necessarily treated separately, given that they will have different needs (such as to receive help in a women-only space), information on perpetrator, victim and children is still shared and the family is considered as a unit. Everyone is helped to move on, which can mean the partners separate safely or changes in behaviour are sufficiently profound for the family to stay together, with everyone's informed consent.⁴⁵

Recommendation

Domestic abuse services, to be integrated, co-located where possible, and working in partnership with other help women are willing to access, including women's centres, and sustainable local funding, as part of the whole system approach, for a range of proven programmes to meet diverse needs.

48. Finally, and this is a point to which I will return in this report. Many organisations which tackle domestic abuse – and other voluntary sector providers in the criminal justice system – have energetically fundraised to develop and evaluate a range of innovative services, by piloting programmes and approaches to demonstrate effectiveness. Often it has been philanthropists and charitable trusts who have put their hands into pockets that are far from bottomless, to push the boundaries of what we know about what works.
49. However, these pioneering organisations have not been able to sustain effective practice, even where they have been able to show significant cost savings, because funding is not forthcoming after the pilot period is over. Organisations often expressed frustration to me that innovation funding was far easier to secure than ongoing

44 Alexander, P.C., 'Childhood Trauma, Attachment and Abuse By Multiple Partners', *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice and Policy*, 1, 2009, pp78–88; Kemp, A., Green, B.L., Hovanitz, C., and Rawlings, E. I., 'Incidence and Correlates of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder In Battered Women', *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 10, 1995, pp43–55; Woffordt, S., Mihalic, D. E., and Menard, S., 'Continuities in Marital Violence', *Journal of Family Violence*, 9, 1994, pp195–225; Coolidge F. L., and Anderson, L. W., 'Personality Profiles of Women In Multiple Abusive Relationships', *Journal of Family Violence*, 17, 1994, pp117–31

45 The longer term aim of Safe Lives' One Front Door model mentioned in the Government's 'Transforming The Response To Domestic Abuse' consultation is to design an approach for effective early intervention for the whole family, which can then be replicated across the country. See www.safelives.org.uk/one-front-door

funding. At the very least, it is vital that the Ministry of Justice's evidence landing page referred to in the Implementation Plan for the original Farmer Review, due to be launched shortly, includes the learning from such pilots so that future commissioners know what is proven good practice. Similarly, this will be highly relevant to the National Concordat, which aims to provide commissioners with a framework of best practice principles and guidance.

Recommendation

The Ministry of Justice's evidence landing page and the National Concordat to include the learning from successful pilots, so future commissioners know what is proven good practice.

Liaison and Diversion

50. The Government's recently published consultation response to 'Transforming the Response to Domestic Abuse' reported that 80% of respondents considered that making sure a history of abuse is captured at every stage of the criminal justice system, will improve how we work with female offenders (and vulnerable women at risk of offending).⁴⁶
51. I would concur with this and go further: during the Review process it became clear that we cannot waste any opportunity to capture information about a woman's family and relational background, including her children and other relationships which may be supportive. A grandmother, charity worker or other person significant to her might be instrumental in her rehabilitation.
52. Neither should we assume that all the men in her life have been abusive. There might be an estranged father or brother or committed partner who would be highly motivated to help her get back on her feet and who would not exploit her vulnerability but help to reduce it. Whilst women-only spaces are important, so too are opportunities to see good male role models: when I went to Anawim Women's Centre in Birmingham, I was told their kindly male Benefits Advisor helped women to realise good men did exist, despite painful experiences to the contrary.
53. The information-gathering process should start as early as possible. Liaison and Diversion services have clear opportunities to do this. Liaison and Diversion services identify people who have mental health, learning disability, substance misuse or other complex challenges such as the fact that they have been trafficked, when they first come into contact with the criminal justice system.

⁴⁶ HM Government, *Transforming the Response to Domestic Abuse Consultation Response and Draft Bill*, (2019), p37 Available online: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/772202/CCS1218158068-Web_Accessible.pdf

54. The information practitioners skillfully draw out from them about their needs can be instrumental in making a good referral to health or social care and to them being diverted away from the criminal justice system into a more rehabilitative setting such as a Women's Centre, if appropriate. Therefore, they are well placed to record information about women's needs and strengths in relation to her family and support network. I am sure this already happens in some cases but it needs to be embedded in the routine of information collection to help shift the culture towards a greater emphasis on relationships.

Information gathering in Liaison and Diversion

Liaison and Diversion (L&D) services seek to identify people who have mental health, learning disability, substance misuse or other vulnerabilities when they first come into contact with the criminal justice system as suspects, defendants or offenders. The service can then support people throughout their criminal justice pathway journey, with supported referrals into appropriate health, social care or voluntary sector services and where appropriate to enable them to be diverted away from the criminal justice system into a more appropriate setting. L&D services aim to improve overall health outcomes for people and support people in the reduction of re-offending. They also aim to identify vulnerabilities in people earlier on which reduces the likelihood that people will reach a crisis point and helps to ensure the right support can be put in place from the start. For example:

- Together for Mental Well-being ask questions to build rapport with women, identify problems and find out more about their circumstances. Inquiry into any effect their relationships might be having on them is included in the list of basic questions. It is emphasised throughout that women may be reluctant to share information as they might feel ashamed or fearful of repercussions if they have experienced abuse at home or be fearful of losing their children. If they are foreign nationals it is important to learn about trauma they may have experienced such as if they have been trafficked or are an asylum seeker who has had to flee danger in their own country. Their lives may have been scarred by rape, sexual or other assault and forced marriage and often they have been separated from their families.⁴⁷

The police, probation and the judiciary make decisions based on the evidence and information presented to them by L&D services which record all information about a person's health needs and social circumstances. With the client's consent L&D services share these with relevant agencies so they

⁴⁷ Together, (2013), *A Common Sense Approach to Working With Women With Health and Well-Being Needs in The Criminal Justice System* Available Online: www.together-uk.org/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2013/02/Together-Common-sense-guide-2013.pdf

can make more informed decisions about case management, sentencing and disposal options. NHS England is currently enhancing female pathways across all L&D services, to address the specific needs of women in the criminal justice system.

All L&D services have appointed a female lead, to develop the pathways and sensitively address the holistic needs of female offenders. To do this, services offer to see all females who come into custody, provide females with a choice of gender of their practitioner offering ongoing support, offer a gender-sensitive approach to screening and support effective onward referrals to gender-specific and sensitive services. They also endeavour to work in partnership with police forces to develop out of court disposal pathways and to create female-specific conditional cautions.

55. Where women have been trafficked, or are otherwise highly vulnerable, they can be highly mistrustful of those they perceive to be in authority and nervous about disclosing personal information. However, the fact that it is healthcare or voluntary sector practitioners who often ask these questions and have been trained to put people at their ease, explore sensitively and be alert to gender and cultural differences, can help to overcome these understandable reservations.
56. Answers to these questions should be captured not just for Liaison and Diversion record-keeping purposes but as early entries in a personal file that can follow a woman through the CJS including back into community services. Identifying someone they trust, who might be a professional such as a doctor or a case worker but could equally be someone in her extended family with whom she has a healthy relationship, is also emphasised in the process. It is essential that the name and contact details of this person (or persons) are not lost. That is why I am recommending the introduction of a Personal Circumstances File to which I will refer again in the following two chapters.

Personal Circumstances File

Across the criminal justice system there is a lack of information on the personal circumstances of women, including on her dependants, family and other relationships and her housing situation, all of which are material to her rehabilitation. Currently there is rarely consistent sharing of information between organisations with whom women come into contact, and they are often unaware of what information has already been collected.

Women can be unwilling to disclose sensitive information regarding their caring responsibilities, often out of fear this could result in their children being taken into the care of the local authority. However, these details should be routinely collected alongside name and age, with assistance from trusted voluntary sector or other agencies who can explain that this will be her personal file where information is shared, with her consent, to help meet the needs of her unique circumstances. Otherwise sentencers who may want to take caring responsibilities into account, and are being encouraged to do so, can be unaware of a woman's dependants. The Pre-Sentence Report, if she has one, will not necessarily capture this information.

Information about other life circumstances, such as her accommodation, are not routinely collected from the earliest opportunity. Yet is important for bail decisions and if she enters custody it is essential for timely planning for post-release.

The introduction of an electronic file on a women's caring responsibilities and personal circumstances would stream-line key rehabilitation processes. The file could be opened by the voluntary sector, health, social services, housing or the police. If collected from the first interaction either with the criminal justice system or an agency which deemed her to be at risk of offending, and diligently updated and added to, the information could inform disposal decisions such as eligibility for a conditional caution and prevent the need for her to constantly answer questions.

Using an information-sharing platform, such as E-CINs, would allow a wide range of agencies to access appropriate levels of information on a woman at risk of offending. This system could build on learning from the Welsh initiative of 'Passport to Support', a resource that 'accompanies a woman through her CJS journey, allowing multi-agencies to share and have access to holistic understanding as her as an individual.'⁴⁸ For example, if the file indicated engagement with a women's centre this would direct a Pre-Sentence Report writer to there as a further source of information.

Introducing a new stream-lined personal file system is an opportunity to re-frame the manner in which personal information is collected. Women should be encouraged to see the electronic file as something they can add to and take ownership of, not a record kept without their permission. They will feel incentivised to disclose if they are told, upon entering custody, that this will allow the prison to assist with visits and communication with their family, as well as to help them prepare for release.

48 Ministry of Justice, Welsh Government, (unpublished), Female Offending Blueprint for Wales Draft, p18

To reiterate, women must be able to choose to whom they disclose, and with whom information will be shared, so there is an important role for trusted agencies, particularly the voluntary sector, to support women through this process.

57. I am conscious that 'MG' case files are opened by the police, (usually) shared with the court and can accompany a woman into custody and I refer to these in Chapter 3. However, I was advised by the Expert Group that there may be very little incentive for a woman to contribute information to what she will likely see as her criminal record with all the connotations this entails. However, if the Personal Circumstances File was described as a tool to help health, voluntary sector and other staff to help her, and which would preclude the necessity of having to answer the same questions *ad infinitum*, this could encourage cooperation.

Police diversion and other out of court disposals

58. Whilst carrying out the Review, I visited Changing Lives who operate out of Tyneside Women's Health in Gateshead and work with Northumbria Police. As with other forces, such as Surrey Police (who work with Women in Prison) and Durham Constabulary's Checkpoint, Police and Crime Commissioners fund services to divert women away from the courts according to certain criteria. Pathway programmes have been developed in Gateshead which take into consideration the victims' views, and women may be given conditional cautions which require them to attend courses and fulfil other requirements.⁴⁹
59. A formal process is followed after an arrest (or when the offender is not arrested but is a voluntary attender at the police station) with an interview conducted with the woman about the offence. This is another opportunity for important information to be collected about her family and other personal circumstances that could be added to the Personal Circumstances File. This would help to tailor the conditions of the caution to be most appropriate for her rehabilitation and the welfare of her family. Again, voluntary sector organisations and other non-CJS personnel could be involved in this process to help obtain accurate and relevant information in a sensitive way.
60. Any agency who has information about a woman should be able to add it to this personal file. There is learning relevant to this from the place-based learning pilot in Warrington which facilitates information-sharing through E-CINs (Empowering Communities Inclusion and Neighbourhood Management System).

⁴⁹ Submission by Alison Best, Chief Inspector, (Prosecution & Victim Services), Northumbria Police and Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Information-sharing through E-CINS

Trusted organisations such as the police or local authority own a licence to input information on a person. They then grant access to partner organisations both statutory and non-statutory (for example, voluntary sector organisations such as Pact and Victim Support use E-CINS). Different organisations can be given different levels of access dependent on their need to know etc.

If a woman has just begun to work with an organisation, they can send the woman's name in and ask who else is working with them. Any agency working with the woman/family should explain that they share client names with E-CINS partner agencies and ask for her permission before sharing confidential information (although they can share information received without consent, if it identifies a safeguarding issue).

61. The Personal Circumstances File could build upon the commitment which is part of the NHS Long Term Plan to run a 'full roll-out of the health and justice digital patient record information system across all adult prisons, immigration removal centres and secure training centres for children and young people. This will include the digital transfer of patient records before custody, in custody and on release.'⁵⁰ It is very welcome that Government have recognised the importance of health records transferring with women on their journey through the CJS. Building upon this to include wider information about family and personal circumstances would enable a holistic approach from health and justice agencies in responding to women's needs, including to maintain family ties.

Recommendation

Liaison and diversion services, and police (whether upon arrest or when an out of court disposal is being considered) to take opportunities to collect information on women's key relationships that can help ensure better outcomes for them and their families. With her consent this will be held in a personal electronic file (Personal Circumstances File) which will be carried with her and added to until she is no longer involved with the criminal justice system.

Family work for women diverted from court

62. Given that their offending behaviour will likely have had a detrimental effect on other family relationships, including with their children, diversion pathways need to include help for women to resolve these difficulties, which could be a barrier to their desistance from crime and a risk factor for their children offending in the future. For example, the 'Checkpoint Plus' Diversion project which operates out of

⁵⁰ The National Health Service, (2019), *The NHS Long Term Plan*, p118

Surrey Women's Support Centre aims to keep children and families together whilst addressing women's needs by providing bespoke interventions which include help with family and other relationships. These can include parenting support, joint working with other agencies around domestic abuse or restorative justice mediation with family members.

63. Women may also need one-to-one support to exit relationships with partners and family members who are abusive, violent and/or irredeemably criminogenic factors in their lives. Alongside this, diversion pathways should address the profound isolation and lack of supportive relationships which many women experience, especially if they have to leave partners or associates who are strongly influencing them to commit crime. When I visited women's services I saw how bonds which develop with peers can make an enormous difference, as can the relationships they build with voluntary sector staff.
64. Obviously, many female offenders will re-partner, and if they have repeatedly experienced violent and abusive relationships including in their birth families, they may need help to identify the early signs that a new partner might be abusive and learn how to build healthy relationships in the future. This help could take the form of a programme such as Within My Reach (WMR) which has been shown to improve female offenders' wider relationships.⁵¹ Where this was delivered in a female custodial setting in Oklahoma, as part of a federal initiative to improve family relationships, the United States Department of Health and Human Services, reported that for the women involved:

*'WMR helped them set rules or boundaries – such as prohibiting a boyfriend from being alone with her children to reduce the risk of possible child abuse. Some inmates said that before WMR, they did not know how to say 'no' to their partners or spouses, or even that they had a right to do so. They felt they had learned about the ingredients of good and bad relationships, and how to balance the fact that no one is perfect with the importance of having a partner who respects you and treats you well. They felt that, after the class, they would have a better chance of deciding what a good relationship is, rather than slipping into a bad one. Many had begun applying some of the skills and concepts they learned in the class to their relationships.'*⁵²

65. More generally, when women are diverted to women's centres, the complex issues of family and relationships are addressed in a range of ways. Women's centre key workers or advocates are flexible in their support, which can range from helping a woman communicate with social workers or accompanying her to court for a hearing in relation to adoption or fostering. It is particularly common for women with complex needs to need support to reconnect with family and children. Some centres provide

51 There are other major national programmes from Women's Aid with whom many women's centres are partnering and their staff have been trained to run the programmes in house.

52 US Department of Health and Human Services, (2009), *Marriage and Relationship Skills Education as a Way to Prepare Prisoners for Reintegration* p7

specialist parenting support workers and parenting groups, in which peer support from other women is often a key element.

66. In summary, programmes women are diverted to must include help to improve their family and other relationships, and, if the ones they are in are criminogenic and likely to remain so help them exit these safely where appropriate.

Recommendation

Family and relationship work to be routinely included in diversion/out of court disposal pathway programmes for women.

Chapter 3: Community Solutions

'I am convinced that women's community centres...pioneers of a woman-centred approach, have found the right way to treat women and that their work must be extended and built on as a real alternative to prison. Their broad approach is to treat each woman as an individual with her own set of needs and problems and to increase their capacity to take responsibility for their lives.'

Rt Hon Baroness Corston⁵³

Recommendations

5. Manual Guidance (MG) forms to be amended by the Government to capture information about the dependants of offenders.
6. The impact of remand on dependants, information about whom will be available in a woman's Personal Circumstances File, to be considered in any bail decision.
 - i. If the decision is made to remand in custody a defendant who is a primary carer the opportunity to be given to make telephone contact before leaving court with family or other alternative carers to make arrangements for her dependants.
 - ii. Women sentenced to custody to be asked if they need to make telephone contact with dependants or organise childcare and allowed to do so before being put onto transport.
7. The Government to review regulations preventing children from living in Approved Premises.
 - i. Women in Approved Premises or housed by Bail Accommodation Support Services with children who are struggling with parenting or other family and relationship issues to be encouraged to engage (voluntarily) with Early Help or Family Hubs, either through self-referral or through referral from women's centres, social workers or other professionals.
8. Given the complexity of many female offenders' lives, and the greater likelihood that they are primary carers, obtaining a written Pre-Sentence Report to be made mandatory for all women (and male primary carers) before a custodial sentence is passed (if a recent report is not available).
 - i. Accurate information on relationships and impact of custody on family ties systematically obtained through the PSR process to be made available to sentence planners to inform custody and other disposal decisions.

⁵³ Baroness Corston, (2007), *A Report by Baroness Jean Corston of a Review of Women with Particular Vulnerabilities in the Criminal Justice System*, The Home Office, p13

- ii. Courts to indicate clearly when requesting Pre-Sentence Reports if the initial assessment is that the custodial threshold has been passed, and convicted women made aware of this by the person conducting the PSR Interview.
 - iii. As part of the whole systems approach, a lead professional to ensure support (typically from women's organisations) is available at the pre-sentence stage, to help women prepare their children, family members and friends who might be able to support them throughout a custodial period, for the possibility of imprisonment.
9. The National Concordat for Female Offenders to highlight the role women's centres can play in delivering whole systems approaches and examine opportunities to bring together cross-government funding for the services they deliver, given the potential savings to the Ministry of Justice and other government departments.
10. Given the particular spending implications across government for women's offending, such as those relating to the greater likelihood that their children will end up in local authority care, the Reducing Reoffending Board (which takes a cross-Government approach to reducing reoffending) to have a ministerial lead for and pay regular attention to the specific needs of female offenders.
11. Funding for women's centres to be made sustainable, with core services paid for by those agencies which refer women (including Police and Crime Commissioners and Probation providers) and those which save through the interventions they provide, such as health and local authorities.
12. Residential women's centres to have places for women to bring their children, if they would not otherwise have sufficiently stable accommodation in which to complete community orders.
13. Models of custodial centres in the community to be considered as part of the Ministry of Justice's longer-term strategy for women whose crime is serious enough to merit a custodial sentence, but who are at low enough risk to retain care of their children.
14. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation to assess the impact of recommendations from the 2014 joint thematic review on Resettlement provision for female offenders, in light of the MoJ's female offender strategy.
15. HMPPS currently developing the new model for Probation to:
 - i. Ensure that services are available to support family and other relational ties under this new model.

- ii. Address the problems of recall which can arise from the offender's relational background, such as their primary – and often sole – carer status: penalties other than recall to be used which reflect the rehabilitative intent of the 12-month supervision period with rehabilitation and relationships at the forefront of probation practice and recall a measure only taken proportionately and in light of these overarching considerations.
 - iii. Clarify who is locally responsible for securing post-release housing.
 - iv. Ensure all offenders receive appropriate resettlement support through the gate including by connecting them with outside services whilst they are still in custody.
 - v. Ensure there is sufficient flexibility in any new resettlement model to enable planning for accommodation post-release to start early enough to secure the best outcome. This will require acting on information contained in the Personal Circumstances File from the point of induction.
16. Allocation of accommodation guidance for local housing authorities in England to recognise the prospective housing needs of women leaving prison who are otherwise able to be reunited with their children, so local authorities can make these needs the basis for assessment.

Introduction

67. The Female Offender Strategy underlines the Government's intention to continue to support whole systems approaches, models in which the work of local agencies (criminal justice, statutory and voluntary) is joined up and takes a bespoke ('gender-informed') approach to women to:
- divert women away from criminal justice where possible;
 - provide alternatives to custody in the community which command respect and inspire trust of sentencers by combining support with accountability; and
 - rehabilitate offenders in whatever setting they are managed.
68. The Welsh Government's 2018-2023 Framework to support positive change for those at risk of offending in Wales, which takes a whole systems approach, describes how: 'an intensive level of multi-agency support and resource is required to effectively reduce the negative consequences of crime.'⁵⁴
69. This 'join up' which is vital in the whole systems approach must go beyond agencies working together in a seamless and non-overlapping way and include joining up what

⁵⁴ HM Prison and Probation Service in Wales, (2017), *A Framework to Support Positive Change For Those At Risk Of Offending In Wales*, p11 Available online: <https://gov.wales/docs/dsjlg/publications/180301-framework-support-positive-change-risk-of-offending-wales-en-v1.pdf>

has happened in a woman's life with her current offending behaviour and ensuring she has the positive relationships which are indispensable to rehabilitation.

70. Therefore, a relational emphasis must permeate the *modus operandi* of whole systems approaches. It is widely understood that good relationships between agencies are vitally important but so too are efforts to help a very diverse range of women:
- sustain positive relationships (including but not only those with any dependants) when they enter the criminal justice system, as these will be vital for their rehabilitation; or
 - build for the first time in their lives, healthy and well-functioning relationships with other adults, including family members, and with any children who remain in their care or with whom they are in contact; and
 - rebuild existing relationships with families and significant others which may have been badly affected due to their contact with the criminal justice system and/or from whom they have been separated during a period of custody.
71. Finally, another important aspect of the policy backdrop to this Review is the Government's recently published response to the *Strengthening Probation, Building Confidence* consultation.⁵⁵ Launched in summer 2018, this engaged a wide range of stakeholders in the design of the future model for probation following the ending of current Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) contracts in place since the Transforming Rehabilitation reforms.
72. To address the challenges faced under the current model, to which I allude in this report, the response outlined the plan to end the split of offender management responsibilities between CRCs and the National Probation Service (NPS) by integrating all offender management under the NPS. Interventions are to be outsourced to voluntary and private sector providers through a commercial framework. This will allow the NPS to directly commission resettlement and rehabilitative services on a scale that encourages the participation of smaller suppliers and is responsive to the needs of local areas.
73. The plan is to transition this new model in 2021 across England and Wales (although in Wales the intention is to integrate offender management responsibilities in December 2019). Several of my recommendations are directed towards the planning work going into this new model, with the aim that this important opportunity is not missed to give commensurate recognition to the vital contribution healthy and supportive relationships make to rehabilitation.

⁵⁵ Ministry of Justice, (2019), *Strengthening Probation, Building Confidence: Response to consultation*. Available at <https://consult.justice.gov.uk/hm-prisons-and-probation/strengthening-probation-building-confidence/results/strengthening-probation-consultation-response.pdf>

74. This chapter will cover three areas:

- Supporting women's family and other relationships through the court process
- Family and other relationships and community orders
- Family and other relationships post-release from custody

Supporting women's family and other relationships through the court process

75. If the importance of family and other supportive ties is to run like a golden thread through all processes in the criminal justice system, it will be essential to obtain information on defendants' family circumstances and other relationships pre-sentence: who is relying on her, who might she be able to rely upon and who might be a harmful influence on her life and therefore her rehabilitation.
76. Obviously, it is not always easy to obtain an accurate picture of this. When women appear in court they may be under the influence of drugs or alcohol or highly distrustful of authority figures like the police or social services, sometimes as a result of traumatic experiences in the past including the removal of children or being taken in care themselves. As I stated in the last chapter, mistrust is particularly prevalent among foreign national women, some of whom will have been trafficked.⁵⁶ They are also likely to be unfamiliar with legal and other processes and have language barriers.
77. Information on dependent family members is often picked up by police officers either at arrest or on booking in to the police station. This should be treated as valuable and included, with a defendant's permission, on her Personal Circumstances (digital) File described in the last chapter. This stays with the defendant and, again with permission, could be made available to custody staff, court staff, and prison staff to avoid women having to keep repeating information about their circumstances. While police may be aware of any criminal associates a woman might have, if they become aware of supportive relationships with other adults, say in her extended family or in a voluntary sector organisation, such information should also be included. The aim is to capture not only details of people relying on her, but also those upon whom she can rely.
78. This does not preclude improving other means of information collection on dependants by the police. Manual of Guidance (MG) forms offer an example of how a structured process for data capture has been introduced and successfully rolled out across the country. These forms relate to case files produced by the police for the prosecution and defence of criminal cases at Magistrates' and Crown Courts. They are used nationally, with any edits to be approved by central government, but

⁵⁶ Foreign national women are more likely than British women to have been victims of trafficking: National Crime Agency, (2017), *National Referral Mechanism Statistics, End of year summary 2016*, Annex E

improvements have been introduced over time, such as the inclusion of data capture relating to victim needs.

79. Another potential improvement to MG forms suggested by the Centre for Social Justice during a roundtable discussion marking the launch of Crest Advisory's recent report on the children of prisoners⁵⁷ was the creation of an appropriate section within the MG3 and MG5 forms, or else a new MG form, to capture this information. This could help ensure that children, where identified or disclosed (whether by police, CPS, probation, defence, or courts), could be recorded for reference by the court and, where an offender is given a prison sentence, this information could translate across from the case file to the prisoner escort bundle.
80. Without proliferating bureaucracy, efforts need to be stepped up at several key points in the criminal justice system to ensure that children and their needs are not ignored. Moreover, piloting and setting up the Personal Circumstances File system will take some time but there are established precedents for enhancing MG forms and it is anticipated that this could be quickly expedited to the benefit of offenders' children and families. Therefore, I am also recommending that MG forms include fields for dependents.

Recommendation

Manual Guidance (MG) forms to be amended by the Government to capture information about the dependants of offenders.

Consideration of primary care or other relationships before a woman is remanded

81. Ministry of Justice figures show that almost half of women imprisoned each year come through the gate on remand⁵⁸ and that women are more likely than men to be remanded to prison for offences which did not then lead to a custodial sentence. In 2017, 61% of women remanded by the magistrates' court and 39% by the Crown court did not go on to receive a custodial sentence, compared with 59% and 25% of men respectively.⁵⁹
82. The main reasons someone can be remanded in custody pending trial (rather than granted bail) include that there are substantial grounds to believe, if released, offences would be committed; there would be interference with witnesses, or the defendant would fail to come back to court. During the Review the devastating

57 Launch on 11th March 2019 of Crest Advisory report: Kincaid, S. et al, (2019), *Children of Prisoners: Fixing a Broken System*

58 Ministry of Justice, (2018), *Offender Management Statistics Quarterly April to June*, Table 2.1

59 Ministry of Justice, (2018), *Remands at the Crown Court: Pivot Table Analytical Tool for England and Wales 12 months ending December 2013 to 12 months ending December 2017*; Ministry of Justice, (2018), *Remands at the Magistrates Court: Pivot Table Analytical Tool for England and Wales 12 months ending December 2013 to 12 months ending December 2017*

effect on families, tenancies and the ability to provide for one's family even if detained for only a short period on remand became clear. Therefore, even though a woman's status as a primary carer should not be determinative, the impact of remand on dependants should also be considered in any bail decision. The Personal Circumstances File will help to ensure that this information is available.

83. If the decision is made to remand in custody a defendant who is a primary carer for dependent children, or vulnerable adult, she should have the opportunity to make arrangements for those children, in much the same way as I describe later for women who unexpectedly receive a custodial sentence.

Recommendation

The impact of remand on dependants, information about whom will be available in a woman's Personal Circumstances File, to be considered in any bail decision. If the decision is made to remand in custody a defendant who is a primary carer the opportunity to be given to make telephone contact before leaving court with family or other alternative carers to make arrangements for her dependants.

Alternative accommodation and residential support

84. Bail Accommodation Support Services (BASS) and (sometimes) Approved Premises (AP) may be used as alternatives to remand if women's lives in general and their accommodation in particular are unstable, and these are contributory reasons to them being refused bail. The Female Offender Strategy commits to increasing availability of Approved Premises for female offenders where there is unmet need, following the Supreme Court ruling on the 24th May 2017 that the distribution of Approved Premises discriminated against women.⁶⁰
85. A renewed focus on AP and BASS is much needed. APs are currently modelled on the male estate and prohibit children being resident or visiting. The Government needs to review these restrictive regulations. Safeguarding concerns about children living, or visiting, alongside other women awaiting trial or who have been released from prison can be mitigated through stringent risk assessment. The service specification for BASS currently provides female-only accommodation where women can receive visitors, including children. Visitors may not stay overnight in BASS multi-occupancy accommodation. However, women with children can be allocated sole occupancy of a house.

60 The Supreme Court noted that the Ministry of Justice has never properly addressed the problem of providing sufficient and suitable places in APs for women which achieve, so far as practicable, the policy of placing them as close to home as possible. See Judgment on R. (on the application of Coll) v Secretary of State for Justice [2017] UKSC 40, p15 Available online: www.supremecourt.uk/cases/docs/uksc-2015-0148-judgment.pdf

Recommendation

The Government to review regulations preventing children from living in Approved Premises.

86. The Female Offender Strategy includes a welcome aspiration to provide closer integration of BASS with established women's centres and I was told by the Ministry of Justice MOJ (which commissions the BASS service) that the BASS supplier is committed to working with local partners, including women's centres, for all service users. The supplier is also committed to aligning its properties for female use with women's centres, where it is possible to source suitable properties with the resource available.
87. Similarly, women with children who may be struggling with parenting or other family and relationship issues should be encouraged to engage (voluntarily) with support provided by Early Help or Family Hubs, where these are available. Family workers from Hubs could also be based in women's centres for some of their working week, to strengthen the relationship support these already provide and help connect women back into the wider community as they make progress.
88. The bail period provides an important opportunity to help women address a range of problems which may have been present for a long time. The 'wake-up call' of an impending court case, and the need to prove to a sentencer that she has every intention of addressing the causes of her offending could catalyse many positive changes, including in the area of relationships.

Recommendation

Women in Approved Premises or housed by Bail Accommodation Support Services with children who are struggling with parenting or other family and relationship issues to be encouraged to engage (voluntarily) with Early Help or Family Hubs, either through self-referral or through referral from women's centres, social workers or other professionals.

Improving Pre-Sentence Reports and making written reports mandatory for all women if a custodial sentence is a possibility

89. The Female Offender Strategy states that:

*'We want all PSRs, whether on the day oral reports or written reports to include details of an offender's circumstances, such as any dependants, and mental health and domestic abuse issues.'*⁶¹

61 Ministry of Justice, (2018), *Female Offender Strategy*, p19

90. Given the complexity of many female offenders' lives, and the greater likelihood that they are primary carers, I would augment this by requiring Pre-Sentence Reports (see box below for different types) to clarify the repercussions of a custodial sentence (if that is an option) on dependants and agree that mitigating factors such as domestic abuse should always be put in front of the sentencer. For example, her partner's violent and/or controlling behaviour may have contributed greatly to a woman's offending behaviour. This does not excuse it but may help to explain it.

Different types of Pre-Sentence Report⁶²

Standard Delivery (Written) Report

- Also known as a Full Pre-Sentence Report
- Requires a three-week adjournment.
- Typically for high risk of harm cases, and involves a thorough risk assessment and detailed sentence plan
- Interviews with the convicted offender are up to two hours long and take place at the probation office

A Fast Delivery (Written) Report

- Requires a one-week adjournment.
- Typically, this is shorter and less detailed and can be used for medium risk of harm cases.
- Interviews with the convicted offender will normally last for up to one hour and take place at the probation office.

A Stand Down (Oral) Report

- Verbal report completed on the day at court, typically for approximately 30 minutes.
- Typically used for low risk of harm cases and first offences. Officers use these reports to assess an individual's ability to complete Unpaid Work or low-level Community Orders.

91. Many of the women who attended focus groups for the Review and some case studies to the Call for Evidence implied that they did not receive a PSR. A recent thematic report on sentencing advice prepared by HMPPS' Operational and System Assurance Group (OSAG) looked at the percentages of sentences (in a defined period March to May 2018) where a PSR was requested and produced. This report found that where the offender was sentenced to under 24 months custody, pre-

62 NAPO, *Ministry of Justice Changes to Pre-Sentence Reports*, www.napo.org.uk/ministry-justice-changes-pre-sentence-reports

sentence advice was not requested in nearly three quarters of cases. Only 5% of this figure can be explained by immediate custody being inevitable (in which case, it is currently argued, a PSR is not needed).⁶³

92. The effects of a custodial sentence can be so draconian that it is precisely where this is an (or the most likely) option that sentencers need as much information as possible to guide their decision. The length and nature of the sentence might be unchanged but this important opportunity to gather and make sentencers aware of vital facts that could greatly impact her rehabilitative chances, should not be missed.

93. The report from OSAG concluded that:

- A considerable number of decisions are made to send people to prison without 'up to date assessments about risk, equality issues, maturity, the potential impact of custody or the suitability of an alternative to custody.'
- In a fifth of cases where advice was not sought, there was no evidence of rationale for the decision not to obtain a PSR.
- 'In the absence of sentencing advice and underpinning assessments, it is likely that some of these offenders have been sentenced to custody when a community sentence could have been appropriate.'⁶⁴

94. In their recent rapid information gathering exercise, the Independent Advisory Panel on Deaths in Custody, also emphasised the need to:

*'Ensure adequate information is provided to the courts including reports covering mental health need, vulnerability and safeguarding concerns.'*⁶⁵

95. I have concluded that obtaining a written Pre-Sentence Report should be made mandatory for all women (and male primary carers) before a custodial sentence is passed. I appreciate that making PSRs mandatory would require a change to the law, possibly by including women alongside young offenders in provisions in s.156 of the Criminal Justice Act 2003, which restrict the court's ability to proceed to sentencing without having first obtained a PSR. Requiring the more extensive written report would also increase the workload of the NPS.

Quality and consistency of Pre-Sentence Report

96. However, if mandating PSRs is to make a significant difference to outcomes, quality and consistency will need to be assured, about which concerns were raised by

63 HMPPS Performance Directorate, Operational and System Assurance Group, (2019) *Requesting and providing advice to Court in cases sentenced to up to 24 months in custody: Additional Findings relevant to Female Offenders* (internal report)

64 Ibid, p10

65 Independent Advisory Panel on Deaths in Custody, (2017), *Preventing the Deaths of Women in Prison – Initial Results of a Rapid Information Gathering Exercise by the Independent Advisory Panel on Deaths In Custody*, p6 Available online: <http://iapdeathsincustody.independent.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/IAP-rapid-evidence-collection-v0.2.pdf>

HMI Probation.⁶⁶ I heard that alternatives to custody with available places which would address the root causes of reoffending without removing women from their children may be under-used because magistrates can only send women to them if the National Probation Service recommends them specifically in the Pre-Sentence Report.

97. A PSR Checklist currently being piloted in England aims to ensure that the right questions are asked to enable good assessments to be made when sentencing.⁶⁷ It includes questions about family and other caring responsibilities and supportive relationships with other adults. Accurate information systematically obtained through this process would be invaluable in building up the Personal Circumstances File which might still be quite skimpy at this stage (or might itself inform the PSR). Moreover, the PSR will follow her into prison or community provision and prevent her having to give the same information several times to different people.

'Within the first 24-48 hours of a woman arriving at prison from the court, she will be asked the same question about eight times.'

Governor of HMP Send

98. The PSR is typically available to prison reception ahead of her being received into custody, so it would be known at admission if there were children who might need to be contacted. Additionally, it should be made available to sentence planners to inform decisions such as custody location, for example if:
- a Mother and Baby Unit is required for pregnant women or those with babies;
 - existing family or other important and supportive relational ties would be more easily maintained by holding a woman at the closest location; or
 - there are concerns about family members which may need to be monitored.
99. If accurate information is to be obtained, NPS must ensure they are asking questions about dependants in a safe and private environment that encourages disclosure. In particular, NPS staff need to take final responsibility for ensuring any dependants are identified. Given that women may be reluctant to disclose, sufficient time must be taken to encourage them to do this and it should be made clear that sensitive information will not be disclosed orally in open court.⁶⁸
100. Currently, apart from asking a woman if she is caring for any children (or adults), the checklist does not specify that any further questions should be asked which might

66 HM Inspectorate of Probation, (2016), *A Thematic Inspection Of The Provision And Quality Of Services In The Community For Women Who Offend*, p24 Available online: www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmiprobation/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2016/09/A-thematic-inspection-of-the-provision-and-quality-of-services-in-the-community-for-women-who-offend.pdf

67 Ministry of Justice, (2018), *Female Offender Strategy*, p20

68 National Offender Management Service, (2016), *Determining Pre-Sentence Reports - Sentencing within the new framework*, PI 04/2016, p4 '1.14 NPS must ensure that staff do not present sensitive information required for sentencing purposes orally in open court. Where this is required for sentencing purposes this must be provided in a written format.'

form the basis for an assessment of the impacts on those dependants should a custodial sentence be passed. (Any alternative community recommendations should also show meaningful consideration of family circumstance, such as the ability to attend appointments and comply with other requirements.)

101. Input from social services may therefore be required if courts are to obtain sufficient information to be able to take any caring responsibilities, and any concerns about family abuse, fully into account when sentencing. Where there are ongoing or past family court proceedings, social services should interact with CAFCASS for relevant information on what is in the children's best interests to pass on to NPS. Voluntary sector organisations who are working with a woman may also be able to assist.
102. This would require adjourning for a written PSR whenever a woman's offending crossed the custodial threshold unless there was a recent written report already on file, when an update on the day may be sufficient.⁶⁹ For this and other reasons, courts should clearly indicate when requesting Pre-Sentence Reports where the initial assessment is that the custodial threshold has been passed, and convicted women made aware of this by the person conducting the PSR Interview as I heard that many solicitors were not doing so.⁷⁰ I heard many cases of women who had been advised by their legal counsel that custody was unlikely, and so had made no alternative care arrangements for their children on the day of sentencing. If expectations were better managed, fewer women would be unprepared for an immediate custodial sentence.

Recommendation

Given the complexity of many female offenders' lives, and the greater likelihood that they are primary carers, obtaining a written Pre-Sentence Report to be made mandatory for all women (and male primary carers) before a custodial sentence is passed (if a recent report is not available).

Accurate information on relationships and the impact of custody on family ties systematically obtained through the PSR process to be made available to sentence planners to inform custody and other disposal decisions.

Courts to indicate clearly when requesting Pre-Sentence Reports if the initial assessment is that the custodial threshold has been passed, and convicted women made aware of this by the person conducting the PSR Interview.

69 Ibid, p12: '6.2 Where a PSR has been recently completed within the last 6 months, consideration should be given to presenting this along with an update presented orally to provide information on any change in circumstances and offence analysis. Where a PSR has been completed within one year, although this can be presented to the court, a more detailed consideration would be required due to an increasing likelihood the information will be out of date the greater the length of time since the assessment was completed.'

70 The final decision on sentence will not be made until the information from the report is available and according to the MA, advice to magistrates is that custody should not be ruled out too early as this limits the sentencing bench, which should have all available options open when making the final decision.

Deferred sentences

Deferring the start of a custodial sentence

103. Several people who responded to the Call for Evidence suggested making it possible to defer the start of custodial sentences to allow for care to be organised for dependants. I have been advised that there does not currently appear to be any provision in English law for deferring the start of a custodial sentence once that decision has been made. I came to the conclusion that the onus should be on professionals who are in contact with the woman prior to sentencing such as her solicitor if she has one, the justice or magistrate at the point of conviction or the probation officers conducting the PSR Interview, to inform her if a custodial sentence is a possibility (without, in the case of justices, raising expectations as to any particular sentence). I fully understand that the enormity of a possible custodial sentence can be very hard for women to come to terms with and prepare for.
104. Where lives are already complex and women are vulnerable, support should be given at the pre-sentence stage, as part of a whole systems approach, to help women prepare their children, family members and friends who might be able to support them throughout a custodial period, for the possibility of imprisonment.

Recommendation

As part of the whole systems approach, a lead professional to ensure support (typically from women's organisations) is available at the pre-sentence stage, to help women prepare their children, family members and friends who might be able to support them throughout a custodial period, for the possibility of imprisonment.

Deferring sentencing for review before a decision is made

105. Deferral of sentencing may be appropriate in certain cases to test a woman's commitment to engage with a community order, especially if it is possible that custody could be avoided. This would usually happen where the assessment of the Pre-Sentence Report writer, having taken her individual circumstances into account, is that behaviour or motivation may have changed or be about to change. It is not a routine measure used any time custody is under consideration but where conduct needs to be reviewed to decide between two sentences.
106. Conditions may need to be met for the lower option to be followed: she might need to attend a drug project, undertake restorative justice conferences or work intensively with an organisation which can help her address the reasons behind her offending, including a lack of positive and supportive relationships. She might be on the brink of losing her children partly because of her offending behaviour but also due to her

neglect or abuse of them. Without additional family support – and particularly if she is incarcerated – the children could end up in the care system.

107. The Scottish system of structured deferred sentences provides, through the 218 Service, an evaluated model of an alternative to immediate custody that strengthens families and helps women reconnect with their children, families and friends and learn how to develop safe, stable and nurturing relationships. It includes a residential option, the effectiveness of which the Government is exploring as it seeks to establish the workability of residential women's centres.⁷¹

Structured Deferred Sentences and the 218 Service

Scotland has piloted the use of structured deferred sentences (SDS) for female offenders who have clearly identified social needs. The SDS is a short period (3-6 months) of structured social work supervision to which an offender consents. During the period between verdict and sentence, engagement with Drug Court Supervision and Treatment Team and with community-based services such as the 218 Service in Glasgow are frequently required, to prove that the offender is sufficiently stable in order to have a community sentence.

The 218 Service includes a 12-bed Residential Unit for women from Glasgow who have been involved with the criminal justice system in the last 12 months and a day support programme for a maximum of 50 female offenders who remain in the community while attending one compulsory group and up to three further contacts a week. Residents stay in the house between four weeks and six months and take part in a structured group work programme, intensive one-to-one support three times per week (if they are residential) and in-house physical and mental health interventions.

As well as help to tackle addictions, sessions include help to attend appointments with the courts, social workers and children's panels as well as support for visits from family members.⁷² In the recent evaluation 16 of the 19 women interviewed reported that their relationships with their families had improved since attending the 218 Service.⁷³

This included children being returned to mothers' care or reconnecting meaningfully with them and their wider families. The evaluation deemed this to be an important outcome for many of the women interviewed. 'For many

71 Ministry of Justice, (2018), *Female Offender Strategy*, p21

72 Women can be referred through a variety of means including the Scottish equivalent of a Pre-Sentence Report; as a condition of a deferred sentence; as a direct bail option; as a condition of probation; by Community Addiction Teams (CAT); by voluntary sector services; by their solicitor and by the women's prison, as well as by self-referral.

73 Easton, H. and Matthews R., *Evaluation of the 218 service: Examining Implementation and Outcomes*, London South Bank University, p62

renewing contact with their children provided them a sense of hope about the future and was a key measure of their success.⁷⁴

Women are also able to work through difficulties in their relationships with partners, improve their friendships and build trusting relationships with staff.

Post-sentence

108. Women who are sentenced to custody should always be asked by cell, court-based probation or voluntary sector support staff, if they need to contact dependants or organise childcare before being put onto transport. Given that she may be reluctant to disclose or in shock at the prospect of imprisonment, her Personal Circumstances digital file and/or Pre-Sentence Report should also be consulted to ascertain if there is a need for contact, and who needs to be called. Where children or dependent adults might be left without care, this must take priority and every effort made to allow women the opportunity to make arrangements, certainly before social services is called.

Recommendation

Women sentenced to custody to be asked if they need to make telephone contact with dependants or organise childcare and allowed to do so before being put onto transport.

Family and other relationships and community orders

109. The combination of support and accountability offered by a community sentence can be invaluable to women with complex needs and offending behaviour. Where a community sentence has been given it is essential that women whose criminogenic needs include relationships – and we know that the vast majority are in this position – receive the necessary help so this is no longer the case. Relationships are the foundation stone she can build her new life upon and all women need this to be an explicit element in their rehabilitation. Yet many women have endured devastating experiences in this area.

In her survey response, one woman under probation supervision, said that to improve contact with family and friends she had:

'...to prove I've changed my ways but I need to let go of bad feelings I have for them not being there for me.'

74 Ibid, p63

110. Whether supervised in the community by the National Probation Service or (as currently) local Community Rehabilitation Company – and whatever supply chain partners they commission – it is essential that women receive help to:

- Restore broken relationships including, where appropriate, with children who are at risk of being or have already been taken into care and family members or friends whom she has possibly alienated as a result of her offending behaviour;
- Learn how to build new, healthy relationships, including how to identify the hallmarks of coercive control, work through interpersonal difficulties (including how to de-escalate conflict before it becomes harmful) and parent more effectively if this is an issue;
- Safely exit toxic relationships, including with abusive partners or associates including family members who will impede her rehabilitation.

111. During the original Farmer Review I heard that family work was not properly embedded in Transforming Rehabilitation: CRCs are not routinely (or ever) commissioning organisations with a proven track record in helping male offenders maintain and strengthen their family ties. The work underway to design and deliver a new model for Probation from 2021 across England and Wales, provides an important opportunity to ensure support for family and other relational ties is part of the future rehabilitative offer to offenders.

112. Although women's centres, which I describe in the next section, work on all the offending pathways, including 'Families and Children', and this is an area where women may be better served than men, not all have access to a women's centre.

- For both men and women, current CRC-commissioned or delivered programmes and courses to do with relationships should not just be focused on abuse, but also on how to build a better relationship with one's children, or partner when domestic abuse is not an issue, or with other potentially supportive adults:
- Sometimes this relationship help will take the form of programmes or course which could be delivered as part of a wider programme, including as an element of a rehabilitation activity requirement or other requirement specified in the community order.
- However, women may be concerned that this will be very difficult, stigmatising and intrusive work, and it would have to be voluntary rather than mandated, particularly as it might draw in other members of the family such as children and partners. Incentives could be given in the form of options, for example if the main punitive element of a woman's community sentence is unpaid work or community service then a portion of that could be 'served' by attending a parenting or other course.

Recommendation

HMPPS currently developing the new model for Probation to ensure that services are available to support family and other relational ties under this new model.

Women's Centres

113. I am generally very positive about women's centres and understand that women-only spaces have an important role to play in creating an environment conducive to rehabilitation – women need to desist into something, they need places to go where they feel safe, which are trauma-informed and where they can build relationships of trust. However, it became clear to me as I looked more closely at women's centres and talked to those running them that it is important to have a wide vision of what a women's centre is: at their best these are not just buildings, they are all about relationships.

What do women's centres do?

Women's community services working with women in the justice system typically provide wraparound, holistic support designed to meet the needs of the women they support. Women's centres are diverse in terms of the services they deliver and how they deliver them. They are embedded in their local communities and work responsively and flexibly to meet the needs of the women they support, whilst also responding to the specific needs in their locations.

These organisations provide essential services to women at risk of being already involved with the criminal justice system, supporting them to develop and maintain relationships with their family, including dependants but also providing support to the high number of women (from these cohorts) who are in coercive relationships and otherwise experiencing domestic abuse. Due to the responsive nature of women's centres it can be challenging to provide a definitive explanation of what they do, but they all share core principles:⁷⁵

- Focused on women's needs;
- Underpinned by an understanding of women's needs, lives and what works for them;
- Located within a women-only, safe, trauma-informed and enabling environment;

⁷⁵ These are adapted from reports published from the Women Centred working programme that can be accessed here: Women Centred Working, www.womencentredworking.com

- Holistic in their approach;
- Delivered with quality and professionalism by staff and volunteers with a specific skill set;
- Co-produced with the women they are supporting;
- Flexible and facilitating a supportive working environment;
- Able to integrate services by linking up diverse agencies that support women.

114. Women's centres I visited clearly value relationships and stress the importance of the bonds that develop between women and between them and the keyworkers, volunteers and other staff, and they cite them as a key factor in their success in helping women turn their lives around. They frequently come into contact with women who have lost their children (partly as a consequence of their involvement in the criminal justice system, although social services departments may have been concerned about their children's welfare before this took place). In many cases if mothers can be given structured and intensive parenting support, social services might be willing to consider returning children to them, or at least to providing more contact in the best interests of the child.

115. I heard that this is provided in some women's centres (such as the 218 Service mentioned earlier and Surrey Women's Centre, see box below), but the ability of any facilities to provide the wide range of family, parenting and relationship support for which there is such high need, is directly linked to variable (and usually desperately precarious) levels of resourcing and funding. There are very many financial pressures on women's centres who struggle to secure funding for their core offer as well as for their general support workers, alcohol and drug specialists, domestic abuse and housing specialists and parenting workers.

Some of the services run at Women in Prison's women's support centre in Woking, Surrey which relate to relationships, domestic abuse and families:

Generic Project Work: support workers provide one-to-one support and run a weekly drop in, which provides a safe space to talk and access information about other services. Various workshops are run throughout the year, including a 10-week programme on healthy relationships.

'Sliding Doors' Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Group: a 12-week programme focusing on intimate relationships for young women aged 14 to 17. Sliding doors is jointly facilitated with Child Sexual Exploitation Leads from Children's Services.

'One Step Ahead' CSE prevention programme focusing on healthy relationship for younger people (male and female) aged between 8 and 12 years.

PACT (Parenting and Challenging Teenagers Programme): an eight-week parenting programme. PACT is co-facilitated with practitioners from Surrey Family Services.

Counselling: a specialist counselling service for women who, in addition to their involvement in the criminal justice system have also been the victims of crime, domestic abuse, sexual abuse, adverse childhood experiences, exploitation and trafficking. Free one-to-one counselling sessions are delivered by trained volunteers for up to 26 weeks, enabling women to make longer term changes and better life choices. The intended outcomes/benefits are: improved mental health and well-being, reduced reliance on substance misuse, improved family and community relationships, reduced offending/reoffending behaviour, increased reporting of domestic abuse and better self-awareness to make positive changes for the future.

The women's support centre has a member of staff seconded from Surrey County Council who holds a protected caseload of younger clients under generic services (18-25) and has supported the centre's diversion project by assisting with restorative justice meetings between mothers and teenager where an offence has been committed. This role is an example of good practice and partnership working between statutory services and voluntary sector women's centres. It also matches the criteria for 'early help.'

The centre has had many cases where offences have been committed by a woman (parent to child) but where interventions from the women's centre have resulted in children's services being able to close the case.

116. In summary, relationships are the bed-rock of a women-centred approach and the whole ethos of women's centres is about building relationships, whether within groups, through mutual aid, peer support and between keyworkers and the women who attend. However, the precarious funding position many women's centres are in jeopardises these services which are essential to the rehabilitation and rebuilding of the lives of so many women under probation supervision in the community.

Sustainable funding for women's centres

117. As the Female Offender Strategy highlights 'we recognise that the availability and sustainability of these services, such as women's centres, is essential for ensuring that we can deliver the vision we have outlined.'⁷⁶ This is welcome, but as Clinks and other voluntary organisations have highlighted, the funding made available to date by the Ministry of Justice falls considerably short of what is needed to ensure the aims of the Female Offender Strategy are realised.
118. We know that the reach of women's centres, and women's services is patchy across England and Wales: some areas are well-served by established women's centres whilst others are not. I heard that women in rural areas find it especially difficult to access support. Yet centrally located women's centres could act as service 'hubs' to support 'spokes' in remoter communities. For example, their staff could augment what is currently offered on women-only days or initiate these in other facilities. Not every area will need a full-time women's centre but women in every area should have access to the kinds of service they provide. However, transforming the current fragmented landscape of support requires a policy and funding response from the Ministry of Justice, which will be sufficient to galvanise local government, philanthropists and other commissioners to strengthen current, effective provision and enable it to grow.
119. In 2018, Clinks and the Prison Reform Trust commissioned a paper to explore the funding needed for a sustainable network of women's centres. Using the most up to date information available, including information gathered from established women's centres, the paper estimates that it costs at least £3,500 per women to deliver a high-quality of package of support to women on a full cost-recovery basis.
120. Further analysis (please see Appendix for a more detailed breakdown of information) suggests between £23.4m and £70.8m is needed to ensure the majority of women in contact with the CJS can access a holistic package of support provided by women's centres. As women's centres receive funding from a range of sources, this sum would be generated through both statutory sources and charitable trusts and foundations.
121. National and local commissioners, including the Ministry of Justice, are key to ensuring the long-term sustainability of these organisations and long-term grant funding in commissioning cycles of at least five years is needed to support this. If women's centres (and the co-located domestic abuse services recommended in Chapter 1) were more sustainably funded, this would go a long way to addressing the historic dearth of support for women's family and other relationships which is so vital for rehabilitation. The National Concordat for Female Offenders, currently being developed by the Ministry of Justice, should highlight the role women's centres can play in whole systems approaches. It should also examine opportunities to bring

⁷⁶ Ministry of Justice, (2018), *Female Offender Strategy*, p8

together cross-government funding for the services they deliver, given the potential savings to the Ministry of Justice and other government departments.

122. Given the spending implications across government for women's offending, particularly those relating to the greater likelihood that their children will end up in local authority care, the Reducing Reoffending Board⁷⁷ set up to establish a cross-Government approach to reducing reoffending should pay regular attention to the specific needs of female offenders and identify a ministerial lead to ensure progress.
123. If this cross-government money were funnelled through Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) budgets, as they are the service commissioners, it could be robustly performance managed by local criminal justice boards or other equivalent strategic local groups (as I recommended in Chapter 1). What is delivered locally would therefore be bespoke to the needs on the ground.

Recommendation

The National Concordat for Female Offenders to highlight the role women's centres can play in delivering whole systems approaches and examine opportunities to bring together cross-government funding for the services they deliver, given the potential savings to the Ministry of Justice and other government departments.

Given the particular spending implications across government for women's offending, such as those relating to the greater likelihood that their children will end up in local authority care, the Reducing Reoffending Board (which takes a cross-Government approach to reducing reoffending) to have a ministerial lead for and pay regular attention to the specific needs of female offenders.

124. As stated earlier, women's centres need a sustainable funding model whereby core services are paid for through those agencies which refer women (including Police and Crime Commissioners and Probation providers) and those which save money through the interventions they provide, such as health and local authorities. Social Finance produced a set of indicative savings over five years from the Greater Manchester Women's Support Alliance (GMWSA) of women's centres which is reproduced below.

⁷⁷ The Reducing Reoffending Board was set up in 2018 to establish a cross-Government approach to reducing reoffending. Led by the Cabinet Office it is attended by Ministers from the Home Office, Work and Pensions, Treasury, Housing, Communities and Local Government, Education, Wales and Justice. Available online: <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmjust/1530/153002.htm#footnote-001>

Indicative savings over five years from the GMWSA women's centres⁷⁸

Organisations	Avoided Costs
Local Authorities	£3,131,500
NHS	£3,157,500
Police	£2,917,500
Prisons	£1,800,000
Courts/Legal Aid	£1,038,500
Other CJS	£804,000
CRC	£271,500

125. There will still be a need to raise additional funds for extra services and pilots and therefore an ongoing role for philanthropists and charitable trusts. The learning from evaluations of pilots will be disseminated through the Ministry of Justice's evidence landing page and the sustainability of the core service should give them more confidence that emerging good practice will be implemented.

Recommendation

Funding for women's centres to be made sustainable, with core services paid for by those agencies which refer women (including Police and Crime Commissioners and Probation providers) and those which save money through the interventions they provide, such as health and local authorities.

Residential women's centres

126. The Female Offender Strategy commits to testing residential women's centre models which

*'...offer an intensive residential support package in the community for women at risk of, or having served, short custodial sentences, supporting them to address the underlying causes of their offending behaviour. We want them to identify, encourage and coordinate service users to access services that will address their offending behaviour, such as substance misuse, and allow them to establish a positive lifestyle in the community.'*⁷⁹

⁷⁸ 'Greater Manchester Combined Authority, Whole System Approach for Women Offenders', presented by Social Finance, 20th March 2018, Used with permission

⁷⁹ Ministry of Justice, (2018), *Female Offender Strategy*, p21

127. We are aware of legitimate concerns expressed by organizations which support women in the criminal justice system, such as the risk of up-tariffing. This is where women who would have received a non-custodial sentence are required to stay in a residential women's centre, which might, in some cases mean they have greater restrictions imposed on them than is proportionate to their crime, even if they are not 'locked in.'
128. They also risk facing the same barriers to post-sentence resettlement as those held in prison. They might be separated from their children and have their housing, employment or benefits disrupted.
129. However, when discussing residential women's centres the Female Offender Strategy seems to prioritise women who need stable accommodation and holistic support to enable them to complete community orders successfully. The aim is to divert them from custody (which might have been the only other alternative given the nature of the offence) or reduce their risk of being recalled due to a lack of support in the community. All of which suggests a different cohort from those whose accommodation and employment might be disrupted. However, it might mean that they are unable to care for their children.
130. Whatever models are eventually piloted, the holistic support offered to women must, as with non-residential women's centres, include programmes and approaches which will help develop residents' ability to identify and form safe and respectful relationships with other adults and help them to provide their children with safe, stable and nurturing relationships.
131. During the Review I came across models upon which residential women's centres could be based, which also accommodate women's children, such as Trevi House and Staffordshire Women's Aid (see box below). Trevi House specifies that it includes relationship analysis in women's rehabilitation plans and supports women in their appointments with social services who are checking up on their children's progress.

Residential facilities which accommodate women's children

Trevi House, Plymouth

Trevi House provides rehabilitation and parental assessment for mothers with drug or alcohol dependency issues, together with their children. Trevi House also admits pregnant women. It is both a home and a safe place; where mothers and children remain together as a family unit while substance misuse and related issues are addressed. The women have sessions on issues such as domestic violence, relapse prevention and detox. Each woman follows a strict rehabilitation plan which includes daily counselling, relationship analysis, group therapy, medical examinations and check-ups from social services.

Rated as outstanding by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) in 2016, Trevi takes referrals from across the UK and can accommodate up to 10 women. It can be used to fulfil community sentence requirements but has to be recommended in the Pre-Sentence Report for a sentencer to be able to send a woman there.

Trevi House is often the last option before a child is removed and goes into permanent care: the children of seven out of 10 women they support stay with their mother. Nine out of 10 women leave the programme drug free.⁸⁰

ForWard House Refuge, Stafford⁸¹

Formerly Staffordshire Women's Aid, this project was developed over 10 years, and its design was heavily influenced by service users and practitioners. It has a balance of self-contained apartments alongside

community areas to encourage relationship building and the development of skills to make a positive difference in the lives of women and their families. Its design enables large families to be housed as well as people from all cultures and religions, older boys, and families with complex needs. It is fully accessible for disabled women and children and aims to provide a safe, therapeutic space where families impacted by the trauma of domestic violence can recover and rebuild their lives.

Those running ForWard House see a clear overlap between what they do and work with female offenders:

'We know from the research that a very large proportion of women in prison have experienced some form of sexual or domestic violence/abuse, and that this is very often linked to their offending. We now have a strong working relationship with HMP Drake Hall and are delivering group work inside the prison to build confidence and better understand the dynamics of abuse and how to challenge it.'

They are keen to build upon the overlaps between the work done in this Refuge, and the women and children they serve, and Staffordshire Women's Aid's work in a women's prison. They are looking at the possibility that women who represent low risk to themselves and others, who would otherwise be held in HMP Drake Hall and lose care of their children, could instead be held in the secure accommodation of ForWard House.

80 Hannah Shead, CEO, Trevi House, *Oral Submission to the Farmer Review*

81 Local Government Association Website, *ForWard House – A New Model for Outstanding Refuge Provision*, www.local.gov.uk/forward-house-new-model-outstanding-refuge-provision

International example: Half-way houses in Germany

In response to the increasing number of mothers in prison, Germany introduced community-based accommodation or half-way houses for many female offenders. Mothers and children live together in these houses: children up to 3 years old can stay with mothers in closed conditions and up to 6 years in open conditions.⁸²

The women are given a curfew and must stay within the house in the evenings and overnight but during the day they access prison training, education, and support while their children attend nursery or school.⁸³ This integrated approach combines imprisonment and welfare, while protecting the rights and welfare of the children of offenders. All staff in these houses, including prison officers, have background studies in a relevant caring profession.

Social workers are involved throughout, but particularly in the last six months of her time in the half-way house when social workers from the area where the mother will live will attend meetings in the prison.⁸⁴

These do not resemble prisons: there are no bars on the windows or fences and they are designed to be as open as possible. Many children are unaware they are in a prison. Prison staff do not wear uniform as they want the environment to be as normal and unthreatening as possible. If a woman disobeys a rule or behaves problematically staff attempt to resolve the situation with her without the child being present: they take the view that mothers who are seen being punished will lose their authority over their children and the relationship will be damaged.⁸⁵

Participants having a significantly lower rate of reoffending than women who are not housed with their children.⁸⁶

Recommendation

Residential women's centres to have places for women to bring their children, if they would not otherwise have sufficiently stable accommodation in which to complete community orders.

82 Places for children to stay with their mothers are funded by money from children's services, child and other benefits as well as general state funds – see Dolan R, (2016), *Alternative Approaches to Prison for Mothers of Young Children*, Winston Churchill Memorial Trust, p22

83 Prison Reform Trust and The Pilgrim Trust, (2013), *International Good Practice: Alternatives To Imprisonment For Women offenders*, p29 Available online: www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/Portals/0/Documents/Women/InternationalGoodPractice.pdf

84 Dolan R, (2016), *Alternative Approaches to Prison for Mothers of Young Children*, Winston Churchill Memorial Trust, p22

85 Ibid

86 Ibid, p35

132. ForWard House, described in the box earlier, is a secure unit primarily designed to keep women and their families (who can obviously come and go) safe from abusive ex-partners (who cannot breach security). Unlike many other refuges women and their children live in self-contained flats rather than communally, which enables them to sustain and build their family identity. They are responsible for all aspects of their and their children's lives. This model could be used to hold women in open custodial conditions if their crime is serious enough that it would always merit a sentence, but who are at low enough risk to retain care of their children.
133. Whilst this would be a new departure for the imprisonment of women in England and Wales, Germany adopted this model some time ago. As part of the Ministry of Justice's longer-term strategy, consideration should be given to its effectiveness in reducing reoffending and the intergenerational transmission of crime, including an analysis of the characteristics of women and children to whom it is best suited.

Recommendation

Models of custodial centres in the community to be considered as part of the Ministry of Justice's longer-term strategy, for women whose crime is serious enough to merit a custodial sentence, but who are at low enough risk to retain care of their children.

Family and other relationships post-release from custody

*'Released from prison, needs unidentified and unmet, still suffering stigma, institutionalization and trauma, they are 'highly vulnerable to the "revolving door syndrome" of relapse, crime and imprisonment.'*⁸⁷

134. One of the most common and concerning barriers to women's rehabilitation after they leave prison is the difficulties they experience when trying to re-establish relationships with family members, resume healthy (rather than toxic) friendships or build, perhaps for the first time, supportive bonds with adults who will not exploit them and turn them back to crime. Women's centres, where they are available, also play an important role for former prisoners, not just women who have been supervised in the community. They are alive to the 'stigma, institutionalization and trauma' referred to in the quote above and their support can be instrumental in women overcoming them.
135. Resuming contact with friends who might be able to support a woman's transition back into the community can be problematic when so much time has elapsed. For this reason, I also strongly recommend in the next chapter that virtual visits using video-conferencing technology are available to all women whilst they are being held in prison, not just mothers. Visual contact is effective in helping people stay current in each other's lives.

87 Plugge, E., et al., (2006), *The Health of Women in Prison Study Findings*, University of Oxford, p62

136. However, women face additional difficulties when trying to resume primary carer and other family responsibilities after leaving prison. Re-establishing daily contact with and care of their children upon release presents many major issues. It is no easy thing to walk back into the day-to-day lives of children from whom one has been absent for weeks, months or even years, possibly seeing them rarely if at all, given the difficulties and cost of visits. Other family members may have had to take over mothers' roles. Children may have been taken into local authority care or even adopted away from their birth families. Accommodation is essential if families are to be reunited but is not always available.
137. In the next chapter on **Better Custody** I recommend that women's prisons in England routinely employ social workers who can liaise between women inside and social services outside in the Local Authority/ies where her family lives. When she leaves prison this ongoing contact between social services professionals and sharing of information, such as her progress towards desistance, would put them in a much better place to assist her integration back into the family.
138. Probation services also need to be part of the solution. A joint thematic review on resettlement was published in 2014 by Her Majesty's Inspectorates of Prison and Probation and Ofsted which emphasised:

*'...the central importance of an offender's family and friends to their successful rehabilitation. Of course, sometimes an offender's family may be the victims of their crime and sometimes they may be a negative influence that contributes to their offending behaviour...However, overwhelmingly, this inspection confirmed our view that an offender's family are the most effective resettlement agency.'*⁸⁸

This report is now nearly five years old and it would be a useful benchmark against which to measure progress for women in the area of resettlement. Probation services need to play their role in ensuring the importance of family and other relationships is a golden thread running through the criminal justice system. As such, and in light of the MoJ's female offender strategy, it would be timely for HMI Probation, as the lead resettlement inspectorate, to conduct a further review assessing the impact of the 2014 report's recommendations for women.

Recommendation

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation to assess the impact of recommendations from the 2014 joint thematic review on Resettlement provision for female offenders, in light of the MoJ's female offender strategy.

88 HM Inspectorate of Prisons, HM Inspectorate of Probation and Ofsted (2014), *Resettlement provision for adult offenders: Accommodation and education, training and employment*, p5.

139. The plans to introduce a new model for probation from 2021 provide an important opportunity to remove any unintended barriers to this outcome which have been introduced as a result of the Transforming Rehabilitation reforms. Two areas of inflexibility highlighted to me in the Call for Evidence are considered below. First, the 12-month period over which women are supervised in the community after leaving prison, and under threat of recall even if no offence is committed. This is often too long. Second, the 12-week window at the end of the sentence to arrange accommodation. This is often too short.
140. Finally, I frequently heard about the housing 'Catch 22' facing many women upon release: they are eager to be reunited with their dependent children but cannot have them in their full-time care until they have obtained suitable accommodation. Yet a single woman is not entitled to appropriately sized accommodation until her children are in her care. This has to be addressed.

Reforming Probation to avoid further damage to family ties

Recall during the 12-month supervision period

141. The requirement for all offenders who have served prison sentences of less than 12 months to undergo compulsorily a full 12 months of post-sentence supervision (under Section 2 of the Offender Rehabilitation Act 2014) can be highly problematic in practice.
142. Sometimes these requirements are very difficult for women to fulfil alongside family responsibilities yet if they miss a probation appointment, perhaps while meeting these responsibilities, this can be treated as a breach of licence conditions and result in a recall to prison. The threat that they might be recalled to custody – without committing an offence – hangs over them and those relying on them for a length of time that may be far in excess of the original sentence.
143. The House of Commons Justice Committee considered this issue in its recent Inquiry into Transforming Rehabilitation. They expressed concern about the inflexibility of the 12-month supervision period and the requirements it placed on people which appeared to set them up to fail in the absence of the necessary support:

*'We welcome the intention...to improve consistency of post-sentence supervision provided to offenders, especially those receiving short custodial sentences. However, the current one-size fits all approach lacks the flexibility to meet the varying needs of offenders.'*⁸⁹

144. The plans to introduce a new model for probation from 2021 provide an opportunity to address the problems of recall identified by the Justice Committee and others which

89 House of Commons, Justice Committee, (2018), *Transforming Rehabilitation Ninth Report of Session 2017–19*, p52

include the aggravation of resettlement difficulties which can arise from the offender's relational background, such as their primary – and often sole – carer status. Penalties other than recall should be used which reflect the rehabilitative intent of the 12-month supervision period. The importance of rehabilitation and relationships needs to be at the forefront of probation practice with recall a measure that is only taken proportionately and in light of these overarching considerations.

Recommendation

The plans to introduce a new model for probation from 2021 to address the problems of recall which can arise from the offender's relational background, such as their primary – and often sole – carer status. Penalties other than recall to be used which reflect the rehabilitative intent of the 12-month supervision period with rehabilitation and relationships at the forefront of probation practice and recall a measure only taken proportionately and in light of these overarching considerations.

Ensuring women have accommodation upon release

145. Where women are released homeless from custody, as well as all the other vulnerabilities this implies it will also have a detrimental effect on her ability to maintain and develop family and other relational ties. All women who leave prison need a roof over their heads, in a stable and secure setting, and resettlement support so tenancies succeed, and rehabilitation can proceed.
146. Yet an inspection of Through the Gate resettlement services for short-term prisoners by HM Inspectorate of Probation and HM Inspectorate of Prisons, found that 13% of women were released from prison to no fixed abode and only 22% were released with secure permanent accommodation, compared to 35% for men.⁹⁰ Social housing can often not be applied for while the women are still in prison which means it has to be resolved at short-notice on release. This is a good example of how, at the local level, different parts of the system need to be made to work better together. Enabling this 'join up' should be included in a whole systems approach.
147. The reason details about accommodation should be included in a woman's Personal Circumstances File is to enable offender managers and others responsible for her resettlement when she leaves prison are able to think, from the outset, about where she will live. Good practice indicates that:

'...re-entry planning should begin at the point of entry to an institution and finish at long-lasting sustainable success. Rather than starting in the final months of a prisoner's stay, re-entry planning should immediately influence the programmes

90 House of Commons Briefing Paper, (2017), *Housing Support for Ex-Offenders (England and Wales)*, Number 2989, p14

*made available to prisoners, continue in their supervised release, and end only once the individual finds stability and self-sufficiency.*⁹¹

148. Currently Through the Gate provision requires CRCs to provide resettlement services to offenders 12 weeks before their release from custody, which includes help to find accommodation. In reality, that help may simply be a referral to another organisation 'recorded as completed once an e-mail had been sent.'⁹² A member of the Residents' Committee whom I met at HMP Low Newton told me,

'There is not enough help pre-release and nowhere to go. Women are often fleeing domestic violence and have nothing to do with their parents so cannot go back there, for example they were previously in the care system.'

149. Another woman on the Residents' Committee said,

'My boyfriend forced me to discard all my other friends.'

150. The plans to introduce a new model for probation from 2021 need to clarify who is locally responsible for securing post-release housing and ensure all offenders receive appropriate resettlement support through the gate, as stipulated by the Probation and Prisons Inspectorates, see box below. It is particularly important that women are connected with outside services whilst they are still in custody.

Through the Gate Resettlement Services

The Probation and Prisons Inspectorates stated that the minimum requirements for resettlement should be:

- a safe place to sleep, from the day of release;
- access to enough money to meet basic needs including food, clothing, and transport;
- a sense of hope for the future; and
- active links into services that can assist them with other needs, for example substance misuse and mental health services.⁹³

151. The work to design the new probation model needs to build sufficient flexibility into any new resettlement model to enable planning for accommodation post-release to start early enough to secure the best outcome. The issue of where she will live when

91 Prison Reform Trust and The Pilgrim Trust, (2013), *International Good Practice: Alternatives to Imprisonment for Women Offenders*, p30 Available online: <http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/Portals/0/Documents/Women/InternationalGoodPractice.pdf>

92 HM Inspectorate of Probation, Criminal Justice Joint Inspection, (2016), *An Inspection of Through the Gate Resettlement Services for Short-Term Prisoners*, p7 Available online: <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/cjji/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2016/09/Through-the-Gate.pdf>

93 Ibid, p13

she leaves prison should be considered at the point of induction, using information in her Personal Circumstances File or through the Basic Custody Screening Tool. If, for example, a woman will be in prison for five months, housing benefit (or the housing costs element of Universal Credit) may only be paid for three months.

152. She is not necessarily aware of the need to inform her landlord and the DWP and for a solution to be found to pay the last two months' rent – perhaps by applying for a Discretionary Housing Payment. If she is not proactively given this information and help to act on it, she might unnecessarily lose her and her children's home, her possessions and the means to accommodate her children. This may mean she is not able to regain care of her children once her sentence is completed.
153. If her case is only picked up 12 weeks before she is released, the window for arranging such help is almost closed. Information on her housing situation including that which is in her Personal Circumstances File, should be looked at from the outset of her sentence, not least so that missing information can be obtained.

Recommendation

The plans to introduce a new model for probation from 2021 also to:

- Clarify who is locally responsible for securing post-release housing
- Ensure all offenders receive appropriate resettlement support through the gate including by connecting them with outside services whilst they are still in custody.
- Ensure there is sufficient flexibility in in any new resettlement model to enable planning for accommodation post-release to start early enough to secure the best outcome. This will require acting on information contained in the Personal Circumstances File from the point of induction.

Solving the Accommodation 'Catch 22'

154. A survey carried out in 1994 found that only 5% of children remain in the family home,⁹⁴ and in many cases the home may no longer be there when the woman returns. Women need accommodation to regain care of their children but are ineligible for housing until their children live with them and this 'Catch 22' situation needs to be resolved. Fundamentally this is a systemic problem which requires various aspects of state provision – including social services, local authority housing and resettlement support provided by probation services – to be properly joined up with voluntary sector partners who can provide support to help families reunite successfully.
155. Philanthropically founded initiatives like Re-Unite, described in the box below, have been designed specifically to address this recurring accommodation conundrum but

94 Home Office (1997) *Imprisoned Women and Mothers*, Home Office Research Study 162, London

most have faltered due to lack of long-term investment. The Government's emphasis on a whole system approach provides an opportunity for the problem to be addressed at the systemic level required.

Re-Unite

Re-Unite was established in 2007 through philanthropic funding from Commonweal Housing. Over ten years, Re-Unite supported 100 mothers and approximately 200 children. Across those supported by the project, the re-conviction rate was just 10%, with significant cost savings delivered to the state.⁹⁵ Re-Unite provides housing and support for mothers leaving prison who would otherwise be homeless, so they can be reunited swiftly with their children. The Commonweal funding allowed 16-18 Re-Unite projects to start which all included the following aspects:

- Women in prison are contacted by project workers early in their sentence and just before they are released, and provided with accommodation as they leave prison
- Individually tailored assistance for each woman
- A woman's family is treated as an important unit, to be held together if possible
- User involvement and feedback
- Help in finding and maintaining permanent homes
- Move-on support that aims for independence

Re-unite projects provide supported accommodation with space for group work and therapeutic services; experienced support workers have the skills to advocate on women's behalf and provide practical and emotional support for issues including employment, debt, practical living skills and community involvement.

There are also 'floating' advocacy and support services to help women find accommodation through a range of housing providers, and dedicated children and young people's support workers to help service users' dependants re-establish healthy bonds with their mothers and overcome any trauma they may have experienced. Again, they advocate and liaise with social services and family courts where appropriate, regarding issues of contact and custody.

⁹⁵ Commonweal Housing, (2017), *Re-Unite Ten Year Review*, p6

Whilst annual personal care costs in Re-Unite South London have been estimated at £14,825 a client, identified saving areas (which include those relating to crimes of fraud, forgery and drug trafficking) deliver cost benefits of Re-Unite of £86,084 per service user over two years or £93,646 per service user over ten years.⁹⁶

156. The key elements of the Re-Unite model – delivered by a range of different providers – should be treated as indispensable to a coordinated, whole systems approach for the rehabilitation of female offenders. The statutory sector response must be joined up and ensure accommodation allocation guidance addresses the needs of this cohort, so families are not prevented from living together. Women and their children may also need therapeutic help, including from the voluntary sector to resume their relationship and establish a healthy family status quo. For example, if social workers outside prison liaised with the in-prison social workers I recommend in the next chapter, and with housing, this could help to ensure accommodation is forthcoming. The box below shows how partners from housing are included in case conferences for individual women as part of the Wales whole systems approach.

Joining up services in the Wales Pathfinder Whole Systems Approach

In each of the Women's Pathfinder pilot sites in Wales, coordinated access into support/interventions for all women into local provision has been supported through local partnership initiatives, co-location (statutory services with voluntary, women's centred partners) and multi-agency case conferences.

Case conferences are multi-agency meetings that bring together a wide range of services (e.g. Police, Probation, Housing, children's services, health and third sector) to review the needs and risk of individual cases following diversion, a Community Order, or a custodial sentence. These forums enable partners to share information that is appropriate and relevant to support women in need and encourage agencies to work in a more joined up way, preventing duplication.

Case conferences have proved to be a vital part of working to a Whole System Approach as they support a single gateway into a coordinated multi-agency response with all women who come into scope of the Pathfinder from the earliest possible stage.

157. Guidance for local housing authorities in England on the allocation of housing could be adjusted to take account of the prospective housing needs of women

96 The Re-Unite South London Project, (2013), *Way Ahead: An Evaluation of The First Two Years*, p5

who are leaving prison, so their applications are treated in the same way as those of prospective adopters and foster carers. The 2012 guidance states that housing authorities' allocation schemes, in determining allocation priorities, must ensure reasonable preference is given to certain categories of people including those who need to move on welfare grounds.⁹⁷ These welfare grounds include the need to provide care or support and specific mention is made of foster carers and adoptive parents (and those being assessed for approval to foster and adopt) who need to move to a larger home to accommodate a child looked after or previously looked after by a local authority.

158. The children of many women in prison are, or have been, in local authority care, but the broader intention behind the guidance is that when a child's welfare is best served by them going to live with foster or adoptive parents, the allocation of housing should enable and not preclude that. Prospective foster or adoptive parents are in a parallel position to the woman leaving prison: they do not currently have the child/ren under their roof but the guidance enables them to be assessed on the basis of their prospective, not their current need.

159. Moreover, the guidance also states, at paragraph 4.30:

'When considering housing applications from prospective foster carers or adopters who would require an extra bedroom to accommodate a foster or adoptive child, authorities will wish to weigh up the risk that the application to foster or adopt may be unsuccessful (leading to the property being under-occupied), against the wider benefits which would be realised if the placement was successful.'

160. In other words, prospective foster carers or adopters can be assessed as needing a larger home than is currently the case, so that when a property becomes available it will be big enough to accommodate the additional child/ren they expect to live with them. The risk that they might under-occupy that house if that expectation is unmet is acknowledged, but housing authorities are enjoined to balance that risk against child/ren being able to join a family.

161. If this guidance were amended to enable primary carers leaving prison to be similarly assessed according to their prospective not current need, and if there were no safeguarding or other reason why their children could not join them, housing allocation policy would no longer be the roadblock to families being reunited. So, for example if as a woman prepared to leave prison, she was assessed as prospectively needing a three-bedroom house, then when one became available and she had reached the top of the list, her children would be able to join her.

⁹⁷ Communities and Local Government, (2012), *Allocation of Accommodation: Guidance for Local Housing Authorities in England*, p17

Recommendation

Allocation of accommodation guidance for local housing authorities in England to recognise the prospective housing needs of women leaving prison who are otherwise able to be reunited with their children, so local authorities can make these needs the basis for assessment.

Chapter 4: Better Custody

'Imprisonment, by definition, breaks down family ties. While this is equally true for men and women, when a man is in prison, it is often women – his partner, mother, sister or other female relative(s) – who are the 'golden thread'; when a woman is in prison, that thread is more likely to be at snapping point. Women's family ties are likely to consist of their parents (who may have their own health issues) and their children (many of whom are in the custody of a woman's already struggling parents – only 5% of children with a mother in prison remain in the family home).''

Sarah Beresford, Prison Reform Trust Associate and Trustee of Partners of Prisoners (POPS)

*'Placing a greater emphasis on prison-based strategies to enhance family relations presents a real opportunity for measurable success in reducing reoffending.'*⁹⁸

Recommendations

17. HMPPS to make significant improvements to the Assisted Prison Visits scheme for (male and female) primary carers in prison including:
 - more generous rules
 - better advertising of how these operate, including advance payments
 - greater flexibility in who can claim expenses
 - piloting changes to ensure they result in the desired outcome of enabling more children to visit their mothers (or primary carers)
18. A separate standardised visitor's survey to be developed for women's prisons.
 - i. Each prison to survey regularly the women in their care, and families/ significant others who visit to find out:
 - how many were able to attend family days and other forms of extended visits compared with how many wanted to attend
 - if certain groups (such as foreign national women and care leavers) are excluded from extended visits because they have no family members able to attend but do have friends/significant others who would come if eligible
 - how many days would their families and significant others be able to attend each year

98 Brunton-Smith, I. and McCarthy, D. J., (2016), 'The Effects of Prisoner Attachment to Family on Re-Entry Outcomes: A Longitudinal Assessment', *British Journal of Criminology*, p16

- what times would be most suitable for children and young people
- ii. Prisons to provide evidence that survey results have been discussed and any issues flagged by the survey to be addressed by an action plan for improvement drawn up with the residents' council and families forum.
19. Each prison to provide a physical space where women can spend private time with family members and significant others with appropriate risk assessment and safeguarding procedures in place (with the understanding that governors might need to prioritise this space for sensitive visits, including pre-adoption and those which are family court-related.)
 20. The Gateway Communication System to be two-way so that women inside prison who have ongoing caring responsibilities can express concerns, thereby alleviating their own anxiety and making it clear to those on the outside that they have not been abandoned.
 21. The recommendations from this Review to be added to the implementation plan for the original Farmer Review, with progress monitored and reported on in the same way. **This recommendation has already been accepted by the MoJ.**
 22. Her Majesty's Inspector of Prisons to ensure the importance of family ties features prominently throughout the Expectations for women's prisons when they are reviewed, so governors know this has to be a cross-cutting priority in the running of their prison.
 23. A family-related prison performance measure to be defined which is designed to:
 - compare similar prisons and therefore used in a relative rather than absolute way
 - stimulate ongoing improvement in all prisons
 - be responsive to the distinct needs and issues in women's prisons
 24. Ministry of Justice policy to allow governors in women's prisons to use ROTL more creatively and ambitiously to enable women to resume contact with family and undertake caring responsibilities, and HMPPS to look at the scope for using monitoring technology where necessary.
 25. Eligibility for Child Resettlement Leave to not rest narrowly on sole carer status but be widened to include other family circumstances, so women in prison can continue in their caring responsibilities to the benefit of children, other carers and offender rehabilitation.

26. A Case Review of children removed from primary carers when they entered prison to be carried out by the Chief Social Worker for England (Children and Families), to ensure that decisions taken are always in the best interests of children. The review should examine social work practice, including the role of support services in keeping families together.
27. Funding to be allocated so that additional family engagement workers, working according to the evaluated model developed by the Family Support Alliance, are available in all women's prisons.
28. The Ministry of Justice to fund an on-site social worker as part of the multi-disciplinary team within each prison.
29. To ensure consistency in the operation of prisoner email schemes, all female establishments (which have not done so already) to develop an email reply system.
30. The Women's estate in its entirety to be prioritised for roll-out of virtual visits with all women routinely able to use facilities, where there are no security concerns, because of the disproportionately positive impact on children. There must be secure video conference facilities available in location managed by other government departments.
31. In-cell telephony (ICT) to be rolled out in all women's prisons as part of the next wave of installation given that so many women are primary carers.
32. Consideration to be given to piloting the use of simple, non-internet enabled mobile phones as a less costly solution.
33. Call providers to treat prisoners in the same way as other customers and provide 'frequent caller' and other packages which enable them to speak more with those who are most important to them.

Introduction

162. The Secretary of State commissioned the original Farmer Review (OFR) to investigate how supporting men in prison in England and Wales to engage with their families, can reduce reoffending and assist in addressing the intergenerational transmission of crime. The Female Offender Strategy states that:

*'Whilst the focus of Lord Farmer's Review is the role of family in preventing reoffending and intergenerational crime for male prisoners, its findings have great saliency for female offenders and their families.'*⁹⁹

163. As already stated, I have been asked to undertake a further piece of work to include a review of these recommendations, which were specifically for the male custodial

⁹⁹ Ministry of Justice, (2018), *Female Offender Strategy*, p27

estate, by looking through the lens of the markedly different needs of women in prison.

164. I welcome the Ministry of Justice's clearly stated desire in the Female Offender Strategy to reduce the female prison population and also their recognition that:

*'Whilst a substantial proportion of women that go to prison serve short-term sentences, women on longer sentences make up the majority of the prison population at any given time. Moreover, there will remain some women who, for reasons of public protection or due to the severity of their offending, must be in custody for a period of time.'*¹⁰⁰

165. For these women who have to be in custody, evidence shows that it is vital that they are enabled to maintain and strengthen their relationships not least to help prevent reoffending and the intergenerational transmission of crime. Research on the Re-Unite model, mentioned in the last chapter found that:

*'In a number of cases, women interviewed for the evaluations stated that losing their children was the trigger for 'giving up' and committing their crimes in the first place. Improved outcomes for the family, therefore, will tend to lower re-offending and may help reduce overall offending in the first place.'*¹⁰¹

166. Mothers in prison experience significant anxiety because of the separation from their children. This impacts on their mental health and their responses to prison regimes, discipline and interventions. Unless and until women are reassured about their children they are unable to make progress in other areas.

167. During the Farmer Review for Women, the importance of supporting positive family ties became very clear. Many women have experienced domestic abuse and this and other forms of toxic relationships may have been a contributor to or prime factor in their offending behaviour. Many have had very negative family experiences.

168. An issue which can make it hard to provide support for women's family ties when they enter prison and is often a consequence of women being the primary or even sole carer of their children, is their frequent reluctance to disclose that they have children for fear that they will be taken into care. The Call for Evidence suggests these fears are often justified and, despite the principle enshrined in the Children Act 1989 that social services and other professionals should ensure the best interests of children are always paramount, more needs to be done to ensure outcomes are congruent with that principle.

169. The long distance many have to travel to prison (on average, in May 2018 women are held 63 miles from their homes, and around 650 women were held more than

100 Ibid, p26

101 Commonweal Housing, (2017), *Re-Unite Ten Year Review*, p38

100 miles from their home,¹⁰² compared to an average of 50 miles for men¹⁰³); the associated costs; and concerns that prisons are unsuitable environments for children are all significant barriers to families visiting women in custody. There are important initiatives to which I refer below, which encourage, enable and enhance the quality of visits in women's prisons, such as Visiting Mum, which has recently stopped running in HMP Eastwood Park, despite a positive evaluation, due to lack of funding. However, even short distances greatly impede women's ability to fulfil primary carer and other responsibilities towards their families: imprisonment, by definition, breaks down family ties.

170. In this chapter I will only draw attention to recommendations from the original Review that require refining or revising in the light of these needs and make recommendations about what should be done additionally and/or instead. Those which are not mentioned below were deemed to be appropriate and desirable by my expert group and by others who wrote specific and detailed reports on the applicability of the original review to women in prison.

171. I deal with those which need refining or revising in the order in which they appeared in the original report, but there are two areas for reform which I propose and particularly want to highlight as implementing these would make a significant difference to the ability of women to maintain and strengthen their family ties, where appropriate. These are:

- the need to deploy prison-based social workers as part of a multi-disciplinary custodial team; and
- the importance of making the most of communications technology, within bounds of appropriate safety and risk, by making virtual visits routinely available.

Family and Significant Others Strategy

OFR Recommendation 1.4 Local Family Offer

172. As part of their implementation of the original Farmer Review, the Government now requires governors in each prison to develop a Family and Significant Others Strategy which should include the following local family offer elements. All of these are as relevant to the women's estate as to the men's, but the greater average distance women are held from home and the high number who are primary carers will have an impact on how these elements are delivered:

173. (a) Visitor base/centre and visiting services

The quality of a visit experience is very important, but this starts before families and

102 Ministry of Justice, (2018), *Supporting Data Tables for the Female Offender Strategy*, Table 5.1a

103 House of Commons, *Written Question*, 7 January 2010, C548W

friends embark on their journey to prison, both in terms of the fears and expectations they are setting out with and the practical difficulties of travelling long distances, especially with young children.

174. HMP Eastwood Park's Visiting Mum programme has been evaluated as effective in enabling children and low-income families to prepare well for and make visits that would otherwise be difficult or impossible; as a result, these can help mothers reconnect with their children and alleviate the impact on children of visiting a prison.¹⁰⁴ Reoffending rates may also be positively affected although Rees et al admit in their evaluation that there are difficulties in commenting on re-offending rates without knowing the previous histories of each woman, as this information was not available.¹⁰⁵

175. For the purposes of this Review, the key aspects of Visiting Mum are:

- The deployment of volunteers to prepare children of imprisoned women and their carers for visits, in their homes, which increases awareness in wider society about their needs.
- Upon reception into custody family engagement workers identify women who are at risk of losing contact with their families and would like support to establish contact with them. Therefore, this is a targeted approach which focuses resources where they are most needed.
- Volunteers transport children and carers to the prison, thereby addressing the issue of distance, which affects many incarcerated women, as the women in the study came from Wales where there is no women's prison.

176. These aspects of Visiting Mum are particularly important for the female estate, given the difficulties associated with visits, and the profoundly negative effect on both children and mothers when they cannot go ahead. Yet this programme was limited to one prison, and to women who come from Wales in that prison, and there is not routine and sustainable funding for such schemes. Visiting Mum was a partnership developed by voluntary organisations with the prison, based on the assessed needs and appropriate service response.

177. A similarly flexible, co-commissioned approach to funding will be required to replicate it in other establishments as responsibility to prevent reoffending and offenders' children spiralling down into criminality is jointly held by a range of different budget holders. These include the Ministry of Justice, prisons and charitable trusts and foundations as well as local authorities and police and crime commissioners from women's home areas, who will need to work with local organisations with volunteers or staff who can provide the preparation and support (which will likely include transport) for visits.

104 Rees, A., et al., *Evaluation of Visiting Mum Scheme*, (2017), Cardiff University Available online: <http://orca.cf.ac.uk/112243/1/Final-PACT-report-Final-version.-12.7.17.pdf>

105 Ibid

178. However, another key issue, low frequency of visits, which affects relatively more families of female offenders than men because of the longer distances involved, is not addressed by the programme and I repeatedly heard that the Assisted Prison Visits (AVP) scheme was not the gamechanger that it should be for those who need help. One respondent to the survey said she only received visits on average every two years because of the cost of the journey to the prison.¹⁰⁶

179. When I visited HMP Low Newton one woman told me her aunt had to make a 500-mile round trip to bring the woman's son to visit her in prison and another said:

'Low Newton has a lot of good things to offer people but if families can't afford to attend visits they won't benefit.'

Another told me,

'My friends would have visited if I was closer to home.'

180. Payments are currently only available to those with exceptionally limited finances, and as reimbursement for monies already paid. Finding the cash up-front and then waiting for repayment is very challenging when finances are already precarious. Also, some next-of-kin carers are looking after prisoners' children without any support from the public purse and for many of them, spending money on visits is simply a stretch too far. Women who do not have children or close family ties and who rarely receive visits, may need help from the staff around them to reconnect with people who could support them in their rehabilitation. Staff should also ensure they and these 'significant others' know about and are able to access whatever financial assistance is available.

181. Given the particular challenges visiting presents to women (and men who are primary carers) and their children, the Assisted Prison Visits scheme should be improved for prisoners and their dependents who are in this category and made more generous. Many people I met when visiting prison and who responded to the Call for Evidence told me that whilst they appreciated that financial help was available, costs still present a considerable barrier to people bringing children in to see their mothers.

182. For example, current mileage rates are 13p a mile which is much lower than those approved by HMRC for tax purposes, and taxi fares from train stations or bus stops will only be considered where the walking distance exceeds 20 minutes in one direction or the visitor is aged 75 years or over.¹⁰⁷ It is not clear if charity workers transporting children and escorts to prison can claim and escorts of children cannot claim online.¹⁰⁸ Only people on benefits can claim but a family member or friend who has taken on someone else's child whilst their primary carer is in prison is often financially very stretched even if they are above benefits thresholds.

106 Resident of HMP Foston Hall, Call for Evidence Survey

107 HM Prison and Probation Service, (2017), *Assisted Prison Visits Scheme, Visitor Guide*

108 Ibid, p12

183. Whilst making the APV scheme more generous for all prison visitors might be beyond the reach of current spending limits, a more manageable goal is to enable more children to visit their mothers (or primary carer). Changes should be road-tested so HMPPS can state with confidence that this is their outcome.

Recommendation

HMPPS to make significant improvements to the Assisted Prison Visits scheme for (male and female) primary carers in prison including:

- more generous rules
- better advertising of how these operate, including advance payments
- greater flexibility in who can claim expenses
- piloting changes to ensure they result in the desired outcome of enabling more children to visit their mothers (or primary carers)

184. (b) Staffing structure to ensure family work is an operational priority

'I need a wider range of professional specialists, especially ones who can make a difference by linking with community agencies. I need more family engagement workers and social workers on my team.'

Governor of HMP Low Newton

185. What was emphasised in the Call for Evidence and over the course of the Review was the need for a different kind of staffing structure in women's prisons, given the complexity of their family-related needs. Ensuring these were met often required an understanding of social services and legal processes and time to do the careful and expert work required to ensure women could fulfil their parental responsibilities or retain their parental rights. Family engagement staff give women the day to day help they need to manage their family life from within prison.

186. A resident at the focus group held in HMP East Sutton Park told the Review that

'Cath at Family Engagement is brilliant as she is based in-house, she offers so much support and is on hand to help regularly which puts a lot of women at ease.'

I look at the importance of having in-house family support in more detail later in this chapter under the heading of **Developing our leaders and staff**.

187. (c) Extended visits

Extended visits are particularly important for women in prison, given the greater

distances from home. The Women's Custodial Estate Review¹⁰⁹ recommended an increase in the provision of family days in the women's estate so that these extended, interactive visits become the norm.

188. It was clear from the Call for Evidence that family days, and other forms of extended visits are very popular with women, not least because they could have less restricted contact with their children. However, many said they were not frequent enough for them, given that shorter visits are often not considered to be worth the effort and costs involved.

189. Also, foreign national women (whose families were too far away to come even for longer visits) and those without family ties, expressed frustration that their friends were not eligible to attend family days. Those who did not have young children were critical of their narrow focus and asked for them not to be solely child-orientated. One resident of HMP Downview said:

*'Not everything should be for mums. Not everyone who has a family is a mum.'*¹¹⁰

190. I visited prisons which also provide private spaces for women where, after appropriate risk assessment, they can spend the whole day with their families, see box below. When they held are in open conditions, such as in the open unit at HMP Drake Hall, or in HMP/YOI Askham Grange, there may also be accommodation for overnight stays. Such opportunities to have a meaningful visit may be instrumental in families reuniting successfully when women leave prison or bonds remaining strong when women are serving their sentences. Every prison should be able to provide some form of private physical space – in HMP/YOI Hydebank Wood Secure College a portacabin has been adapted to enable families to have time together, which is greatly appreciated by them. An extrovert prison (see OFR Recommendation 18.) might approach a local builder, craftsmen and other businesses to obtain help with the work that would be required.

109 National Offender Management Service, (2013), *Women's Custodial Estate Review*, p25 Available online: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/252851/womens-custodial-estate-review.pdf

110 Resident of HMP Downview, Call for Evidence Survey

Good Practice: Luke House, Family Bonding Unit, HMP Foston Hall (closed conditions)

The Family Bonding Unit consists of two separate flats with fully equipped kitchen and lounge/play areas and an outdoor garden area. It has been developed to provide an environment conducive to improving and strengthening family relationships during extended and more relaxed visits from 9.30-4.30pm. Due to numbers, only enhanced status women are eligible.

Governor Andrea Black said they want to give women an incentive to work towards, which seems to be working well, but this may be over-ridden, for example for a final visit before adoption; pre-release or for social services assessments in respect of the family courts. They risk assess as necessary.

Women are eligible to use the unit if they are adjudication free for three months and no security risks have been identified. The facility is there to support anyone to sustain or rebuild family ties. It could be with a woman's husband, partner, parents or children.¹¹¹

Recommendation

Each prison to survey regularly the women in their care, and families/significant others who visit, to find out:

- how many were able to attend family days and other forms of extended visits compared with how many wanted to attend
- if certain groups (such as foreign national women and care leavers) are excluded from extended visits because they have no family members able to attend but do have friends/significant others who would come if eligible
- how many days would their families and significant others be able to attend each year
- what times would be most suitable for children and young people

Prisons to provide evidence that survey results have been discussed and any issues flagged by the survey to be addressed by an action plan for improvement drawn up with the residents' council and families forum.

Each prison to provide a physical space where women can spend private time with family members and significant others with appropriate risk assessment and safeguarding procedures in place (with the understanding that governors might need to prioritise this space for sensitive visits, including pre-adoption and those which are family court-related.)

111 Information from Governor Andrea Black, HMP Foston Hall

191. (d) Family learning

The original Review described the importance of providing evidence-based programmes which enable prisoners to maintain and improve relationships, implemented with fidelity. Whilst this is equally the case for the women's estate, women's parenting and other relationships programmes need to be specifically designed for them and always adapted if they were originally designed for men. Importantly, the main focus may not always be on relationships per se but on an issue such as the effect of drugs and alcohol on family members. For example, a programme currently being piloted and evaluated by Manchester Metropolitan University called Holding Families Plus aims to address unmet treatment and recovery need for alcohol dependant (AD) parents in HMP Styal. A key feature will be commitment to the voice of the child within the offer and working with prisoners as parents.¹¹²

192. (e) 'Gateway' communication system

Women who were the sole or primary carers for dependant(s) should be enabled and encouraged, where possible and appropriate, to continue to fulfil their responsibilities after they are imprisoned. Just as family members on the outside can communicate their concerns about a woman inside prison to a member of staff, through the gateway communication system, who will pass that on responsibly, women in prison who have an ongoing caring role (including alongside the child/ren's father or another carer) should be able to do likewise.

193. They might need to communicate with schools, health/mental health services, or social services about their children's needs. Those who were previously carers for parents or other family members may also want to raise concerns. If they cannot do that their levels of anxiety will soar, and the dependant on the outside will suffer, not least because they will likely assume that they have been forgotten and are no longer of concern. It should become routine for keyworkers, family engagement workers or other professionals within prison such as the social workers described later, to enable this communication to take place, where possible by allowing a woman to talk directly to the relevant person on the outside. They will often have vital information about dependants' needs, so agencies involved in dependants' lives should see women in prison as potential assets to enable them to respond effectively.

¹¹² Rochdale Local Authority and the voluntary sector organisation Early Break will lead work to develop and enhance existing programmes (which use evidence-based interventions based on One Plus One's, 'How to Argue Better') to address children affected by dependant parental alcohol use. The project will build on existing Holding Families Programmes in four other Greater Manchester Authorities Bury, Salford, Trafford and Bolton. See <https://youtu.be/uRhufAwa10Y>

Recommendation

The Gateway Communication System to be two-way so that women inside prison who have ongoing caring responsibilities can express concerns, thereby alleviating their own anxiety and making it clear to those on the outside that they have not been abandoned.

OFR Recommendation 1.6 The Ministry of Justice to develop an action plan out of the Farmer Review recommendations, including details on how the proposals will be taken forward, and report progress to the Review twice a year.

194. An action plan was developed and is monitored monthly via a Family Strategy Working Group chaired by the HMPPS Families lead in partnership with the MOJ Family policy lead and attended by a Clinks representative. Regular meetings are held with my team to provide updates.

Recommendation

The recommendations from this Review to be added to the original action plan, with progress monitored and reported on in the same way. This recommendation has already been accepted by the MoJ.

HMIP Expectations

OFR Recommendation 2. Her Majesty's Inspector of Prisons must ensure the importance of family ties features prominently throughout the new Expectations currently being refined, so empowered governors know this has to be a cross-cutting priority in the running of their prison.

195. HMIP's set of Expectations for Women in Prison was created in 2014 and is on their Business Plan in 2019-20 to review, so it is timely to reiterate this recommendation. Whilst the original women's set emphasises, for example, safe and supportive relationships more than the-then current (2012) set for men, the importance of family ties was given due prominence in the fifth version of men's prison Expectations published in 2017 per the above recommendation. I would be very happy to work with HMIP as they undertake this new Review, to ensure the importance of relationships is the golden thread running through Expectations for women's prisons, as it is for the men's estate.

Recommendation

Her Majesty's Inspector of Prisons to ensure the importance of family ties features prominently throughout the Expectations for women's prisons when they are reviewed, so governors know this has to be a cross-cutting priority in the running of their prison.

Raising Standards

OFR Recommendation 4. Given their role in prisoner rehabilitation, a standardised visitors' survey should be developed to capture the experiences of families as they seek to maintain contact and to enable comparison between different establishments.

196. A greater variety of people are involved in maintaining contact with women, especially if they have children, as children are not typically cared for by their other parent (unlike when fathers are in prison and the mother often retains primary carer responsibilities). Grandparents, siblings, aunts, uncles, fathers, friends, foster carers and social workers are some of the categories who will attend prison visits and the survey should properly accommodate this range of experiences. As such it should be designed specifically for the female estate and with those who have experience of visiting women in prison.

Recommendation

A separate standardised visitor's survey to be developed for women's prisons.

OFR Recommendation 5. Prison performance measures, which would enable comparisons to be made with similar prisons for the purposes of learning from practice, should include a family-related measure such as rate of prisoners who receive visits on entry and exit and rate of prisoners engaged with their family, or other supportive relationships, on entry and exit.

197. While family-related measures are still important for the women's estate, I am obviously mindful that caution is needed when considering the design of any measure. A simple data capture of the rate of prisoners who receive visits on entry and exit, the example given in this recommendation, could be problematic on the women's estate. As already stated, many women in custody have experienced some form of family-related abuse and often it will be positive for them to cease contact with those who have perpetrated such abuse. Some women's crimes have made them outcasts from their families and work to rebuild those relationships may take a very long time and still not result in a visit.

198. Women are also, on average, held considerably further from home and often moved around the estate to access appropriate interventions, which will likely have an

adverse impact on the frequency of visits they receive. Finally, I talked to women who preferred to wait for family days when the length of visit, and the quality of interactions they could have with their children made the difficulty and cost of travel seem more worthwhile.

199. If a visits-dependent performance measure will not drive improvement effectively on the female estate another, more appropriate, family-related measure should be developed.

200. As part of their implementation of the original Farmer Review, HMPPS are developing new performance measures which will provide crucial guidance to deliver more consistent services to improve relationships between prisoners, their family and significant others, such as extended visits and family days across the prison estate.¹¹³

201. As part of this ongoing work a measure should be designed to be:

- fair, that is, designed to compare similar prisons and therefore used in a relative rather than absolute way
- a stimulant to ongoing improvement in all prisons
- distinct for women's prisons.

Recommendation

A family-related prison performance measure to be defined which is designed to:

- compare similar prisons and therefore used in a relative rather than absolute way
- stimulate ongoing improvement in all prisons
- be responsive to the distinct needs and issues in women's prisons

OFR Recommendation 6. Contact details of family and significant others should be mandatorily requested by prisoner escort services before a prisoner leaves court and immediately added to his prison file, with this and other information on key relationships updated on an ongoing basis and sent with him when he moves establishments.

202. This recommendation is appropriate for the female estate with the following caveats and observations. Given the complexity of many imprisoned women's lives there are clear benefits to having a full picture of her family circumstances, including responsibilities for dependent children and details of adults with whom she has supportive relationships as well as those which will likely be toxic to her

¹¹³ NICCO, *Updates on The Implementation of Recommendations Resulting from The Farmer Review*, (2017) Available online: www.nicco.org.uk/userfiles/downloads/5bc45729eb900-lord-farmer-review-updates.docx

rehabilitation. More than half of women in prison report having been the victims of domestic abuse.¹¹⁴

203. The Personal Circumstances File outlined in the Chapter 1 should already have been opened and contact details inserted, but prisoner escort services should ensure at this final stage, before she is taken into custody, that they have been not been missed. One barrier to obtaining these is that women may be reluctant to disclose this information to prisoner escort services, although some courts have volunteer family support workers who would likely be more trusted. If as recommended in Chapter 2 the request for information comes with the offer of a phone call to make arrangements and it is made clear that the Personal Circumstances File will be used to her benefit, such an approach will assist in collecting this important information.

OFR Recommendation 7. If a prisoner cannot name anyone he will want to contact on the first night this should be flagged and active steps taken to try to reconnect him with family or others with whom he might be able to develop a supportive relationship.

204. This explicitly prioritises the importance of relationships, including those beyond the immediate family, from the very beginning of a custodial sentence and can also be applied to the women's estate. Indeed, it was pointed out that this could be very helpful to the ongoing maintenance of family ties and to early identification of relational difficulties, including if a woman has a history of abusive relationships so that appropriate onward referrals for support can be made.

205. In her research within women's prisons Dr Shona Minson found that it is not unusual for women to believe erroneously that imprisonment in and of itself means they have forfeited any right to contact with their children. If they are asked about family on the first night this also provides an opportunity to correct this misunderstanding.

Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL) and Child Resettlement Licence (CRL)

OFR Recommendation 9. When governors are in the process of making a decision about granting ROTL, family ties and supportive relationships should be one of the considerations.

ROTL

206. Access to ROTL and CRLs was one of the three issues raised most frequently in the focus groups with women in prison (alongside family days and cost of phone calls). There was a wide-spread view that the ROTL for child-related situations and CRL were both rare and underused means of helping women successfully adapt to a life

¹¹⁴ Ministry of Justice, (2014), *Transforming Rehabilitation, Thinking Differently About Female Offenders, Guidance Document*, p3 states that 57% of women in prison have experienced domestic abuse as an adult but as this statistic is entirely based on self-disclosure, the data is likely to be an under-estimation of the prevalence of domestic violence among female offenders.

outside of custody. Governors of women's prisons described having to stretch the boundaries of what was allowed by the policy and considered it to be too inflexible.

207. During the Farmer Review for Women, I frequently heard that whilst decisions about ROTL are often complicated and perhaps more so where children are involved, the importance of ROTL cannot be underestimated both for women preparing to resume hands-on caring responsibilities (on their own or with another parent) and for their children.
208. ROTL could be used far more frequently, creatively and ambitiously to help women fulfil their caring responsibilities and aid resettlement. At HMP Low Newton I was told about a young woman who was a prolific drug user, estranged from her family, but was sent home on ROTL to nurse her mother and grandmother. With support she turned a difficult family situation around and learned how to look after other people. She has not returned to prison after two years.
209. We have much to learn from international good practice in this area, see box below.

Using ROTL to resume primary carer responsibilities for children

Germany, reported to have the most child-centred approach to women's imprisonment, has implemented some innovative approaches for female offenders with children. These include allowing women 21 days leave per year to maintain contact with their children and in what is termed the Hausfrau programme, parenting is viewed as a form of employment, and women eligible for work release can leave the prison each day to support their families.

A work-release prisoner might rise at 5am and take public transport to her home every weekday morning to get her children ready for school. As well as taking and collecting her children from school the mother is responsible for caring for them, cooking and cleaning, and organising doctor and school appointments. After she has put the children to bed she leaves them in the care of another family member or responsible adult and returns to the prison for the night. This programme enables women to maintain connection with their children and retain responsibility for their welfare while they serve their sentence.¹¹⁵

115 Prison Reform Trust and The Pilgrim Trust, (2013), *International Good Practice: Alternatives To Imprisonment For Women Offenders*, p48 Available online: www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/Portals/0/Documents/Women/InternationalGoodPractice.pdf

There are conditions which limit eligibility: women need to have spent a certain amount of time in prison and demonstrated good behaviour prior to being able to apply for the programme and it requires children to live in a home with another adult present.¹¹⁶

210. Use of electronic monitoring and curfews could also increase confidence among the public and necessary authorities that greater and more innovative use of ROTL, including to resume day-to-day childcare responsibilities as outlined in the box above, will not jeopardise safety or be unduly lenient.

Recommendation

Ministry of Justice policy to allow governors in women's prisons to use ROTL more creatively and ambitiously to enable women to resume contact with family and undertake caring responsibilities, and HMPPS to look at the scope for using monitoring technology where necessary.

CRL

211. Currently CRL allows a primary carer in prison to spend time with their child only if they were their sole carer immediately before they started their prison sentence and would be so if they were not in prison, which means many mothers are not eligible.¹¹⁷ Yet it is important to appreciate the depth of trauma many women and their children experience after being separated from each other. Without good quality ongoing contact some relationships are irreparable, especially if a child has come to harm when the mother has been inside. A woman's prison term should not turn into a life sentence for her and her family.
212. Some women reported being joint carers for their children before they went into custody, at which point their children began to live solely with their father. These women were ineligible for CRL but they, their children and fathers or others who may have become sole carers overnight, would benefit greatly from it. The difficulties of resuming a co-parenting role when a woman finally leaves custody could be eased by widening the eligibility criteria for CRL.

116 Dolan R, (2016), *Alternative Approaches to Prison For Mothers of Young Children*, Winston Churchill Memorial Trust, p25

117 HM Prison Service, (2015), *ROTL, Order 6300*, p8; p22: To be eligible for CRL a prisoner must show she has sole caring responsibility for a child under 16 and is;

- in open or semi-open conditions; or
- categorised as suitable for such conditions; or
- in a mother and baby unit and has other children outside the prison

Recommendation

Eligibility for Child Resettlement Leave to not rest narrowly on sole carer status but be widened to include other family circumstances, so women in prison can continue in their caring responsibilities to the benefit of children, other carers and offender rehabilitation.

Developing our leaders and staff

OFR Recommendation 15. Development of leaders and staff must support governors in fulfilling the Family and Significant Others Strategy requirement to provide a staffing structure that makes family work an operational priority

213. It became clear during the Farmer Review for Women that a different and more appropriate workforce is needed for the women's estate where the population has very different and frequently very complex, family-related needs. Some of this difference lies in the fact that a high percentage of women are primary carers upon entering prison,¹¹⁸ but a low percentage of their children live with the other parent while they are inside, in contrast to the children of men who are in prison.

214. As a result, the physical severing of family ties when a woman enters custody often has profound and lifelong consequences for both them and the children or other dependents involved. Indeed many women in prison are still trying to fulfil primary carer responsibilities towards their children and, where possible and appropriate, they should be given support to do so. However, I heard that they often feel they are trying to do this in the teeth of opposition, or lack of engagement, from children's social services in the community.

215. One respondent to the survey of women in prison told the Review,

*'My kids can only write if the social worker or probation let them. The family worker is trying to get me some contact, but the social worker is not always getting back to her. I want social workers to work with the families not against. Where social workers cannot take the law into their own hands and stop all contact. Because without any contact with my kids, what do I have out there? My kids do want contact with me but are getting stopped.'*¹¹⁹

216. Frequently women in prison do not see social services as being there to help them. Those who do not have custody of their children prior to imprisonment report that supervised contact with their children often ceases at the point of sentencing. To set this in context, good communication between prisons and external social workers is often difficult to achieve, indeed social workers can struggle even to locate the

118 Compared to males, a significantly higher proportion of females in prison reported having children under the age of 18 (54% compared to 47%). Ministry of Justice, (2018), *Statistics on Women and the Criminal Justice System 2017*, p72

119 Resident HMP Ashkam Grange, Call for Evidence Survey

establishment a woman is held in and the correct person associated with her. Responses to the Call for Evidence suggested they are not automatically informed when the mother of a child on their caseload is sentenced and women in prison may not know how to contact them, particularly in the first few weeks of a sentence. (They may also be reluctant to draw attention to their imprisonment for fear of making a situation worse.)

217. High demands on services within prison such as Family Liaison can also result in further delays to establishing links with social workers outside. Given the climate of time constraints and high caseloads in which social workers operate, barriers like this will make it hard to facilitate contact even where the social worker is convinced that a visit or phone call is clearly in the best interests of the child. However, this attitude cannot be taken for granted.

218. A recurring theme in the Call for Evidence and in focus groups of women in prison conducted for the Review, was the lack of a consistent approach from social workers to helping mothers in prison maintain and strengthen their family ties. The Children Act 1989 enshrined in law the principle that the interests of the child should be paramount. So the application of this principle in differing circumstances may be an important contributing factor towards the prevailing sense that social workers are sometimes sympathetic and sometimes antipathetic towards facilitating contact between children and their imprisoned mothers.

219. However, evidence to the Review suggested that the starting point for many social workers is that children should not visit prison and further that it was not an appropriate place for young children who might benefit from being with their mothers in Mother and Baby Units. Choice for Change, a voluntary organisation which counsels women through difficult experiences with pregnancy, child or parenting loss in HMP Bronzefield and HMP Downview, wrote that there:

*'is often reluctance on the part of social workers to arrange contact between mother and child. It appears sometimes a prior judgment has been made that the woman are not deemed worth the hassle entailed.'*¹²⁰

220. As stated earlier, research by Dr Shona Minson found that some women believe that when they entered prison they lost their right to have contact with their children. This will make it extremely hard for them to take the necessary action to make this possible. Even mothers who are aware of their rights and extremely motivated to do all they can to stay in contact, can hit a brick wall when care proceedings are initiated against them.

221. I was told that a very high percentage of the family engagement worker (FEW) caseload in HMP Low Newton involves supporting prisoners and their families with on-going care proceedings, that Legal Aid changes since 2014 have meant

¹²⁰ Choice for Change, *Written Submission to the Farmer Review*

women cannot afford to fight actions in the courts and early intervention based on sound legal advice is not now available. By the time women get any legal assistance, actions have often proceeded a long way.

222. This can have very far-reaching consequences especially given other legal changes such as speedier adoption under the Children and Families Act 2014, which specified that care proceedings should normally be limited to 26 weeks. A local law firm provides *pro bono* legal support and legal rights workshops for women in HMP Low Newton, which is a good example of community engagement in prison life. It is also commendable that the organisations Rights of Women and the Prisoners' Advice Service are in the process of creating information leaflets about family law matters during imprisonment which will soon be in all women's prisons. However, children being taken into foster care or permanently removed from their parents should not be taking place against the backdrop of such threadbare legal representation for their mothers.
223. The consensus in the evidence I received was that birth parents in prison and their children being adopted away have the same rights as birth parents and their children in the community, but these are not made clear enough. Imprisonment should not, for example, prevent a final photograph being taken of the child with the birth parent before adoption, or a letter from the parent to be included in the child's Life Story box. Family members should still be considered as potential guardians before looking to unrelated foster carers or adoptive parents. In summary, a child should be taken away in as understanding a way as possible: the devastating effect that a removal has on a mother is undiminished by the fact of her imprisonment.
224. I was informed about some very concerning cases of children being permanently removed from women serving short sentences (less than 12 months), who were not considered by family engagement workers and other prison staff who were closely involved with them to be irresponsible or unsuitable parents. Obviously, they and I were not in receipt of the full facts of the case available to the social workers – or the family court judges who ultimately make the decisions to remove – so I am not able to draw accurate conclusions from these disturbing anecdotes.
225. However, to reiterate, family engagement workers in prison spend most of their time helping mothers whose children are subject to care proceedings. Many community-based organisations also told the Review how often they work with women who have lost their children whilst in prison and are still struggling greatly, post-release, with the after-effects of this traumatic event. It is essential to investigate if children are being too hastily and/or permanently removed, from mothers in prison, particularly those serving short sentences, who might be able to resume care, with support, post-release.
226. This would need to be careful work, carried out by those who have been trained to review actual cases, so I recommend that there be a Case Review of the social work processes that have led to children being removed from primary carers when they entered prison, to be carried out by the Chief Social Worker for England (Children

and Families). Her remit should include a consideration of social work practice and the role of family services in keeping families together. The Case Review should adequately consider children of mothers from Wales in English prisons, involving senior social workers from relevant Welsh local authorities, and working closely with the Welsh Government as well as the UK Ministry of Justice/Department of Education.

227. Certainly, social workers should receive training about the characteristics of many women in the criminal justice system, and particularly about the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) an imprisoned parent has experienced and the effects this will have had on them. As I have already stated, compared with people with no ACEs, those with 4+ ACEs are 20 times more likely to have been incarcerated at any point in their lifetime.¹²¹

Recommendation

A Case Review of children removed from primary carers when they entered prison to be carried out by the Chief Social Worker for England (Children and Families), to ensure that decisions taken are always in the best interests of children. The review should examine social work practice, including the role of support services in keeping families together.

A different workforce for a different prison population

228. There also needs to be a rethink on how women's prisons are staffed. Fundamentally they should no longer *be modelled on the male estate*. Governors of female prisons told me how useful they would find it to have at least one social worker permanently based on their premises and more family engagement workers than are currently on their team.

'The Criminal Justice System is a male-centred system. Men's prisons need security officers to stop the violence, women's prisons need social workers to reduce the risk of violence and give some hope. If rehabilitation is the goal women need rehabilitating through different means. They have different problems and the effect of their imprisonment is generally more far-reaching to children and more financially and socially costly for society.'

Governor of HMP Low Newton

*'Women have been marginalised within a system largely designed by men for men for far too long...'*¹²²

121 Public Health Wales, (2015), *Adverse Childhood Experiences and Their Impact on Health-Harming Behaviours in The Welsh Adult Population*, p16

122 Baroness Corston, (2007), *A Report by Baroness Jean Corston of a Review of Women with Particular Vulnerabilities in the Criminal Justice System*, The Home Office, p2

*'The sense of parental responsibility was more evident in the women's prison than the men's prison. All but one of the [11] male prisoner interviewees were fathers, but none of them had been the sole, or principal, carer for their children prior to their imprisonment (indeed, the FEWs could not recall ever working with a father who had sole parental responsibility). As a consequence, there was a greater focus on complex childcare, guardianship, and family court work in the women's prison.'*¹²³

229. We have known that there is an unconscious emphasis on the male majority in the Criminal Justice System for a long time and, as well as stepping up efforts to keep women out of prison, ensuring women in custody are held in an environment that is as conducive to their rehabilitation as possible is also essential. As stated in the Introduction, women's top criminogenic need in custody is relationships. Meeting this will require a different kind of workforce. During the course of the Review I became convinced that we need to have social workers permanently located inside prisons and more family engagement workers, working in a multi-disciplinary team with prison officers, offender managers and others.

More family engagement workers

230. I have already described how women in the criminal justice system identify community-based social services as a barrier to seeking help: the fear that their children will be taken into care deters them from disclosing their problems and support needs. This was a common theme in the focus groups of women in prison and in the focus group in the women's centre, as well as in the Call for Evidence response. The overwhelming feeling of respondents toward social workers was one of betrayal: for some this can be traced to their dual role. They are both the person to whom the mother turned to for help and the person who used that confidentially-provided information in court against her. It is evident that women are more likely to seek and accept help from non-statutory agencies because, without fear of losing their children, they are more likely to build relationships of trust and disclose important information.

'If prisons prioritised family engagement staff and ensured that women were able to have frequent contact with their children (either directly or indirectly via facetime/ telephone etc) it would improve the situation for the whole family during and after imprisonment.'

Dr Shona Minson, in evidence to the Review

231. It was clear from the evidence received both in this and the original Review that family engagement workers (working in the model developed by the Family support alliance of criminal justice system charities evaluated by Dominey et al¹²⁴) are highly

123 Dominey, J., Dodds, C., Wright, S., (2016) *Bridging the Gap: A Review of the Pact Family Engagement Service*, University of Cambridge, p49

124 Ibid

effective in improving the quality of ties between prisoners and family members, including by reducing conflicts and tensions within families. They can also help women who are not in contact with their families or friends to reconnect. Women responding to the surveys said what made the difference was that they were viewed by family engagement workers as having the potential to change and this was echoed by staff themselves in the service evaluation:

*As one FEW concluded, 'Delivering the [family engagement] service gives people hope – something to hold onto. Having hope means that people are more likely to change.'*¹²⁵

232. Where appropriate, a family engagement worker may also advocate for a woman in prison to re-establish communication with children with whom they were not previously been in contact and/or are being looked after in social care, and act in a liaison capacity with community social services from within prison.¹²⁶

*'Part of the family engagement role involves making judgments about whether and how to support family contact. FEWs support prisoners through the ending of family relationships and manage their expectations about family contact.'*¹²⁷

233. This is incredibly time-consuming work often requiring a very large number of phone calls and meetings on behalf of each woman and attendance at family court appearances, particularly for child-related proceedings. Sometimes the ability of the family engagement worker to advocate on behalf of the prisoner makes all the difference between a child being taken into care, adopted or staying within the family and eventually reunited with the mother. Whilst this is testament to their effectiveness, it also exposes the possible arbitrariness of these outcomes which are, as stated earlier, life changing for the women, children and families concerned.

234. Governors greatly value the role FEWs play in the life of the prison but are aware that the need for the careful relational work they do far outstrips their capacity. Some governors seek additional resources for family support when commissioning or co-commissioning other services, such as for substance misuse or health: HMP Send have managed to secure a second FEW as part of the substance misuse contract but there is still much unmet need:

'One more family engagement worker would make so much difference.'

Governor of HMP Send

235. Whereas in the original Review I was not prescriptive about how staffing should ensure the golden thread of family and other significant ties ran through the

125 Ibid, p45

126 Pact, who provide FEWs in many prisons and most of the female estate, informed me that the annual cost to a prison for a Family Engagement Worker is £36,000, and they carry a case load of 60 on average.

127 Dominey, J., Dodds, C., Wright, S., *Bridging the Gap: A Review of the Pact Family Engagement Service*, University of Cambridge, p34

processes of prison, with the female estate there is a clearer case for specifying that more family engagement workers should be available in all women's prisons.

Recommendation

Funding to be allocated so that additional family engagement workers, working according to the evaluated model developed by the Family Support Alliance, are available in all women's prisons.

236. However, this will not be sufficient to address the high level of unmet need for expert help, particularly on issues to do with child care proceedings, which has been exposed by this Review. There is always an asymmetry of professional status between family engagement workers based in prison, who are generally not social work-qualified and are employed by the voluntary sector, and community social workers.

237. The latter may have little experience of liaising with mothers in prison and their guiding assumptions may be that a) a mother inside, by virtue of being given a custodial sentence, is not a fit parent and b) that prison is not a suitable environment for her child(ren) to visit. However well-informed the family engagement worker advocating on her behalf, it is unlikely they will be able to persuade the social work professional that the best interests of the child will be served by doing all that is possible to maintain and strengthen ties, not least by facilitating frequent contact. FEWs are not part of the statutory service and not necessarily part of the team around the child. For this and other reasons I outline below, I recommend that the multi-disciplinary team within each prison includes an on-site social worker.

An on-site social worker at each prison

238. Social workers in prison would be well-placed to do the following:

- **Provide a vital link with community social workers who have female prisoners' children on their caseloads.**

239. Currently community social workers have no obligation to visit the mother of a child designated to their caseload if she is in prison. The unfamiliarity of the prison system(s) and distances involved can make it difficult to locate a prisoner even if they are minded to do this. Having social workers in the prison would help ensure effective liaison with social workers in the community who would have a direct link to help them organise a visit to assess the mother. I heard about cases on Mother and Baby Units where social workers who were able to meet the mother and get to know her a little have completely changed their minds about her mothering capabilities.

240. A social worker within the prison would enable the mother to be informed in a timely manner of any care proceedings and to support the woman through final visits with her children if they are to be removed from her care permanently.

241. Whilst a child's case would continue to be held by the local authority 'community' social worker, including in any care proceedings, social workers in prison could support visits for children who wish to visit their mother but do not have an appropriate adult to accompany them. Social workers supported by voluntary organisations currently facilitate this in Northern Ireland.

- **Improve take up of places on Mother and Baby Units (MBUs)**

242. The number of women being granted places on MBUs has waned somewhat in recent years, although uptake may be increasing again, and many are separated from their infant children. In the year to March 2018 70 women and 60 babies were received into an MBU compared with 61 women and 51 babies in the 12 months to March 2017, 'a reversal of the falling volumes since March 2011.'¹²⁸

243. Social workers based in prisons would be more familiar with and able to attest to the benefits of MBUs not just for mothers but also for their babies. I heard that many community social workers, possibly due to risk aversion but certainly due to lack of experience, are reluctant to agree to very young children entering the prison estate to live with their mother in MBUs. This is one contributing factor (among several others) to the current under-use of such units.

244. If in-prison social workers were able to work with children's social workers on the outside (who would, as above, continue to be the caseholders for babies) this would help them develop the case for a baby to enter the MBU, where this is in their best interest, and decisions could be made more swiftly than is currently the case. I frequently heard of women giving birth who had no idea what would happen to their baby postpartum, which has very detrimental effects on maternal wellbeing.

245. Some women's applications to be accepted onto MBUs will still be refused and social workers in prison would have a key role supporting these and other women separated from their babies, including to maintain contact with them, for example by facilitating visits.

- **Act as advocates for women in prison, for instance, in care proceedings and help to broker more constructive relationships with community social workers to improve outcomes for children.**

246. I have already described the overwhelming response to their children's social workers from women in prison as one of distrust. The constant presence of at least one on-site social worker within a prison would enable women to build meaningful and more trusting relationships with them. This would also mean that women have a social care expert who knows their personal situation and can advocate for them in child

¹²⁸ Ministry of Justice, *HM Prison and Probation Service Annual Digest: 2017 to 2018*, p35

custody decisions, so these are better informed about risk and the best interests of the child.

247. Obviously other practitioners such as probation workers, family engagement workers or specially trained prison officers could also act as advocates, however community social workers need to know that they are dealing with someone who understands that the child's best interests must always be the paramount consideration. They would likely have more respect for in-prison social workers, who would help greatly in liaison with family courts and decisions about custody, on this ground.

248. I was concerned to hear that women have to pay for phone calls to legal aid solicitors about care proceedings out of their own pocket, at the usual expensive rate, and that they could be cut off after 10 minutes despite the call length not necessarily being under their control. That is why it is important that social workers and others are part of a communications gateway to help them access vital services on the outside particularly where this is necessary for maintaining their family ties.

249. Participants at the Brighton Women's Centre Focus Group emphasised the importance of someone not only being there for them, but who could also protect children if an abusive partner had been given custody when they entered prison. Ensuring children's best interests is key. This is not about creating a 'rights see-saw' between women and children, but about recognising that ongoing contact is often in a child's best interests and a woman in prison may have important information about the safety of a child that is not being heard. Indeed, Austin Treacy, the Director of Prisons in the Northern Ireland Prison Service, told the Review that he would like to have social workers embedded in all our prisons so that the rights of children are not unduly infringed.

- **Fulfil Care Act 2014 duties to provide social care to vulnerable women in prison**

250. Finally, the Care Act 2014 places a duty on local authorities to provide a social work function to vulnerable adults in prison, irrespective of the presence of children. Many women inside prison have a plethora of social care needs which will need to be met if they are to resettle successfully after their sentence. To this end social worker skills would complement those of probation workers: in other jurisdictions in the UK (Northern Ireland and Scotland) probation workers have a social work background which is very helpful for this reason. A social worker in the prison can also help connect women to services in the community prior to and on release.

251. Including social workers and more family engagement workers on multi-disciplinary teams obviously carries a cost to the Ministry of Justice (although joint funding models with local authorities should be considered as part of the more joined up services I advocate for throughout this report). However, if there was flexibility in how the Offender Management in Custody (OMIC) model is implemented so that governors who wanted the more diverse staffing structure I propose and were willing to have fewer prison officers to fund it, this could be more cost-neutral. I was advised

that social workers and family engagement workers should not be imposed upon establishments as an alternative to prison officers and that there should be flexibility.

Recommendation

The Ministry of Justice to fund an on-site social worker as part of the multi-disciplinary team within each prison.

Extrovert prisons

OFR Recommendation 18. The MoJ should require prisons to demonstrate mutually beneficial links with local businesses, schools and other bodies in the wider community.

252. When the Prisons Minister came before the Justice Select Committee on 11th December 2018, he underlined this point when describing his plans;

'...to model ourselves on what some NHS trusts and schools have done, and set up a charitable foundation alongside the public prison estate. In a hospital, the charitable foundation might support the children's area or a particular ward. I would like an opportunity to have a charitable foundation that could, particularly in London in relation to Wormwood Scrubs or Pentonville, give the often quite wealthy communities living around prisons a chance to contribute philanthropically, perhaps to support family areas, a library or specific activities for prisoners in a way that works alongside the Government.'

253. This recommendation is equally valid for the women's estate although they are held further from home and fewer of their children will be in local schools. However, where families do live nearby and are involved with local authority services such as early help/family hubs and possibly troubled families teams, or children attend local schools, prisons which hold the primary carer should work to build strong links to such provision. This will enable agencies to work together better and hold the whole family in mind, even whilst they are separated, in the interests of a less destructive sentence period and better resettlement.

254. The importance of governors and other senior leaders actively seeking out philanthropic and other private sector financial support such as sponsorship from local companies cannot be overstated. Involving local people in rehabilitation including through corporate social responsibility programmes helps to break down 'us and them' barriers from the grassroots of society: we will all ultimately be the beneficiaries of lower reoffending. The chaplain at HMP Send has galvanised a team of 80 volunteers who run Restorative Justice and parenting programmes as well as bereavement courses.

255. I saw many other good examples of extrovert prisons during this Review, attending for example an opera with many other local people and invited guests from

philanthropy and industry at HMP Bronzefield. Enterprisingly they took the opportunity to sell high quality goods hand-made by the women. I think of them every time I use the glasses cases I bought there. They are also planning to draw locals into their community by opening a dogwalkers' café in the visitors centre just outside the gate who will be served by women on ROTL.

256. If the community 'owned' the prison then women-focused charities such as the local Women's Institute and Soroptimists branch and others might be more aware of and willing to help to meet women's support needs whilst inside prison, when they go out on ROTL or even when they finally leave prison if they stay in the nearby area. Foreign national women who have no family nearby or even in the country and have met local people who have volunteered inside the prison or whilst on ROTL, could be drawn into peer support networks.

Opportunities for better family contact created by better use of technology

OFR Recommendation 19. Virtual visits using video calling technology should be available for the small percentage of families or individual family members who cannot visit frequently or at all due to infirmity, distance or other factors.

257. One of the most consistent themes running through responses to the Call for Evidence (from women in prison, their families, academics, voluntary sector organisations and the Women's estate team in HMPPS) was the need for technological communications solutions to improve women's contact with their families and virtual visits were called for with particular urgency. This is not new, NOMS' 2013 Women's Custodial Estate Review stated that:

*'Other options for maintaining contact such as telephone calls, emails and exploring the use of Skype and similar technology with appropriate safeguards should be increased to facilitate contact between visits, particularly for foreign national women.'*¹²⁹

258. The importance of maintaining computer literacy was highlighted by women in my Call for Evidence and email is a cheap and responsive way to maintain communication greatly valued by women: as one respondent to the Call for Evidence Survey said, 'email is a fantastic way to keep in touch.'¹³⁰ However there is much room for improvement: another resident told me on my visit to her prison,

'We are still in the 1970s. There is so much technology out there, but we don't have that – we can't return emails.'

129 National Offender Management Service, (2013), *Women's Custodial Estate Review*, p24

130 Female resident of HMP Peterborough, Call for Evidence Survey

259. The lack of reply system means, for example, that when a child sends her mother a distressed – and therefore distressing – message and her mother cannot answer, the child can be left thinking that she does not care, or that she has not received the message. Either way this can add to the child’s sense of being abandoned and the mother’s fears that she is letting her down.
260. There is inconsistency between different prisons’ application of schemes which facilitate prisoners’ use of emails, regardless of whether they were open or closed. According to the Email a prisoner website, HMP Askham Grange, HMP Bronzefield, HMP Downview and HMP East Sutton Park allow prisoners to receive and reply to emails whereas other women’s prisons only allow them to receive emails.¹³¹ Therefore, other female establishments need to learn from those who have already worked out how to run a reply system to ensure consistency across the estate.

Recommendation

To ensure consistency in the operation of prisoner email schemes, all female establishments (which have not done so already) to develop an email reply system.

Virtual visits

261. As with the original Review I found much enthusiasm within prisons for making the use of video-calling technology mainstream. As I noted in the final report, there was agreement that video-conferencing technology to allow more court hearings to take place virtually could help to achieve this: HMP Foston Hall is taking part in a pilot to allow risk-assessed and supervised family contact through video-conferencing.
262. I am convinced that the rather limited recommendation I made for the men’s estate needs to be expanded to be more appropriate for women in prison, not least because for this population it is not ‘a small percentage of families or individual family members who cannot visit frequently or at all due to infirmity, distance or other factors.’ To reiterate, the small size of the women’s estate means women are held at much greater distances from home than men in custody and women remain the primary carers in many cases.
263. So virtual visits should be routinely available to supplement (but not replace) face-to-face visits. This would increase the frequency with which women in prison can have more meaningful contact with a supportive adult outside who might struggle to visit often if at all, and mothers would be able to see their children more often, and in an environment that was less daunting for all concerned. Making better quality contact more readily available across the whole of the women’s estate would also help to address the high levels of self-harm.

¹³¹ Available at <https://messagecentre.unilink-technology-services.com/content/locations>

264. During this Review I saw good practice examples in HMP/YOI Hydebank Wood Secure College in Northern Ireland, where women are held, and virtual video visiting has become particularly embedded. It supports but does not replace face-to-face visits, reduces the cost of contact as it is free to use, and enables prisoners to ‘visit’ their own homes and see their family members in situ. One female prisoner told me that her grandson could take his tablet around the house and show her his bedroom. Such unsupervised use of video-conferencing technology is routinely allowed (and not just restricted to use in the visits hall and during official visiting times) for those who have shown they can be trusted. The Governor of HMP/YOI Hydebank Wood Secure College told me it was about:

‘Managing opportunity rather than focusing on risk. Protocols apply, for example, people have to happy to receive a call, but we just did it.’

265. As I said in the original Review, using virtual visiting in this way ‘acts as a motivator and a reminder of “normality”’.¹³² I pointed out that when earlier pilots had taken place in England, security at the family members’ end was considered to be unnecessarily tight and the inconvenience largely negated the benefit of being able to make a virtual visit. In pilots and eventual roll-out on the women’s estates, it will be essential to take a risk-reward approach, focusing on opportunities and taking small risks by operating to an adequate but not excessive level of security. Otherwise the potential of virtual visits will not be realised.

266. There are various ways this could be achieved, either through tablets as in HMP/YOI Hydebank Wood Secure College, and an establishment might choose to restrict use to visiting times and areas. Alternatively, in one women’s prison I was shown a row of ten booths where legal visits take place which the governor was keen to convert into spaces for virtual visits.

267. Historically the women’s estate has often lagged behind the men’s in benefiting from innovative practice but the whole of the female estate should be at the front of the queue for roll-out of virtual visiting because of the disproportionately positive impact on children given the relatively much higher number whose primary carer is in prison. Maximising this impact will require other government departments – social services, job centre plus, probation, education, housing services and others – also to host virtual visits as the next paragraph makes clear.

268. To build a robust case for prioritising the women’s estate that would help to win the battle for public opinion, there should be a cost benefit analysis of the use of virtual visits that would illustrate savings. These include:

- reduction in self harm;
- lower probation officer and social worker travel and subsistence costs;

¹³² Lord Farmer, (2017), *The Importance of Strengthening Prisoners’ Family Ties to Prevent Reoffending and Reduce Intergenerational Crime*, Ministry of Justice, p105

- fewer behavioural problems in children;
- increased representation at child custody hearings – with potentially fewer children released for adoption;
- improved access to legal advice;
- improved access to child/parent/teacher video-conferencing;
- improved access to interviews with a work coach, potential employer;
- housing/education provider, with knock-on improved resettlement outcomes;
- pre-transfer links between prisons to smooth transition between prisons for people moving;
- links with faith groups and other voluntary sector organisations prior to release.

269. Additionally, whilst the aim is not to reduce the number of face-to-face visits, it would be realistic given the current configuration of the women's estate and the distances some families have to travel, to expect reduced pressure on the Assisted Prison Visits scheme, reduced officer and administration time in managing as many face-to-face visits and a reduction in passing of contraband.

270. The cost savings are likely to be significant as is the long-term benefit of reducing reoffending by strengthening family ties, although this is harder to quantify. Rolling out virtual visits across the women's estate will also yield a rich seam of learning to aid broader implementation in adult male prisons, so HMPPS should be prepared to invest in the required level of secure access.

Recommendation

The Women's estate in its entirety to be prioritised for roll-out of virtual visits with all women routinely able to use facilities, where there are no security concerns, because of the disproportionately positive impact on children. There must be secure video conference facilities available in location managed by other government departments.

In-cell telephony

271. In my original Review I also mentioned the roll-out of in-cell telephony (ICT). I understand that more than 50 prisons are being prioritised for instalment of ICT. If this is the route HMPPS are planning to go down then, again, all women's prisons should be prioritised in the next phase of installation, given that this would make it far easier for primary carers to fulfil ongoing responsibilities, and enable other women to maintain and strengthen positive relationships.

One resident of HMP Peterborough said in her survey response that the most effective thing in maintaining family ties was:

'A phone being in my room as can phone when is best for everyone and when I want to phone, not feeling I have to phone within prison regime time.'

272. I would also say, however, that installing landlines in every cell in the female estate will be costly and low-tech in comparison with the way the vast majority of people outside prisons communicate. The Government could be creative in how it enables women to connect with families and significant others outside and consider making non-internet enabled mobile phones legal on the female estate, if only for a trial period. Lessons learned from road-testing more up-to-date means of communication would be invaluable when considering if and how this could be implemented on the male estate.

273. Finally, the high cost of phone calls was a recurring theme, and cause of considerable resentment in every focus group and in the Call for Evidence. In our survey, 183 (65%) of the women currently in prison identified phone calls as something that had either helped to keep in contact with family and friends or something they enjoyed the most. The expense significantly affected the frequency and level of contact women could achieve and maintain with their families. Many women said they spent their entirely weekly wage on phone credit. Foreign national women faced the additional cost of having to fund international call rates.

274. One resident at HMP Low Newton said,

'It makes you feel low not to be able to contact your family.'

275. Very similar issues were raised by the original Farmer Review, which pointed out that the prohibitively costly BT contract was being renegotiated by HMPPS and expressed some optimism that progress would be made on reducing call rates across the whole estate. In the interests of maintaining good relationships the cost of telephone communication should not be punitive in relation to prisoners' incomes. However, I have been informed that the present situation is that call costs are being significantly reduced only when establishments are fitted with in-cell telephony, per the table below, with figures provided by HMPPS.

Call costs with/without in-cell telephony

Landline cost per minute			
	Current	In-cell	% Reduction in cost
Weekday	7.4	4.1	44.5
Weekend	6.6	3.7	44.6
Mobiles cost per minute			
	Current	In-cell	% Reduction in cost
Weekday	16.6	9.2	44.6
Weekend	10.1	6.0	40.5

276. It is not unreasonable to surmise that prisoners will still spend large proportions of their very limited cash on calls if they have greater access to phones in their cells, particularly in the evening, and can talk for longer. This suggests that profits to the commercial provider will remain high. With that in mind there should be scope for more imaginative use of call packages across the estate which could, for example, give reduced call costs to their five most frequently called numbers. This would better reflect the situation customers find themselves in outside prison, where communications providers innovate to keep customers onside.
277. Similarly, at a focus group for the Review in HMP East Sutton Park, it was suggested that prisoners should be able to buy minutes, not credit. If paying for calls were made similar to regular phone contracts where £'x' a month buys 'y' minutes, remaining phone time would be easier to track.
278. Turning to establishments where there are no in-cell phones, it is very concerning prisoners will continue to have limited opportunities because of cost and competition for access, to speak regularly with children, families and others who matter to them. This hits primary carers particularly hard because the daily concerns of raising children do not diminish with distance. Yet there are only four women's prisons scheduled to have in-cell phones in the current wave of installation.
279. Given the greater proportion of women who are primary carers, and the benefit to their children of them being able to continue this role from inside prison, in-cell telephony (ICT) should be rolled out in all remaining women's prisons as part of the next wave of installation.

Recommendation

In-cell telephony (ICT) to be rolled out in all women's prisons as part of the next wave of installation given the higher proportion of women (than men) are primary carers.

Call providers to treat prisoners in the same way as other customers and provide 'frequent caller' and other packages which enable them to speak more with those who are most important to them.

Consideration to be given to piloting the use of simple, non-internet enabled mobile phones as a less costly solution.

Appendix

Breakdown of sustainable funding required for women's centres to support a third, a half and all women in England and Wales subject to criminal justice supervision, 2017¹³³

The table below looks across the criminal justice system (using 2017 numbers) and estimates the likely cost to specialist women's services if they had worked with 100%, 50% or 33% of women under sentence in 2017. It assumes equivalence in cost to support women subject to community and suspended sentence orders and includes provision for a small package of support for the growing number of women recalled to prison from post-release supervision. This analysis indicates that the women's sector would need approximately £23.4-£70.8m per calendar year to work with current numbers of women under supervision in the community by CRCs or the NPS.

	Number of women (2017)	Support Costs (£)	Cost (£): According to % of Women Supported		
			33%	50%	100%
All community orders	10,641	3,500	12,290,355	18,621,750	37,243,500
Suspended sentence orders	6,752	3,500	7,798,560	11,816,000	23,632,000
Post-release supervision*	5,665	1,750	3,271,538	4,956,875	9,913,750
Grand total			£23,360,453	£35,394,625	£70,789,250

*Pro rata, assuming a corresponding decrease in those requiring post-release supervision.

Sources: Ministry of Justice Offender Management Statistics. Table A4.14: Offenders supervised at end of period, under court orders and pre and post release supervision; Table A2.7: Sentenced admissions into prison by sentence length; Court Outcomes by Police Force Area; Analytical Tool for England and Wales.

¹³³ Based on research that Clinks and Prison Reform Trust commissioned before the Female Offender Strategy was launched, to explore how much funding women's centres would need to meet the needs of the women they are supporting to full cost recovery levels.

Prisons visited by the Farmer Review for Women

HMP Askham Grange

HMP Bronzefield

HMP Drake Hall

HMP East Sutton Park

HMP Eastwood Park

HMP Foston Hall

HMP Low Newton

HMP Peterborough

HMP Send

HMP Styal

HMP/YOI Hydebank Wood College, Ash House, Northern Ireland

Community Services visited by the Farmer Review for Women

Anawim Women's Centre

Brighton Women's Centre

Cardiff Women's Centre

Circles, Scotland

DISC Women's Diversion Project, Harrogate

Nelson Trust Women's Centre, Gloucester

Mariposa (Black Country Women's Aid Justice Service)

Open Gate, County Durham

Re:shape, North Yorkshire

Tyneside Women's Health, Gateshead

Respondents who gave oral evidence to the Farmer Review Expert Group

Adrienne Darragh, CEO, Hibiscus

Dr Ben Raikes, University of Huddersfield

Cicley Wilkinson, User Voice

Claire Hubberstey, CEO, One Small Thing

Corin Morgan-Armstrong, Head of Family Interventions, HMP/YOI Parc

Denise Clarke, User Voice

Florence Kroll, Director of Children's Services, London Borough of Greenwich

Hannah Shead, CEO, Trevi House

Joni Hobbs, User Voice

Katie Fraser, Women in Prison

Dr Lucy Baldwin, De Montfort University

Lyn Romeo, Chief Social Worker for Adults

Niki Gould, Nelson Trust and ReUnite

Nikki Flack, User Voice

Rebecca Steele, Lancashire Women's Centre

Sarah Beresford, Prison Reform Trust

Dr Shona Minson, University of Oxford

Sofia Buncy, Muslim Hands

Yvonne MacNamara, Traveller Movement

Zaiba Qureshi, Housing for Women

Organisations and individuals who responded to the call for evidence or otherwise contributed to the report

Agenda

Alison Best, Chief Inspector (Prosecution & Victim Services), Northumbria Police & Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner

Andy Hunt, NHS England

Anna Capstick, Senior Officer, National Probation Service

Arooj

Baroness Jean Corston

Birth Companions

Brathay Trust

Brighton Women's Centre

Charlotte Dodds, University of Surrey

Choice for Change

Claire Hannah-Russell, University of Bath

Clinks

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