

Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Cydraddoldeb a Chyfiawnder Cymdeithasol](#) ar [Profiadau menywod yn y system cyfiawnder troseddol](#)

This response was submitted to the [Equality and Social Justice Committee](#) consultation on [Women's experiences in the criminal justice system](#)

WECJS 15

Ymateb gan: Iechyd Cyhoeddus Cymru | Response from: Public Health Wales



Public Health Wales Response to Senedd Equality and Social Justice Committee

Consultation - Experiences of the criminal justice system: women's experiences in the criminal justice system

1. Name:

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2. Email address:

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3. In what capacity you are responding to this consultation?

Individual responding on behalf of an organisation

Please find our response to the consultation under each of the headings set out in the Terms of Reference.

4. The progress being made, if any, by the Welsh Government in realising its ambitions for the transformation of services for female offenders including implementation of the Female Offending Blueprint;

4.1 Public Health Wales has been involved in the development of the Female Offending Blueprint, in a number of ways since its inception. We are very pleased to note that the name of the Blueprint was changed to the Women's Justice Blueprint reflect the more positive language we collectively use in Wales regarding women who offend, and recognising that offending is often linked to structural inequality and adversity and trauma in their lives. The change in name also reflects our values around strengths based approaches that are inclusive and trauma informed. Our involvement with the Blueprint has included providing workshops and advice at the first Female Blueprint Summit in 2019 on the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences and trauma informed support for women, as well as ongoing research and evaluation support, including for the last two years overseeing a specific research officer for the Women in Justice Blueprint, who in the last 12 months has been hosted by Public Health Wales.

4.2 The Programme Director for Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), Criminal Justice and Violence Prevention has had a lead role in the Research and Evaluation Work strand of the Women in Justice and Youth Justice Blueprints. The Programme Director also attends the Programme Board and provides additional support from her previous expertise in leading on Violence Against Women and Girls in the Home Office and as policy lead for Violent Crime. In the Research and Evaluation Work stream we can confidently report that there has been considerable progress; in particular with the completion of the two major externally funded reports that support both Blueprints: The Cordis Bright Evaluation of Women's Pathfinder and 18-25 Early Intervention Service, and the ORS Blueprint Evaluability Assessment. Both documents are already informing the future work of the Blueprints.

4.3 This year our ACE Support Hub Wales, funded by Welsh Government and hosted by Public Health Wales since 2017, published a co-produced National Trauma Practice Framework for Wales. For more information on this please see www.traumaframeworkcymru.com. The work developed by the Women's Justice Blueprint in developing a psychological model of support for women, which is now informing the pilot of gender sensitive and trauma-informed training for HMPPS and partners. The

ACE Hub Wales is currently evaluating this training to support wider roll out across Wales. We are also pleased to see other products that align to the principles of the Trauma Practice Framework including the development of an engagement model to inform the approach of engaging women with experience in the blueprint development, particularly from racially minoritised communities. A language and terminology guide clarifying what language we use and why, is a ground breaking document that should be replicated across public service in Wales in line with the Welsh Government anti-racism plan. And we are pleased to see plans to evaluate the 'Visiting Mums' service which will support Welsh mothers to maintain positive relationships with their children throughout their prison sentence. The Visiting Mum project is jointly funded by Welsh Government and HM Prison and Probation Service.

4.4 The ACE Hub Wales is currently finalising an important piece of research, funded by the Welsh Government Children and Families' Division on the experience of ACEs of women who are on the cusp of the criminal justice system. This work has engaged directly with women to identify what their experiences were before and during early engagement with the CJS, and what opportunities there are for prevention. It is currently informing work across all the work streams, but particularly the Early Intervention and Prevention Work stream.

4.5 There is still more to do, and Public Health Wales remains committed to our involvement in the Women's Justice, Youth Offending and developing Violence Against Women Blueprints with opportunities to further align the work we do in the ACE Hub Wales and in the Violence Prevention Unit, which will provide further opportunities to develop the evidence base and a trauma-informed, public health approach to supporting Women in Justice in Wales. As well as of course the provision of expert advice and support on health protection, mental health and wellbeing, substance misuse and behavioural insights, and wider contributions on health equality, the wider determinants of health. We also support learning from the international space through our connections from the World Health Organisation (WHO) Collaborating Centre with WHO in Europe and globally and continue to showcase this work in Wales at the international conferences and events around Law Enforcement and Public Health (LEPH).

5. The evidence for the development of Women's Rehabilitation Centres and arguments for reducing custodial sentences for women in Wales, including views on the Women's Centre that will open in Swansea;

5.1 Public Health Wales has supported the approach and arguments put forward for reducing custodial sentences for women in Wales and the need for the development of Women's Rehabilitation Centres (WRCs) as an alternative to custodial sentences in appropriate cases. We support the plans to develop the Women's Centre in Swansea and appreciate the sensitivity around finding a suitable venue and engaging the local partners and community in doing so. We welcome the opportunity for Women in Wales to stay in Wales, remain closer to family, children and their communities, particularly if they are Welsh language speakers.

5.2 In particular, our Health Protection Team is keen that the provision of health services for women in RCs in Wales improves the current provision for women in prison in England. Women in WRCs in Wales should be informed and able to access testing, abortion care and contraception (all options) in the same way they would be able to in the wider community. Other areas to consider would be period dignity and menopause. We would regard it as a missed opportunity if there isn't lessons

learnt applied to the planning for the centre in Swansea from the experience of accessing these services in particular in Wales. Likewise we hope that the publication of the National Trauma Practice Framework will support the development of the Swansea WRC as trauma informed from the start, building in relevant training, expertise and support for the women depending on their needs and taking into account the principles of the framework.

6. The availability of appropriate custodial provision and support for different groups of women including girls under the age of 18, disabled women, those with mental health problems, women from ethnic minorities, those who have experienced sexual violence or domestic abuse, women with alcohol or drug problems and Welsh speaking women.

6.1 Public Health Wales is involved in a number of work strands and programmes that are seeking to address the needs of women from these different groups; but some are outside of the Women in Justice Blueprint. For example, under the Criminal Justice in Wales work Jo Hopkins leads the Early Intervention and Prevention work strand that is prioritising work on Brain Injury and women in the CJS, which directly links to all of the above given that we know Brain Injury sufferance by women in Justice is often as a result of violence against women. There is also extensive work that can be drawn on from team in the Violence Prevention Unit, including What Works to Prevent Violence Against Women Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence ; A systematic Evidence Review published in 2021 https://www.violencepreventionwales.co.uk/cms-assets/research/What-Works-to-Prevent-Violence-against-Women-Domestic-Abuse-and-Sexual-Violence-Systematic-Evidence-Assessment_2021-09-20-124755_aypz.pdf

6.2 There are also extensive links to be made with our ACE Hub Wales work substance misuse and mental health services in Wales to develop a trauma informed substance misuse sector, and opportunities to develop further our work on racial trauma through the recently launch Wales anti-racism plan for the CJS As stated above we hope that lessons will be learned from the implementation of custodial provision and support in England to ensure that women in Wales have access to the services they need. We look forward to being part of the partnership arrangements to support this going forward through the implementation of the Women in Justice Blueprint and the forthcoming Violence against Women Blueprint which will be critical is ensuring join up and systematisation of support and provision for Women in Wales who are in the WRC and in the custodial arrangements in England. We also continue our involvement in the Welsh Government Prison Health and Social Care oversight group and provide important contributions on how the triple challenge of Brexit, COVID -19 and Climate Change and the Cost of Living impact on Women in Welsh communities, on the cusp of the CJS as well as services available to them both in those communities in the WRC and in the wider custodial settings.