

FEMALE OFFENDERS STRATEGY

Question from Prof Adrian James (May 2020)

My question is in relation to Agendum 11- the Force Performance Report against Police and Crime Plan 2017 - 2021 (Renewed 2019) - Protecting Vulnerable People.

In the report on Force Performance in relation to the protection of vulnerable people, there is no mention of female offenders as a group, many of whom are likely to be vulnerable according to the Female Offender Strategy report published by the MoJ in 2018. Based on this report, which was endorsed by both the NPCC and the APCC, the MoJ made a clear recommendation for "every Police area to consider implementing a process model which ensures officers take a gender-informed approach to all women with whom they come into contact, whether or not they are arrested. We would encourage the inclusion of this approach for vulnerable female offenders in the Police plan for every force, with the cultural and practical changes required led by senior officers. Such an approach would be a positive response to the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty and the need to advance equality of opportunity." (page 3, Managing Vulnerability: Women - Fact Pack, Ministry of Justice, 2018)

Whilst the South Yorkshire Police Force has taken a number of initiatives in relation to female offenders, would the Chief Constable explain why has such a clear recommendation from the MoJ not been implemented so far in South Yorkshire and indicate when such an approach will be included in the South Yorkshire Police plan?

Until the beginning of this year, the Force had neither a lead officer for female offenders nor a specific strategy. Superintendent Delphine Waring has now been appointed the Force Lead for Female Offenders and she will be developing the Force's on-going response.

At present, responsibility for female offenders is spread across several Superintendent portfolios: RJ and use of out of court disposals and alternatives to court – Superintendent Chapman; vulnerability lead and CJS/ Custody – Superintendent Verrall; and offender management – Superintendent Waring.

The MoJ Strategy for Female Offenders is being delivered locally with partners (Liaison & Diversion service; Community Rehabilitation Company; National Probation; courts, including sentencers, and prisons), but is dependent on available resources.