



# Women's Justice Blueprint Newsletter

**W**elcome to the second edition of the Women's Justice Blueprint newsletter. A lot has happened since we last communicated in July and we're excited to continue showcasing the ongoing developments of the women's agenda across Wales as well as give a flavour as to what is next for the Blueprint, as we enter the new year.

Since the last newsletter, the Women's Justice Blueprint team has continued to work closely with the new Violence Against Women Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) Blueprint, recognising that many women who come into contact with the criminal justice system have experienced abuse and/or violence. This joined-up approach is being supported through shared leadership roles across both Blueprints.

We have also been pleased to secure funding from Welsh Government to undertake a bespoke piece of research focused on exploring issues around race disparity amongst women who come into contact with the criminal justice system in Wales.

This research will help to provide evidence to support and inform delivery of the Welsh Government Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan and the Criminal Justice in Wales Anti-Racism Action Plan for Wales.

Our newsletter will keep you updated on the work of the Blueprint and wider Women in Justice work in Wales. We welcome your feedback and input, so please feel free to contact us with any reflections at [wales.womensblueprint@justice.gov.uk](mailto:wales.womensblueprint@justice.gov.uk)

## Emma Wools

South Wales Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner and Women's Justice Blueprint SRO

## Women's Justice Blueprint Event - Celebrating Progress and Sharing Learning

The Women's Justice Blueprint celebratory and learning event took place in Cardiff at the end of November.

Over 100 people from across Wales and the UK attended the day-long event, with presentations and input from a number of key Blueprint partners, including Welsh Government, HM Prison and Probation Service, the Police and Crime Commissioners and third sector partners including Safer Wales (representing the Future 4 Consortium), Pobl, Nelson Trust, North Wales Women's Centre and PACT Visiting Mum's Service, as well as representation from a number of women with lived experience of the justice system.



The event was an opportunity to reflect on and share learnings and emerging evidence from key Blueprint developments to-date, as well as gain some rich learnings from participants through a series of workshop sessions on themes such as health, accommodation and diversity, which will help shape the future work of the Blueprint.



# A belief in the possibility of change, and a commitment to never giving up - the keystones of the Nelson Trust's Women's Centres

The Blueprint is committed to strengthening community-based solutions for women in Wales, including support for increasing provision of women's centres and hubs. We're really pleased to be able to showcase the new Nelson's Trust women's centre, which is one of a number of women's centres and hubs across Wales.

The new Nelson Trust Women's Centre in Cardiff provides a lifeline for women who are facing multiple and complex needs – usually as a result of previous trauma and disadvantages such as homelessness, poverty, mental health issues, substance misuse, and domestic abuse.



The Women's Centre offers a wide range of services, ranging from practical help, advocacy, one-to-one counselling, group activities, and peer support. The Centre provides an I.T suite and a creche to remove the barriers women often face when accessing support. Like other women's centres in Wales, the Nelson's Trust centre also offers co-location opportunities for partner agencies so together, we can ensure that every door is the right door.

The team at the Centre were delighted to recently welcome Jane Hutt MS, Minister of Social Justice, and Lynne Neagle MS, Deputy Minister for Mental

Health and Wellbeing for a tour of the recent renovations. The Centre provides a welcoming, safe, and warm environment for the women and their children to come and access vital help and support when they need it.

For further information please contact Niki Gould – Director of Women's Community Services in Wales [niki@nelsontrust.com](mailto:niki@nelsontrust.com)

Future newsletters will shine spotlight on other community women's centres / hubs in Wales including the Safer Wales Women's Centre in Cardiff and the North Wales Women's Centre in Rhyl.

## How improved community sentences would better help women in the justice system

As part of the Blueprint's partnership work with women with lived experience of the justice system, we have created a series of videos to highlight real life stories and how the work of the Blueprint could improve the experiences of women in or at risk of entering the justice system.

Danielle John, a senior caseworker on the Communities programme at St Giles Trust in Cardiff, explains how she ended up in custody on a short-term prison sentence, and the difference a community sentence would have made to her rehabilitation. [Watch the video here.](#)



# Evaluation of the Whole System Approach in Gwent and South Wales

We are delighted to be able to share the findings from the Cordis Bright independent evaluation of the Women's Pathfinder Whole System Approach and 18–25 Early Intervention Service in South Wales and Gwent, which has confirmed the very positive impact of the service on the experiences of women involved in (or at risk of entering) the justice system.

Evidence from the evaluation points to successful engagement with women, providing them with positive experiences of support, improving how women engage with the justice system and other agencies and improving outcomes for those who have engaged.

The evaluation shows that as a result of engagement with the whole system approach service, women are also experiencing improvements in other areas of their lives such as the ability to engage with education, training and employment, improved relationships, better experiences for wider family members, positive changes to physical health, increased levels of safety and improvements in finances.

“ I feel like I can really talk to [caseworker] and she listens, she doesn't judge, she's very understanding. If I feel a bit depressed or not myself, I can text her and she'll be the spark I need to motivate myself. ”

“ [Caseworker] wrote me a letter for court and that really helped... she explained to them how remorseful I was and how much it was affecting me. It helped the people at court to understand my situation better. ”

“ [Caseworker] has given me a sense of pride and helped me to come along and be where I am now, where I never thought I'd be. I wouldn't do anything to jeopardise this. ”

“ The timing was a massive factor... [caseworker] reached out at just the right time. If I hadn't been given support in the cell that day, I would have lost all hope. ”





# Wales Safer Communities Network Launch

**In October, the Wales Safer Communities Network held an event at the Senedd to celebrate what's happening in Community Safety across Wales.**

Over 100 people from across Wales attended, and speeches from Jane Hutt MS, Minister for Social Justice, Rt Hon Alun Michael, Police and Crime Commissioner for South Wales and co-Chair of the Wales Safer Communities Board, as well as Policing, Fire and Rescue, Probation, Local Government, Third Sector and Health, showcased the good practice that is taking place across Wales within the community safety arena.

The Network's mission is to become the strategic voice for community safety in Wales, through working collaboratively

with members to champion and support community safety partnership working and influence the shaping and development of national policy and local practice.

The Network is overseen by the Wales Safer Communities Board, which aims to ensure effective shared leadership is provided to support local partnership working that promotes safe, strong, confident communities.

**To find out more about the Network visit [www.safercommunities.wales](http://www.safercommunities.wales) and follow @WalesSaferComms on Twitter for latest updates.**

You can also listen to the latest podcast episode which features Emma Wools, Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner for South Wales and SRO for the Women's Blueprint and Danielle John, St Giles Trust – [Safer Communities Podcast – Wales Safer Communities](#)



# New strategy aims to deliver step change for women in the justice system in North Wales

**A new strategy, launched in September 2022, aims to help address the causes of female offending in North Wales and to make a genuine difference to women's lives, reduce their involvement with the criminal justice system, and cut crime.**

Building on the foundations of the Women's Justice Blueprint for Wales and the work of existing organisations and partners across the region, the North Wales Women's Justice Strategy has been designed by the North Wales Women in Justice Delivery Group in line with North Wales Police and Crime Commissioner, Andy Dunbobbin's pledge to deliver better support and outcomes for women in their experience of the criminal justice system. The strategy is the first of its kind at a local level in Wales.

The new strategy will provide an opportunity for partners to come together to deliver services in a way that is responsive to the needs of the local population.

The Women's Justice Blueprint will continue to work alongside partners in North Wales to support delivery of this important area of work and hopes key learnings can be shared with other regions in Wales.

The North Wales Women's Justice Strategy can be accessed in full on the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner website [here](#).



## What are the key factors influencing women's pathways into offending?



**The ACE Hub has just launched a report which through the review of existing literature, has identified the key factors influencing women's pathways to offending and the primary prevention and early intervention opportunities to reduce women's offending risk.**

A number of themes, which impact women's pathways to offending, were identified; poverty and debt, ACEs, mental illness, domestic violence and sexual violence victimisation, substance use, brain injury, poor access to services, neurodiversity and race/ethnicity.

The report goes on to outline opportunities for, and potential approaches to, primary prevention and early intervention to mitigate each of these risk factors. Four case studies were also collected to highlight the experiences of

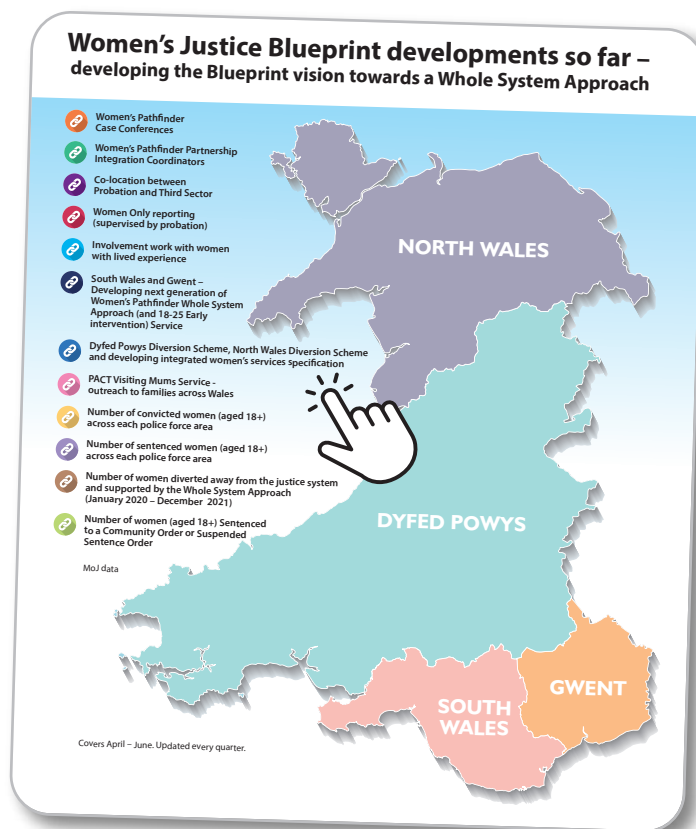
women who had offended in Wales and were diverted away from the criminal justice system to other support. Four key factors appeared to influence their offending; mental illness, substance use, bereavement and brain injury.

The findings in this study can be used as a resource to inform improvements to policy and practice which could prevent women from entering the criminal justice system.

# A visual explanation of the work of the Women's Justice Blueprint for Wales

A visual tool has been produced to provide an overview of the aims of the Blueprint, what has been achieved so far and the impact this has had on the women who have been supported.

This interactive tool aims to highlight the key elements of the Blueprint and the key achievements, as well as summarising what is coming up. The tool will be updated as the project progresses.



## Upcoming events and activity

**Gender-responsive practice and Trauma-informed skills practitioner training – dates for Q3 and Q4 for the have now been released.** This CPD Certified training which is being delivered on behalf of the Women's Justice Blueprint by Welsh

Women's Aid has been designed for all practitioners and organisations working with women who are in, or at risk of entering the Criminal Justice System in Wales. To book a place email: [training@welshomensaid.org.uk](mailto:training@welshomensaid.org.uk)

## What's next for the Women's Justice Blueprint?

Whilst significant positive progress has already been made by partners towards building a system that is able to recognise and respond to the distinct needs of women who are in (or at risk of entering) the criminal justice system in Wales, there is more we can do.

Over the coming months the Blueprint will be continuing to focus on areas, informed by feedback from the Blueprint event in November 2022, such as:

- Taking forward the whole system approach vision for women in Wales
- Focusing on primary prevention opportunities for women through the role of health, social services and other key partners

- Exploring and testing accommodation solutions for women
- Promoting and strengthening provision of community women's centres/hubs
- Creating a gender-informed workforce
- Continuing to build the Welsh evidence base in relation to the profile and needs of different cohorts of women who are in contact with (or at risk of entering) the justice system

The Women's Justice Blueprint is a whole system partnership initiative involving key statutory and third sector partners working together to deliver transformative services

For further information please contact: [wales.womensblueprint@justice.gov.uk](mailto:wales.womensblueprint@justice.gov.uk)

**The Blueprint is being delivered by a cross-sector multi-agency approach including statutory, non-statutory and third sector partners, with support from women with lived experience.**