

The National Women's Justice Coalition

Established in September 2021, the [National Women's Justice Coalition](#) (NWJC) is dedicated to achieving social justice by driving transformative change within the criminal justice system (CJS) to reduce the stigmatisation of and improve outcomes for women and girls. The coalition's membership group includes 26 women's organisations ([partners](#)), each expert in delivering trauma-informed, gender-responsive support through women's centres, women's prisons and women-only premises.

The NWJC welcomes the Independent Sentencing Review as an opportunity to fundamentally re-think and reform how sentencing works for women and girls in England and Wales. Most women in prison need community-based support not punishment, and short custodial sentences disrupt lives and fail to tackle the root causes of female offending or the underlying complex needs of women and girls in contact with the CJS. With the prison system in crisis and projections indicating that 4,200¹ women could be incarcerated by 2027, the Independent Sentencing Review must prioritise a greater use of community sentences, proven to reduce reoffending rates and support better outcomes.

Collectively, the NWJC believes this review presents a valuable opportunity to radically transform and embed more sustainable, compassionate and gender-responsive approaches to sentencing women and girls and to shift the balance across the CJS from punitive justice to effective rehabilitation and prevention. Our partners know firsthand that when women are supported holistically to address their complex needs and offending behaviours, they can transform their lives. This leads to more equitable justice for women and improves outcomes for offenders, victims and communities as a whole.

While we recognise that the **use of remand** falls outside of the scope of this review, we believe that the high and increasing numbers² of women held on remand is a matter of huge significance and relevance to any strategic efforts or approaches that seek to effectively reduce the number of women in prison. Women are frequently remanded into custody for minor offenses, even when they are unlikely to receive a custodial sentence. This practice exacerbates the strain on prison capacity and unnecessarily disrupts women's lives, causing harm to both them and their families. Remand should only be used for women who pose an immediate, high-level threat to public safety. Most women currently held on remand do not meet this threshold, and many are eventually acquitted or given non-custodial sentences. We see an urgent need to implement stricter guidelines to ensure remand is only used for women when necessary and proportionate, and that community-based interventions are fully utilised as an alternative to remand. We encourage the Sentencing Review Independent Panel to highlight and advocate for the need for a dedicated and systemic review of the use of remand in the CJS.

After the Call for Evidence event deadline has passed, we would welcome further opportunities for NWJC representatives and partners to participate in the planned programme of engagement events, including roundtables, and we collectively look forward to the publication of the Sentencing Review Independent Panel's report in spring 2025.

¹ Prison Population Projections: 2023 to 2028, Ministry of Justice

² [Female offender strategy delivery plan: 'one year on' progress report - GOV.UK](#)

Summary of NWJC recommendations

THEME	NWJC recommendation
<p>THEME 3: TECHNOLOGY <i>How should we reform the use of community sentences and other alternatives to custody to deliver justice and improve outcomes for offenders, victims and communities?</i></p>	<p>A presumption against electronic tagging for pregnant women and mothers should be introduced alongside the limited use of electronic tagging for women and girls in only the most exceptional of circumstances: page 4</p> <p>Technology should be used to improve communication between women, Probation services, and support networks and help to reduce the administrative and logistical burden for women who are working to rebuild their lives: page 4-5</p>
<p>THEME 4: COMMUNITY SENTENCES <i>How should we reform the use of community sentences and other alternatives to custody to deliver justice and improve outcomes for offenders, victims and communities?</i></p>	<p>Adopt a gendered response to sentencing: page 5-6</p> <p>Commission third sector organisations to work alongside the Probation service to deliver community sentences more effectively: page 7-8</p> <p>Low-harm, non-violent offences should be dealt with outside of the court system wherever possible and the driver(s) of said offences should be examined in depth before making custodial sentencing decisions in relation to women and girls: page 8</p> <p>Develop trauma-informed approaches to supervising women on probation: page 8-9</p> <p>Pre-Sentencing Reports must be fully utilised and mandated to inform all sentencing decisions: page 9 - 10</p> <p>The purpose and use of recall must be widely understood by probation officers. Recall decisions must be transparent, evidence-based and enacted only after robust alternatives have been fully considered: page 10-11</p> <p>Pregnant or postnatal (perinatal) women should be supported in the community in all but the most exceptional of circumstances due to the negative health risks for both the woman and baby associated with the prison environment: page 11-13</p> <p>Increase the use of women’s Problem-Solving courts (PSC) to reduce the number of women and girls in custody: page 13-14</p> <p>Commit significant and long-term investment in women’s centres: page 14-16</p>
<p>THEME 5: CUSTODIAL SENTENCES <i>How should custodial sentences be reformed to deliver justice and improve outcomes for offenders, victims and communities?</i></p>	<p>Abolish short custodial sentences for women: page 16-18</p> <p>All women in custody should have access to robust, accessible education and culturally responsive training opportunities: page 18-19</p> <p>Increase the use of Release on Temporary License (ROTL) for women in custody to enhance opportunities and progression routes for women post-release: page 19</p>

	<p>Address sentence inflation and reduce the imposition of longer custodial sentences: page 19-20</p> <p>Pre-Sentencing Reports must be fully utilised and mandated to inform all sentencing decisions: page 20-21</p>
<p>THEME 5: CUSTODIAL SENTENCES <i>How should we reform the way offenders progress through their custodial sentences to ensure we are delivering justice and improving outcomes for offenders, victims, and communities?</i></p>	<p>Pregnant or postnatal (perinatal) women should be supported in the community in all but the most exceptional of circumstances due to the negative health risks for both the woman and baby associated with the prison environment: page 21-23</p> <p>To support outcomes for women leaving prison, progression from custody to community must be coordinated, collaborative and well resourced: page 23-24</p> <p>The lack of resource and capacity within Probation requires urgent attention if ambitions to deliver justice and improve outcomes for offenders, victims, and communities are to be met: page 24-26</p> <p>The purpose and use of recall must be widely understood by probation officers. Recall decisions must be transparent, evidence-based and enacted only after robust alternatives have been fully considered: page 26-27</p>
<p>THEME 7: INDIVIDUAL NEEDS OF VICTIMS AND OFFENDERS <i>What, if any, changes are needed in sentencing to meet the individual needs of different victims and offenders and to drive better outcomes?</i></p>	<p>The sentencing framework should be amended to consider the specific needs and/or vulnerabilities of women: page 27-29</p> <p>The sentencing framework needs to acknowledge and address the systemic disproportionality that exists in sentencing precedents and negatively impacts women and people from Black and racially minoritised communities: page 29-32</p> <p>The increased use of and investment in early intervention and diversion services is critical to responding to the individual needs of victims and offenders to achieve better outcomes: page 33</p> <p>Release planning and management of community sentences for perpetrators of violence against women and girls must consider the experiences and risks posed to victims and survivors of abuse: page 33-34</p>

Thematic responses in full

THEME 3: TECHNOLOGY

How can we use technology to be innovative in our sentencing options, including considering how we administer sentences and manage offenders in the community?

RECOMMENDATION: A presumption against electronic tagging for pregnant women and mothers should be introduced alongside the limited use of electronic tagging for women and girls in only the most exceptional of circumstances.

The use of electronic tagging with women can be physically uncomfortable, stigmatising and overly restrictive, and creates specific barriers to them accessing housing, training and employment. NWJC Partner [Working Chance](#) has noted instances in which employers have revoked job offers because a candidate has been visibly seen to be wearing an electronic tag.

Discreet technology, such as smartwatches or apps on mobile phones, should be explored as suitable alternatives to provide an equally effective and cheaper form of supervision.

The use of technology should be gendered informed and designed with women’s specific physical, mental and circumstantial needs in mind, in recognition of the significant inequalities and injustices that can impact women when technological solutions fail them.

We support [Level-Up’s](#) calls for an end to tagging all pregnant women and mothers.

RECOMMENDATION: Technology should be used to improve communication between women, Probation services, and

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE:

Case study³: Gaie Delap, 77, was released from HMP Peterborough on Home Detention Curfew (HDC) in November 2024. The company contracted to fit her electronic tag was unable to attach a tag to Gaie’s ankle due to her health conditions. They were also unable to provide a device small enough to fit Gaie’s wrist. As Gaie could not be monitored on HDC, she has now been recalled to prison⁴.

In some reported cases, electronic tagging is not fit for purpose when a woman’s physique or health conditions may prevent or hinder its use.

If a woman is experiencing or attempting to flee from domestic abuse, an electronic tag that restricts her to a particular area can be dangerous and exacerbate her risk of being subjected to further abuse.

Women experiencing poverty, without access to secure housing and reliable electricity can be penalised and at risk of recall if they are unable to recharge their electronic tags due to the instability of their circumstances.

Perinatal women fear breaching their licence conditions when going into labour or accessing urgent healthcare appointments for themselves or their children.

³ <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2024/dec/07/just-stop-oil-activist-gaie-delap-facing-jail-recall-as-wrists-too-small-for-electronic-tag>

⁴ [Just Stop Oil campaigner back in jail after ankle tag problem - BBC News](#)

support networks and help to reduce the administrative and logistical burden for women who are working to rebuild their lives.

Any changes to the use of technology in sentencing should focus on solutions that find a balance between accountability and successful reintegration into society.

Digital platforms should be utilised in both prisons and the community to deliver remote programmes such mental health support, and skills training.

THEME 4: COMMUNITY SENTENCES

How should we reform the use of community sentences and other alternatives to custody to deliver justice and improve outcomes for offenders, victims and communities?

RECOMMENDATION: Adopt a gendered response to sentencing.

A gender-responsive and trauma-informed approach to sentencing women and girls needs to be integral to all sentencing guidelines.

Sentencing guidelines must require the consideration of trauma histories, including women’s experiences of domestic abuse and coercive control. This would lead to more compassionate and effective sentencing practices that reflect women’s lived experiences and specific needs.

Sentencing decisions must:

- Avoid criminalising women and girls experiencing poverty, abuse and discrimination.

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE:

Many women in contact with the justice system are victims of crimes more serious than the ones they are accused of themselves. These women often have a deep experience of trauma and multiple unmet needs and face interrelated challenges such as homelessness, mental health issues, substance misuse, and domestic abuse. The absence of a holistic, systemic response leaves these issues unaddressed and directly contributes to the overrepresentation of women in the criminal justice system.

Nearly 7 in 10 women entering prison in 2023 had committed non-violent crimes⁵ and over 75% of women on probation in 2023 with a community order or suspended sentence had committed non-violent crimes.⁶

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/offender-management-statistics-quarterly> referenced in Bromley Briefings 2024, Prison Reform Trust

⁶ Offender management stats, Apr-Jun 2024

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek to divert women and girls away from cycles of harm and re-traumatisation. • Favour community-based sentences for women and girls that enable them to access specialist services that can support their progression every opportunity. • Acknowledge and address how the requirements of a community sentence may be experienced by women who have caring responsibilities, mental healthcare needs and complex issues. <p>Too many women are prosecuted and criminalised for offences perpetrated by men that relate to domestic abuse and sexual violence, and offences relating to social and economic deprivation, ill mental health and trauma. This issue has been compounded by a significant lack of long-term investment in upstream, preventative work with women and girls to reduce their contact and divert them away from criminal justice system.</p> <p>All non-violent offences committed by women should be addressed outside of the court system, with individuals who have committed low-harm offences, such as theft, drug possession, or driving offences, presumed suitable to serve a sentence in the community. This includes most women in the criminal justice system.</p> <p>Prisons are not and should never been considered safe places for women and girls.</p>	<p>Following referrals from the Probation service under the Rehabilitation Activity Requirement (RAR) framework,⁷ 7 in 10 women who are successfully contacted by NWJC Partner Advance engage in women-only services.</p> <p>The Women’s Risk Needs Assessment (WRNA) tool is currently being trialled by a national group of women’s centres as part of the Effective Women’s Centres project. The WRNA considers the needs and strengths of women who attend women’s centres in a gender informed and trauma responsive way. Recently published research⁸ findings from the WRNA project show that 80% of women in the criminal justice system are victims of abuse (inc 63% childhood sexual abuse). Providing them with holistic, gender-specific support is a way to improve outcomes for victims of crime. It also reduces their risk of re-offending so improved outcomes for victims of the women’s crimes as well and reduces future victims.</p> <p>Anecdotal evidence from NWJC partners collectively demonstrates that when women present with unmet complex mental health needs, they are more likely to be sent to prison as a ‘place of safety’, because there is nowhere else for them to go and insufficient support available in the community. This undermines and exploits the use of custodial sentencing and discriminates against and disadvantages women and girls disproportionately.</p> <p>Incidents of women self-harming in prison have increased over the last 12 months and are at record-high levels⁹.</p>
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⁷ Advance internal data [Annual-Report-2023.pdf](#)

⁸ [EWC-Exploring-Needs-Profiles-of-Justice-Involved-Women-1.pdf](#)

⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/safety-in-custody-quarterly-update-to-march-2024/safety-in-custody-statistics-england-and-wales-deaths-in-prison-custody-to-june-2024-assaults-and-self-harm-to-march-2024>

RECOMMENDATION: Commission third sector organisations to work alongside the Probation service to deliver community sentences more effectively.

Many of the challenges women face when transitioning from custody to community could be better addressed upstream. This would directly help to reduce the female prison population as a whole.

Current community sentences consist of probation supervision alongside a catalogue of requirements including tagged curfew; unpaid work; treatment for addiction or mental health; and programmes including counselling, drug testing, or support with reading, writing and job applications. They are complex and resource intensive for the Probation service to deliver alone.

For a fraction of the cost of a prison place, third sector organisations including women’s centres, can provide expert specialist support, resources, programmes and courses, group work, peer support, mentoring services and restorative justice approaches to deliver community sentences and improve outcomes for offenders, victims and communities.

If a collaborative, non-adversarial approach to co-delivering community sentences was embedded between Probation and third sector providers, it would significantly reduce pressures on the Probation service and help to distinguish Probation’s role as one of enforcement and compliance.

Establishing robust referral pathways to ensure that every woman is offered access to support and advocacy from women’s specialist services from when she first comes into contact with the criminal

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE:

Women on community sentences can access support from women’s centres and through residential women’s centres and communities like NWJC Partner [One Small Thing’s](#) Hope Street¹⁰ centre in Southampton.

Community-based women’s centres enable women to remain close to their families and networks and support them to address the root causes of their offending behaviours.

Community-based provision can empower women to disrupt the cycles of trauma and criminalisation that drive their continued and prolonged contact with the criminal justice system.

Residential women’s centres like Hope Street represent value of money. One Small Thing estimates that public savings would amount to millions of pounds per year if their residential women’s centre model was rolled out nationally.

¹⁰ <https://www.womensservicesmap.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/HopeStreetBrochure-Updateopen23.pdf>

<p>justice system is essential. This must include access to appropriately trained female interpreters where needed. Such an approach would encourage a more effective and gender-informed approach with increased use of community solutions for women and reduced imprisonment.</p> <p>Public confidence in sentencing would increase if the tangible impact of involving offenders in meaningful, rehabilitative community-based work could be witnessed and demonstrated in communities.</p>	
<p>RECOMMENDATION: Low-harm, non-violent offences should be dealt with outside of the court system wherever possible and the driver(s) of said offences should be examined in depth before making custodial sentencing decisions in relation to women and girls.</p> <p>Sentencing decisions should always be made in line with the five key principles of sentencing: punishment, reduction in crime, reparation, rehabilitation, and public protection; as well as the culpability and harm tests.</p> <p>Low-harm, non-violent offences should be dealt with outside of the court system wherever possible. Although it can be useful to generally categorise types of offences, with respect to female offending, it is critical to consider the driver(s) of said offences when making sentencing decisions.</p>	<p>SUPPORTING EVIDENCE</p> <p>All non-violent offences committed by women should be addressed outside of the court system, with individuals who have committed low-harm offences, such as theft, drug possession, or driving offences, presumed suitable to serve a sentence in the community. This includes most women in the criminal justice system.</p> <p>Nearly 7 in 10 women entering prison in 2023 had committed non-violent crimes¹¹ and over 75% of women on probation in 2023 with a community order or suspended sentence had committed non-violent crimes.¹²</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION: Develop trauma-informed approaches to supervising women on probation.</p>	<p>SUPPORTING EVIDENCE:</p>

¹¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/offender-management-statistics-quarterly> referenced in Bromley Briefings 2024, Prison Reform Trust

¹² Offender management stats, Apr-Jun 2024

<p>Tailored, gender-specific supervision for women on probation is essential. This support must be person-centred - looking at the whole woman - and strengths-based, considering the skills and resources the individual can bring to make a positive change. Specialist supervision and support is an efficient, safe and impactful way to improve the efficacy of community sentences.</p> <p>Greater consistency of practice is needed nationally across the Probation service.</p> <p>There is currently no standardised framework of support offered to women on probation to respond to their experiences of domestic abuse, despite the majority of women reporting having experienced domestic, sexual or childhood abuse.</p>	<p>Most women in contact with the justice system have experienced some form of trauma or abuse.</p> <p>Of the women supported by NWJC Partner Advance through their CJS services alone:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 70% report experiences of domestic, sexual or childhood abuse • 80% report that they need mental health support • 58% report that they need support with substance misuse <p>Collectively, NWJC partners have witnessed varying levels of consistency and support offered to women through the Probation service, with individual probation officers making different decisions in comparable circumstances relating to offenders’ requirements. For example, some officers will allow the time offenders spend engaging with support services to contribute to their probation hours, while others won’t. Standardising policy across the probation service would alleviate pressure on both the service and offenders.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION: Pre-Sentencing Reports must be fully utilised and mandated to inform all sentencing decisions.</p> <p>Pre-sentence reports (PSRs) have the potential to provide an expert assessment of the nature and causes of an individual’s behaviour, the risk that individual poses and to whom, and to make independent recommendations of the options available to support the judiciary in deciding the appropriate sentence.</p> <p>PSRs are critical to identifying and quantifying the circumstances, specific considerations and challenges a woman is facing that have directly or indirectly contributed to her offending. They are also vital in ensuring the correct sentence, requirements, and ancillary orders</p>	<p>SUPPORTING EVIDENCE:</p> <p>According to the most recent data¹³ available, the use of Pre-Sentencing Reports has declined steeply since 2014 in England and Wales:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • England: Standard Delivery PSR 2014 = 131,462 • England: Standard Delivery PSR 2023 = 84,880 • Wales: Standard Delivery PSR 2014 = 10,470 • Wales: Standard Delivery PSR 2014 = 6,488 <p>NWJC Partner Anawim notes that a ‘speedy justice’ approach has consistently proven counter-productive, with the short oral reports offering very little information in place of PSRs. Oral reports do not allow for input from the specialist support services involved in and</p>

¹³ [Written questions and answers - Written questions, answers and statements - UK Parliament](#)

<p>are put in place, particularly with thorough inquiry on a defendant or victims’ experiences of domestic abuse and coercive control, and other intersecting needs such as substance misuse and mental health needs.</p> <p>PSRs must be a valued and integral part of sentencing practices and should be mandated by the judiciary to inform sentencing decisions, particularly in cases involving domestic abuse and coercion into offending.</p> <p>There is currently little-to-no involvement or resourcing for women’s specialist services to assist in the delivery of PSRs. This must be addressed and rectified. The expertise of women’s organisations should be sought and considered in writing PSRs whenever possible to ensure that a woman’s complex needs and circumstances are fully articulated and that the breadth and reach of the community-based specialist provision available to support her rehabilitation is understood.</p>	<p>well placed to advise on a woman’s individual behaviours, risks and complexities.</p> <p>The value of PSRs has been demonstrated through the Intensive Supervision court in Birmingham. PSRs have contributed to tailored orders being made that better meet the needs of the individual; these include Mental Health Treatment Orders and Alcohol Treatment Orders. To fully embed and benefit from this innovate approach, additional resources and funding must be allocated to support the capacity of mental health teams and treatment programmes and to mitigate the risk of setting some women up to fail.</p> <p>Learning should be drawn from the Ministry of Justice’s Pre-Sentence Report pilot to ensure high quality pre-sentence reports are available in any case where custody is being considered for women, including through training and guidance for report writers, court staff, judges and magistrates.¹⁴</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION: The purpose and use of recall must be widely understood by probation officers. Recall decisions must be transparent, evidence-based and enacted only after robust alternatives have been fully considered.</p> <p>Robust alternatives to recall should include provision of appropriate, supported accommodation and access to women’s centres. The expertise and professional insights of third sector and women’s organisations involved in delivering targeted support should be sought and considered prior to any recall decision being made, to</p>	<p>SUPPORTING EVIDENCE:</p> <p>The number of women being recalled to custody increased by two-thirds between 2023 and 2024.¹⁵</p> <p>Of recalls in April-June 2024, about 24% involved a charge of further offending, 77% involved non-compliance, 36% involved failure to keep in touch, and 23% involved failure to reside. These proportions have remained relatively stable.¹⁶</p> <p>NWJC partners delivering frontline services and Commissioned Rehabilitation Services to women report that decision-making</p>

¹⁴ [Ministry of Justice \(2023\) A Process Evaluation of the Pre-Sentence Report Pilot](#)

¹⁵ Offender management statistics quarterly: April to June 2024 - GOV.UK

¹⁶ Offender management statistics quarterly: April to June 2024 - GOV.UK

<p>ensure that a woman’s individual, complex needs and circumstances are fully understood.</p> <p>Without access to safe and appropriate accommodation and specialist support, women may find it difficult to comply with the conditions of their licence. A lack of accommodation, including move-on accommodation following access to CAS and Approved Premises options, means that women may be more likely to breach their conditions and face recall through no fault of their own.</p> <p>The current system of two-week (14 day) recalls is ineffective and impractical. Recalls are predominately due to non-compliance, and not re-offending. For women, non-compliance is linked to issues associated with their unstable housing, chaotic lifestyles, caring responsibilities, substance misuse issues and physical and mental health needs.</p> <p>An increased use of community sentences for women would directly reduce the female prison population, relieve pressure on Probation to administer recalls, and increase women’s access to effective rehabilitative programmes and support.</p> <p>Recall is a traumatising process for women and their families. With recall rates steadily increasing without sufficient evidence to justify this increase, robust alternatives to recalling women to prison are needed, and transparency in recall decisions is necessary to protect all those involved.</p>	<p>around recalls can vary significantly, depending on the skills and experience of probation practitioners.</p> <p>Anecdotal evidence demonstrates that trusted relationships between women’s providers and probation practitioners can increase women’s compliance with licence conditions and reduce the risk of recall.</p> <p>According to data collated by NWJC partner Birth Companions, many perinatal women are entering prison on recall after breaches linked to insufficient release planning, inappropriate housing, and a lack of support for mental health or substance use issues. Recall disrupts women’s access to healthcare, impacts women’s childcaring arrangements including contact with children in foster or kinship care.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION: Pregnant or postnatal (perinatal¹⁷) women should be supported in the community in all but the most exceptional of circumstances due to the negative health risks for</p>	<p>SUPPORTING EVIDENCE: For evidence on the importance of the first 1001 days, refer to Evidence Briefs - Parent-Infant Foundation.</p>

¹⁷ We define perinatal women in accordance with a definition explained by Birth Companions, as being women who are in the 1001 days from conception to their child’s second birthday.

both the woman and baby associated with the prison environment.

Many women who give birth in prison, or who enter prison during the postnatal period, will be separated temporarily or permanently from their baby. Separation interrupts breastfeeding and risks significant trauma at a time during which mother-baby attachment is shown to be crucial.

In cases when the custody threshold is met for perinatal women, a deferred sentence should be made unless there is a clear and overriding justification for immediate custody. Furthermore, the deferral period available should be extended from the current six-month provision to cover the entirety of the remaining days up to the second birthday (as a minimum).

Deferred sentences offer valuable opportunities to allow pregnant women and new mothers the chance to give birth in the community, with full access to healthcare including easy access to emergency care if required, and to navigate the complexities of pregnancy and early motherhood within their existing support networks. They also reduce the likelihood of temporary or permanent separation from an infant during this critical period and allow for healthcare, voluntary sector, and social care services to be offered more easily and coordinated more effectively by multiple agencies.

Research shows women in prison experience significant difficulties accessing equivalent and appropriate healthcare, including urgent medical assistance or specialist maternity services¹⁸.

Pregnancy and the postnatal period pose increased risks of suicide or death for women experiencing severe mental ill-health, as evidenced by the annual reports on maternal mortality¹⁹.

Evidence²⁰ compiled by NWJC partner [Birth Companions](#) references the impact of maternal stress, anxiety, and mental health issues during the first 1001 days, and demonstrates the importance of the development of a child’s early emotional bond with their primary caregiver and the impact separation can have on a child’s intellectual, emotional, social and psychological development.

Pregnant women in prison are five times more likely to experience a stillbirth than women in the community. Pregnant women in prison are almost twice as likely to give birth prematurely as women in the general population, which puts both mothers and babies at risk. One in 10 pregnant women in prison give birth in a cell or on the way to hospital²¹.

For comprehensive evidence on the risks to the physical health of mother and baby in the prison environment, including premature and unassisted labour, pre-eclampsia, haemorrhage, and sepsis, refer to [MBRRACE-UK | Maternal Reports & Perinatal Reports](#)

¹⁸Abbott, L., Scott, T. and Thomas, H. (2023) Experiences of midwifery care in English prisons. *Birth*, 50(1), pp.244-251. Davies, M et al (2022) Inequality on the inside: Using hospital data to understand the key health care issues for women in prison <https://www.nuffieldtrust.org.uk/research/inequality-on-the-inside-using-hospital-data-to-understand-the-key-health-care-issues-for-women-in-prison>

¹⁹ MBRRACE-UK (2024) Saving Lives, Improving Mothers’ Care <https://www.npeu.ox.ac.uk/mbrrace-uk/reports/maternal-reports/maternal-report-2020-2022>

²⁰ [SC_Imposition_consultation_Feb_2024_-_Birth_Companions_FINAL_SUBMISSION.pdf](#)

²¹ [Pregnant women in prison at greater risk of pregnancy complications and baby loss | Tommy's](#)

<p>Where perinatal women do enter prison, they must be prioritised for childcare-linked Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL) and Home Detention Curfew (HDC) at the earliest possible opportunity.</p>	<p>The Royal College of Midwives and the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists both emphasise the need for alternatives to prison to be used in sentencing pregnant women wherever possible²².</p> <p>The significance of the risks and complexities experienced by perinatal women and their children in prison was recognised by the Sentencing Council and led to the creation of a specific mitigating factor which came into operation on 1 April 2024.</p> <p><i>“The impact of custody on an offender who is pregnant or post-natal can be harmful for both the offender and the child, including by separation, especially in the first two years of life. – Sentencing Council guidance²³</i></p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION: Increase the use of women’s Problem-Solving courts²⁴ (PSC) to reduce the number of women and girls in custody.</p> <p>Problem-Solving courts facilitate pioneering partnerships between women’s centres and women’s specialist service providers, Probation, courts, drug treatment and others to successfully tackle the underlying causes of crime.</p> <p>Focusing on rehabilitative outcomes, PSC combine intervention programmes with judicial oversight through regular reviews. By placing judges and magistrates at the centre of rehabilitation, PSC target individuals or families with complex needs, who might</p>	<p>SUPPORTING EVIDENCE:</p> <p>The Women’s PSC in Greater Manchester has been operating since 2014. The UK Government launched a Women’s Intensive Supervision Court pilot in Birmingham in June 2023. In Scotland, a Women’s Court has also been implemented in Aberdeen Sheriff’s Court since 2015²⁵.</p> <p>Government data from 2021 shows the rate of re-offending for women in Greater Manchester’s PSC was 15% while the national percentage was 20.1%²⁶.</p>

²² RCM (2018) Position Statement: Perinatal women in the criminal justice system www.rcm.org.uk/media/3640/perinatal-women-in-the-criminal-justice-system_7.pdf and RCOG (2021) RCOG Position Statement: Maternity care for women in prison in England and Wales <https://www.rcog.org.uk/media/wwhogs5/rcog-maternity-care-and-the-prison-system-position-statement-sept-2021.pdf>

²³ Sentencing Council (2024) Sentencing pregnant women and new mothers <https://www.sentencingcouncil.org.uk/news/item/sentencing-pregnant-women-and-new-mothers/>

²⁴ [Problem-solving courts - UK Parliament POST-PN-0700.pdf](https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/problemsolvingcourts/pages/problem-solving-courts-uk-parliament-post-pn-0700.pdf)

²⁵ [Aberdeen Problem-Solving Approach | Centre for Justice Innovation](https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/problemsolvingcourts/pages/aberdeen-problem-solving-approach-centre-for-justice-innovation)

²⁶ [Problem-solving courts - UK Parliament POST-PN-0700.pdf](https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/problemsolvingcourts/pages/problem-solving-courts-uk-parliament-post-pn-0700.pdf)

<p>not benefit from standard court proceedings and supervision, with an aim to improve long-term life outcomes.</p> <p>Women-specific PSC aim to address gender-specific needs underlying offending, such as domestic abuse, trauma, substance misuse, sexual exploitation and involvement in sex work. Expanding the use of women-specific PSC would provide collaborative, tailored approaches to sentencing and would support women to remain in and contribute to their communities, keeping families together wherever possible.</p> <p>PSC can effectively address the underlying causes of female offending while ensuring accountability and rehabilitation.</p>	<p>Additional positive outcomes include increased compliance with community orders and multi-agency partnerships (including police, probation service, women’s centres).</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION: Commit significant and long-term investment in women’s centres.</p> <p>Women’s centres are run for women, by women, in women-only spaces. They offer gender-responsive services delivered with a trauma-informed approach that recognises how trauma and abuse impact women’s lives, and the lives of their families, and why addressing the psychological impact of this trauma is vital to meeting women’s needs.</p> <p>Women’s centres have a proven track record of reducing reoffending and supporting rehabilitation and must be positioned as central to the criminal justice system’s response to addressing and reducing cycles of female offending. When women’s centres and women’s specialist service providers are insufficiently and</p>	<p>SUPPORTING EVIDENCE</p> <p>Female offenders cost the government approximately £1.7 billion in 2015/16²⁸, including estimated police costs of around £1 billion. This figure excluded wider social costs, such as the cost of intergenerational offending. The one-off investment in diversionary, community-based services over the same two-year period was £6.5 million²⁹. This disparity continues despite overwhelming evidence demonstrating the effectiveness and impact of the women’s centre model in preventing recidivism and reducing pressure on other services³⁰.</p> <p>Ministry of Justice figures put the cost of imprisonment at over £50,000 per place for per in 2022/23³¹. By comparison, specialist women’s organisations such as NWJC partner Advance can provide keyworker support for as little as £2,000 per woman per year.</p>

²⁸ [Female Offender Strategy](#)

²⁹ [WBG-15-Womens-Centres-Report-v4.pdf](#)

³⁰ [committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/36645/pdf/](#)

³¹ [costs-per-place-per-prisoner-2022-2023-summary.pdf](#)

<p>unsustainably funded, women are unable to access the support they need and female offending increases.</p> <p>The insecurity of short-term funding and funding that falls short of true cost recovery for women's organisations present significant challenges. The government must prioritise and commit long-term, sustainable funding for women's centres and women's specialist service providers to align with any increased use of community sentences (including suspended and deferred sentences).</p> <p>Long-term and sustainable investment in women's centres would significantly reduce reliance on custody and ease pressure on prison places and wider services. Such investment would also enable women's specialist organisations to better respond to women with multiple and intersecting needs and ensure that women and girls benefit from consistent access to holistic, trauma-informed, and community-based support.</p> <p>A key principle of the Women's Justice Re-imagined's 10-point action plan for change²⁷ should underpin any long-term funding and commissioning decisions. This principle states:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Action 9: Ensure funding and commissioning mechanisms and procedures are accessible to small and medium-sized, voluntary and specialist sector organisations to deliver specialist support for this group in all parts of the criminal justice system. In particular:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o HMPPS to encourage and enable engagement of smaller specialist organisations through grants rather than contracts and by providing targeted capacity building programmes. 	<p>Evidence shows that women's centres offer considerable benefits in reducing the costs of re-offending³² but the benefits delivered by the women's centre model are not fully realised due to inadequate funding and inconsistent commissioning.</p> <p>The current funding deficit in 2025 for NWJC partners delivering critical services to women in contact with the CJS currently stands at over five million pounds³³.</p>
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²⁷ [Tackling Double Disadvantage: Ending inequality for Black, Asian, minoritised and migrant women in the criminal justice system](#)

³² [WBG-15-Womens-Centres-Report-v4.pdf](#)

³³ *Source: data collected from 76% of NWJC Partners – November 24. £5,314,989 total projected funding deficit, largely based on losses incurred if MoJ core cost grants are not renewed

- MoJ to allocate more funding for legal aid to allow diverse participation of specialist organisations who would not otherwise be able to provide support to this group without additional funding
- MoJ and HO to support specialist organisations working with this group of women to navigate the new guidance of the APCC Equality Framework for Police and Crime Commissioners and their Offices and ensure that PCCs are commissioning in line with the guidance.

THEME 5: CUSTODIAL SENTENCES

How should custodial sentences be reformed to deliver justice and improve outcomes for offenders, victims and communities?

RECOMMENDATION: Abolish short custodial sentences for women.

The introduction of a presumption against short custodial sentences for women who have committed non-violent offences and a shift to greater use of community-based alternatives would directly help to address the underlying root causes of female offending, reduce reoffending rates and ease pressure on prison places.

Women are disproportionately given short custodial sentences for non-violent, low-level offenses. These sentences often fail to address underlying issues women experience, such as trauma, poverty, mental health challenges, or domestic abuse.

Women have been deeply impacted by the cost-of-living crisis and disproportionately criminalised for offences such as shoplifting,

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE:

Over half (58%) of prison sentences given to women in 2022 were for less than six months³⁵.

Evidence demonstrates that a sustained period of support within a community sentence is proven to be more likely to prevent further offending than a short-term custodial sentence.

The Ministry of Justice’s own data³⁶ indicates that short sentences are ineffective and that sentences of less than 12 months, without supervision on release, are associated with higher levels of reoffending than community orders.

The UK Government’s 2020 White Paper ‘A smarter approach to sentencing’ supported a reduction in short custodial sentences and a move towards probation and stronger community orders. Policy interventions and alternative sentences may be helpful in reducing

³⁵ [Six in 10 women sent to prison serve sentences of less than six months | Prison Reform Trust](#)

³⁶ [The impact of short custodial sentences, community orders and suspended sentence orders on reoffending](#)

petty theft, and non-payment of fines that can often be indicative of the poverty and/or financial abuse women may be experiencing.

Short custodial sentences do not present opportunities for women to engage in meaningful rehabilitation due to a lack of time for them to fully engage and immerse themselves into education, training, or therapeutic programmes.

Robust community-based alternatives to short custodial sentences, and an increased use of suspended and deferred sentences for women, would create more opportunities for women to engage with support, address the drivers of their offending and break intergenerational cycles of harm.

The judiciary's understanding and confidence in available sentencing options must be deepened, the lack of support and/or awareness on the part of magistrates of alternatives to custodial sentences must be addressed, and assumptions that custody may be a safer place for women if they are experiencing domestic abuse, poor mental health or homelessness must be debunked.

One approach to reducing the use of short custodial sentences would be to adopt the sentencing principles of the youth court, namely the overriding aim to 'prevent further offending' and the duty to 'have regard to the welfare' of the offender. The combination of these principles in sentencing have directly contributed to a reduction in youth offending and custodial sentences for youths. The

the use of short prison sentences. These include a presumption against short-term imprisonment, further detailed sentencing guidelines and an increased use of non-custodial sentences – refer to [The use of short prison sentences in England and Wales - POST](#)

Suspended sentences have been associated with lower reoffending rates than custodial sentences of less than 12 months³⁷. Despite this, suspended sentences accounted for just 3% of all sentences in 2022³⁸. It is likely that deferred sentences account for an even smaller proportion of all sentences for women.

Community sentences are particularly effective for people who have committed previous offences and those experiencing mental health problems³⁹. However, there is a reluctance to give community sentences to women, despite evidence that demonstrates women released from prison are more likely to reoffend and reoffend sooner, than those serving community sentences⁴⁰.

Further evidence suggests that short custodial sentences are less effective at reducing reoffending than community sentences and suspended sentences⁴¹ yet 66% of women receive custodial sentences of 12 months or less. Between 2012 and 2022 the use of community orders has more than halved - two thirds for women, and suspended sentences make up just 3-4% of all sentences.

Short sentences inflict more harm than benefit⁴². They destabilise women's lives, separating them from families, disrupting housing

³⁷ [Winter-2024-factfile.pdf](#)

³⁸ [Winter-2024-factfile.pdf](#)

³⁹ [January-2023-Bromley-Briefings.pdf](#)

⁴⁰ [The Impact of Prison for Women on the Edge: Paying the Price for Wrong Decisions: Victims & Offenders: Vol 10 , No 2 - Get Access](#)

⁴¹ <https://prisonreformtrust.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Winter-2024-factfile.pdf>

⁴² [Sentencing Bill Factsheet: Short Sentences - GOV.UK](#)

<p>overall youth proven re-offending rate of 31.4% (Dec 2022³⁴) has been in general decline since 2016.</p>	<p>and employment, and perpetuating cycles of reoffending. Statistics show the shorter the prison sentence the more likely someone will go on to reoffend. Nearly 6 in 10 women entering prison in 2023 served six months or less.⁴³</p> <p>A survey published in 2017 showed that over a third of magistrates lacked confidence in community sentences as effective alternatives to custodial sentences, with two thirds saying they lacked confidence in community sentences reducing crime⁴⁴.</p> <p>NWJC partner One Small Thing delivers Hope Street⁴⁵, a residential community for women and children. Such pioneering approaches effectively demonstrate how most women who receive short custodial sentences could be safely supported in the community, where they can maintain jobs, stay in contact with family, access housing and specialist women’s services – all of which have been shown to reduce reoffending.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION: All women in custody should have access to robust, accessible education and culturally responsive training opportunities.</p> <p>Current offerings across the female estate fall short of this ambition, with many programmes capped at Level 2 NVQs. In the community, most employers seek qualifications at Level 3 or higher.</p> <p>To ensure women in custody have opportunities to participate in purposeful activities, education and training, prisons must align with labour market expectations and requirements and offer</p>	<p>SUPPORTING EVIDENCE:</p> <p>NWJC partners delivering services in prisons report that women are frequently only allocated one hour per day to participate in purposeful activity.</p> <p>Staff shortages and limited resources within prisons have directly and detrimentally impacted women’s access to robust, accessible education and culturally responsive training opportunities. Such issues must be addressed to ensure that women have opportunities to take part in the employment, education, or recreational</p>

³⁴ [Proven reoffending statistics: October to December 2022 - GOV.UK](#)

⁴³ [Six in 10 women sent to prison serve sentences of less than six months | Prison Reform Trust](#)

⁴⁴ [FINAL Crest Advisory - study in community sentences - Google Docs copy](#)

⁴⁵ <https://onesmallthing.org.uk/hopestreel>

<p>qualifications that seek to equip offenders with the skills they need to secure employment post-release.</p>	<p>programmes that are vital to maintaining their mental health, and for preparing them for resettlement post-release.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION: Increase the use of Release on Temporary License (ROTL) for women in custody to enhance opportunities and progression routes for women post-release.</p> <p>ROTL can support women in prison to transition back into society, enabling them to rebuild connections with their families, secure employment, and develop skills while serving their sentence.</p> <p>ROTL relies on significant investment and resource, as well as extensive work with employers to change attitudes towards hiring people on ROTL. But when successfully introduced as part of women’s rehabilitative support, women on ROTL benefit from significantly improved outcomes and reduced reoffending rates.</p>	<p>SUPPORTING EVIDENCE: Evidence from the Ministry of Justice⁴⁶ shows that ROTL fosters a greater sense of accountability and personal growth for individuals and helps to support a smoother reintegration into society, results in increased employability on release and prevents reoffending.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION: Address sentence inflation and reduce the imposition of longer custodial sentences.</p> <p>The imposition of longer prison sentences is not a response to rising crime⁴⁷, nor is it supported by evidence that demonstrates longer sentences positively contribute to rehabilitation⁴⁸. Instead, <i>“Sentence inflation is the cumulative result of decades of piecemeal changes to the law, led by politicians in Westminster”</i>⁴⁹ and most recently, a political pandering by the Conservative Government to the popularism rhetoric of being tough on crime.</p>	<p>SUPPORTING EVIDENCE: The average sentence lengths for indictable offences have risen significantly over the past decade, from 18 months in 2013 to almost 23 months in 2024.⁵⁰</p> <p>Longer prison sentences have contributed to current prison capacity issues and overcrowding and have negatively impacted the experiences of people in prison.</p> <p>Prison staff are overburdened, services and support programmes are oversubscribed, accommodation is overcrowded, and people in</p>

⁴⁶ [The reoffending impact of increased release of prisoners on Temporary Licence](#)

⁴⁷ [Crime falls to lowest level on record, ONS says - BBC News](#)

⁴⁸ [The Effectiveness of Sentencing Options on Reoffending](#)

⁴⁹ [The Howard League | What is sentence inflation?](#)

⁵⁰ [Criminal Justice System statistics quarterly: March 2024 - GOV.UK](#)

<p>If people are not receiving the support and opportunities they need to change and redirect their lives and prospects in prison, sentence inflation will have little if any impact on crime and reoffending rates.</p> <p>The Howard League has outlined some proposed solutions to addressing sentence inflation in The Howard League What is sentence inflation?</p>	<p>custody are more likely to be locked down for longer periods, with nothing to do and no means to progress their rehabilitation.</p> <p>Longer sentences also lead to lengthy waits for interventions that may help individuals to get their lives back on track, such as access to behaviour courses or higher education, transfers to open prisons, or release by the Parole Board.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION: Pre-Sentencing Reports must be fully utilised and mandated to inform all sentencing decisions.</p> <p>Pre-sentence reports (PSRs) have the potential to provide an expert assessment of the nature and causes of an individual’s behaviour, the risk that individual poses and to whom, and to make independent recommendations of the options available to support the judiciary in deciding the appropriate sentence.</p> <p>PSRs are critical to identifying and quantifying the circumstances, specific considerations and challenges a woman is facing that have directly or indirectly contributed to her offending. They are also vital in ensuring the correct sentence, requirements, and ancillary orders are put in place, particularly with thorough inquiry on a defendant or victims’ experiences of domestic abuse and coercive control, and other intersecting needs such as substance misuse and mental health needs.</p> <p>PSRs must be a valued and integral part of sentencing practices and should be mandated by the judiciary to inform sentencing decisions, particularly in cases involving domestic abuse and coercion into offending.</p>	<p>SUPPORTING EVIDENCE:</p> <p>According to the most recent data⁵¹ available, the use of Pre-Sentencing Reports has declined steeply since 2014 in England and Wales:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • England: Standard Delivery PSR 2014 = 131,462 • England: Standard Delivery PSR 2023 = 84,880 • Wales: Standard Delivery PSR 2014 = 10,470 • Wales: Standard Delivery PSR 2014 = 6,488 <p>NWJC Partner Anawim notes that a ‘speedy justice’ approach has consistently proven counter-productive, with the short oral reports offering very little information in place of PSRs. Oral reports do not allow for input from the specialist support services involved in and well placed to advise on a woman’s individual behaviours, risks and complexities.</p> <p>The value of PSRs has been demonstrated through the Intensive Supervision court in Birmingham. PSRs have contributed to tailored orders being made that better meet the needs of the individual; these include Mental Health Treatment Orders and Alcohol Treatment Orders. To fully embed and benefit from this innovate approach, additional resources and funding must be allocated to support the capacity of mental health teams and treatment</p>

⁵¹ [Written questions and answers - Written questions, answers and statements - UK Parliament](#)

<p>There is currently little-to-no involvement or resourcing for women’s specialist services to assist in the delivery of PSRs. This must be addressed and rectified. The expertise of women’s organisations should be sought and considered in writing PSRs whenever possible to ensure that a woman’s complex needs and circumstances are fully articulated and that the breadth and reach of the community-based specialist provision available to support her rehabilitation is understood.</p>	<p>programmes and to mitigate the risk of setting some women up to fail.</p> <p>Learning should be drawn from the Ministry of Justice’s Pre-Sentence Report pilot to ensure high quality pre-sentence reports are available in any case where custody is being considered for women, including through training and guidance for report writers, court staff, judges and magistrates.⁵²</p>
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THEME 5: CUSTODIAL SENTENCES
How should we reform the way offenders progress through their custodial sentences to ensure we are delivering justice and improving outcomes for offenders, victims, and communities?

<p>RECOMMENDATION: Pregnant or postnatal (perinatal⁵³) women should be supported in the community in all but the most exceptional of circumstances due to the negative health risks for both the woman and baby associated with the prison environment.</p> <p>Many women who give birth in prison, or who enter prison during the postnatal period, will be separated temporarily or permanently from their baby. Separation interrupts breastfeeding and risks significant trauma at a time during which mother-baby attachment is shown to be crucial.</p> <p>In cases when the custody threshold is met for perinatal women, a deferred sentence should be made unless there is a clear and</p>	<p>SUPPORTING EVIDENCE:</p> <p>For evidence on the importance of the first 1001 days, refer to Evidence Briefs - Parent-Infant Foundation.</p> <p>Research shows women in prison experience significant difficulties accessing equivalent and appropriate healthcare, including urgent medical assistance or specialist maternity services⁵⁴.</p> <p>Pregnancy and the postnatal period pose increased risks of suicide or death for women experiencing severe mental ill-health, as evidenced by the annual reports on maternal mortality⁵⁵.</p> <p>Evidence⁵⁶ compiled by NWJC partner Birth Companions references the impact of maternal stress, anxiety, and mental health</p>
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⁵² [Ministry of Justice \(2023\) A Process Evaluation of the Pre-Sentence Report Pilot](#)

⁵³ We define perinatal women in accordance with a definition explained by Birth Companions, as being women who are in the 1001 days from conception to their child’s second birthday.

⁵⁴ Abbott, L., Scott, T. and Thomas, H. (2023) Experiences of midwifery care in English prisons. *Birth*, 50(1), pp.244-251. Davies, M et al (2022) Inequality on the inside: Using hospital data to understand the key health care issues for women in prison <https://www.nuffieldtrust.org.uk/research/inequality-on-the-inside-using-hospital-data-to-understand-the-key-health-care-issues-for-women-in-prison>

⁵⁵ MBRRACE-UK (2024) Saving Lives, Improving Mothers’ Care <https://www.npeu.ox.ac.uk/mbrrace-uk/reports/maternal-reports/maternal-report-2020-2022>

⁵⁶ [SC Imposition consultation Feb 2024 - Birth Companions FINAL SUBMISSION.pdf](#)

overriding justification for immediate custody. Furthermore, the deferral period available should be extended from the current six-month provision to cover the entirety of the remaining days up to the second birthday (as a minimum).

Deferred sentences offer valuable opportunities to allow pregnant women and new mothers the chance to give birth in the community, with full access to healthcare including easy access to emergency care if required, and to navigate the complexities of pregnancy and early motherhood within their existing support networks. They also reduce the likelihood of temporary or permanent separation from an infant during this critical period and allow for healthcare, voluntary sector, and social care services to be offered more easily and coordinated more effectively by multiple agencies.

Where perinatal women do enter prison, they must be prioritised for childcare-linked Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL) and Home Detention Curfew (HDC) at the earliest possible opportunity.

issues during the first 1001 days, and demonstrates the importance of the development of a child's early emotional bond with their primary caregiver and the impact separation can have on a child's intellectual, emotional, social and psychological development.

Pregnant women in prison are five times more likely to experience a stillbirth than women in the community. Pregnant women in prison are almost twice as likely to give birth prematurely as women in the general population, which puts both mothers and babies at risk. One in 10 pregnant women in prison give birth in a cell or on the way to hospital⁵⁷.

For comprehensive evidence on the risks to the physical health of mother and baby in the prison environment, including premature and unassisted labour, pre-eclampsia, haemorrhage, and sepsis, refer to [Reports | MBRRACE-UK | Maternal Reports & Perinatal Reports](#)

The Royal College of Midwives and the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists both emphasise the need for alternatives to prison to be used in sentencing pregnant women wherever possible⁵⁸.

The significance of the risks and complexities experienced by perinatal women and their children in prison was recognised by the Sentencing Council and led to the creation of a specific mitigating factor which came into operation on 1 April 2024.

"The impact of custody on an offender who is pregnant

⁵⁷ [Pregnant women in prison at greater risk of pregnancy complications and baby loss | Tommy's](#)

⁵⁸ RCM (2018) Position Statement: Perinatal women in the criminal justice system www.rcm.org.uk/media/3640/perinatal-women-in-the-criminal-justice-system_7.pdf and RCOG (2021) RCOG Position Statement: Maternity care for women in prison in England and Wales <https://www.rcog.org.uk/media/wwhogsk5/rcog-maternity-care-and-the-prison-system-position-statement-sept-2021.pdf>

	<p><i>or post-natal can be harmful for both the offender and the child, including by separation, especially in the first two years of life. – Sentencing Council guidance⁵⁹</i></p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION: To support outcomes for women leaving prison, progression from custody to community must be coordinated, collaborative and well resourced.</p> <p>Successful progression through a sentence from custody to community relies on strong pre-release and “through the gate” support and carefully managed transitions of care for women leaving prison and accessing support services in the community, including rehab, without delay or issue.</p> <p>Women in prison, particularly those serving longer sentences, are likely to require enhanced support to access housing, welfare, employment and continued mental and physical healthcare.</p> <p>Pre-release processes and support should begin at least 12 weeks before a woman is due to be released from custody. This should include the homelessness Duty to Refer, as well as referrals to specialist Commissioned Rehabilitation Services (CRS) with ample lead time to embed appropriate levels of support and resource.</p> <p>Resettlement outcomes are severely compromised by a lack of suitable accommodation for women leaving prison. This issue requires immediately attention and resolution.</p> <p>Community based support for women’s physical and mental health needs and substance use is also vital to ensure their successful</p>	<p>SUPPORTING EVIDENCE:</p> <p>NWJC Partner The Women’s Centre Cornwall cites the Psychologically Informed Prison Environment⁶⁰ (PIPE) unit in Eastwood Park as a good practice example of a model of intensive therapeutic support that should be available to women in prison to help address their trauma and reductive reoffending.</p> <p>NWJC partners delivering specialist CRS repeatedly report receiving referrals a matter of days before a woman is released from custody. This leaves little time to build trust with the woman being referred and compromises opportunities for practitioners and professionals to collaborate and make a full assessment of a woman’s needs.</p> <p>In 2023, half of women leaving prison did so without suitable accommodation in place, and only 9% secured paid employment six weeks after release from custody (compared to 18% of men)⁶¹.</p>

⁵⁹ Sentencing Council (2024) Sentencing pregnant women and new mothers <https://www.sentencingcouncil.org.uk/news/item/sentencing-pregnant-women-and-new-mothers/>

⁶⁰ [Evaluation of Psychologically Informed Planned Environments \(PIPEs\)](#)

⁶¹ [Winter-2024-factfile.pdf](#)

<p>transition from custody to community. However, a distinct lack of appropriate services undermines and impedes successful outcomes.</p> <p>The precedent to coordinate an increasing number of prison releases on a Friday afternoon further complicates and compromises women’s access to support , increasing their risk of recall.</p> <p>Women’s continued integration into the community can be supported by access to appropriate jobs, either through employment or as part of community payback. The lack of suitable jobs for women returning to work post-release and the barriers to hiring people with convictions must be addressed as a priority.</p> <p>A lack of resource and capacity amongst prison staff to make full assessments and referrals before an individual is released can present significant barriers to supporting women’s progression from custody to community. Better practice models underpinned by coordinated, collaborative and well-resourced responses are critical to delivering justice and improving outcomes for offenders, victims, and communities.</p>	
<p>RECOMMENDATION: The lack of resource and capacity within Probation requires urgent attention if ambitions to deliver justice and improve outcomes for offenders, victims, and communities are to be met.</p>	<p>SUPPORTING EVIDENCE: As of 30 September 2024, the Probation Service had 5,413 FTE Probation Officers in post, against a target staffing figure of 7,115 FTE (giving a 76% staffing level), with levels varying by region from 64% to 89%⁶²</p>

⁶² https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67586ee8f8e28262d63bfa7e/20.312_MOJ_Annual-State-Prison-Capacity_v10.1_WEB.pdf

The Probation service must be equipped to deal with and support more releases. Attempts to increase the capacity and resource of Probation have been partly and temporarily addressed through by the Probation Reset policy introduced in July 2024. Despite this, and a committed increase in probation staffing, there remains a fundamental lack of resource within the Probation service and more probation practitioners are needed.

Increased funding for Probation services is needed to reduce caseload pressures and provide mandatory gender-specific training to probation officers (both current and newly recruited). This in turn will enhance the quality of support and outcomes for women and reduce breaches or recalls.

We recommend the use of post-sentence supervision and licence periods, and that consideration is paid to how probation resources can be most effectively targeted. High caseloads and resource pressures limit probation officers' abilities to provide gender-specific, tailored support. And without adequate resourcing, women's complex needs often go unmet, leading to breaches or recalls that could be avoided with more individualised support.

Women's leads and women's specialist teams within probation delivery areas have a key role to play to respond efficiently to the needs of women on probation. This should include co-location within safe spaces like women's centres, which enable women on probation to access the support they need from specialist services alongside supervision from probation practitioners.

Many of the rehabilitative elements of women's community sentences could be delivered, or significantly supported by, the third sector. Resourcing women's specialist organisations to provide gender-responsive, person-centred support that looks at the whole

In August 2024, NWJC partner [One Small Thing](#) conducted research on community justice solutions for women, and asked participants about their experiences of supporting women since the introduction of the Probation Reset. Around a third flagged concerns about the erosion of trust women have in services. Respondents mentioned how women feel 'abandoned', 'let down', 'punished' and 'on their own' after support during the last third of their sentence was withdrawn. Probation officers specifically raised concerns by acknowledging that many women still need support during the last third of their supervision orders, and noted how challenging it was to end support early.

Case and keyworkers from third sector organisations are typically paid considerably less from Probation officers and have the potential to generate significant savings to public spending by offering specialist, targeted, responsive support to women in the last third of their supervision orders.

<p>woman, and adopts a strengths-based approach to consider the skills and resources the individual can bring to make a positive change, would be cost effective solution. To achieve this, it is critical that adequate, sustainable, full cost recovery contracts are embedded to support impact and outcomes for offenders, victims, and communities.</p> <p>Co-locating probation in women’s centres and women’s spaces, specifically within women’s organisations providing CRS, will assist with engagement if women are worried about attending probation offices and having contact with other offenders which could include ex-partners, co-defendants and perpetrators.</p>	
<p>RECOMMENDATION: The purpose and use of recall must be widely understood by probation officers. Recall decisions must be transparent, evidence-based and enacted only after robust alternatives have been fully considered.</p> <p>Robust alternatives to recall should include provision of appropriate, supported accommodation and access to women’s centres. The expertise and professional insights of third sector and women’s organisations involved in delivering targeted support should be sought and considered prior to any recall decision being made, to ensure that a woman’s individual, complex needs and circumstances are fully understood.</p> <p>Without access to safe and appropriate accommodation and specialist support, women may find it difficult to comply with the conditions of their licence. A lack of accommodation, including move-on accommodation following access to CAS and Approved</p>	<p>SUPPORTING EVIDENCE:</p> <p>The number of women being recalled to custody increased by two-thirds between 2023 and 2024.⁶³</p> <p>Of recalls in April-June 2024, about 24% involved a charge of further offending, 77% involved non-compliance, 36% involved failure to keep in touch, and 23% involved failure to reside. These proportions have remained relatively stable.⁶⁴</p> <p>NWJC partners delivering frontline services and Commissioned Rehabilitation Services to women report that decision-making around recalls can vary significantly, depending on the skills and experience of probation practitioners.</p> <p>Anecdotal evidence demonstrates that trusted relationships between women’s providers and probation practitioners can</p>

⁶³ Offender management statistics quarterly: April to June 2024 - GOV.UK

⁶⁴ Offender management statistics quarterly: April to June 2024 - GOV.UK

<p>Premises options, means that women may be more likely to breach their conditions and face recall through no fault of their own.</p> <p>The current system of two-week (14 day) recalls is ineffective and impractical. Recalls are predominately due to non-compliance, and not re-offending. For women, non-compliance is linked to issues associated with their unstable housing, chaotic lifestyles, caring responsibilities, substance misuse issues and physical and mental health needs.</p> <p>An increased use of community sentences for women would directly reduce the female prison population, relieve pressure on Probation to administer recalls, and increase women’s access to effective rehabilitative programmes and support.</p> <p>Recall is a traumatising process for women and their families. With recall rates steadily increasing without sufficient evidence to justify this increase, robust alternatives to recalling women to prison are needed, and transparency in recall decisions is necessary to protect all those involved.</p>	<p>increase women’s compliance with licence conditions and reduce the risk of recall.</p> <p>According to data collated by NWJC partner Birth Companions, many perinatal women are entering prison on recall after breaches linked to insufficient release planning, inappropriate housing, and a lack of support for mental health or substance use issues. Recall disrupts women’s access to healthcare, impacts women’s childcaring arrangements including contact with children in foster or kinship care.</p>
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THEME 7: INDIVIDUAL NEEDS OF VICTIMS AND OFFENDERS
What, if any, changes are needed in sentencing to meet the individual needs of different victims and offenders and to drive better outcomes?

<p>RECOMMENDATION: The sentencing framework should be amended to consider the specific needs and/or vulnerabilities of women.</p> <p>Gender informed and trauma responsive approaches are required to meet the individual, complex needs of female offenders. Evidence demonstrates women typically offend after having experienced</p>	<p>SUPPORTING EVIDENCE: The Centre for Women’s Justice Double Standard report sets out how women’s offending is often directly linked to their own experience of domestic abuse, and how victims can be unfairly criminalised.⁶⁷ This has been re-emphasised in subsequent research</p>
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⁶⁷ [Centre for Women’s Justice \(2022\) Double Standard: ending the unjust criminalisation of victims of violence against women and girls](#)

personal trauma, harm, abuse or poverty. These root causes must be understood and addressed within their sentences to drive better outcomes.

An intersectional approach to addressing violence against women and girls (VAWG) subjected to the criminal justice system is critical. We recognise and support efforts by the CPS and Police to develop specific guidance on this but urge the Sentencing Review to reiterate and reinforce the need for sentencing precedents and decision-making to consider the impact VAWG has on cycles of female offending.

Risk is a much lower determinant when working with female offenders. Evidence demonstrates that women are more likely to self-harm than pose risk to the public. Many more women can be spared from the damaging effects of custodial sentences if they can be supported through community sentences instead.

Sentencing decisions must consider the detrimental impact prison has on women with caring responsibilities and evaluate if a custodial sentence is in the best interests of women and their dependents. An estimated 17,500 children were separated from their mother by imprisonment in 2020⁶⁵. By comparison, community sentences keep families together, mitigating the risks of intergenerational harm and perpetuating wider cycles of offending.

by Julia Pitman,⁶⁸ the recent Baird Inquiry,⁶⁹ in CWJ's police super-complaint on police-perpetrated domestic abuse⁷⁰ and in a recent report by Criminal Justice Alliance⁷¹.

NWJC partner [Advance](#) supports thousands of women and girls experiencing domestic abuse every year. They note that not all survivors of domestic abuse want a criminal justice outcome against the perpetrator(s) of their abuse; many just want the abuse to stop and to be kept safe.

The Women's Risk Needs Assessment (WRNA) tool is currently being trialled by a national group of women's centres as part of the Effective Women's Centres project. The WRNA considers the needs and strengths of women who attend women's centres in a gender informed and trauma responsive way. Recently published research⁷² findings from the WRNA project demonstrate that while justice-involved women face significant and complex challenges, there are clear opportunities for intervention, particularly when services can address multiple needs simultaneously while building on existing strengths and protective factors. It provides a robust evidence base for developing integrated, trauma-informed services that address both women's immediate needs and long-term recovery.

A recent study conducted by the University of Birmingham⁷³ examined the relationship between severity and complexity of needs

⁶⁵ [Interim Report on the Outcomes for Children affected by Maternal Imprisonment](#)

⁶⁸ [Pitman, J \(2022\) *Invisible victims: What are the barriers to police recognising female offenders as victims of coercive control* \[Masters thesis: Portsmouth University\]](#)

⁶⁹ [Dame Vera Baird KC \(2024\) The Baird Inquiry: An independent report into the experience of people who are arrested and taken into custody by Greater Manchester Police with a focus on women and girls](#)

⁷⁰ [Centre for Women's Justice \(2024\) Police-perpetrated domestic abuse: has anything really changed since the 2020 super-complaint?](#)

⁷¹ [Criminal Justice Alliance \(2024\) Shifting Culture: the experiences of Black and racially minoritised officers of the Metropolitan Police misconduct process since the Baroness Casey review, see Interview 2](#)

⁷² [EWC-Exploring-Needs-Profiles-of-Justice-Involved-Women-1.pdf](#)

⁷³ [Examining the relationship between severity and complexity of needs among women involved in the Criminal Justice System » National Women's Justice Coalition](#)

<p>Women’s transition back into the community after prison poses a particular risk to the continuity of their healthcare and other crucial forms of support. For example, pregnant women must build relationships with new midwifery teams in the community, often at a late stage in their pregnancy, and women experiencing or at risk of perinatal mental health issues may not be appropriately referred to community provision when released⁶⁶.</p> <p>To strengthen confidence in sentencing and the principles underpinning sentencing guidelines, the care and rehabilitation of women should be of paramount priority. No individual should be imprisoned solely due to an inadequate provision of specialist services in their local community, specifically mental health or trauma-informed services.</p> <p>There is a public safety role for the criminal justice system to hold perpetrators of domestic abuse to account with appropriate sentences. This role should be balanced against the needs and wishes of victims.</p> <p>Increased recognition and responsiveness to perinatal women’s needs when re-settling into the community after a custodial sentence and/or on community sentences under probation supervision is needed.</p>	<p>among women involved in the justice system. Research findings from this study demonstrate that as the severity of a woman’s needs increases, so do the number of connections between them, and that the women’s centres can address multiple issues and support intervention and prevention – potentially reducing the number or severity of women’s complex needs before they reach crisis point and enter or re-enter the criminal justice system.</p> <p>Over the 12-month period of April 2023 to March 2024 there were 215 pregnant women in prison. This compares with 194 for the 2022/23 year.</p> <p>In 2024, the number of women and babies received into Mother & Baby Units (MBUs) increased for the third year running. In the year to March 2024, 55 women and 50 babies were received into MBUs compared with 51 women and 45 babies in the previous reporting year. There was a total of 53 births to women spending time in custody in 2023/24.⁷⁴</p> <p>Research⁷⁵ conducted by NWJC partner Birth Companions identified significant issues in relation to a lack of recognition of, and responsiveness to, pregnancy and motherhood in policing, community sentence requirements and probation supervision.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION: The sentencing framework needs to acknowledge and address the systemic disproportionality that exists in sentencing precedents and negatively impacts women and people from Black and racially minoritised communities.</p>	<p>SUPPORTING EVIDENCE</p> <p>The 2021 census shed light on the overrepresentation of Black people in prison. At the time, 12.1% of the prison population were Black whilst only making up 4% of the general UK population.</p>

⁶⁶ [Interim Report on the Outcomes for Children affected by Maternal Imprisonment](#)

⁷⁴ [HMPPS Annual Digest 2023 to 2024 - GOV.UK](#)

⁷⁵ [A window of opportunity Clinks and Birth Companions FINAL 2021.pdf](#)

Institutional racism and Islamophobia have led to a shameless lack of attention paid to women and girls from Black and minority ethnic (BME) groups that are significantly over-represented in the criminal justice system and subjected to disproportionate custodial sentences. Their situations are exacerbated by a pervasive lack of cultural and religious literacy in all areas of the CJS, particularly in the CPS, courts, and custodial institutions.

Social and economic inequalities further contribute to higher incarceration among marginalised communities.

Young Black girls are often subjected to adultification - a harmful bias that perceives them as being older than they are - which leads to harsher treatment. Black Caribbean girls are twice as likely to be excluded from school as their white peers. These inequities contribute to the higher rates of arrest, charges, and convictions that Black women face compared to white women.

A review of the current sentencing framework must take into consideration the sentencing precedents that consistently lead to harsher sentences for Black and minority ethnic people. These sentences create lasting barriers to women rebuilding their lives and have an intergenerational and lasting impact on BME communities. Courts must also consider the impact of trauma, domestic abuse, and coercive control which significantly influence cycles of female offending for racially minoritised women.

Black, Asian, minoritised and migrant victims of VAWG are particularly vulnerable to being unfairly swept into the criminal

Black women are 1.4 times more likely to be arrested than white women and are 25% more likely to be given custodial sentences than their white counterparts.

Racially minoritised people receive longer average custodial sentences than white people. The average custodial sentence length is 11 months for white women, 14 months for Black women, 16 months for other ethnicities including Chinese, and 18 months for Asian women. This means that their criminal records are likely to last longer and will need to be disclosed to employers for longer, increasing barriers to employment for these communities.

Only 1% of court judges in the UK are Black, a figure unchanged since 2014⁷⁸. This underrepresentation can contribute to systemic biases which can result in harsher treatment for Black women. Increasing judicial diversity can help mitigate unconscious biases and ensure fairer and more balanced sentencing outcomes.

The Corston Report⁷⁹ identified that Black and minority ethnic groups were further disadvantaged than other groups 'by racial discrimination, stigma, isolation, cultural differences, language barriers and lack of employment skills'

Research⁸⁰ conducted by NWJC partner **Muslim Women in Prison** demonstrates that Muslim women are disproportionately sentenced due to systemic racism, Islamophobia, and gender-based prejudice and discrimination across the CJS. Many Muslim women are victims of crimes orchestrated by men (close and extended family members) and that these social and cultural dynamics are often misunderstood or overlooked by the CJS providers. Muslim women's crimes are often

⁷⁸ [Racial and ethnic disparities in sentencing: What do we know, and where should we go? - Veiga - 2023 - The Howard Journal of Crime and Justice - Wiley Online Library](#)

⁷⁹ [Corston report - review of women with vulnerabilities in the criminal justice system](#)

⁸⁰ [Sisters in Desistance Community-based solutions for Muslim women post-prison / InVisibility-report.pdf / MWIP_Report.ai](#)

<p>justice system.⁷⁶ This is because they experience additional barriers to disclosing abuse and accessing support, and they face systemic racism from criminal justice agencies. This includes failures to respond appropriately to evidence of abuse, misinterpretation of women’s behaviour and failures to ensure women are able to participate fully in proceedings against them.</p> <p>Migrant women are put at greater risk by ‘hostile environment’ policies, including the lack of a firewall to prevent the police sharing information about victims’ immigration status with immigration authorities, inhibiting victims’ disclosure of abuse.</p> <p>The principles of the Women’s Justice Reimagined 10-point action plan for change⁷⁷ should underpin any approach to addressing disproportionality in sentencing precedents; specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MoJ and HO to ensure use of diversion and out of court disposals (OOCDD) and end the use of disproportionate custodial sentencing and remands, for Black, Asian, minoritised and migrant women (Action 5). • Train criminal justice staff on culture, ethnicity, race, faith, gender and anti-racism to meet the multiple and intersecting needs of Black, Asian, minoritised and migrant women (Action 1). • Develop practical resources and guides for HO and MoJ staff on the rights of Black, Asian, minoritised and migrant women who have language barriers and require support in different languages or in easy-to-read formats to incorporate their needs and ensure their experiences are taken into consideration throughout each stage of the CJS (Action 2). 	<p>isolated incidents, frequently coerced, or committed under duress. In many cases, custodial sentences are unnecessary and counterproductive. Community sentences, coupled with proper support structures, provide a more effective means of enabling these women to rebuild their lives.</p> <p>Using evidence from NWJC Partner Working Chance’s client data (2023-24), over half (51%) of Working Chance clients were from racially minoritised communities, with 30% identifying as Black or Black British. This overrepresentation of Black women in contact with Working Chance’s services tracks with trends across the criminal justice system more broadly.</p> <p>Working Chance’s research⁸¹ demonstrates how the justice system discriminates against BME groups and illustrates how systemic bias specifically undermines Black women’s prospects of securing employment post-conviction.</p> <p>A case study provided by NWJC partner SHEWISE demonstrates the disproportionate and negative impact custodial sentences have:</p> <p>AD, a 42-year-old British South Asian woman living in Hounslow, was convicted of theft and sentenced to 15 months in prison. AD had faced years of domestic and financial abuse by her husband. She had no independent income and was not formally educated. She committed the theft under coercion from her husband.</p> <p>Challenges AD faced:</p>
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⁷⁶ [Centre for Women’s Justice and Tackling Double Disadvantage Partnership \(2023\) Westminster Hall debate to be held on 5 July: That this House has considered the criminalisation of victims of violence against women from ethnic minority and migrant communities – Briefing for MPs](#)

⁷⁷ [Tackling Double Disadvantage: Ending inequality for Black, Asian, minoritised and migrant women in the criminal justice system](#)

⁸¹ [Worst-Case Scenario - Working Chance 2021.pdf](#)

- Ensure Black, Asian, minoritised and migrant women and their individual circumstances are properly taken into consideration by effective legal representation and other actions in court (Action 8).

The review must also consider reforms needed in the sentencing of individuals without British citizenship and consider measures to improve identification of trafficking victims and diverting trafficked women into culturally sensitive and responsive support rather than imprisonment.

There are clear and apparent disparities in sentencing based on race which undermine fairness and justice. The Sentencing Review has the potential to:

- Identify patterns of inequity of sentencing to address and rectify these issues
- Recommend critical reforms such as:
 - Compulsory trainings for judges and magistrates on the intersection of race, gender, and systemic bias to improve their understanding of the unique challenges faced by racially minoritised women. Such training must be accompanied by new structures and cultures of accountability to ensure implementation in practice.
 - Recruiting more court judges who identify as racially minoritised.
 - Mandating that cultural context and lived experiences are properly considered in sentencing decisions.
 - Collaborating with specialist organisations advocating for racial and gender justice to ensure sentencing guidelines reflect the lived realities of racially minoritised women.
 - Ensuring funding and commissioning mechanisms and procedures are accessible to small and medium-sized, voluntary and specialist sector organisations to deliver

- AD’s family disowned her after her conviction, bringing shame to the family.
- She suffered from anxiety and severe depression due to years of abuse, forcing her into isolation.
- AD’s limited English proficiency made navigating the legal system and prison services extremely challenging. Not being able to understand what her rights were.

Sentencing:

The court did not fully consider AD’s history of domestic abuse or her role as a coerced participant in the crime. The judge sentenced her on standard guidelines for theft, without taking into consideration the broader context of her vulnerabilities or mitigating factors.

Impact of sentencing:

AD’s custodial sentence resulted in long-term trauma, financial hardship since AD’s imprisonment further entrenched her family in poverty and reintegration barriers. Upon release, AD struggled to access housing, employment, and mental health services due to her criminal record and lack of support.

<p>specialist support for this group in all parts of the criminal justice system.</p>	
<p>RECOMMENDATION: The increased use of and investment in early intervention and diversion services is critical to responding to the individual needs of victims and offenders to achieve better outcomes.</p> <p>Early intervention and diversion programmes are not nationally available, and their funding is often precarious. This, combined with limited engagement with the judiciary and sentencers, results in missed opportunities to divert women away from custody at the earliest stages. Diversion programmes should be expanded nationwide and provided with long-term, sustainable funding.</p> <p>Policies must prioritise early intervention and diversion programmes, providing women with access to holistic support for issues like housing, mental health, and domestic abuse. Strengthening partnerships between community services, police, and courts will also help to facilitate this and there needs to be greater collaboration between community-based services, the judiciary, and sentencers to build confidence in diversion programmes and community sentencing options. Embedding diversion teams within courts and providing training on the effectiveness of these approaches can help achieve this.</p>	<p>SUPPORTING EVIDENCE</p> <p>NWJC partner Together Women operates effective diversion schemes such as liaison and diversion services across Yorkshire, and the Early Intervention and Diversion programme based in police custody suites and courts. These initiatives prove that addressing the root causes of offending through tailored, community-based support can prevent unnecessary incarceration.</p> <p>Diversion programmes have proven their effectiveness in addressing women’s needs at the earliest possible stage, both at police custody suites and in courts. Investment is needed to embed such programmes into every area, with clear pathways for women that integrate with police and judiciary processes.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION: Release planning and management of community sentences for perpetrators of violence against women and girls must consider the experiences and risks posed to victims and survivors of abuse.</p> <p>Communication with and support for survivors of sexual violence and abuse must be integral to release planning for perpetrators. Victims need to be informed in advance when their perpetrators are</p>	<p>SUPPORTING EVIDENCE</p> <p>NWJC partner Advance supports thousands of women and girls experiencing domestic abuse every year. They note that not all survivors of domestic abuse want a criminal justice outcome against the perpetrator(s) of their abuse; many just want the abuse to stop and to be kept safe.</p>

being released and updated on their progress on rehabilitative programmes. If offenders are on probation in the community, better use of enforced non molestation orders, electronic tagging and strong incentives to change their attitudes to women and stay away from their victims must be enforced.

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