

“
...there is an urgent need for action
to reduce the number of women
reoffending and going to prison...
”

Commission on Women Offenders, 2012

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Increased use of prisons is the result
of using it for those who are troubled
and troubling rather than dangerous.
”

Scottish Prisons Commission

“
Without this project I would be
offending again. I would be in jail.
”

Service user, commenting on a community-based
justice programme

“
People expect it to be a man
[that's in prison]. It isn't right that
it's a woman. People were just nosy,
they weren't interested in us.
”

Girl, 19, with mother in prison

“
...[the service] has helped open
my eyes to what I am doing to
myself and others around me...
”

Service user, commenting on a community-based
justice programme

How to find out more

To find out more about how Community Justice Authorities and their partners are working to reduce reoffending amongst women, contact the CJAs National Support Manager by email:

CJANAT@glasgow.gov.uk

or by telephone:

0141 287 3806

For information about the Prison Reform Trust's programme to reduce women's imprisonment, or to sign up to our monthly e-newsletter, visit

www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/women



Scottish Working Group on Women's Offending

WOMEN IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM IN SCOTLAND THE FACTS



Women and the Justice System in Scotland

Over 150 women return to Scotland's communities each month from prison.

- In the last 10 years, the number of women convicted of a crime has gone up by 14%, but the number of women in custody has more than doubled.
- During the same time frame, the gravity of women's offending has stayed more or less the same — just 2% of offences committed by women involve violence.
- In 2000, women made up just 3.5% of Scotland's prison population; by 2010 this had risen to 5%.

Of the women remanded in custody in Scotland, only around 30% went on to receive a custodial sentence.

Reduce reoffending by women

- 43% of women leaving prison are reconvicted within 1 year.
- 8 out of 10 women given a prison sentence were sentenced to less than 6 months. Evidence suggests that short prison sentences offer little scope to provide rehabilitation and support. Reconviction following very short sentences is high.
- Statistics suggest that women on community based sentences are less likely to reoffend. Women-specific interventions have been shown to reduce reoffending by supporting women to tackle the underlying issues they face.

Increase and improve preventative measures

- Diversion from prosecution offers an early route out of the justice system for women, avoiding the cycle of custody and reoffending. Just 481 women were diverted from prosecution in 2011/12 and we are developing new ways to maximise the use of diversion.
- Many women continue to be remanded in custody when, with the right support, they could remain in the community. This can lead to loss of housing and breakdown of family relationships.

Make families a priority

- Each year around 27,000 children in Scotland are affected by their parents' imprisonment.
- Two thirds of women in prison have children, and almost 40% receive visits from their children.
- In the last 5 years, 19 babies have been born in prison in Scotland.
- Partners worked together to develop a new Family Help Hub at Cornton Vale to support the children and families visiting. The hub opened September 2013.
- Family-focused support and interventions are available in prison and to support women as they leave.

Tackle the root problems behind women's offending

- Almost all the women in prison in Scotland have a history of drug and alcohol use.
- Over 7 out of 10 women in prison report using drugs in the past year and around a third are on methadone.
- Around 42% of women in prison say that they were under the influence of alcohol when they committed their last offence.
- It has been estimated that as many 8 out of 10 women in prison face mental health problems.

Explore new ways to work together

- In 2011/12 over 1,400 women received Community Payback Orders — these new orders have replaced old community orders. They offer scope to link women to the help and support they need.
- A national Public Social Partnership, led by SACRO and the CJAs and funded via the Reducing Reoffending Change Fund, will support 720 women per year to tackle the problems they face and reduce reoffending.
- Following on from the recommendations of the Commission on Women Offenders, new centres for women offenders will be developed and tested in a number of locations across Scotland.