

EMBARGOED UNTIL Tuesday 19 August 00:01 GMT

£3 Million Funding Agreement Marks Major Milestone for Effective Women's Centres Partnership

£3 million in charitable funding for women's centres has been announced today [Tuesday 19 August] alongside landmark new research from the University of Birmingham, as part of an innovative research collaboration to reduce women's imprisonment and create lasting change in the criminal justice system.

The Henry Smith Foundation, one of the largest independent funders in the UK, is providing £1.5 million in matched funding to The JABBS Foundation for Women and Girls to scale up the Effective Women's Centres Partnership.

Founded with initial investment from The JABBS Foundation for Women and Girls, the partnership brings together seven women's centres and the University of Birmingham to evidence the effectiveness of women's centres as community-based alternatives to custody.

The new funding announcement comes as the University of Birmingham's Women, Crime and Justice Research Group publishes new research demonstrating the Women's Risk Needs Assessment (WRNA) can accurately predict the risk of reoffending among women in the UK, based on factors that drive criminal behaviour, like trauma and abuse, substance use, and financial struggles.

Originally developed in the US, WRNA is to date the most comprehensive assessment tool specifically for women involved in the criminal justice system. It is now being used by women's centres in Birmingham, Cornwall, Gloucester, Greater Manchester, and Yorkshire.

It means women's centres can provide personalised support for each woman – helping to tackle underlying causes of crime and supporting women to rebuild their lives and thrive.

With the new funding, more women's centres will join the Effective Women's Centres Partnership and use WRNA, helping thousands more women and steering them away from crime.

Previous research from the University of Birmingham has shown specialist women's interventions, like those provided by women's centres, are up to 42% more effective than non-gendered support in reducing reoffending.

Over the coming years, the Effective Women's Centres Partnership aims to provide the strongest evidence yet that investment in community-based, gender-responsive services leads to better long-term outcomes and a more effective and sustainable justice system.

Annabel Collins, Grants Manager at the Henry Smith Foundation, said, “We are thrilled to collaborate with The JABBS Foundation for Women and Girls and support the Effective Women’s Centres Partnership, creating safer futures and supporting women to rebuild their lives.”

By helping divert women from crime and harm, the research collaboration provides evidence-based solutions that align with the Government’s aims to tackle crime, reduce prison overcrowding, and make the UK’s streets safer.

The Independent Sentencing Review, led by former Justice Minister David Gauke and published in May 2025, recommended the Government make greater use of community sentencing instead of prison, and provide long-term and sustainable funding to women’s centres.

Chloe Geoghegan, Deputy Director at The JABBS Foundation for Women and Girls, said, “This investment reflects the growing confidence in what we have known for a long time: supporting women in the community works. It’s brilliant to have the growing academic evidence to back it up and the opportunity to scale up this transformational partnership.”

Details of how organisations can apply to join the Effective Women’s Centres Partnership will be published by The JABBS Foundation for Women and Girls later this year.

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

- The [Effective Women’s Centres Partnership](#) includes Anawim – Birmingham’s Centre for Women, Farida Women’s Centre (Partners of Prisoners), The Nelson Trust, Salford Foundation, The Women’s Centre Stockport, Together Women, The Women’s Centre Cornwall, and The University of Birmingham, funded by The JABBS Foundation for Women and Girls. As of August 2025, it is also supported by the Henry Smith Foundation.
- The WRNA (Women’s Risk Needs Assessment) is a gender-responsive tool originally developed in the US and designed to assess risks, needs, and strengths of women in the criminal justice system.
- The [validation study](#) was conducted by the Women, Crime and Justice Research Group at the University of Birmingham and is the first of its kind in the UK. The study involved more than 500 women, one of the largest WRNA validation cohorts in the world.

- Women's Centres provide holistic, trauma-informed counselling and casework on issues such as domestic abuse, housing, mental health, substance use and addiction, and employment.

For further information and interview requests, please contact:

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