



Government
Equalities Office

Putting equality at the heart of government

**WOMEN IN FOCUS:
Promoting equality
and positive practice**

Government Strategy to
Divert Women Away
from Crime

Ministry of
JUSTICE

March 2010

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Foreword

**Maria Eagle MP, Minister of State
Ministry of Justice and Deputy Minister for Women and Equality**



I encourage you to read this report which sets out what we heard at the ten Women in Focus events held across England and Wales. The events will help us all to achieve a fairer and more effective criminal justice system for women offenders. They gave us the opportunity to promote the implementation of the Gender Equality Duty, support delivery of it and build on the positive work already underway, and importantly, to discuss what more we can do together.

The Government's strategy is focused on making a difference for women within the criminal justice system, but also aims to divert women away from crime in the first place. To make this happen, we must offer the majority of non-violent women offenders alternatives to prison which provide the opportunities to address the root-causes of offending.

I want to assure you that as Ministerial Champion for Women in the Criminal Justice System and Deputy Minister for Women at the Government Equalities Office, I have made it my priority to ensure that women offenders are no longer the invisible minority within the criminal justice system and we are making progress including a promising reduction in the numbers of women in prison and the development of a network of community provision across the country.

We have learnt a lot from the Women in Focus events. Good progress is being made, but there is much to do to achieve the sustained distinct approach that is needed. The cross-cutting themes offer an opportunity to consider what else needs to be done together to divert women and girls away from crime.

The National Offender Management Service will now want to discuss the findings with partners and agree action in each nation and region. Together we can ensure that women are given the opportunity to turn their lives around.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Maria Eagle". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Maria Eagle MP, Minister of State
Ministry of Justice and Deputy Minister for Women and Equality**

Summary

The Government Equalities Office (GEO) held a series of one-day stakeholder events as part of the department's contribution to the Governments' strategy to divert women from crime. In particular, the events aimed to bring key agencies together, from across the third and statutory sector, in order to consider how best to utilise the Gender Equality Duty to meet the distinct needs of women offenders.

Two years on from Baroness Corston's report and the implementation of the Government's strategy, there appears to be a greater understanding of the multiple and complex needs of women offenders; they are part of a much bigger picture of violence, abuse and social exclusion, many serve short sentences for non-violent offences, and imprisonment has a profound impact on them and their families.

A number of themes emerged from across the events regarding what is now needed to achieve a sustained change to work with women in the criminal justice system. Participants emphasised:

- that we all need to promote and use the Gender Equality Duty – it helps us make the case for different services for women offenders; and
- if we are to really make a difference then we must ensure that women offender's health needs are met; and
- we must give the judiciary¹ clear information on community provision in their areas; and
- success to date is because we are working in partnership, especially important given the wide range of issues facing many women offenders; and
- intervening at an early stage is critical if we are to address the intergenerational impact on children and families.

I. Background

The first recommendation of Baroness Corston's *Review of Women with Particular Vulnerabilities in the Criminal Justice System* was that every criminal justice agency must implement the Gender Equality Duty and radically transform the way they deliver services for women. The Government accepted this recommendation in its response published in December 2007, viewing the Gender Equality Duty as a lever to support a different approach to women offenders.²

As part of its contribution to delivering on the first of Baroness Corston's recommendations, the Government Equalities Office (GEO) held a series of one-day stakeholder events, one in each of the English regions and Wales. These events brought together key stakeholders from both statutory and voluntary sectors and provided attendees with the opportunity to:

- Build on their knowledge about the needs of women offenders, the Gender Equality Duty as a lever to deliver services for women offenders; and how both of these relate to local targets and priorities.
- Learn about best practice and identify how it can be translated into work to support delivery of priorities and targets locally as well as linking with the national agenda.
- Network and learn about the work of other key local partners including community providers.

In addition, these events offered an opportunity to explore how to increase the judiciary's confidence in the alternatives to women being remanded into custody or given short sentences.

² The Government published its response to the Corston Report in December 2007, accepting 40 out of 43 of the recommendations. Where it has not been possible to accept a recommendation, the response sets out other ways in which the issues could be addressed. <http://www.justice.gov.uk/publications/gov-resp-corston-review.htm>
A report providing details of progress in taking forward the government's strategy for diverting women away from crime was published December 2009. <http://www.justice.gov.uk/publications/divert-women-away-crime-report.htm>

2. The Women in Focus Programme

“This was a good event it raised awareness of the issues affecting women and also where I can access data and resources to inform my staff” – Leicester

“The speakers were excellent, it was an informative and thought provoking day” – Bristol

We are grateful to the many speakers who contributed to the events (see Annex B for details). Each one followed a similar format:

- a session dedicated to the Gender Equality Duty,
- a presentation from the Director of Offender Management (DOM) (or a representative from the DOMs office),
- information on the Government’s strategy,
- the work of local women’s community projects; and
- a facilitated group work discussion.

Ministers spoke at 5 of the 10 events, and programmes were tailored to reflect regional/Welsh and local contexts by showcasing good practice. Where possible, the experiences of women offenders were highlighted through presentations by service users and ex-offenders, the use of DVDs to illustrate the impact of the services on real women, and at the Newcastle event, a theatre production.

“I enjoyed hearing the contribution from the survivor/ex-offender. Hearing from courageous people who have had first hand experience and are willing to share their story had a big impact” – Newcastle

“What was great about the day was the mix of people from different sectors, and the opportunity to hear about interventions and activities I was not aware of before”. – London

The London Women in Focus event was different to the other nine as it was delivered with three third sector partners: the Griffins Society, Clinks and Women in Prison. As well as a London focus, this event also provided delegates with an opportunity to learn from experiences of working with women offenders in other parts of England and Wales during workshop sessions.

WOMEN IN FOCUS: A PARTNERSHIP APPROACH

Griffins, Clinks and Women in Prison³

Recognising that there is good practice in support for women offenders to celebrate, but that the recommendations of the Corston Report have not yet been fully implemented, the Griffins Society, Clinks, and Women in Prison had begun planning a conference to explore progress on the Corston report. This would provide a platform for the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) to demonstrate how their work has led the way in providing the “distinct approach” that Corston recommended. We were therefore pleased to join forces with the GEO and the Ministry of Justice in planning and delivering an event in London.

This partnership symbolises the great potential of voluntary sector and statutory partnerships, with all parties coming together to work on creative ideas for reducing the over-use of custody for women offenders. In the current economic climate partnerships between and within sectors, sharing resources, skills and experience are vital if we are to provide the best possible support for women, many of whom are vulnerable.

The Griffins Society, Clinks and Women in Prison were pleased with the workshops which showcased some of the wide-ranging work that the VCS is carrying out with women offenders, from one-stop shops such as the Asha Women’s Centre, to counselling services in prison and work with Black and Minority Ethnic women.

Delegates at the London event seemed pleased with the speakers and with the workshops; but most of all they wanted to ensure that the energy that was around in the event can be captured and sustained. For this reason we will be working together to build upon and spread the learning from this conference, so that innovative work with women offenders is sustainable especially in the new context of cuts in public spending. And finally, to ensure that the sector’s history of successfully providing a distinct approach is recognised and built on to ensure that we work together to best meet the needs of women offenders.

³ This is a contribution from third sector partners Griffins, Clinks and Women In Prison.

3. Attendance

In total 786 delegates, from a broad mix of agencies across the criminal justice system attended the 10 events held in England and Wales. Specialist third sector organisations were strongly represented (43%, 339 delegates) as were Probation (16%, 123 delegates). In addition, there was representation from the Crown Prosecution Service, police, prisons, the judiciary, local authorities and health service providers.

Profile of delegates:

Judiciary: 43 delegates (5.5%)

Health providers: 48 delegates (6%)

Local authorities: 49 delegates (6.2%)

Prisons: 37 delegates (4.7%)

Police: 35 delegates (4.5%)

Crown Prosecution Service: 18 delegates (2%)

Government departments: 55 delegates (6.9%)

Independent/other: 40 delegates (5%)

4. Feedback and evaluation

Feedback was provided through a variety of methods. Participants were asked to discuss local issues around working with women offenders during a facilitated table discussion and to capture their responses on feedback sheets. In addition, attendees noted comments on flipcharts which were collected at the end of each event. These comments were collated to identify key issues across the series of workshops and individually by region/Wales. Delegates were also asked to complete a short evaluation form (example at Annex D)⁴ after each event, 54% (423) of which responded.

Evaluation of the events was very positive:

- 85% of respondents rated the events as either “very good” or “excellent”
- 88% of respondents thought that the events succeeded in increasing their awareness of the Gender Equality Duty in meeting the needs of women offenders.
- 52% of respondents thought that the events provided an opportunity to network with other local stakeholders.

“I learnt that we do need to all work together to ensure that the needs of women [offenders] are met” – Birmingham

*“This event was fantastic, networking and communication is so important and this event enabled people to speak about better working practices.”
– London*

The method of data collection used for the event evaluation could have resulted in a “halo effect”. When asked to give an assessment of an event or an activity in which they had just participated, there is a tendency for respondents to select the highest rating (in this case, “excellent” or “strongly agree”). This is particularly the case when an event or activity is felt to represent a “worthy cause” and/or where the organisation is held in high regard. Whilst it is possible this applies here this does not detract from the overall findings, however, which are very positive.

⁴ The evaluation form was tailored for each event to give delegates an opportunity to give feedback on each speaker and, where relevant, workshops.

5. Common themes/issues

A number of common issues in relation to embedding gender equality in work with women offenders emerged across the events (see Annex C for breakdown by event):

- Gender specific commissioning of services for women offenders
- Partnership working across statutory and voluntary sectors
- Meeting the health needs of women offenders
- Communication with the judiciary
- The value of early intervention

Some of these were more strongly reflected at some events than others. Where possible, these are illustrated below by an example of local practice. This feedback offers a snapshot of the ongoing work at local level, progress made in relation to meeting the distinct needs of women offenders and the challenges faced.

5.1 The Gender Equality Duty helps make the case for different services for women offenders

Across all ten Women in Focus events, the top issue identified was the need for an ongoing commitment at local and regional/Wales levels to embed and mainstream a gender specific approach to women, ensuring that appropriate specialist community services are available as an alternative to custody. Gender specific commissioning of services for women offenders was strongly identified as a key area for action at a number of the events. Delegates emphasised the need for commissioning plans which take into account gender specific needs and are informed by feedback from service user groups.

“From a commissioning point of view, this is a matter which needs to be focused on from the top. In the long run, commissioning specialist services is cost-effective and money saving” – Newcastle

“Specialist organisations have a wealth of experience working with marginalised groups. We need to be included in the commissioning process. Opportunities need to be available for specialist agencies to have their voice heard and to work in partnership” – Bristol

The Gender Equality Duty provides an opportunity for public authorities to assess service provision and consider how best to ensure equality of outcomes for women offenders. Women offenders differ from men offenders in a number of ways which make the case for a different approach:

- about one half of women prisoners have suffered from domestic violence, about a third from sexual abuse (twice as high as in the general population);
- about 80% suffer from alcohol and substance abuse;
- relationship problems, drug or alcohol addiction and mental health problems feature strongly in women's pathways into crime;
- women prisoners are far more likely than men to be primary carers of young children and this factor makes the prison experience significantly different for women than men;
- approximately half of all self-harm incidents in prison are committed by women, even though they comprise only about 5% of the total prison population.
- women recently released from custody are 36 times more likely to commit suicide than the general population.
- only 40% of those remanded in custody go on to receive a custodial sentence.⁵

Participants identified the Gender Equality Duty and Equality Impact Assessments as useful tools which can support agencies when making decisions impacting on women offenders including in relation to:

- commissioning services which are appropriate for women offenders;
- setting budgets which takes into account the different needs of women offenders, despite making up a small percentage of the offender population⁶; and,
- ensuring that the right services and support are available in prison for women for whom a custodial sentence is the most appropriate response to their offending.

⁵ *Prison statistics England and Wales 2002*

⁶ Gender budgeting is a powerful tool for assessing whether services are effective and equitable for male and female users. It traces the money that an organisation spends and finds out the respective extent to which men or women benefit from it. For more information go to www.equalityandhumanrights.com

Participants also emphasised that gender specific commissioning should take into account the diverse needs of women offenders, many of whom may experience additional barriers to accessing services. For example, the needs of foreign national women in prison were raised. Participants highlighted that many may experience language barriers and are victims of abuse, including trafficking and sexual violence. Similarly, older women offenders were identified as a group within the women's offender population who require services tailored to their needs. Commissioning which takes into account the diversity of women offenders can ensure that appropriate services are available for this segment of the women offender population.

“Today showed me that partnership working and the Gender Equality Duty underpins everything” – Leicester

“I enjoyed the Gender Equality Duty presentation, I can now better challenge my organisation and multi-agency processes around gender matters” – London

5.2 Success to date is as a result of partnership working

A common theme is the need for sectors to work together to reduce re-offending, given the wide range of issues facing women offenders.

Participants stressed:

- criminal justice agencies play a significant but not exclusive role in addressing community safety and social exclusion, and community service providers are best placed to meet the multiplicity of women offender's needs; and
- joint commissioning provides an opportunity to meet local and national targets, including Local Area Agreements (LAA's) and National Indicators; and
- partnership forums play a vital role in sharing good practice, resources and promoting dialogue and understanding between commissioners and providers.

Because women offenders tend to serve much shorter sentences in comparison to men offenders, “through the gate” services which support women offenders post-release were identified as an important aspect to ensuring rehabilitation. This is particularly important with respect to women offenders who are transferred numerous times between custodial settings,

and/or are repeat low level offenders with multiple needs. Signposting alone is not adequate to meet the needs of women offenders; advocacy is required at each point in the women offender's journey.

A recurring theme was the need for measurable outcomes for women offenders, reflecting their multiplicity of need, and which may require interface from a number of services to address. For example, the point was made about the high number of Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)⁷ cases of women offenders who are suffering high risk domestic violence and that outcomes are needed that include sustained employment, homelessness and safeguarding of children and young people. Delegates said that longer-term monitoring is required because the complex nature of a women offender's needs means that set-backs are common in the short-term. Also emphasised was the need for innovative commissioning in order to meet the needs of women offenders in rural areas. Often, this relies on strong partnership links and shared resources.

Feedback highlighted the need for service providers to collect qualitative and quantitative data as evidence of the value added by specialist services, including cross-cutting outcomes for women. It was emphasised however that data collection should not be too onerous or resource-heavy, and could for example utilise existing quality assurance frameworks. In addition, this data could be used to inform commissioning plans and ensure sustainability of specialist services.

"I gained practical reassurance about cross-agency working and benefits to service users" – Leeds

"Partnership working between voluntary and statutory agencies is the most efficient and cost-effective way to improve services for female offenders" – Newcastle

"Our group discussion highlighted that it is essential to adopt a joined-up approach to supporting female offenders at the point of release. All too often the individual will relapse when left to their own devices to identify support networks" – Cambridge

⁷ A Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference is a forum where multiple agencies get together to provide a co-ordinated response for those at the highest risk of domestic abuse.

Good practice example: “Link Up Link In”

Public services are at their best when people work together. When they are joined up they can address all aspects of the challenges in the lives of the people they work with. Feedback from the event in Leicester highlighted the value of *Link Up Link In*⁸ a Government website designed to assist partnership working by providing examples of best practice case studies and useful guidance on collaboration and working with vulnerable client groups. *Link Up Link In* is part of the Government’s work around PSA 16, which aims to increase the numbers of vulnerable people who are in stable accommodation and employment.⁹ The website includes regional and local statistics on care leavers, mental health and disabilities and tips on how to develop local links.

5.3 It is essential that the health needs of women offenders are met.

Meeting the health needs of women offenders underpins all the other pathways, however, the feedback was that there is a shortage of services which meet the mental and physical health needs of women offenders, and access to existing mainstream services is poor.

Delegates emphasised:

- access to basic services (such as registering with a GP) is often “ad hoc” and undermines support strategies for women offenders; and
- more mental health training for frontline staff is required to ensure that women offenders are assessed at the earliest stage in the offender journey; and
- health commissioning must be gender specific and consider the wide range of women offender’s health needs.

Participants stressed the importance of commissioning mental health provision which is designed to meet the needs of women who have experienced sexual and domestic violence. This would include, for example, ensuring access to appropriate long-term counselling. Participants flagged the need to implement the *Improving Health, Supporting Justice* plan that

⁸ <http://www.hmg.gov.uk/linkuplinkin.aspx>

⁹ PSA 16 focuses on four groups of socially excluded adults: young people leaving care; offenders under probation supervision; people receiving secondary mental health care; and people with moderate to severe learning disabilities.

followed Lord Bradley's report¹⁰ with an emphasis on the distinct approach recommended by Baroness Corston.

"I learnt that we need to do more to commission health services that consider female offenders as women first, not just offenders. We need to work better together rather than in our organisational silos". – Cambridge

5.4 The judiciary needs clear information on community provision in their area.

The events were attended by a number of magistrates and other members of the judiciary. At several events delegates stressed:

- sentencers need to feel confident that there are robust alternatives in the community so that women are not remanded into custody or given short sentences by default; and
- the importance of service providers gathering qualitative and quantitative data as evidence of success; and
- pre-sentence reports play a vital role in informing sentencers by providing an accurate reflection of the individual's needs and the impact of prison on the offender and her children (including cost of prison versus community provision and detailed assessments); and
- more needs to be done to consider ways of minimising "up-tariffing", for example where the breach of community orders results in custodial sentencing.

Participants emphasised the need for clear information on what alternatives are available in the community and demonstrable evidence that services are effective in challenging re-offending, not simply a "soft option".

"I was encouraged by the innovative ideas and desire to drive through reforms" – Magistrate, Bristol

¹⁰ In December 2007 the Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice, Jack Straw, invited Lord Keith Bradley to lead an independent inquiry into diversion of offenders with mental health problems or learning disabilities away from prison into other more appropriate services. The Government's response was published in April 2009 <http://www.justice.gov.uk/publications/bradley-mental-health-cjs-gov-response.htm>

Good Practice Example: Problem-Solving Courts

Feedback at the Women in Focus events highlighted Problem-Solving Courts as an effective means of providing a more holistic approach to address the needs of women offenders. Problem-solving courts take a specialist approach in dealing with offenders with specific needs, from mental health, to drug abuse or domestic violence. They address the causes and consequences of offending, dealing with the underlying problems associated with criminal behaviour.

Building on a local model that had existed in Leeds since 2001, the original dedicated drug court pilots were launched at Leeds and West London Magistrates' Courts in December 2005. The pilot scheme was extended to four other courts in Barnsley, Cardiff, Salford and Bristol in April 2008, after an evaluation indicated they can have a positive impact on re-offending, court attendance and compliance by offenders.

Mental health courts form part of a Ministry of Justice programme designed to break the cycle of re-offending by putting in place a range of problem-solving courts and, in this instance, attend to the specific needs of those with mental health problems. The courts, which have been in operation since January 2009, also provide an early response to Lord Bradley's review of mental health services across the criminal justice system.

5.5 The value of early intervention

Feedback from a number of events was that prevention and early intervention are vital if we are to divert women from crime.

Participants stressed:

- the need to address women's offending at the earliest stage in the offender journey by providing gender specific provision which can address the root causes of offending; and
- more needs to be done to determine the best methods of engaging with young women and girls involved in low-level offending, many of whom have experienced domestic and sexual violence through affiliation with gangs; and
- early intervention work can play a key role in reducing the generational cycle of offending and impact on children.

Good Practice Example: Using the conditional caution scheme to divert women offenders from the criminal justice system

The use of the conditional caution scheme to refer low level, low risk women offenders to a women's centre such as a Together Women Project (TWP) centre or the Women's Community Projects funded by Ministry of Justice came out strongly at many of the events as a positive initiative.

Developed as part of the national conditional caution scheme in joint cooperation between the government, local police, prosecutors and women centres, they present a chance for diversion at an early stage. Pilots to test out this women's specific condition ran for six months from September 2008 in, Bradford, Leeds and Liverpool.

The condition attached to the caution commits the woman offender to attend a women's centre for a full needs assessment. A single appointment may be all that is needed to complete the assessment, although some women may need to attend follow-up sessions as advised by the centre. Sessions are up to eight hours in total. The completed assessment finalises the condition, however women offenders can continue to engage with the centres on a voluntary basis providing them with an opportunity to address the causes of their offending.

The pilots have been evaluated and initial findings are promising. The full evaluation report is due to be published in Spring 2010.

“Building confidence and self-esteem [of the women] is key. Time and trust is needed not a tick-box, one-size-fits-all approach. It is not possible to tackle issues like domestic violence and alcohol/substance misuse in isolation”
– Newcastle

“We need to ensure that all needs are assessed and addressed at the first point of contact including benefits, mental health and housing” – Birmingham

6. Next steps:

Directors of Offender Management (DOMs) working with partners will now use this report to inform their joint commissioning and partnership plans to ensure appropriate attention is given to the different needs of women.

They will:

- Ensure that reducing re-offending partnership plans include a focus on the particular needs of women offenders and that specific commitments are set out in forthcoming commissioning plans; and
- Assess and identify, within those plans provision needed for specific groups of women offenders, such as black and minority ethnic, older or disabled women; and
- Provide the judiciary with clear information on provision available locally that will tackle the root causes of women's offending; and
- Promote measures to assess the impact of work to divert women away from crime, to address their specific needs and identify what needs to be done to ensure sustainability; and
- Ensure that the needs of women, including health needs, are integrated into regional joint commissioning and co-commissioning plans.

Annex A: Women in Focus schedule of events

The series of Women in Focus events were held from 25 September 2009 to 29 January 2010 in 9 England regions (Birmingham, Leeds, Liverpool, Leicester, Newcastle, Bristol, Cambridge, London, Brighton) and 1 in Wales (Cardiff).

| | AREA | LOCATION OF EVENT | DATE |
|----|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 | West Midlands | Birmingham | 25 September 2009 |
| 2 | Yorkshire and the Humber | Leeds | 2 October 2009 |
| 3 | North West | Liverpool | 9 October 2009 |
| 4 | East Midlands | Leicester | 23 October 2009 |
| 5 | North East | Newcastle | 30 October 2009 |
| 6 | South West | Bristol | 6 November 2009 |
| 7 | East of England | Cambridge | 13 November 2009 |
| 8 | London | London | 26 November 2009 |
| 9 | South East | Brighton | 13 January 2010 |
| 10 | Wales | Cardiff | 29 January 2010 |

Annex B: Women in Focus speakers

WOMEN IN FOCUS SPEAKERS

Birmingham: Marie Eagle MP, Christine Mann (Chair), Gill Mortlock (West Midlands DOM), Joy Doal and Sue Hanley (Anawim), Maureen Connelly (Chair, Birmingham DV Forum), Juliet Lyon (Prison Reform Trust), Helen Turner (CJWSU), Gary Holland (Offender Health), Adele Baumgardt (Gender Equality Consultant), Workshops: Carlene Firmin (ROTA), Ruth Rigby (DCLG), Rachel Halford (Women in Prison).

Leeds: Christine Mann (Chair), Frances Flaxington (CJWSU), Janet Thornton (NOMS), Adele Baumgardt (Gender Equality consultant), Rokaiya Khan (Together Women Project), Phillipa Tibbetts (West Yorkshire Probation), Eleonor Phillips (Health), Maxine Myatt (Probation), Peter Sandiford (After Adoption), Clare Jones (Women's Centre Calderdale and Kirklees), Susan Field (Askham Grange).

Liverpool: Maria Eagle MP, Christine Mann (Chair), Patrick Connelly (NOMS), Catherine May (EHRC), Ursula Doyle (CPS), John Quick (Probation), Debbie O'Brien (Salford Foundation), Helen Turner (CJWSU), Clare McGregor (Offender Health), Cath Norman (Revolving Doors Project).

Bristol: Christine Mann (Chair), Colin Allars (South West DOM), Helen Turner (CJWSU), Sharon Smees (Fawcett Society), Adele Baumgardt (Gender Equality Consultant), Ruth Power and Sarah Smith (Eden House), Richard Tamlyn (Revolving Doors), Helen Bell (Women's Worker Pilot), Juliet Lyon (Prison Reform Trust).

Leicester: Christine Mann (Chair), Linda Jones (NOMS), Kate Carty (CPS), Penny Cram (Hafal), Gareth Twose (After Adoption), Ann Jackson, Adele Baumgardt (Gender Equality Consultant).

Newcastle: Vera Baird QC MP, Christine Mann (Chair), Mike Kirby (NOMS), Adele Baumgardt (Gender Equality Consultant), Susan Metcalf (Co Durham DAAT), Open Clasp Theatre Company, Debbie Flounders (Tyneside Cyrenians), Rowena Russell, Sue Taylor (Balance), Laura Wade (POAL Project).

WOMEN IN FOCUS SPEAKERS *(continued)*

Cambridge: Christine Mann (Chair), Frances Flaxington (CJWSU), Trevor Williams (DOM), Peter Sandiford (After Adoption), Dr. Loraine Gelsthorpe (Institute of Criminology), Jo Fitzpatrick (The Dawn Project), Adele Baumgardt (Gender Equality Consultant), Sharon Smees (Fawcett Society), Dawn Brooks, Juliet Lyon (Prison Reform Trust).

London: Maria Eagle MP, Christine Mann (Chair), Roma Hooper (Chair, Griffins Society Trustee), Jackie Lowthian (NACRO, and Griffins Society Trustee), Trevor Williams, Adele Baumgardt, Theresa May MP, Wendy Cranmer (Griffins Society, Stella Lanning (Peterborough Women's Centre), Workshops: Pip Tibbetts, Rokaiya Khan, Suzanne Sibillin, Natalie Vellinor, Jenny Roberts, Sarah Salmon, Sasa Simek, Sophie Kershaw, Kieron Daniels, Norma Hoyte, Neenaq Samota, Sarah Cottom, Sarah Bambridge, Sue Matthews, Cath Smith.

Brighton: Christine Mann (Chair), Frances Flaxington (CJWST), Roger Hill (DOM), Gerry Marshall (Probation Chief, Thames Valley, Mary Munday (Offender Health).

Cardiff: Maria Eagle MP, Christine Mann (Chair), Yvonne Thomas (DOM), Juliet Lyon (Prison Reform Trust), Dr Alison Parken, Barbara Natasegara (Safer Wales), Sue Norman (Women's Turnaround Project), Penny Cram (Hafal), Mike Hardy (DIP), June Milligan (WAG), Gill Hurley (Going Home Project), Isabelle Moran (Hafan), Gemma Fox and Sheila Dance (Women's Focus Group).

London Workshops:

Delegates at the London event had the opportunity to attend two workshops from the following options:

| | |
|----|--|
| 1. | <p>'A Two Way Process' – women offenders, personality, power and partnerships. This session will explore how voluntary sector and statutory partnerships in the Bradford district work effectively with women offenders.</p> <p>Pip Tibbets (West Yorkshire Probation Service)</p> |
| 2. | <p>The work of the CARE Project (Choices, Action, Responses, Education) Programme at HMP Downview: a Women in Prison project.</p> |
| 3. | <p>The work of Asha and the benefits of generic centres: needs, normalisation, identity. The Asha Women's Centre takes referrals of women from a wide range of statutory and voluntary organisations, and this is arguably one of its most important features in providing effective services to women offenders.</p> <p>Jenny Roberts, Manager, Asha Women's Centre</p> |
| 4. | <p>'The Hidden Sentence': Women offenders and their children.</p> <p>Sarah Salmon, Assistant Director, APF</p> |
| 5. | <p>Tackling substance misuse before it splits up families: the work of Camden Family Drug and Alcohol Court.</p> <p>Sophie Kershaw, Portman NHS Trust</p> |
| 6. | <p>Making local partnerships effective in working with Black and minority ethnic women.</p> <p>Norma Hoyte, Chief Executive, PLIAS Resettlement</p> |
| 7. | <p>How we can work to meet the needs of women prisoners who are survivors of abuse: the work of Bradford Rape Crisis at HMP New Hall.</p> <p>Sarah Cotton and Sarah Bambridge, Bradford Rape Crisis</p> |
| 8. | <p>How gender-specific programmes successfully work with girls and young women and achieve their compliance with community interventions.</p> <p>Sue Matthews and Cath Smith, Nottinghamshire YOT</p> |

Annex C: Top issues

Top 3 issues at each event:

West Midlands (Birmingham):

- Gender specific commissioning is vital to ensure the needs of women offenders are met in the community.
- Accurate data collection is necessary as a measure of success.
- Mapping of existing resources, and a directory of community services would support joint working.

Yorkshire and the Humber (Leeds):

- Conditional Cautioning for women should be readily used as a means of diverting women from prison.
- Partnership working and local champions are key to success.
- Service user feedback should be utilised to support gender specific commissioning.

North West (Liverpool):

- Communication with the judiciary about the availability of robust community-based alternatives to prison is key.
- The Gender Equality Duty should be utilised effectively to support the commissioning of specialist services for women.
- A co-ordinated partnership approach is necessary to ensure a seamless provision of services between prison and the community.

South West (Bristol):

- The diverse needs of women offenders must be met, particularly in relation to BME women, older women and women subject to trafficking and abuse.
- Early prevention and intervention are key to diverting women from crime.
- Multi-disciplinary partnerships are crucial to address the complexity of female offender's needs.

East Midlands (Leicester)

- The health needs of women offenders must be met both in prison and the community.
- Sharing of good practice and partnership working is the most effective means of meeting the needs of female offenders.
- Gender specific commissioning of specialist services underpins a long term strategy to divert women from crime.

North East (Newcastle)

- Early intervention and work with young women is essential to address social exclusion and the root causes of offending.
- Women offenders need a consistent approach in order to address their complex needs, this requires access to services both in prison and upon release.
- Communication with sentencers on suitable community services is essential.

East of England (Cambridge)

- Gender specific commissioning must be embedded locally.
- Sentencers need to be kept informed of local service provision.
- The mapping of services and sharing of good practice will support partnership working.

London

- The Gender Equality Duty is crucial to support cost-effective commissioning.
- Specialist community services play a vital role in diverting women from prison.
- Early intervention and support is crucial.

South East (Brighton)

- There is a need to focus on measurable outcomes for women offenders which reflects their multiplicity of need.
- Data collection (qualitative and quantitative) by service providers provides evidence of success.
- Early intervention work plays a key role in reducing the generational cycle of offending and impact on children.

Wales (Cardiff)

- It is essential to inform and engage with the judiciary.
- Gender specific commissioning for women utilising service user feedback is vital.
- Support for women offenders must address their complex needs (e.g. domestic violence, employment, substance misuse).

Annex D: Evaluation Form

What do you think?

Please spend a few moments giving us your honest views on the event and your ideas for future events.

Women in the criminal Justice System

WOMEN IN FOCUS – Brighton 13th January 2010

Poor ←————→ Excellence

| How do you rate the following aspects of the event? | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Relevance of content | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Speakers | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Venue | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Timing | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Event organisation | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Any further comments? | | | | | |
| Overall rating | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Poor ←————→ Excellence

| How did you rate the following presentations? | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Keynote Speech | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Roger Hill's presentation | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Understanding the Gender Equality Duty | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Meeting the Health Needs of Women Offenders | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Women in Prison | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Local Good Practice 1: Partnership Working – Gerry Marshall | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Local Good Practice 2: Partnership Working – Ray Morgan | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Local Good Practice: Bronzefield Prison | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Meeting the Needs of Women in the Criminal Justice System | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

P.T.O

What three things did you like best about the event

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What could we improve for future events?


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Any other comments?

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How did you hear about the event?

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