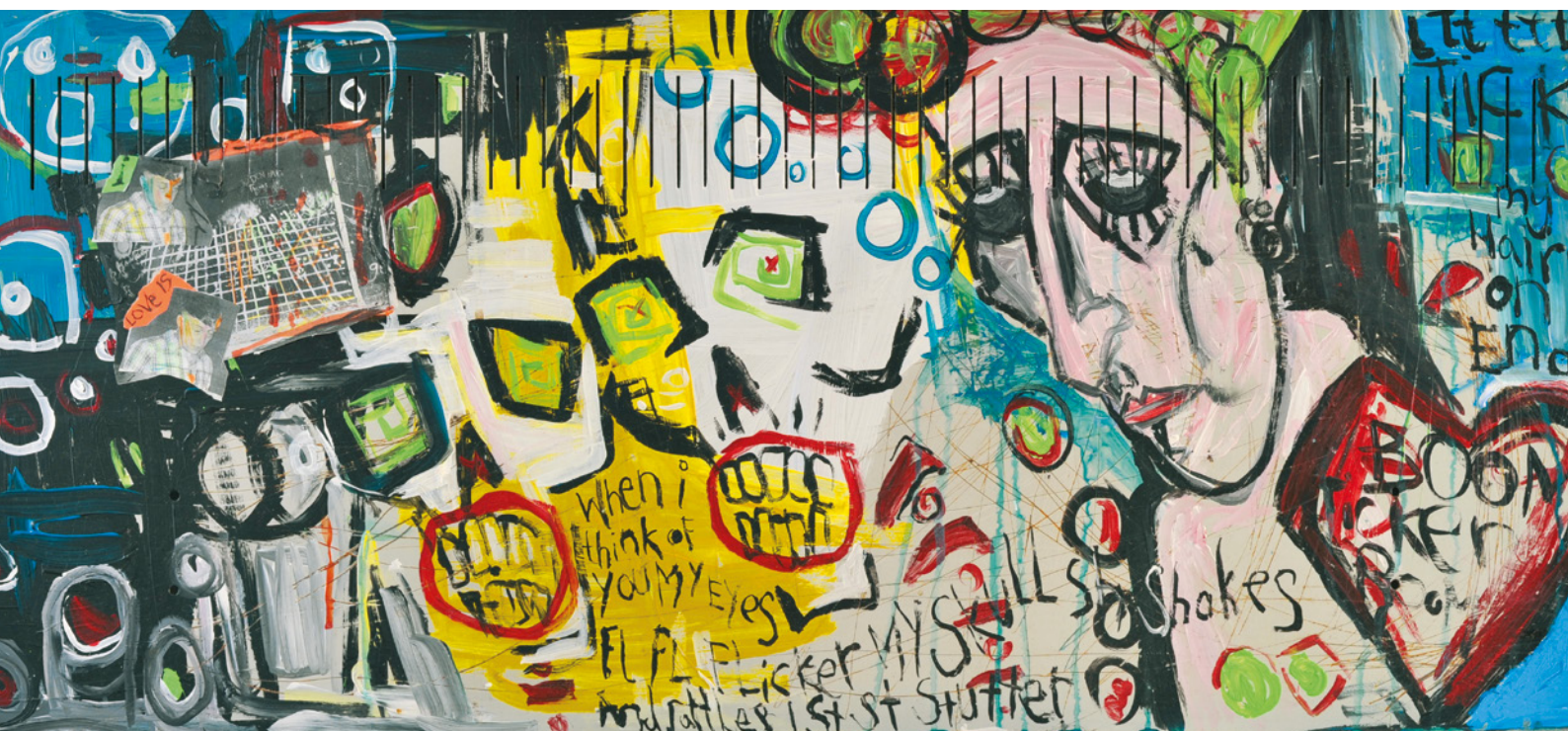


CLINKS

supporting voluntary organisations that
work with offenders and their families

WHO CARES?



Where next for women offender services?

WOMEN ARE
PHONING
AND SAYING,
“ I HAVEN’T
EATEN
FOR TWO
DAYS, CAN
SOMEBODY
HELP ME? ”

Introduction	4
Methodology	5
Participants	5
Current policy context	5
Findings	7
Impact of policy changes	8
Security of service	9
Local partnerships	10
Cross sector engagement	10
Barriers to partnership working	12
Opportunities for partnership working	12
Making the numbers count	12
Champions	13
Innovation	13
The changing needs of service users	14
Finance, benefit and debt	14
Accommodation	15
Complex needs	16
Finding solutions	17
Commitment to the agenda at government level	19
Conclusion	21
Recommendations	24
End notes	26

© Clinks, 2014. All rights reserved.

Unless otherwise indicated, no part of this publication may be stored in a retrievable system or reproduced in any form without prior written permission from Clinks. Clinks will give sympathetic consideration to requests from small organisations for permission to reproduce this publication in whole or in part but terms upon which such reproduction may be permitted will remain at Clinks' discretion. Clinks and the author are not legally trained or qualified. Any information or guidance given in this publication should not be taken as a substitute for professional legal advice. Clinks is unable to accept liability for any loss or damage or inconvenience arising as a consequence of the use of any information provided in this guide.

Author | This report was written by Louise Clark, Local Development Officer, Clinks, with support from Clinks' Local Development Team and Policy Team.

Acknowledgements | Special thanks to all those who participated in this study and shared information about their organisations and the women they support. This report was kindly supported by funding from Tudor Trust and Lankelly Chase Foundation for funding the project.

Images | Images courtesy of the Koestler Trust www.koestlertrust.org.uk. Cover image: Yearning for Longevity (section), HMP Send. Artists Collecting Society Silver Award for mixed media.

Clinks is the national membership body for voluntary sector organisations working in criminal justice in England and Wales. Clinks' vision is of a vibrant and independent voluntary and community sector working with informed and engaged communities to enable the rehabilitation of offenders for the benefit of society.

www.clinks.org | info@clinks.org | 0207 248 3538

Clinks is a registered charity no. 1074546 and a company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales no. 3562176. Registered office: Clinks, Tavis House, 1-6 Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9NA.

Introduction



Yearning for Longevity (section), HMP Send. Artists Collecting Society Silver Award for mixed media.

This report provides a picture that spans a year in the life of women offender projects and their service users. It is intended to amplify the voice of service providers who are experts in supporting women throughout the Criminal Justice System (CJS); in prison and in communities.

As well as making recommendations for change, we have highlighted positive examples of statutory sector commitment to a gender specific approach, and showcased the innovative work that people are undertaking to address the challenges faced by the women they work alongside.

It is the culmination of a project which tracked the experiences of nine organisations that directly support women in the CJS. It is therefore a snapshot of a rapidly changing national picture of reform with the intention to ensure better services for women and girls.

In early 2014 Clinks published *Run Ragged: The current experience of projects providing community based female offender support services*,¹ which was an interim report from the qualitative study that has also informed this report. The interim findings showed that 89% of the projects felt their service was less secure than 12 months previously, that the sustainability of gender specific services for female offenders was not embedded in local strategies, and that there is an emergent crisis amongst service users, as a result of increasing poverty that is linked to changes in the welfare system.

Following *Run Ragged*, further interviews were conducted with the study participants, leading to this final report. The findings of those second interviews further highlight the current situation for projects and service users, whilst also providing examples of innovative approaches by local partners across the public, private and voluntary sectors to address the needs of female offenders.



Methodology

The second interviews were semi-structured with questions focusing on similar themes as the first interviews, to draw out more detail and to see if there had been any changes since the first snapshot.

Clinks' interviews focused on:

- Financial security of service
- Strategic influence of the service providers (nationally and locally)
- Local partnerships
- Innovative approaches
- The changing needs of service users

Participants

There are nine participating organisations which have been consistent throughout the

project, they are all providers of female offender services in the community (including some Women's Community Projects²). Participants are from both voluntary and statutory sector.³

Some participant projects are standalone, some are part of a wider women or offender focused service, and others sit as a project of a larger – sometimes national – organisation (though usually still with a strong criminal justice focus). The projects have a mixed source of income including local probation trust funding, National Offender Management Service (NOMS) funding, health funding and investment from charitable trusts and foundations.

In addition, staff from Wiltshire Probation Trust and Integrated Offender Management (IOM) Cymru were interviewed about the approach they are taking to develop services for female offenders in their areas, to add examples of good practice from across England and Wales.

The interviews were carried out through Clinks' Local Development Team, by Louise Clark and Isabel Livingstone. All interviews were recorded and transcribed.

All material is presented anonymously to allow for frank discussion of what can sometimes be sensitive issues.

Current policy context

The CJS is undergoing rapid and wide scale change. Amongst the most notable of these changes is Transforming Rehabilitation, which is the Government's plan to reform the way that probation services are structured, commissioned and delivered in England and Wales.⁴

For female offenders, there are also some changes to how they will be dealt with in the CJS. This has been informed by the Justice Select Committee's⁵ year-long inquiry that reviewed progress made since the *Corston Review* was published in 2007.⁶ The Government's response⁷ to the findings sets out its intended approach to managing women offenders.

Due to the Offender Rehabilitation Act, for the first time ever offenders serving less than 12 months in prison will receive through the gate support on release from custody and they will be subject to a license period (or a combination of license and supervision) of at least 12 months in the community.

This will particularly affect women, as they are proportionally more likely to serve short sentences than their male counterparts. However, amendments to the Bill have been made to include a statutory requirement for the Secretary of State for Justice to ensure contracts with new providers under the Transforming Rehabilitation reforms consider and identify the specific needs of female offenders in their bids, so that the issue will be expressly considered when commissioning rehabilitation and supervision services.

The new providers have come about as Transforming Rehabilitation opens up to competitive tender the provision of resettlement and offender management services for low to medium risk offenders (risk of harm to the public). Those offenders will be managed by independent providers from private, not-for-profit or voluntary sectors, under Community Rehabilitation Companies.

Another imminent change is that following the NOMS Women's Custodial Estate Review,⁸ all women's prisons will be re-categorised as 'resettlement prisons'. Some will increase their capacity, but there are plans to close some women's prisons too.

Life skills training will be increased and expanded so all prisons offer peer-led services. There are no plans to introduce small custodial units, as recommended by both the Corston Report and Justice Select Committee report, though a small open unit is to be established outside the perimeter at HMP Styal to test such an approach.

The Advisory Board for Female Offenders⁹ which was established to deliver the Government's strategic objectives, now chaired by Simon Hughes MP, will continue, though formal on-going Ministerial membership of the Advisory

Board is not considered necessary by the Government. Ministers will be invited to attend meetings where it will be beneficial.¹⁰

Those providing support to female offenders on the ground, and advocates for reform in the CJS, have remained vocal during this period of change. And whilst it is welcome that some of the issues raised in this report will be addressed via these reforms, for this to happen some of the challenges also need to be addressed.

Organisations and advocates are clear that a gender specific approach to reduce reoffending is absolutely necessary if we are to effectively address the needs of female offenders. This is reflective of the Justice Select Committee comments in their recent review:

"We found that it is well recognised that women face very different hurdles from men in their journey towards a law abiding life, and that responding appropriately and effectively to the problems that women bring into the Criminal Justice System requires a distinct approach ... We urge NOMS to consider gender as a matter of course, rather than seeking to reduce any detrimental impact on women of their general approach after the event. The most striking incidence of this is the likely impact of the Transforming Rehabilitation reforms which have clearly been designed with male offenders in mind."¹¹

As well as the rapid changes in criminal justice policy, this study was conducted against a challenging economic landscape and high levels of welfare change. Both factors have had a direct impact on the service delivery of the study participants and on the needs of their service users. What follows are the findings of the study, reflecting the experience of organisations operating in such a landscape.

“ YOU
CAN'T LET
US GO
BECAUSE
WE'RE
SAVING
YOU A
FORTUNE. ”

The findings show how women offender projects care for and support the women they work with. We have documented the current experiences of projects in relation to the policy and economic landscape outlined in the previous section. We highlight local partnership arrangements and innovative approaches to service delivery. Our findings conclude with the changing needs of service users and a call by projects to ensure their endeavours to meet those needs are supported by a strong national voice and strategic commitment at government level.

Impact of policy changes

Changes under the Transforming Rehabilitation agenda, as outlined in the previous section 'Current Policy Context', are seen by some interviewees as an opportunity to formally bring together expertise for the benefit of service users and smaller providers, which can currently be difficult due to capacity: "We don't get some referrals from the prison, because we don't offer that [particular] service."

Some projects are looking to form a local consortium with other organisations in their area, with the aim of strengthening each other's bids through collaboration and formal partnerships. In this regard Transforming Rehabilitation can be viewed as a constructive way to leverage women's services into a core offender management service, and as a catalyst to encourage better local collaboration.

Other projects said they regard Transforming Rehabilitation as a potential threat, or as posing a risk to their organisation. In particular some stated that they wanted to maintain their independence and provide a consistent service to users, and considered Transforming Rehabilitation as a potential threat to both.

A short-term (and doubtless unintended) consequence of the significant change that Transforming Rehabilitation is introducing has been a reduction in contact with the probation trust, and other key partners; especially at a strategic level. Probation trusts have ceased to be, and existing staff have been moved into two new organisations, a National Probation Service (NPS) to manage offenders who are assessed

as a high risk of harm to the public, and Community Rehabilitation Companies who will manage medium and low risk offenders. The changes in local probation services are having a direct impact on service delivery, the ability of organisations to plan for the future, and the positive relationships many of the organisations had with colleagues in former probation trusts.

"It's sadly not the same [anymore] and because of Transforming Rehabilitation everyone's pulled back and pulled the drawbridges up. That's how it feels to me, and the conversations are not happening anymore. Yes, it might be a temporary thing while the dust settles and everyone finds out where they stand and where they are supposed to be, but at the moment I'm finding that we've ended up being more isolated than we were before."

"The situation is quite difficult with Transforming Rehabilitation approaching. Probation are not working with us as closely anymore. Therefore, we are not getting as many referrals. Therefore it is impacting our targets and how we are performing. That is a concern."

There is some concern that the uniqueness of the women's projects we interviewed may get lost in the wider reforms, and the attempts to save costs in the CJS. However, the recently published update on delivery of the Government's strategic objectives for female offenders¹² shows a number of safeguards have been introduced to make sure the needs of women are met as part of the reforms.

Some projects noted that the changes in commissioning arrangements were starting to generate unhelpful local competitiveness between organisations in some areas of England and Wales. One interviewee had seen a local generic service provider start to develop and advertise a new women's service which was worryingly identical to their own well-established specialist provision. This has caused concern that generic service providers (without specialist knowledge

> It's about the woman's right to get as many services that are women-focused, rather than being at the tail-end of something that has been developed for a man. <

in delivering services to women offenders) could win contracts to deliver women specific services, on the basis that they are able to absorb some of the overheads and therefore offer the service at a lower price. The unique provision delivered by the women's projects that we interviewed, as well as the strong partnerships that they had developed, could be squeezed out of the market if cost becomes the over-riding factor in deciding who should provide these services.

"The women come through the door here and they can be dealt with from beginning to end and they've got everything they need, and if they don't, all the women here have developed their pathways to give them those signposts."

The participants summed up the need for future commissioning to retain a focus on specialist gender services thus:

"It's about the woman's right to get as many services that are women-focused, rather than being at the tail-end of something that has been developed for a man."

One way the Government is seeking to keep a focus on women offenders is by seeing the members of the Advisory Board for Female Offenders as expert advisors and who are also able to provide challenge. The board is also regarded as a key part of the partnership work and cross government approach that the Government deems essential in rehabilitating female offenders.

In Wales, IOM Cymru are taking a strategic multi agency approach to try and ensure that positive work in relation to this agenda is maintained throughout a period of significant change. Following a recommendation from an Executive Summit held in March 2014, they aim to establish a strategic board to provide ongoing leadership and governance, in which all the key stakeholders including key third sector partners will be represented.

It should be noted that concerns expressed in this report about local and national strategic approaches to female offenders were not solely attributed to

changes under Transforming Rehabilitation and reflect a desire to see all statutory partners and cross party representatives embrace a gender specific approach.

Security of service

In the first interviews, concerns about a precarious financial future were compounded by poor communication between the service providers and the commissioners. Unconfirmed funding arrangements that continued well into the new financial year meant that many organisations had to use reserves or reduce their capacity sharply. This had a detrimental effect on the women in need of a service, the delivery organisations and their ability to retain experienced staff, and the relationships that had been built with local commissioners.

The changes to funding arrangements are likely to continue to cause a lack of stability for women offender services. For 2013/14, probation trusts allocated a total of £5.8 million (England and Wales), to fund services for female offenders in the community. This included £3.78 million ring-fenced funding for the provision of women's community services. The Government has also expressed an expectation that existing providers of women's services will continue to receive funding from Community Rehabilitation Companies until March 2015, unless there are concerns about performance, or where demand for the service is considered to be insufficient.

On the ground, the financial situation for projects is still unstable, and possibly less stable than before. One project commented, "We're even more uncertain than the last time when I told you it was uncertain!" During the course of the interviews we recorded that:

- One provider lost their funding in a local competitive tender
- Another had won a contract in a local competitive tender
- Three providers have secured at least one year continuation funding
- A number were waiting on funding decisions from charitable trusts and foundations to support and/or expand service delivery

- One project successfully expanded into a neighbouring county with the support of the probation trust.

For some projects and/or organisations their immediate and long term security remains a key issue and continues to cause stress.

“We’re at the stage now of preparing for the worst case scenario. Even though I’m working hard at keeping irons in the fire, it’s whether they will come off in time. Right now, being absolutely black and white, there is nothing on paper that will secure us. I suppose the situation right now is that we are technically winding down [in the next few months], but I’ve been here before. I try and stay positive ... I tell everybody ‘You can’t let us go because we’re saving you a fortune!’”

Where there had been a change in the provider, it was felt that there could have been better management of the transition period and information sharing by the commissioners, to better support the move from the old to the new provider.

Interestingly one organisation which runs multiple projects for women offenders, has now developed some male projects too, to enable a more sustainable funding base from which to carry on the women’s work in the future. In their view: “Smaller organisations like mine just won’t survive if we carry on only working with women.”

In the development of one new contract, the provision has changed considerably. This is to accommodate unit costs over a larger geographical area, meaning that less women are being seen in some areas than before. This has also seen a change in the referral route where only the commissioning organisation can make referrals, thereby limiting the multi-agency approach of the service. These changes have meant that early intervention work to support those at risk of offending is no longer possible as part of the new contract.

The ongoing uncertainty regarding future funding is almost part of the fabric of delivering female offender services, but no less stressful or disheartening:

“I think if we’re sitting in the dark not knowing where we’re going to sit in March next year, that’s probably reflective of most women’s services throughout the whole country, because all of them are going to be affected by what’s going on. Loads of people aren’t going to give funding because they’re not sure where people are going to sit, and what people are going to be able to do. So I don’t think we’re the only ones. You were having to try and answer questions – even by service-users, they’re not silly, they know what’s going on, they know that potentially their services are going to be cut or they’re going to lose a service – but you have no answers for them because you’re not really getting fed any answers.”

The instability and uncertainty expressed above highlights that participants feel that there has been a slowing of strategic movement since the *Corston Review*. However, the services supporting the vulnerable women that Corston described in her report, are taking actions to secure their future and the embedding of a gender specific approach. The remainder of this section looks at some of the longer term solutions for addressing the needs of female offenders.

Local partnerships

None of the projects interviewed are working in isolation. Partnerships with other providers and statutory agencies remain a key element of their provision, whether that be through referral arrangements, strategic collaboration, funding, or signposting to other support. They described what local partnerships are working well for them, particularly in relation to enhanced support for their service users.

Cross sector engagement

One example was of securing an ‘Early Years Team’ to run a crèche, enhanced by funding for child care via the Freedom Domestic Violence Programme, and by mental health services, who also deliver a service

> The partnership we have with [our] Probation Trust is a really strong one. We're very happy with the relationship we have with them. They're great at communicating with us. They've really been very good at promoting the service. <

at the project premises. This provides a brilliant example of how female offender services in the community can act as a hub for activity, as well as a significant asset to the community, and a resource for professionals from across the criminal justice, community safety, health, and family services sector.

A private sector education, training and employment provider was also singled out as working well in partnership with two of the projects; and a

women's prison was praised for its close work with many of the projects. "The prisons are still giving us really good engagement and support." Some probation partnerships are also working well. "The partnership we have with [our] Probation Trust is a really strong one. We're very happy with the relationship we have with them. They're great at communicating with us. They've really been very good at promoting the service."

A partnership approach: Wiltshire Probation Trust

The CEO of Wiltshire Probation Trust, Liz Rijnenberg, commissioned a new women's community support service in Swindon, in partnership with the Nelson Trust, who run the ISIS women's community project in Gloucester.

Having worked in women's services and community development over the last 30 years, she saw the benefit of the partnership with the voluntary sector: "It is almost like they go to the depths and the roots where other organisations just don't get. I think part of that is about operating on that different level and being able to talk to them [service users] and have the time. Particularly when you have got an organisation that has got ex-service users themselves."

Wiltshire is one of a handful of areas in the country without any women's service, so additional funds from NOMS helped them develop the plans. It coincided with Swindon Council's desire to become a 'Public Sector Transformation Network', and this partnership spurred on the council to find suitable accommodation for the initiative.

Utilising some existing probation staff with a specialism in women offenders, as well as recruiting new ones, staff are seconded over to work in the project and they will also run probation's Specified Activity Initiative, utilising the principles of a therapeutic and women-centred approach to address reoffending.

Swindon's offender population is 19% female offenders, with a significant proportion of women drug users identified in reoffending statistics and by the local authority Drug and Alcohol Team's figures.

Liz feels the willingness of partner organisations to address the needs of women offenders in Wiltshire has been really positive, "Everybody has been behind us, people have asked 'How can we tie in with you?' ... Jobcentre Plus offered support, people in the small business community were saying, 'What can we do to help?' Drug and Alcohol Services and everybody seemed to want to help. The PCC said, 'Is there anything I can do to help extend this to Salisbury and, for example, to have a building in Salisbury?' It has actually been quite overwhelming. I think it is the recognition that the issues for women are cross-cutting."

Liz believes that the benefit of setting up the project will lead to a more inclusive service provision: "It can be more than just a project for women offenders. It can be a project for those at risk and beyond, and make a big contribution to prevention. I think over the last few years, for all local authorities, it feels like there is much more of a focus on prevention. It shows what can happen if you get the people around the table committed to it."

Barriers to partnership working

However, there can be a clash of service models in local areas, particularly between offender specific projects and other service providers. Many women offender projects adopt a model of proactive engagement, where they try to stay in the process with the women until they engage. But other local services may have a 'three strikes and you're out' approach to engagement, meaning that people can be refused access to services if they fail to engage with them on three occasions. This can cause significant tension between different service providers.

The current funding and policy climate was identified by one project as a possible factor in partnerships failing.

"I'm not sure partnerships are working very well anywhere at the moment. I think that people are so under-staffed and so worried about the future that they're doing what they need to do, to be seen to do it, but I'm not sure they're working very well [to develop partnerships]."

Opportunities for partnership working

Health was cited several times as a field where engagement could sometimes be difficult, particularly trying to link female offender services in at a strategic level. Healthcare professionals were viewed as often working with some of the most vulnerable women in the local community and therefore it was felt that a better partnership between female offender projects and health professionals would be of benefit to those hard to reach women. But there were also examples of really good engagement, with one project organising a health day to encourage local midwives, health visitors, and other professionals to attend and find out about the service. Another project has a link with their local dental school, enabling a free dental triage drop-in as well as patients for the dental students to work with. A GP drop-in with blood sugar and Body Mass Index (BMI) services was also established, which gives women the opportunity to register with their local GP, women who have often been disengaged from primary health care for many years.

Making the numbers count

Women offenders can often be invisible in policy and commissioned services, due in large part to the fact that women offenders represent a small percentage of the people in our CJS in comparison to their male counterparts. The projects we interviewed are clear, however, that this is not a good enough reason to ignore the distinct needs of women in the CJS, "It doesn't matter that they [women] are five percent of people's caseloads; five percent is five percent."

The projects interviewed still find that the low number of women offenders remains a key reason why many commissioners and providers do not engage with the agenda. For example, one project reported that a partner organisation providing drug support in the city, had not seen a need to specifically engage with this cohort, remarking that, "Well, what with [the female offenders] only being 5% of our work..." The project responded by arguing that the fact they represent only 5% was exactly the reason why they should focus on women, saying, "That's the same in most organisations; the percentage is very low for women, but that's why they've all been forgotten within the services." This highlights the need for ongoing campaigning and awareness raising at a local level to ensure that commissioners and other service providers are aware of the distinct needs of women in the CJS, as well as the need to provide specialist provision to support them.

Another partner organisation had said "Well, we will do everything we can to try to help you hit your targets and tick your boxes." The female offender project pointed out that meeting targets and ticking boxes was not their motivation, making the point that it was about the "provision of service" that's unique and responsive to women's needs. But they recognised that some partner organisations may not want to direct their resources towards 5% of their caseload. This was underlined by a sexual health project stopping their co-located work, saying the low numbers did not justify them delivering a service at the women's project. This highlights the fact that some providers, when they aren't encouraged by commissioners or their targets to work effectively with women, will find it difficult to prioritise a service for this client group given limited resources.

Champions

The use of champions is considered vital by some projects:

"If there was a woman's lead or a champion in organisations I think it would make it better, because that person would have to go out and find the organisations that work with them. They'd have to go and have a look at policy and practice, and lack of funds, because if they had that lead then surely someone's got to be answerable somewhere."

One project now has a champion for their service in every single local children's centre. These champions provide a single point of contact for women moving into mainstream childcare provision.

In one area, a local judge asked if he could visit a project for a breakfast meeting before going into court. When staff met with him, he very encouragingly asked how the community sentencing was going and if there was anything he was not doing that the project would like him to do. The project found this really refreshing.

Another project reported that the police are beginning to send trainee officers to them to raise their awareness of the project and the needs of female offenders, which is supported by enabling the trainees to shadow the key workers.

Projects feel that individuals with strategic influence only understand the realities of the project and the service users if they visit the project. This also seemed to underline the view again – as mentioned in our interim report *Run Ragged* – that local female offender projects are the conduit for enabling a women specific strategy in the local area and that if that service were to shut then "it would leave a big hole." The fact that these services deliver such vital local advocacy should be recognised, supported, and expanded where possible, but there also needs to be a recognition that these projects will need local advocacy support from

within the public and private sectors. For these reasons the identification and implementation of local champions within other services will be critical if women offender services are to thrive.

Innovation

Developing new opportunities, being innovative with approaches, and forging new partnerships are all taking place to expand services. This is often associated with the need to secure funding and to support the sustainability of local delivery. But it is also testament to the passion and commitment project staff bring, to meet the needs of their service users and to tackle the many challenges their projects face.

Incorporating mental health work, engaging with gardening initiatives, and setting up clothing projects were all given as examples of new ideas to support women in their desistance from crime. In one instance, a partnership with an urban food growing project has been developed, providing women and their children access to green spaces, use of a crèche and training to develop new skills through the programme.

Some of the projects interviewed cover rural areas and have been developing smaller versions of their service with local partners, so that, for example, the use of Female Offender Specified Activity Orders (FOSARs) can become an option for those local courts. Piloting tablet technologies for rural communities has been adopted by another project, as well as using Skype communication for peer mentoring. This same project has developed their website to include information on food bank locations and opening times as well as other pertinent information.

"It's about supporting the women to support themselves and to engage in this society which has become far more technological ... [there is] that digital divide: if they haven't been working and had access to I.T., then they really are an awful long way behind."

One project has also tapped into the promotional focus of their local town as a 'foodie' destination and secured funding to develop a cook book for slow cookers. Local celebrity chefs are providing recipes and the funding has enabled the project to buy slow cookers for the women to support them in accessing affordable, nutritious and home cooked food.

A couple of the projects are now formal contact points for food banks and another has invested in using the 'Big White Wall'¹³ to support their users, again a useful tool for more geographically isolated individuals.

Another interviewee has worked with a local housing provider to co-locate a housing worker in the project twice a week, to address accommodation issues, focusing specifically on supporting those facing problems with housing benefit. This same project is often looking at how to bridge the gap for vulnerable women accessing core services or for services to reach isolated women. They see co-location as a solution, as the women can engage with these other services in a women only environment and in turn the services can reach women that they are often already funded to support, but struggle to make contact with.

This view was reflected by other projects interviewed, who saw co-location as enabling partner organisations to provide a more intensive service, and also as a way of being a successful holistic service without relying on pulling in additional funding to enable some of this specialist work to take place.

Innovation will remain a vital element in meeting the needs of women offenders, particularly as those needs are changing in the current climate, as reported in the next section.

The changing needs of service users

Clinks' *State of the Sector* report¹⁴ further confirms that the economic downturn has had a far reaching impact. Two-thirds of the organisations who contributed to the findings stated that the needs of those seeking their services have changed, particularly increased and

more complex needs being presented, demographic changes affecting demand for services, and more demand for housing and employment support.

Finance, benefit and debt

In our interim report, *Run Ragged*, the impact of austerity measures were summarised in a quote provided by a women's service provider; they described the situation as "shockingly desperate times for women." The report also highlighted the need for some project staff to increase their skills around certain issues that were becoming more prominent for the women they worked with. Debt advice was a key area identified.

The later findings further highlight the finance, benefit and debt challenges faced by female offenders:

"We have a number of women who are living on £25 per fortnight because the Bedroom Tax has been taken off them, even though there is nowhere for them to go ... there isn't any housing for people to scale down to."

This shows that some vulnerable service users are being negatively impacted by national policy, which should be cause for concern, especially where this might lead to increased offending to combat poverty and debt amongst some women in our communities.

Some women are finding that the most basic of items are beyond the reach of their economic circumstances:

"We are getting requests from women to buy tampons for them. That is something we have never, ever had before. I am sure that that isn't something that the women are doing lightly."

For others, even food is unobtainable:

"They are phoning and saying, 'I haven't eaten for two days. Can somebody help me?' This is the not the experience we have had in the last six years. The only

things that have changed [to account for this] have been the government policies.”

Debt attributed to benefit cuts was specifically noted as impacting on women. One project identified that they were getting an increase in referrals from their local Jobcentre: “Mums are under pressure, they’re having their benefits withdrawn”. Another project described how left with few solutions, women are turning to pay day loans to try and ease their debts. The women are almost in the pincer between loan companies and a more punitive response to their debts by local authorities and the courts:

“They get into loads of debt with other things as well, because their budgets are on such a fine line anyway. So then you’ve got fourteen quid a week, and what happens is you then get the payday loans coming in and then it’s just the TV licence doesn’t get paid, council tax doesn’t – then court.”

One interviewee reported the worrying trend that local authorities and courts are passing rent/council tax debt cases to bailiffs at a much earlier stage than before. This gave the project less leeway to negotiate for their clients, where previously they had been able to present the personal circumstances of the women and support a more appropriate resolution: “You cannot negotiate with bailiffs; there is just a communication breakdown”.

Accommodation

The Ministry of Justice’s update on delivery of the Government’s strategic objectives for female offenders, states that they “... will make sure that women are finding suitable housing immediately on release ...” “This is a welcome statement that can help address a significant need amongst female offenders.

In the second interviews for this study, housing needs formed an increasingly prominent theme. The issues of safe, affordable and appropriate accommodation and the impact of cuts to public services, appear to now be more intertwined. This is compounding the stress placed upon

women offenders. An example of housing need and related stress was described by a project, in the context of a woman they were supporting:

“They are often really struggling. If you’re single women without any children, then really, they’re expected to share a house with other people that they don’t know. For vulnerable women that’s really difficult. We’ve got a woman now who’s recently been released from prison. She really wants her own place, but the amount of housing benefit she can get really makes that quite difficult. The places she’s been offered are just... more or less unliveable. We haven’t been able to come up with really good solutions to the problems. We’re just trying to work with the housing providers and the local housing department to try to help with solutions. Obviously, we’re doing quite a lot of coaching with women around presenting themselves to private housing providers. How best to maximise their chances of being accommodated.”

Accommodation is a key resettlement need for many female offenders and poor quality housing or lack of access to suitable accommodation can contribute to reoffending. For those in crisis, no safe place to stay can exacerbate their vulnerability.

“One very vulnerable women ...had been put in a B&B, she’s left the B&B and is now in a worse situation in somewhere that’s hardly liveable in, but she’s with a female friend. She had been threatened in the B&B by males and she had to give them money and that sort of thing. That goes on all the time.”

Insecure accommodation or the need to move for financial reasons is an added pressure and the consequences of current austerity measures on accommodation can be emotionally traumatic.

"[Because of welfare reforms,] we've had to support clients to move home and all that that entails, all the emotional toll. I think that's something that never gets taken into consideration. If somebody's lived in a certain place for a long time and then they've got to move, what they must feel like. If the move's enforced, you know?"

Complex needs

"We had two phone calls yesterday of women who were hospitalised. One had cut herself really badly and the other had taken an overdose. As a team, what we were asking ourselves was: 'Are we getting more difficult referrals from probation because they know of our experience and are making referrals knowing we will support those women, or are the women getting worse?' I don't know the answer to that. There seems to have been a drop-off in general support. A lot of agencies have lost their funding and gone to the wall."

The interviewee who made the statement above felt that complex and increasing need, in combination with cuts in statutory provision, were increasing their referrals. It was also confusing the needs profile for them. Women offenders often have complex needs and it would seem the current climate is complicating those further and making women's lives all the more difficult to manage.

In the first interviews debt was highlighted as a prominent need, and whilst the second interviews clearly show that that need has not gone away, in some examples it now sits alongside other crisis points like housing, perhaps for the sobering reason that the women appear to have to absorb the immediate crisis and accommodate the next one with which they are faced.

Offender projects remain committed to providing a service for women who may fall through such gaps. One project wanted to ensure that a local cohort

of women with low level offending and low level but complex needs remained their focus. For them, the offending was a reflection of other areas of the women's lives that were going wrong. The women were not meeting the thresholds of many services such as mental health and so weren't slotting into any particular service. The project felt that the women were at high risk of missing out on key support as a result of their needs being below the radar for a lot of services.

Poor mental health was also cited as a crisis point:

"The focus now seems to be on housing and mental health issues. I guess people have adapted and adjusted to the changes that they are in debt, and are just increasingly getting in debt, which is affecting their mental health. It becomes quite a bad spiral."

This is having the affect that many women will be experiencing increasingly complex issues, which is likely to require a more intensive support offer from local projects.

One example of this was the effects of the changes to housing benefit on a woman suffering domestic violence:

"I have noticed a big increase in people getting into debt because of the bedroom tax; that's just had an instantly massive impact. ...I've been supporting a woman who is in a three-bedroom house with her adult son. Now, he is being violent towards her; he's an alcoholic and she's scared of him. She has been getting more and more into arrears because of the bedroom tax, and he's not paying any of his benefits to her; he's an adult non-dependent...So she ends up in court... effectively because she's got an abusive son who won't give her the money that he should be giving to her... I've come across enough women where they've had an adult child living with them

refusing to contribute to the household, and it's all around the confidence of that woman, and either an actually abusive, or borderline abusive, relationship that has developed with her adult child."

Complex needs can sometimes go unnoticed and it is the skills of specialist projects being able to identify the additional issues for women offenders that links them to relevant support. A project described how debt was the route into their service via courts, but they then become aware of underlying issues for the women that have until this point fallen through the gaps:

"Often it's because the system catches up with them for fines, because that's a very structured, very definite thing to have happened. So that's the way in, that's why they're in court, and then it usually transpires that there's all this other stuff going on as well that nobody is helping them with – but it is impacting on their ability to manage their money – and then that's landing them in court."

In addition, needs can include the often documented situation of female offenders being victims as well as perpetrators of crime. But despite this, sometimes the rules of projects may mean offending behaviour supersedes meeting those needs:

"We've had one woman who was fleeing really, really serious violence, but she'd been done for arson, so the refuge wouldn't look. Even though she wasn't even an arson risk at all: she'd tried to set herself on fire because she'd been so depressed. The refuges won't look at her because she's got an arson conviction."

It is the holistic approach of specialist projects that means they can address the hidden needs of female offenders and tap them into vital resources. They are showing themselves to be one of the best placed providers of support to women with complex needs.

Finding solutions

The current uncertain situation for projects and the emerging needs that they have identified for their service users, is a challenge for projects. But the innovation shown reflects that they are flexible to respond quickly to changing needs and this responsiveness is core to the ethos and design of all the providers we interviewed.

The impact of the new commissioning landscape does provide an additional challenge to all our interviewees, it seems to be putting up barriers and constraints for other organisations to make referrals or provide their service within any of the one-stop provisions.

"I think what's become more evident is that because of the commissioning, because of this new world that we live in ... with the commissioning of drug services and alcohol services [for example], that people tend to put their arms around their own group of people and clients, and don't necessarily want to share them – so they don't want to refer."

But to try and address these issues, particularly gaps in service provision, some providers are choosing to take a more direct approach with commissioners. For example, one interviewee told us that they felt a more direct message about the gaps in services for women needed to be made so that commissioners could make better funding decisions. As is shown in the quote below, many women's organisations have been doing this at a local level through probation:

"We've made a few pathways and spoken to some people [statutory partners] where they've said, "Maybe now we [the statutory sector] just need to actually address the commissioners directly and say "we need this service and no-one's providing us with it", and go and be direct with the commissioners, rather than trying to go to all the people who are going to give the service."

Consolidating and growing provision: Integrated Offender Management (IOM) Cymru Women's Pathfinder Project

Wendy Hyett, the IOM Cymru Women's Pathfinder Project Manager, is taking a lead to reduce the reoffending rate for women in Wales. Identified as a priority due to high rates of reoffending amongst all offenders being released from short-term custody and because they're the lower-level offenders, women offenders were also disproportionately experiencing the revolving door effect; they were going into custody and coming out without support. So a specifically focused project for women has been developed.

IOM Cymru recognise the specific needs of women offenders and the issue that offender management services are predominantly designed for men. For this reason IOM Cymru wanted to meet the needs of women more effectively by providing women centred, holistic, integrated services to address the impact of custody on women, the impact of family issues, experience of domestic abuse and other forms of victimisation and other social justice related issues for women.

IOM Cymru examined the evidence base around what works for women, so that in developing an approach they could be sure that it was something that was likely to be effective. A detailed analysis of Welsh women will then ensure that the model goes further, to fit the specific needs of the cohort.

Wendy wants to harness the uniqueness of small local providers in contributing to supporting women offenders by responding to local need: "... smaller organisations that are working in the communities with local women, will have their local experience and will develop their knowledge around the needs of those women, which sometimes is for whatever reasons, limited to certain groups of women in certain areas. This is great because it's responding to that local need. It's very much building on the experience of our local providers and what they already do with women."

The approach is about consolidating existing provision and bringing it into partnership with the project: "We will bring in additional resources

where we're able to get them, and particularly for piloting. But it's more about looking at how we can reconfigure what already exists in terms of how statutory partners work with voluntary sector and incorporating things that people are already doing or getting them to do things a little bit differently, in a way that is more effective overall because it's a more coordinated approach. The aim is for multi-agency partners to work together, to prevent any of those gaps in the system from occurring and work with the offender rather than the offence, so looking at providing more of a holistic model of support."

The expertise of the voluntary sector is of great value to the IOM approach: "IOM is looking at how statutory agencies work together with the voluntary sector, there's a huge amount of knowledge and information out there about what works with women. It's about being able to use their approaches and bring them on board with what we're doing."

A key strategic approach for Wendy is to inform commissioners as to the things that they really need to invest in quality services, and to support partners' applications for funding where IOM Cymru feel it is beneficial to the Women's Pathfinder project.

Wendy also hopes to be able to pilot awareness raising with magistrates around the issues of women offenders. In addition, if new services for women, such as one stop shops and a new domestic abuse service are developed, then these will be resources incorporated into the partnership model so that more robust and bespoke options are available to the courts or as voluntary support.

Although currently criminal justice is not devolved to the Welsh Assembly, women offenders are firmly on the agenda, particularly in relation to the impact on children and families and the links with the violence against women and girls agenda and are receiving national focus with support and strategic collaboration with Welsh Government as a key supporter of the IOM Cymru partnership.

> **There needs to be distinctive services for women ... I don't think there is any excuse for it not being written into policy.** <

Although there is concern as to how short term funding will impact on local partnerships, co-location is regularly cited as really beneficial for providing a holistic service, bridging the statutory and voluntary sector and enabling up-skilling of staff in both sectors as well as providing a one stop shop facility to women. One project has secured mental health staff on site and noted:

“What has emerged ... is how difficult it has been to get people into secondary services, and that the mental health staff here have seen it – it’s now become evident to them how difficult people find it – because when they work with them in the community, they just work with people and get them straight into the services. But all of a sudden they’re meeting with women who have maybe tried to access those services for years, and only because then they’ve linked with here they’ve managed to do it.”

The work to develop local partnerships, securing champions, and the raft of innovative approaches already highlighted in this report, are all elements of the strategic and practical expertise that the projects bring to bear on meeting the needs of the women that access their services.

The rapidly changing needs profile is well accommodated by the female offender services, however it is doubtful that generic services would have been able to identify and adapt to the needs of these women in the same way. This further makes the case for women specific provision that takes a different approach to meeting their distinct needs.

Commitment to the agenda at government level

“There needs to be distinctive services for women ... I don't think there is any excuse for it not being written into policy.”

The Government has made the positive step of amending the Offender Rehabilitation Bill to include a statutory requirement that the Secretary of State for Justice ensure contracts with new providers under the Transforming Rehabilitation reforms “consider and identify” the specific needs of female offenders in their bids, so that the issue will be expressly considered when commissioning rehabilitation and supervision services. The Government has also provided some practical guidance on support for women offenders to Tier 1 providers bidding for contracts under Transforming Rehabilitation. Further still it has stated that following the award of contracts, the Ministry of Justice will monitor service provision to ensure that key outputs for female offenders are delivered, although the outputs themselves are not specified.

These changes are documented in Clinks’ policy briefing on the Government’s review of the women’s custodial estate¹⁵ and are welcome amongst those advocating for a gender specific approach. However, participants feel that policy hasn’t gone far enough, and that future policy must build on existing good practice and the emerging evidence base that supports a distinct and holistic approach to female offenders.

“Because the number of women offenders is small, it’s very easy for them to get lost in the whole Transforming Rehabilitation agenda, and for prime contractors then not to recognise that need. What we know is that women who offend do far better in a gender specific service ... We need to treat them differently to create equality.”

“We’re not asking them to be given more of a chance, we’re asking them to be given the same chances. But in order to do that they have to be given a different set of interventions. The interventions that we make for men do not work for women, we know that. So we need to be really clear that we use the interventions that do work.”

The House of Commons Justice Committee, speaking on the topic of women offenders said the following, "Many of our witnesses drew attention to a perceived weakening in governance arrangements for further progressing the Corston agenda and an apparent shift in the strategic commitment of the Government."¹⁶ Our participants reflected this statement, providing examples of ongoing difficulties with strategic engagement at a local level, and a perceived lack of a national strategic commitment from the Ministry of Justice.

"I really liked it when they had the women's policy team in the Ministry of Justice ... because they felt very accessible. So as a little centre, trying to set it up they didn't mind my phone calls or queries ... it felt like they were very honouring of [their commitment], and trying to be very helpful. Then it went to the NOMS women's team, and again a good team of women. Then it all seemed to go and I started thinking, 'Oh, this isn't good because we're going off the agenda now' ... Unless you have something at a national level driving it forward, I think it will fall by the way side."

Projects want the agenda on a strong footing, and see national commitment as necessary to provide both strategic and policy direction. At the same time they also want to see a clear financial commitment to the sustainability of women offender services.

"There needs to be a national approach to this so it is given a really high profile – different services for women, women-specific services. The funding needs to be put on a much surer and more long-term footing; year-by-year is just so incredibly demoralising and difficult, and it's very difficult to advocate for a service that might not be here this time next year."

It is evident that projects want a loud and powerful voice to advocate for them, one interviewee commented, "I guess we advocate ourselves. We network and we promote, and wave our arms around and bother people."

There is a willingness from government to continue the reforms and commitment to women offender services that emerged from the Corston Report and subsequent reviews. The organisations that we interviewed want to be able to continue a constructive and strategic dialogue with government to continuously improve services, and to support women in our local communities who require a unique approach to tackling their complex and multiple needs. Participants were also clearly frustrated by the short term nature of funding, and the stress that this puts on an organisation to develop and plan meaningfully for the future. In both these regards, the services wanted to have a voice in government, which they felt was lacking, and wanted to be able to influence future policy based on their experiences of providing support to the women they work alongside.

“ IT IS A
CRITICAL
TIME FOR
WOMEN
OFFENDER
SERVICES
AND THEIR
SERVICE
USERS. ”

This report provides a picture that spans the past twelve months in the life of women offender projects and their service users.

After the *Corston Review*, a clearer direction for supporting women offenders emerged, through policy, funding commitment and the growth of specialist services. Those services were able to flex and innovate to meet the needs of women offenders and there was the start of a positive gender specific approach at a national and a local level.

The title asks *Who Cares?* which was a sentiment echoed by participants feeling like they were now often lone voices in their local areas, constantly needing to advocate and reiterate the case for women specific services. The approach hailed as the way forward following the Corston Report of 2007 was evident of care and concern for women offenders, yet the recent Justice Committee report stated: "It is clear that the matter of female offending too easily fails to get priority in the face of other competing issues. The lack of central drive has resulted in outsiders having difficulty determining Ministry of Justice policy and direction, and insiders detecting a dampening in mood and enthusiasm, leaving an impression that for this Government it was not a sufficiently high priority."¹⁷

The organisations we interviewed felt that the Ministry of Justice and NOMS needed to strengthen their messaging around why women's services are essential and effective. This message needs to be spread through a cross-departmental approach, with local authorities and police and crime commissioners, to embed a requirement that women receive a unique and gender specific approach. This requires a renewed drive in advocacy for the services and policies that stipulate the need for a unique approach. Key to any success in this area will be a strong commitment to the long-term funding and sustainability of these services.

Knowing that these projects are operating in an extremely challenging economic and policy landscape, this report has further highlighted the difficult situation for many women offenders,

depicting a situation of increasing desperation. It also shows that the mixed experience at a local level, with variable opportunities to sustain services, and differing possibilities to develop partnerships, and the various reasons why it has been a struggle to develop a robust cross sector strategy committed to supporting women offenders.

As with many qualitative studies, it has been impossible to share all the rich information that the projects provided. In addition to this report, there were numerous examples of elaborate networks and 'fingers in pies' approaches which were necessary to sustain local services and bring about innovative collaborations to meet the needs of their service users. This flexibility and creativity is something that has taken projects many years to develop, and it shines a light on the value, assets, and expertise of these projects. As one project summarised, "We punch well above our weight." These services are specialist and unique, providing society with a group of projects, and people, that genuinely care for, support, and advocate on behalf of women offenders in the community. But surrounding all this positivity there is a growing fear that their specialism may be diluted or lost in the new commissioning landscape.

A grassroots approach is often preferable to a top down one when defining need, designing an approach, and delivering services. Now, at a time of great uncertainty for women offender projects (and the increasing needs of service users), central government should be mandating commissioners, policy makers, and strategic leads to embrace the established evidence base that local gender specific interventions have developed. The Ministry of Justice should take all possible steps to ensure that this becomes a core element of criminal justice support provision in every part of England and Wales.

It is clearly understood that there is a direct link between poverty and offending, particularly so for women. It is established that most women who enter the CJS have committed acquisitive crimes, and that many have experienced long-term poverty and debt.¹⁸ A Joint Inspectorate report states women's offending is typified by crimes including shoplifting

and breach of trust such as theft from an employer. These offences can be driven by a woman's need to support her family, with NOMS stating that women "may perceive theft ... as a means of survival."¹⁹

This report provides further evidence that there is rising debt for women offenders, an emerging crisis reflecting recent reports that women are being disproportionately affected by changes to the welfare and benefits system,²⁰ which are likely to contribute to an increase in poverty related crime and re-offending. A commitment from government is required to ensure services can meet this increased and rapidly changing need. Determination and leadership are required to commit resources, strategic drive and vision to support women offenders in our communities, particularly at this time of crisis.

We have shown that the competitive commissioning agenda raises concerns for the future of crucial partnerships, upon which many female offenders rely.²¹ It is a critical time for women offender services and their service users over the next 12 months. This report has shown that offender projects and some statutory agencies are willing to do what is needed to support female offenders in the community but they need much wider support in order to achieve this.

The following recommendations seek to provide some focus for enabling this.

Recommendations



Patchwork Woman, HMP & YOI Low Newton. Commended Award for oil or acrylic.

TRACKING. MONITORING. WHOLE SYSTEM. CHAMPIONS. FORUMS.

- 1 Independent tracking of provision under Transforming Rehabilitation** to ensure delivery of offender management recognises and is responsive to the specific needs of female offenders and that services reflect the existing evidence base for specialist gender specific services.
- 2 Rigorous monitoring and assessment** by key government departments on the impact of funding and service cuts on women in low income and/or single parent households, to avoid perpetuating poverty related offending (this repeats a call by the Reducing Reoffending Third Sector Advisory Group²²).
- 3 A whole system approach to address the gender specific needs of female offenders**, to include a joint board of high level leadership from key government bodies, voluntary sector specialists in women's offending, and women offender projects as part of its permanent membership.
- 4 Mandatory champions for gender specific services in local and national commissioning bodies** to ensure that commissioners are taking into consideration the needs of women when designing new services, and to have well informed commissioners that understand the existing evidence base for specialist gender specific services.
- 5 Women offender forums** to be created in each Community Rehabilitation Company area to enable a greater voice for service users and the organisations that support them, so that they can identify emerging need, shape local strategy, and inform service development.

- 1 Clinks (2014) 'Run Ragged: The current experience of projects providing community based female offender support services'. Online: <http://www.clinks.org/sites/default/files/basic/files-downloads/Run%20Ragged%20Interim%20Report%20February%202014.pdf> [last accessed 20.06.14]
- 2 Women's Community Projects developed as a result of The Corston Report (see note 6), building on existing women's community centres and developing new gender specific one-stop provision for female offenders in the community, to be used ideally as an alternative to a custodial sentence.
- 3 Some statutory services were included as they were the main service provider in some geographical areas.
- 4 <http://www.clinks.org/criminal-justice/transforming-rehabilitation>
- 5 House of Commons Justice Committee (2013) 'Women offenders: after the Corston Report: Second Report of Session 2013-14'. Online: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmselect/cmjust/92/92.pdf> [last accessed 14.11.2013]
- 6 Home Office (2007) 'A report by Baroness Jean Corston of a Review of Women with Particular Vulnerabilities in the Criminal Justice System', Home Office.
- 7 Ministry of Justice (2013) 'Government response to the Justice Committee's Second Report of Session 2013-14: Female Offenders'. Online: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/252817/response-jsc-female-offenders.pdf [last accessed 20.06.2014]
- 8 NOMS (2013) 'Women's Custodial Estate Review'. Online: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/252851/womens-custodial-estate-review.pdf [last accessed 20.06.2014]
- 9 Ministry of Justice (2014) Advisory Board on Female Offenders. Online: <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/advisory-board-for-female-offenders> [last accessed 20.06.2014]
- 10 All proposed actions that the government have made in accepting the Justice Select Committee's recommendations can be found in Clinks' briefing on the Government's response to the Justice Select Committee's Report on Women Offenders and the Women's Custodial Estate Review (2013). Online: http://www.clinks.org/sites/default/files/basic/files-downloads/Members%20Briefing%20-women%20offenders%20November%2013%20FINAL_0.pdf [last accessed 20.06.2014]
- 11 See note 5.
- 12 Ministry of Justice (2014) 'Update on the delivery of the Government's strategic objectives for female offenders'. Online: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/298225/update-on-delivery-of-government-strategic-objectives-for-female-offenders.pdf [last accessed 17.07.2014]
- 13 A web based support network for emotional health www.bigwhitewall.com
- 14 Clinks (October 2013) 'State of the Sector: The impact of the economic downturn on the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector working with offenders'. Online: <http://www.clinks.org/sites/default/files/Clinks%20State%20of%20the%20Sector%20-%20Full%20Report.pdf> [last accessed 20.06.2014]
- 15 Clinks (2013), 'Clinks' Briefing on The Government's response to the Justice Select Committee and Women's Custodial Estate Review'. Online: http://www.clinks.org/sites/default/files/basic/files-downloads/Members%20Briefing%20-women%20offenders%20November%2013%20FINAL_0.pdf [last accessed 20.06.2014]
- 16 Ministry of Justice (2013) 'Government response to the Justice Committee's Second Report of Session 2013-14: Female Offenders'. Online: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/252817/response-jsc-female-offenders.pdf [last accessed 20.06.2014]
- 17 See note 5.
- 18 Clinks (2014) 'Briefing about the nature of the relationship between debt and women's offending'. Online: http://www.clinks.org/sites/default/files/basic/files-downloads/Members%20Briefing%20-Relationship%20between%20debt%20and%20female%20offendingFINAL_0.pdf [last accessed 20.06.2014]
- 19 National Offender Management Service (2012) 'A distinct approach: A guide to working with women offenders' (page 35). Online: <http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/publications/noms/2012/guide-working-with-women-offenders.pdf> [last accessed 02.10.2013]
- 20 New Economics Foundation (2013) 'Surviving Austerity: Local voices and local action in England's poorest neighbourhoods'. Online: <http://dnwssx4l7gl7s.cloudfront.net/nefoundation/default/page/-/publications/Surviving%20Austerity.pdf> [last accessed 02.10.13].
- 21 See 'Impact of policy changes' section of this report, page 8.
- 22 Reducing Reoffending Third Sector Advisory Group (2012) 'A report of the Task & Finish Group – Breaking the cycle of women's offending: a system re-design' (Executive Summary). Online: http://www.clinks.org/sites/default/files/null/RR3%20Paper%20on%20Women_1.pdf [last accessed 20.06.2014]

“ IT IS A
CRITICAL
TIME FOR
WOMEN
OFFENDER
SERVICES
AND THEIR
SERVICE
USERS. ”