



South Yorkshire

POLICE & CRIME PANEL

Meeting Date	25 April 2022
Report of	The Police and Crime Commissioner
Subject	Female Offenders

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- To provide an update to the Panel of work that the Police and Crime Commissioner is maintaining oversight of in relation to Female Offenders within Southy Yorkshire.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

Members of the Police and Crime Panel are recommended to note the content of this report.

CONTENT

Background:

The Panel has periodically sought information from the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) about local progress in relation to the Female Offender strategy that was published by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) back in 2018.

The strategy set out Government's commitment to a new programme of work for female offenders, driven by three priorities:

- earlier intervention,
- an emphasis on community-based solutions, and
- an aim to make custody as effective and decent as possible for those women who do not have to be there.

The strategy acknowledged and recognised the importance of effective partnership working.

As the Panel will recall from previous reports, local progress has been impeded by Covid, probation reform, and the absence of any discrete funding to South Yorkshire to support local delivery of the ambitions set out in the Strategy.

Nevertheless, updates on the progress that was being achieved locally were provided to the MoJ in 2020 and 2021, details of which have previously been shared with the Panel. No progress update has been sought by the MoJ so far in 2022.

In January 2021, the MoJ published the Concordat on women in or at risk of contact with the Criminal justice System. The second section looked at improving outcomes at a local level, including through establishing a whole system approach to respond more collaboratively and effectively to the multiple and complex needs of women in or at risk of contact with the criminal justice system.

The Strategy also contained a commitment to publish a data tool to enable local areas to better understand the needs of the women in their area.

Main Report

1. Work to support local delivery of the ambitions contained in the strategy and the concordat have continued over the course of the last year, albeit within the delivery context outlined above.
2. In 2021/22, South Yorkshire Police committed to developing a Female Offender strategy. A first draft of such a strategy has been produced by the Force Lead and is currently being considered.
3. Upon unification of the Probation Service in June 2021, a Female Offender Commissioned Rehabilitative Service for South Yorkshire has been available, delivered by a local consortium of specialist female providers led by Changing Lives.
4. On behalf of the Local Criminal Justice Board, the countywide Rehabilitate and Reduce Reoffending steering group (RRRSG) have co-ordinated and progressed local partnership working in relation to females as follows:

- Engaged colleagues based in New Hall Prison as part of the Accelerator project who are now a part of the RRRSG
 - Forged links across the county in relation to the range of new services available as part of the Probation reforms with a particular focus on female offenders
 - Established arrangements for a Female Conditional Caution to be piloted in Doncaster during 2022/23
 - Scoped out support available for female offenders locally, and
 - Hosted an event focused on 'Women and girls in or at risk of entering the criminal justice system'.
5. This event took place to act as a catalyst for change. Details of the event and what has happened since follows below.

'Women and girls in or at risk of entering the criminal justice system'

6. On 9 February 2022, the PCC welcomed more than 60 delegates to an event that took place virtually.
7. The event was attended by individuals representing a broad range of organisations and services working within and across South Yorkshire. There were presentations from a range of services operating in the area, offering insight into the needs and support available for women and girls in or at risk of entering the Criminal Justice System (CJS), as well as input from other areas already adopting this approach. A copy of the event programme is attached to this report.
8. There was excellent engagement of participants throughout the event - real energy, passion and a collective will to make a difference. There was an overwhelming view that by coming together, many of the desired outcomes and ambitions could be achieved through increased connectivity, increased understanding of what is already available, and perhaps a willingness to be a bit flexible.
9. A key ingredient leading to successful co-ordination of a Whole System Approach in other areas, has been the establishment of a Steering Group to drive forward activity. At the RRRSG meeting that took place in March, it was agreed that establishment of such a group will take place to progress development of a South Yorkshire Whole System Approach during 2022/23.
10. Identification of a Chair and members of the group is now underway. Once in place, the intention is to develop a plan or blueprint that will set out
- some clear, shared objectives;
 - identify intended activity and plans to address any gaps in provision that need to be plugged;
 - baseline data as well as agree collection & provision of any key missing data;
 - articulate outcomes to be achieved; and
 - plan communications.
11. The MoJ introduced a Female Offender data tool last year, and at the request of staff in the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, the data contained within it has recently been refreshed. The intention is for that data to be used to help construct a

data dashboard specific to South Yorkshire to support the work of the proposed Steering group.

Appendix

A - Whole System Approach Event Programme

List of background documents		
Female Offender Strategy - MoJ - 2018		
The Concordat on Women in or at risk of contact with the Criminal Justice System - MoJ - 2021		
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