



HM Prison &
Probation Service

Probation
Service



South Central



The journey of women in the CJS

Exploitation focus

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Preventing victims by changing lives



- ❖ Women in the CJS – background
- ❖ Women in Thames Valley & West Berkshire
 - ❖ Spotlight -The sex industry & approach
 - ❖ A profile
 - ❖ Probation Practitioner reflections
 - ❖ Q & A and reflections



Background and Policy

It has taken time for a system that works predominantly with men to acknowledge the evidence that women have different needs that require a gendered response.

The Corston report (2007) stressed that the underlying reasons why men and women offend and their responses to interventions and rehabilitation differed. It therefore suggested a different approach was needed to achieve equality of outcomes for women.

The Female Offender Strategy (2018)

Farmer Review (2019)

Concordat on women in or at risk of contact with the Criminal Justice system (2021)

The Female Offender Strategy Delivery Plan (2023)

The Female Offender Strategy Delivery Plan – ‘one year on’ progress report (2024)

The Female Offender Strategy (June 2018) states:

“If we are to rehabilitate female offenders successfully and reduce reoffending, our workforce must understand the factors that drive women’s offending behaviour, and the greater likelihood that gender-informed interventions will be effective.”

Useful Statistics

It is estimated that nearly 60% of women who offend have experienced domestic abuse. The true figure is likely to be much higher.

72% of female prison receptions in 2022 were for non-violent crimes

70% of sentences started in 2022 were for less than 12 months compared to 54% for men

An estimated 17,000 children are affected by maternal imprisonment each year.

Women tend to commit less serious offences than men and are more likely to be serving a short prison sentence.

In 2019 33% of women remanded into prison by the magistrates' courts, and 40% remanded by the Crown Court, did not go on to receive a custodial sentence

Gendered pathways

Patterns of offending

Women are more likely to commit acquisitive crimes and less likely to commit serious and violent offences

Social and economic context

Women are more likely to experience poverty and be primary carers of dependent children; many women are victims of domestic violence or sexual abuse, and their offending is more likely than men's to be linked to their relationships

Patterns of substance use

Women in prison report higher rates of opiate use (e.g. heroin and crack cocaine) and use of (legally or illegally obtained) prescription drugs

Health inequalities

Women have higher rates of self-harm, eating disorders, depression and anxiety. They are more likely to have symptoms associated with post-traumatic stress disorder and are more likely than men to have a mental illness

The impact of human trafficking

Women are vulnerable both to sexual exploitation and to coercion into criminal activity

Women are more likely to:

Be remanded

Be recalled

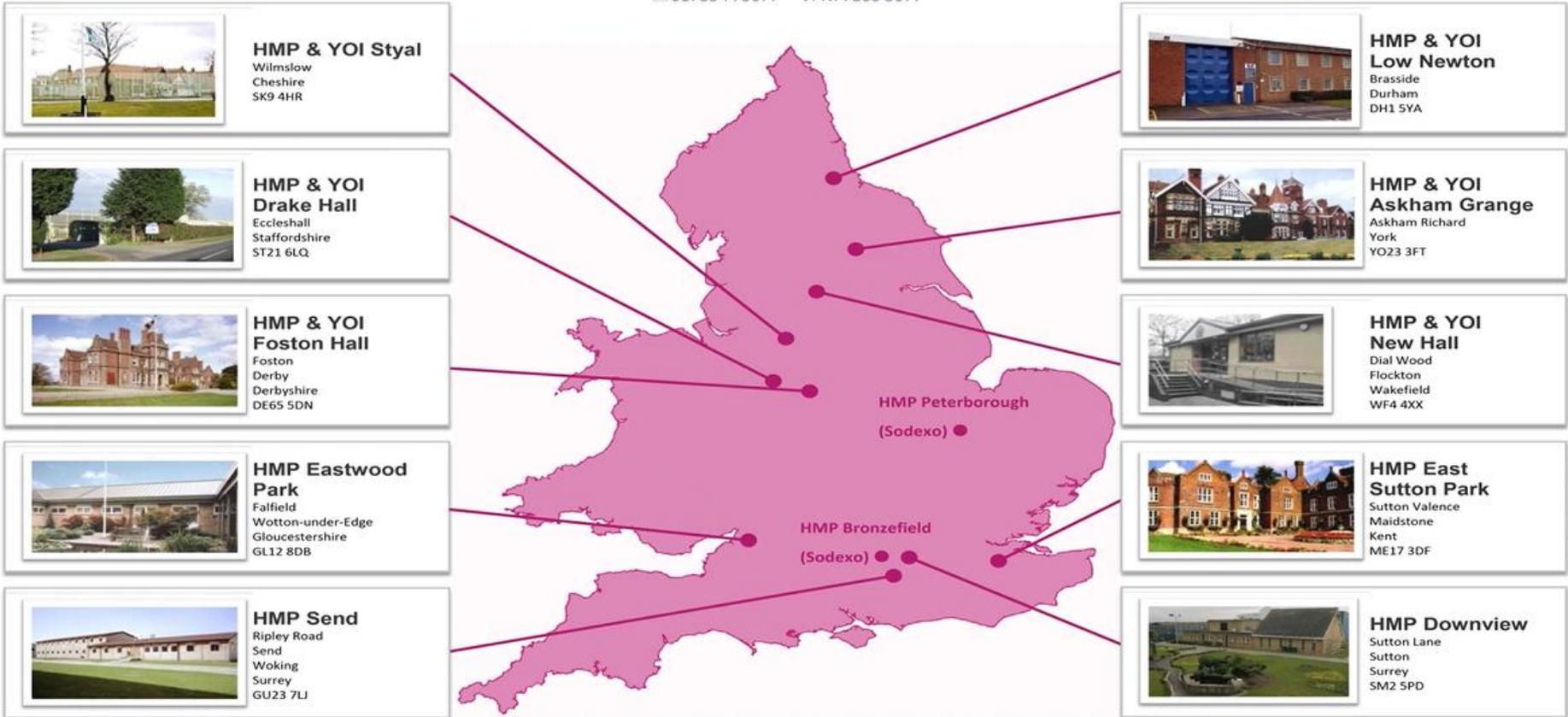
Have poorer outcomes on release

Struggle to secure employment

Women in Prison

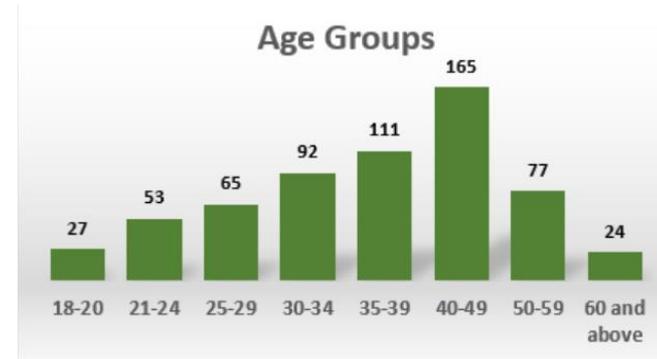
Prison Location	Women
Bronzefield (HMP)	3
Downview (HMP)	7
East Sutton Park (HMP & YOI)	1
Eastwood Park (HMP)	1
Foston Hall (HMP & YOI)	1
Send (HMP)	3
Unlawfully at Large	1
Total	17

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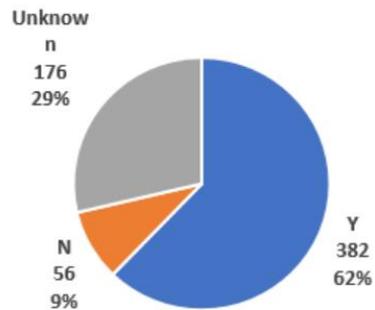


The profile of women in Thames Valley

687 women are subject to supervision



Disabled

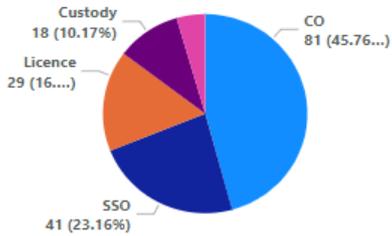




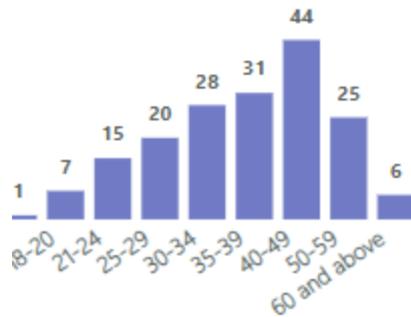
174 women West Berks



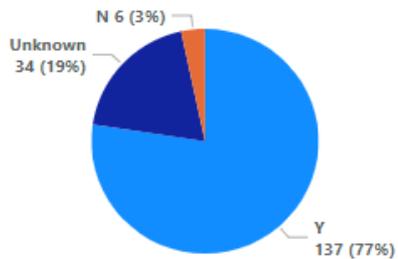
Sentence type



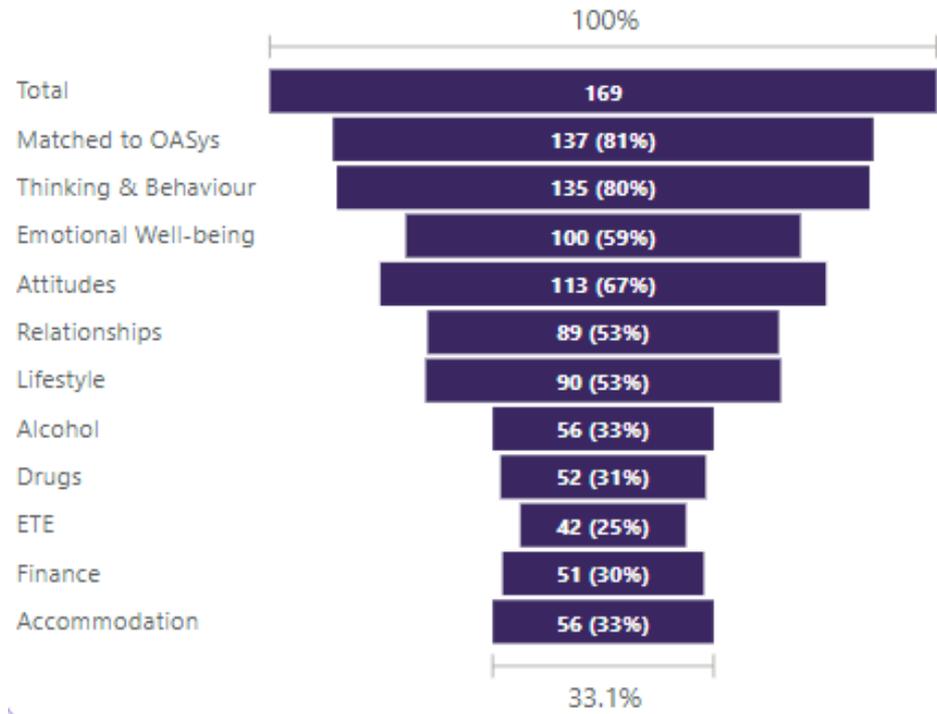
Age Group



Has Disability?



Criminogenic Needs



Women and exploitation



There is a complex interplay between vulnerability and offending

The most common pathways to crime are based on survival (of abuse and poverty) and substance abuse “ (Bloom, Owen & Covington, 2003)

The nature and prevalence of sex work and sexual exploitation in the UK

People working in the sex industry face enhanced risks including physical or sexual violence (Church *et al.*, 2001; Shannon *et al.*, 2009; Cunningham *et al.*, 2018), psychological harm and mental health risks (Hester *et al.*, 2019), stigma and isolation (Sanders, 2004; Benoit *et al.*, 2018), and vulnerability to exploitation (Wagenaar and Altink, 2012; Hester *et al.*, 2019). Many also experience financial, housing and/or drug and alcohol misuse issues (Sagar *et al.*, 2014; Hester *et al.*, 2019). As such, people selling various types of sexual services in various settings may require a range of different types of support.

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Cost of living: The women doing sex work to make ends meet

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Sexual exploitation

Sexual exploitation means any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially, or politically from the sexual exploitation of another. It includes but is not limited to exchanging money, employment, goods or services for sex. This includes transactional sex regardless of the legal status of sex work in the country. It also includes any situation where sex is coerced or demanded by withholding or threatening to withhold goods or services or by blackmailing.

We define survival sex as 'selling or exchanging sex for food, shelter, drugs or alcohol, to pay bills or safety'. It is when someone feels that selling sex is their only option to ensure they can meet their and/or their family's basic needs.

A conversation with DCI Ben Henley Thames Valley Police



Microsoft Teams

Helen/Ben - conversation about TVP approach to sex workers with a view t...

2024-11-18 15:13 UTC

Recorded by
Morris, Helen

Organized by
Morris, Helen

Sex Worker Action Groups (SWAG's)

1. To ensure sex working is being addressed in line with Government guidelines.
 2. Identify new and emerging issues to develop an appropriate response.
 3. Provide a multi-agency response sex working.
 4. To jointly construct exit routes through professional support for sex workers and families to reduce risk of harm.
 5. To reduce harm to the sex worker and wider community including:
 - health
 - physical harm
 - risks
 - anti-social behaviour
- Increasing access to services and identifying gaps in services.
- Empower the sex worker to seek support by:
- Building capacity within the services
 - Increase the continuity of services
 - Assist and support the exit from sex working
1. Hold an emergency meeting if a particular individual is at immediate significant risk of harm.

A Women's profile

- Age 34**
- History of shoplifting to support substance misuse, often with a male associate.**
- First convicted aged 20**
- Reports as pressure from a partner to sell substances. He is also known to Probation.**
- There are concerns that her partner is controlling. She has a history of abusive relationships.**
- History of homelessness**
- Has a daughter aged 8, in the care of a relative that she sees in stable periods of her life.**
- Intelligence shared by agencies suggests that she engages in survival sex to support her and her partners substance misuse. She has not disclosed this.**
- Diagnosis of anxiety and depression (sporadic medication)**
- Engagement is varied, but when she does, she presents with a motivation to address her substance misuse.**

A gendered approach

“Empowering women to achieve change”

Specialist women’s Team

Gendered Interventions

Being trauma informed and responsive

One Woman
One Plan

Women’s Services

Whole System Approach

Court engagement

Protect the public and support victims

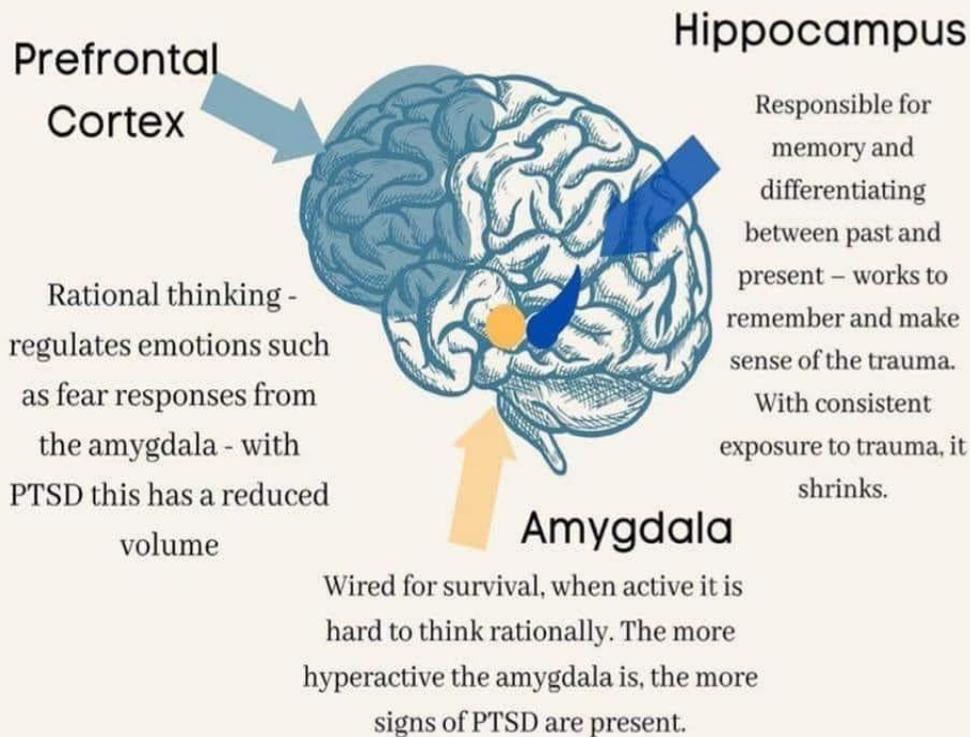
Innovative, holistic and empathic Probation Practitioner case co-ordination for women

Preventing victims by changing lives



Being Trauma Informed

HOW TRAUMA AFFECTS THE BRAIN



@PSYCHOTHERAPY.CENTRAL

Being 'Trauma Informed' means being able to recognise when someone may be affected by trauma, collaboratively adjusting how we work to take this into account and responding in a way that supports recovery, does no harm and recognises and supports people's resilience.

Working with women.....

A conversation with Mairead O'Hanlon – Probation Officer



The impact of a women's centre approach and somewhere like Alana House.....

A place of safety

1 to 1 tailored support

Access to multiple
services



Whole System
Approach

Partnership with
Probation

Trauma informed

[Alana House | Women's community project
in Reading \(Subtitled\)](#)

Further Reading

[Female Offender Strategy - GOV.UK](#)

[concordat-progress-report.pdf](#)

[Female Offender Strategy Delivery Plan 2022 to 2025 - GOV.UK](#)

[Criminal Exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: County Lines guidance](#)

[PowerPoint Presentation](#)

[UK charity working to end sexual exploitation | Beyond The Streets](#)



