



House of Commons
Committee of Public Accounts

Improving outcomes for women in the criminal justice system

Fifty-First Report of Session 2021–22

*Report, together with formal minutes relating
to the report*

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The Committee of Public Accounts

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Summary

The aims of the Ministry of Justice's (the Ministry's) 2018 Female Offender Strategy are widely supported but actual progress delivering the strategy since then has been disappointing. It is clear to us that implementing the strategy has been a relatively low priority for the Ministry and was so even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. We welcome the Ministry's renewed commitment to the strategy, but it needs to make substantial changes to its approach if it is to turn its aims into reality.

The Ministry's strategy emphasised the importance of maintaining and expanding community services for women, to tackle the causes of offending and so reduce the need for courts and prisons. Despite this emphasis, it has spent just £9.5 million on community services for women over four years. In comparison it has committed to spending £200 million on 500 additional prison places for women. The Ministry's recent funding settlement included £550 million over the next three years to reduce reoffending (by men and women). This money provides the Ministry with a clear opportunity to 'spend to save' in community services for women.

We are concerned that the Ministry did not design its female offender programme in a way which would allow it to be held to account. It has not set out how much change it is seeking to achieve or reported its progress clearly. In addition, its governance arrangements have been weak. We welcome that the Ministry is working to rectify some of these issues. However, currently it is still difficult for the Ministry to demonstrate the value of its work on female offenders as it does not yet have the data it needs and has not set out a monitoring and evaluation plan.

The successful implementation of the strategy relies on many organisations (such as the police, courts, probation, local authorities, voluntary organisations and the health service) working together to address the underlying causes of women's offending. In a few areas, local leadership, for example from police and crime commissioners, has led to effective co-operation between organisations to provide support and oversight to help women turn their lives around. This is, however, far from universal and the Ministry is not doing nearly enough to support the adoption of good practice more generally.

Introduction

The Ministry published its Female Offender Strategy in 2018 after many years of concern about the experience of women in the Criminal Justice System (CJS). Women in the CJS have a higher incidence of prior domestic abuse and mental health issues compared to men; their offences are generally less serious and present lower risk of serious harm to the public; they are more likely to be in custody for shorter periods (including the use of remand) with poor rehabilitation outcomes; and a self-harm rate nearly five times as high in women's prisons as in men's. The impact of women's imprisonment is greater on children as women are more likely to be their main carers.

The strategy's aims are to reduce the number of women entering the CJS by intervening earlier with support in the community; have fewer women in custody (especially serving short sentences) and a greater proportion of women managed in the community; and have better conditions for women in custody, including improving and maintaining family ties, reducing self-harm and providing better support on release. The Ministry set up its female offender programme (the programme) to oversee delivery of the commitments in the strategy. While the Ministry leads the programme, several other organisations across government also have a key role in implementing it.

Conclusions and recommendations

1. **The 2018 Female Offender Strategy was widely welcomed but progress since then has been limited and it is unclear how much of the additional money allocated to the Ministry will be spent on services for women.** The Ministry set up a programme to oversee implementation of the wide range of commitments in the strategy, but it did not prioritise investment in it even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Progress in improving community options or conditions in custody for women has therefore been limited. The Ministry has several major programmes underway, however women make up 4% of the prison population and 9% of those on probation so there is a risk they may not be a priority in future. The Ministry's funding settlement at the Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021 included £550 million (for 2022–23 to 2024–25) to reduce reoffending. The Ministry has not yet set out how much of this funding it will allocate to its female offender programme.

Recommendation: *The Ministry should publish how much of its resource and capital spending it has allocated to work on improving outcomes for women as soon as it has completed its budget allocations for 2022–23. It should include details of funding for this work for future years where available, and how it will filter down to funding community services.*

2. **Despite its emphasis on community provision in its strategy, the Ministry has not yet quantified how much funding is required or invested heavily in community services for women.** The Ministry has declined to set targets for its female offender programme. It says that doing so would be inappropriate as achieving its outcomes depends on decisions by independent bodies such as the judiciary. However, without setting out its own expectations of what can be achieved, the Ministry cannot assess how much it should spend on community services or ultimately how much can be saved from reductions in the numbers of women coming before the courts and being sent to prison. The Ministry spent £9.5 million between 2018–19 and 2021–22 on providing services in the community for women in, or at risk of being in contact with, the criminal justice system (CJS). This contrasts with the £200 million the Ministry has committed to spend on creating 500 additional prison places for women that it projects it will need due to increased police numbers. When it made this projection, the Ministry did not build in any expected reduction in numbers of women in court or being sent to prison as a result of improved community services.

Recommendation: *The Ministry should assess the level of funding required in the community. To do this, it should estimate and publish:*

- *the proportion of women that are currently arrested or prosecuted, and the proportion of women currently remanded or sentenced to prison, who could appropriately be supported in the community instead; and*
 - *how much it would cost to provide support for these women via women's services in the community.*
3. **Effective implementation of the strategy has been undermined by insufficient joined-up working.** Working across government is always challenging and the Ministry is reliant on many other bodies for the female offender programme to

be successful. For example, the NHS, several government departments, local authorities and the voluntary sector have key roles in providing treatment for mental health problems and addiction, support to escape domestic violence, housing advice, children's services and help finding employment. Such bodies need to work together to provide clear routes to the support individual women need to turn their lives around. The Ministry has taken a first step to build co-operation between government departments by negotiating a concordat with them, although this took two years longer than it had promised. There are good examples of bodies working together locally but several of these started doing so before the female offender programme. The Ministry says it recognises the importance of joined-up working locally, which it calls the 'whole-system approach', but it has not committed nearly enough to bringing this about. In fact, it has not spent anything on helping new areas to set up these types of approaches since some it provided some seed funding for 2017–19.

Recommendation: *The Ministry should set out how it plans to influence more joined-up working. It should write to the Committee alongside its Treasury Minute response with an assessment of any barriers to local areas implementing 'whole system approaches' and how it plans to work with other government departments and organisations to address these barriers.*

4. **The Ministry is taking some steps to address the needs of ethnic minorities in the CJS, but it recognises that it has not yet done enough to achieve equality of outcomes for ethnic minority women.** The Ministry's Female Offender Strategy included actions to tackle the overrepresentation of, and unique challenges facing, black and other ethnic minority women in the CJS but progress has been slow, and the Ministry acknowledges that it needs to do better. The Ministry accepts that it can learn from others and it is committed to addressing the concerns raised in a recent publication by providers of specialist services for ethnic minority women in the CJS. The Ministry recognises that there is also an issue in making sure that it funds services specifically for ethnic minority women. The small charities that work in this field find it difficult to compete with larger organisations, which can have whole teams dedicated to developing bids for grants and contracts. The Ministry has provided some funding to help smaller organisations prepare bids.

Recommendation: *The Ministry should work with specialist providers and experts to establish a set of actions it needs to take to deliver equality of outcomes for ethnic minority women. This should include its arrangements for supporting smaller specialist organisations that support them. It should publish the set of actions with a timetable so that Parliament, stakeholders and others can hold it to account. It should confirm in its response to this report a planned timescale for publishing this action plan.*

5. **It is not clear how Parliament, the public and other stakeholders can hold the Ministry to account for delivery of the strategy's commitments.** The Ministry's decision not to set targets affects not only its ability to make good funding decisions, (see conclusion 2 above), but also makes it difficult to hold the Ministry to account. This is compounded by the way the Ministry implemented the strategy. It did not set out clearly how the female offender programme's progress could be measured. Collecting data, or metrics as the Ministry refers to them, is not sufficient unless

it is clear how they relate to what the Ministry intends to achieve. The Ministry considered that the programme required light governance because of the limited funding available and its objective to influence others. This limited stakeholders' visibility of the programme's progress. The Ministry claims that it now has a list of 66 commitments from the strategy with an assessment of how much progress has been made on each. It also said that it is rearranging how it manages and oversees implementation of the strategy. One of the changes is that specialist providers of women's services will no longer be members of the minister-led board, which may reduce public scrutiny.

Recommendation: *The Ministry must clarify what it aims to deliver via the strategy and its progress to date. It should:*

- *publish forthwith the 66 commitments in the strategy that it has assessed the progress of using Red/Amber/Green ratings, with the details of the progress that underpin the ratings;*
- *write to the Committee alongside its Treasury Minute response setting out what it will achieve and by when in implementing the strategy over the next 3 years so it can be held to account; and*
- *write to us by the end of July 2022 setting out the new governance arrangements including how it will improve transparency for specialist providers, experts and other external stakeholders.*

6. **The Ministry does not yet know the effectiveness of its interventions, or whether it is achieving its aims. This limits its ability to identify and share best practice and to understand where it needs to invest to achieve its aims.** It is now almost four years since the Ministry published its Female Offender Strategy and it still does not have a plan for how it will monitor and evaluate the work it is doing to achieve its aims. The Ministry says it now recognises the importance of having the data it needs to understand progress towards its aims and measure the value of the work it is doing. But it is disappointing that it is still working on what its performance metrics will look like and does not have plans to evaluate all its interventions. It is important that it gets on with this work as it can take years to evaluate criminal justice interventions as it is often essential to track their effects on reoffending. In the shorter term, the Ministry recognises that there is a lot of good practice locally and that it now needs to work out how to share that and scale it up. The first step will be publication of the 'one-year-on' review of the concordat, which will include some examples of joined-up work.

Recommendation: *The Ministry should publish a monitoring and evaluation plan by September 2022. This should include the following:*

- *how it will work with other government departments to evaluate the main strategy commitments and build on the evidence of what works to aid funding decisions;*
- *the specific performance measures it will use to assess progress towards its aims. For example, how women are dealt with at various stages – before*

court proceedings are started, while they are progressing through the courts, and when they are sentenced; and whether they offend in future; and

- *how it will use performance measures, along with other qualitative methods to identify good practice in local areas and what it will do to support its adoption widely.*

1 Strategy progress

1. On the basis of a report by the Comptroller and Auditor General, we took evidence from the Ministry of Justice (the Ministry) and HM Prison & Probation Service (HMPPS) on improving outcomes for women in the criminal justice system.¹ We also took evidence from Women in Prison, the Howard League for Penal Reform; and Anawim—Birmingham’s Centre for Women.

2. The Ministry published its Female Offender Strategy in 2018 after many years of concern about the experience of women in the Criminal Justice System (CJS), set out most notably in the 2007 Corston Report. The strategy was based on a range of factors including a higher incidence of prior domestic abuse and mental health issues compared to men; women’s generally less serious offences and lower risk of serious harm to the public; the greater use of short periods of custody (including the use of remand) with poor rehabilitation outcomes; a self-harm rate that was nearly five times as high in women’s prisons as in men’s; and the greater impact of women’s imprisonment on children as women are more likely to be their main carers.²

3. Women made up approximately 4% of those in custody in 2019–20, (with an average daily population of 3,426) but twice this number of women (6,852) were received into prison either on remand or to serve a sentence over the same period. Nine per cent (21,892) of those on probation were women (at the end of September 2021).³ Women in Prison told us that, in its opinion, women’s specific needs are often overlooked, because they constitute only a small percentage of offenders.⁴

4. The aims of the Ministry’s Female Offender Strategy are to: reduce the number of women entering the CJS by intervening earlier with support in the community; have fewer women in custody (especially serving short sentences) and a greater proportion of women managed in the community; and have better conditions for women in custody, including improving and maintaining family ties, reducing self-harm and providing better support on release.⁵ The Ministry’s female offender programme oversees delivery of the strategy but is dependent on various parts of the Ministry, HMPPS, other government departments and relevant organisations at a local level (often police-force areas) to work together to adopt joined-up ‘whole-system approaches’. How this is done in practice varies from area to area.⁶

Implementing the strategy

5. The Ministry’s 2018 Female Offender Strategy has been widely welcomed but the Ministry has not implemented it well.⁷ Stakeholders told us of their disappointment. For example, Women in Prison told us that “the strategy was welcomed across the board, across political parties, by professional groups, and across policing and prison governors.”

1 C&AG’s Report, *Improving outcomes for women in the criminal justice system*, Session 2021–22, HC 1012, 19 January 2022

2 C&AG’s Report, para 1.2 to 1.4

3 C&AG’s Report, para 1.1; HMPPS, Probation data, 30 September 2021. Available at <https://data.justice.gov.uk/probation>

4 Q 10

5 C&AG’s Report, para 1.6

6 C&AG’s Report, paras 2.2–2.4

7 C&AG’s Report, paras 2.7, 2.9, 2.14, 2.18

The Howard League for Penal Reform said of the strategy “It has a strong evidence base and there is not much about it that we would disagree with. The problem has been its implementation.” Anawim—Birmingham’s Centre for Women echoed this saying “It is so disappointing to see that a really good strategy like that has just not been implemented properly.”⁸

6. The Comptroller and Auditor General concluded that the value of the strategy’s aims was clear, but the Ministry had not prioritised investment in implementing the strategy, even before the COVID-19 pandemic.⁹ We asked the Ministry how great a priority the female offender programme is now, given its small scale and the many other large projects the Ministry has underway. It told us that protecting women and girls and giving them confidence in the CJS is the Deputy Prime Minister’s top priority so the female offender programme “...is absolutely right at the top”.¹⁰

7. The Ministry told us that it has received a record funding settlement at the Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021.¹¹ We asked the Ministry how much of this it will be spending on the female offender programme.¹² It told us it has not yet allocated funding to specific budgets but that it wanted to fund the programme properly given that it is a real priority for the Ministry and for the government.¹³ The Ministry told us its funding settlement includes £550 million over three years (2022–23 to 2024–25) to reduce reoffending (by both men and women), that this amount is not directly associated with the female offender programme but that “a lot of it” would be used to support women.¹⁴

Community services

8. The first two objectives of the strategy (intervening earlier and a greater proportion of women managed in the community) each depend on improved community services for women.¹⁵ The Ministry told us the importance of work done in the community is “absolutely well understood”¹⁶ Despite this the Ministry has spent only £9.5 million on grants for community services over four years (2018–19 to 2021–22).¹⁷ The Ministry has not been able to make a full assessment of how much it needs to spend on community services because it has declined to set targets so has not set out the reduction in the proportion of women entering different stages of the CJS that it expects to see. It considers that it would be inappropriate to set out the extent of what it is aiming to achieve as this depends on other bodies that are independent of it such as the judiciary.¹⁸

9. The £9.5 million for grants for community services compares with £200 million the Ministry has committed to spend on an extra 500 prison places for women due to increases in police numbers.¹⁹ We asked stakeholders how far the £200 million would stretch if it were spent on community services and what the results would be. They told

8 Q 1

9 C&AG’s Report, para 20

10 Q 29

11 Q 79

12 Q 58

13 Q 80

14 Q 58

15 Female Offender Strategy, Ministry of Justice, 2018, paras 11 and 12

16 Q 44

17 Q 28; C&AG’s Report para 3.3

18 C&AG’s Report, paras 2.10, 2.11

19 Qq 32, 34–35

us it would be transformational. Women in Prison told us that Ministry funding could be used to stimulate funding from other public bodies and philanthropists, and that with that amount of funding there could potentially be a women’s centre in every local authority.²⁰ It said it had not done the analysis for this but they hoped that the Government had. The Howard League for Penal Reform said the money could be spent on “...all kinds of different ways that would stop women offending in the first place and provide real solutions to solve their problems.” Anawim told us that the cost of a women’s centre supporting a woman in the community is between £1,000 and £4,000 per woman. The average annual cost of a women’s prison place is £52,000.²¹

10. We asked the Ministry if it had assessed the impact of spending the £200 million on prison places for women. It has not. It told us this was because it has a duty to provide places for those sent to prison by the courts and its projections are that increased police numbers would result in an additional 500 prison places for women being required.²² The Ministry told us that implementing the Female Offender Strategy might bring that number down, and if so, it would not need all the additional prison places.²³ However this modelling of expected need for 500 more prison places did not take into account any effect from the female offender programme such as more people being diverted away from prison sentences.²⁴ The Ministry and HMPPS told us the newer prison places will be higher quality than some existing places and if they were not needed older places could be closed, but that was not an explicit objective.²⁵

Working with others

11. The Ministry recognises it needs to work together with many other national and local bodies to improve outcomes for women in the CJS.²⁶ It established a concordat with other government departments, creating a basis for joint working, although this was only published in January 2021—two years later than planned.²⁷ The Howard League for Penal Reform told us that as well as the Female Offender Strategy, there are numerous strategies across government to tackle drug abuse, mental illness, violence against women and girls and that the challenge is to bring them together: “we know that drugs affect a lot of women. We know about mental ill health and violence.... We know that a large number of women who are in the Female Offender Strategy are equally captured as victims under the violence against women and girls strategy. They are the same women. We need to better understand how these strategies fit together”²⁸

12. We were told of several good practice examples where many different agencies worked together to help women with multiple problems. These include the ‘one-stop-shop model’ that women’s centres try to adopt.²⁹ The Ministry told us about ‘problem solving courts’ where packages of support and oversight are tailored for individual women.³⁰ The Howard

20 Qq 3, 12

21 Qq 4, 5; C&AG’s Report, para 1.9

22 Q 39

23 Q 37

24 C&AG’s Report para 17

25 Qq 38, 40

26 Q 46; C&AG’s Report, paras 3 and 1.8, and Figure 3

27 Q 30; C&AG’s Report paras 2.12–2.14

28 Q 10

29 Q 24

30 Q 31

League for Penal Reform told us of good work between different services in Avon and Somerset to provide alternatives to stop offending.³¹ We asked what had been the driver for getting bodies working together there and heard that it was a mix of women’s centres, a committed police and crime commissioner and the police leading it. We were told by the stakeholders that although there were examples of good practice, these were in pockets “that are making things work on a shoestring”³² and Women in Prison said the national picture was poor.³³ We asked specifically about joining up drug rehabilitation services for women in the CJS. Anawim told us that it had struggled to work with drugs services, and that it would be ideal to have specialist substance misuse workers located at women’s centres.³⁴ It also highlighted that some statutory service providers were always missing from joined-up working, particularly children’s services but also housing.³⁵ Women in Prison said that key partners from the police, local authority and health were not routinely sat around the table in every area. It told us it thought that greater leadership from the Ministry is needed.³⁶

13. We asked the Ministry why it had not had the support from others it had hoped for and how it could incentivise their support. It told us that the COVID-19 pandemic had changed priorities for a lot of departments, and this had slowed down progress on joined-up working. It acknowledged that the ‘grip across the whole picture was not as strong as it might have been’. It told us the *new Women in the CJS and at risk of entering the CJS* board (chaired by a Minister from the Ministry of Justice and made up of Ministers from partner departments and agencies) has reiterated support for the strategy’s objectives and is now looking at how things can be improved.³⁷ Despite its recognition of the importance of joined-up working by local bodies, which it refers to as the ‘whole-system approach’, the only funding the Ministry has provided specifically to support the adoption of this approach was seed-funding for six areas and the last funding was for 2017–19.³⁸

Meeting the needs of women from ethnic minorities

14. The Ministry’s strategy included specific actions to tackle the overrepresentation of, and unique challenges facing, black and other ethnic minority women in the justice system. But progress has been slow.³⁹ The Ministry told us that after the publication of the strategy it recognised that this is an area where it needs to do more and go further than the strategy. It has set up a minority ethnic female offenders group and worked with the group to understand where things are going wrong.⁴⁰ Many providers of specialist services for ethnic minority women are small and Women in Prison highlighted the difficulties that small organisations face when bidding for grants in competition with larger organisations with well-resourced bid teams.⁴¹ The Ministry told us it had that it had provided £1.5 million in 2020–21 to groups supporting black and minority ethnic

31 Q 21

32 Qq 23, 24

33 Q 15

34 Q 9

35 Qq 11

36 Qq 10, 18

37 Qq 52, 80

38 Qq 68, 69

39 C&AG’s Report, para 3.10

40 Q 54

41 Q 13

offenders (both men and women) generally through the system and funding to Clinks to help smaller organisations bid for money.⁴² It has also worked to design a specification for improving translation services.⁴³

15. The Ministry told us that it wanted to work with others to help it make greater progress.⁴⁴ In particular, it referred to a recent publication, *Tackling Double Disadvantage* that specifically addresses issues faced by minority ethnic women in relation to the CJS.⁴⁵ It said it recognises many of the recommendations in the publication and wants to work with its authors to make sure it addresses the concerns they have raised.⁴⁶

42 Clinks is an umbrella body that supports, promotes and represents the voluntary sector working with people in the criminal justice system and their families.

43 Q 54

44 Q 54

45 *Tackling Double Disadvantage, 10 point action plan for change*, Agenda, Hibiscus Initiatives, Muslim Women In Prison, Zahid Mubarek Trust, Criminal Justice Alliance and Women In Prison, January 2022

46 Q 54

2 Programme management

Holding to the Ministry of Justice to account

16. The Ministry decided not to set targets because achieving them would be reliant on bodies independent of the Ministry, including other government departments and the judiciary.⁴⁷ We asked the Ministry about the impact of this decision on cross-government working.⁴⁸ It told us that Ministers across government are reviewing what outcomes they want to see and how best to measure progress towards them and that the new cross-departmental *Women in the CJS and at risk of entering the CJS* board (chaired by a Justice Minister) is working on what these measures will look like. The Ministry accepted that the female offender programme had not been tightly governed but said that had now changed.⁴⁹ It told us that the new board is focusing on ensuring it has the right programme in place and on measuring outcomes.⁵⁰

17. We asked the Ministry how it could measure progress as it did not yet have milestones. In its reply it claimed that it had looked at 66 commitments from the strategy and given each a Red/Amber /Green rating for progress.⁵¹ We asked if it would publish the 66 commitments and show the us which were green and which were red. The Ministry replied that a progress update had been shared with the Advisory Board on Female Offenders (ABFO) in November 2021. However, Women in Prison, a member of ABFO, did not recall such a document and reported that ABFO members “are still uninformed of what the 66 commitments in the strategy are.”⁵²

18. Stakeholders who sit on ABFO told the National Audit Office that without performance measures they had found it difficult to understand progress at a national level and for different groups of women. They reported that this had limited the ABFO’s ability to hold the Ministry to account.⁵³ Ministers attended the ABFO so the stakeholders who were members were able to contribute to developing their understanding of women’s experiences of the CJS and how best to improve outcomes.⁵⁴ It appears that stakeholders will have a diminished role in the new governance arrangements as specialist providers of women’s services will no longer be members of the board.⁵⁵

Monitoring, evaluation and disseminating good practice

19. It is nearly four years since the strategy was published and the Ministry does not yet have an overall plan to evaluate the work it and others have done in this area.⁵⁶ We asked the Ministry if it had the data it needed to know what it is achieving against each of the strategy’s aims and the performance measures it will use to assess progress. It replied that it is still working on what its performance metrics will look like. To do this it needs to understand what it is trying to achieve, how it will know when it has got there and

47 C&AG’s Report, paras 2.9–2.10

48 Q 46

49 Qq 46, 76

50 Q 29

51 Qq 28, 66

52 Q 75; Ev CJS0013 Women in Prison submission para 3

53 C&AG’s Report, para 3.19

54 Ev CJS0011 penultimate para, page 3

55 Ev CJS0011 para 2, page 4

56 Q 45; C&AG’s Report para 3.12

how it is going to measure it. It told us it will soon be appointing a director general for performance strategy and analysis to focus on data and evidence.⁵⁷ The Ministry told us that the governance and data are important to make sure it is investing in the right sorts of interventions.⁵⁸

20. In evaluating the effect of its interventions, the Ministry told us it is difficult to attribute changes in the number of women in custody to specific actions, such as the use of out-of-court disposals, pre-sentence reports and community interventions. It accepted that it should be able to evaluate its interventions as it is spending taxpayers' money.⁵⁹ It told us that patchy data was part of the problem but that it was still building the necessary data, several years after the strategy was published.⁶⁰ The Ministry told us that it is evaluating some individual interventions, for example out-of-court disposals and housing advisers in prisons (both for men and women) but that evaluating interventions takes time especially in relation to any impact on reoffending.⁶¹ It does not currently have plans to evaluate its £9.5 million in grants to community services.⁶²

21. We asked whether the Ministry was looking at savings for the overall system and how a good outcome for an individual woman can be cost-effective for the taxpayer. The Ministry told us that it had done an analysis on the total cost of reoffending two years ago. It said it thought it would be straightforward to use this to make the case for funding interventions that reduce reoffending by women, especially given women's higher rates of reoffending.⁶³

22. There are many examples of local good practice where organisations work together to help women turn their lives around.⁶⁴ We asked the Ministry how it is going to identify and disseminate best practice. The Ministry told us that its 'one-year-on' report on the concordat will set out some of the joined-up work it has been doing and where best practice exists and that it will then want to further invest in that.⁶⁵

57 Q 30

58 Q 31

59 Qq 44- 46

60 Qq 31, 45

61 Qq 44-45, 64, 82

62 C&AG's Report, para 3.14

63 Qq 81-82

64 Qq 11, 12, 15, 18, 21, 24; C&AG's Report para 3.25

65 Q 77

Formal minutes

Wednesday 20 April 2022

Members present:

Dame Meg Hillier, in the Chair

Shaun Bailey

Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown

Dan Carden

Mr Louie French

Peter Grant

Kate Green

Sarah Olney

Nick Smith

Improving outcomes for women in the criminal justice system

Draft Report (*Improving outcomes for women in the criminal justice system*), proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 22 read and agreed to.

Summary agreed to.

Introduction agreed to.

Conclusions and recommendations agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be the Fifty-first of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chair make the Report to the House.

Ordered, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 134.

Adjournment

Adjourned till Monday 25 April at 3:30pm

Witnesses

The following witnesses gave evidence. Transcripts can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

Wednesday 2 February 2022

Dr Kate Paradine, Chief Executive, Women in Prison; **Andrea Coomber**, Chief Executive, The Howard League for Penal Reform; **Joy Doal MBE**, Chief Executive, Anawim-Birmingham's Centre for Women

[Q1–25](#)

Antonia Romeo, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Justice; **Jerome Glass**, Director General Policy and Strategy Group, Ministry of Justice; **Jo Farrar**, Second Permanent Secretary and Chief Executive, HM Prison and Probation Service

[Q26–83](#)

Published written evidence

The following written evidence was received and can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

CJS numbers are generated by the evidence processing system and so may not be complete.

- 1 All-Party Parliamentary Group on Women in the Penal System ([CJS0008](#))
- 2 Changing Lives ([CJS0006](#))
- 3 Clinks ([CJS0009](#))
- 4 Fair Play for Women ([CJS0002](#))
- 5 Greater Manchester Combined Authority; and Greater Manchester Probation Service ([CJS0003](#))
- 6 Independent Advisory Panel on Deaths in Custody ([CJS0010](#))
- 7 Independent Monitoring Boards ([CJS0012](#))
- 8 Lightowlers, Dr Carly (Senior Lecturer Criminology, University of Liverpool) ([CJS0001](#))
- 9 Prison Reform Trust ([CJS0005](#))
- 10 The Disabilities Trust ([CJS0007](#))
- 11 Women in Prison ([CJS0011](#))
- 12 Women in Prison ([CJS0013](#))
- 13 Women's Budget Group ([CJS0004](#))

List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

All publications from the Committee are available on the [publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

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Number	Title	Reference
1st	Low emission cars	HC 186
2nd	BBC strategic financial management	HC 187
3rd	COVID-19: Support for children's education	HC 240
4th	COVID-19: Local government finance	HC 239
5th	COVID-19: Government Support for Charities	HC 250
6th	Public Sector Pensions	HC 289
7th	Adult Social Care Markets	HC 252
8th	COVID 19: Culture Recovery Fund	HC 340
9th	Fraud and Error	HC 253
10th	Overview of the English rail system	HC 170
11th	Local auditor reporting on local government in England	HC 171
12th	COVID 19: Cost Tracker Update	HC 173
13th	Initial lessons from the government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic	HC 175
14th	Windrush Compensation Scheme	HC 174
15th	DWP Employment support	HC 177
16th	Principles of effective regulation	HC 176
17th	High Speed 2: Progress at Summer 2021	HC 329
18th	Government's delivery through arm's-length bodies	HC 181
19th	Protecting consumers from unsafe products	HC 180
20th	Optimising the defence estate	HC 179
21st	School Funding	HC 183
22nd	Improving the performance of major defence equipment contracts	HC 185
23rd	Test and Trace update	HC 182
24th	Crossrail: A progress update	HC 184
25th	The Department for Work and Pensions' Accounts 2020–21 – Fraud and error in the benefits system	HC 633
26th	Lessons from Greensill Capital: accreditation to business support schemes	HC 169
27th	Green Homes Grant Voucher Scheme	HC 635

Number	Title	Reference
28th	Efficiency in government	HC 636
29th	The National Law Enforcement Data Programme	HC 638
30th	Challenges in implementing digital change	HC 637
31st	Environmental Land Management Scheme	HC 639
32nd	Delivering gigabitcapable broadband	HC 743
33rd	Underpayments of the State Pension	HC 654
34th	Local Government Finance System: Overview and Challenges	HC 646
35th	The pharmacy early payment and salary advance schemes in the NHS	HC 745
36th	EU Exit: UK Border post transition	HC 746
37th	HMRC Performance in 2020–21	HC 641
38th	COVID-19 cost tracker update	HC 640
39th	DWP Employment Support: Kickstart Scheme	HC 655
40th	Excess votes 2020–21: Serious Fraud Office	HC 1099
41st	Achieving Net Zero: Follow up	HC 642
42nd	Financial sustainability of schools in England	HC 650
43rd	Reducing the backlog in criminal courts	HC 643
44th	NHS backlogs and waiting times in England	HC 747
45th	Progress with trade negotiations	HC 993
46th	Government preparedness for the COVID-19 pandemic: lessons for government on risk	HC 952
47th	Academies Sector Annual Report and Accounts 2019/20	HC 994
48th	HMRC's management of tax debt	HC 953
49th	Regulation of private renting	HC 996
50th	Bounce Back Loans Scheme: Follow-up	HC 951
1st Special Report	Fifth Annual Report of the Chair of the Committee of Public Accounts	HC 222

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1st	Support for children with special educational needs and disabilities	HC 85
2nd	Defence Nuclear Infrastructure	HC 86
3rd	High Speed 2: Spring 2020 Update	HC 84
4th	EU Exit: Get ready for Brexit Campaign	HC 131
5th	University technical colleges	HC 87
6th	Excess votes 2018–19	HC 243

Number	Title	Reference
7th	Gambling regulation: problem gambling and protecting vulnerable people	HC 134
8th	NHS capital expenditure and financial management	HC 344
9th	Water supply and demand management	HC 378
10th	Defence capability and the Equipment Plan	HC 247
11th	Local authority investment in commercial property	HC 312
12th	Management of tax reliefs	HC 379
13th	Whole of Government Response to COVID-19	HC 404
14th	Readying the NHS and social care for the COVID-19 peak	HC 405
15th	Improving the prison estate	HC 244
16th	Progress in remediating dangerous cladding	HC 406
17th	Immigration enforcement	HC 407
18th	NHS nursing workforce	HC 408
19th	Restoration and renewal of the Palace of Westminster	HC 549
20th	Tackling the tax gap	HC 650
21st	Government support for UK exporters	HC 679
22nd	Digital transformation in the NHS	HC 680
23rd	Delivering carrier strike	HC 684
24th	Selecting towns for the Towns Fund	HC 651
25th	Asylum accommodation and support transformation programme	HC 683
26th	Department of Work and Pensions Accounts 2019–20	HC 681
27th	Covid-19: Supply of ventilators	HC 685
28th	The Nuclear Decommissioning Authority's management of the Magnox contract	HC 653
29th	Whitehall preparations for EU Exit	HC 682
30th	The production and distribution of cash	HC 654
31st	Starter Homes	HC 88
32nd	Specialist Skills in the civil service	HC 686
33rd	Covid-19: Bounce Back Loan Scheme	HC 687
34th	Covid-19: Support for jobs	HC 920
35th	Improving Broadband	HC 688
36th	HMRC performance 2019–20	HC 690
37th	Whole of Government Accounts 2018–19	HC 655
38th	Managing colleges' financial sustainability	HC 692
39th	Lessons from major projects and programmes	HC 694
40th	Achieving government's long-term environmental goals	HC 927

Number	Title	Reference
41st	COVID 19: the free school meals voucher scheme	HC 689
42nd	COVID-19: Government procurement and supply of Personal Protective Equipment	HC 928
43rd	COVID-19: Planning for a vaccine Part 1	HC 930
44th	Excess Votes 2019–20	HC 1205
45th	Managing flood risk	HC 931
46th	Achieving Net Zero	HC 935
47th	COVID-19: Test, track and trace (part 1)	HC 932
48th	Digital Services at the Border	HC 936
49th	COVID-19: housing people sleeping rough	HC 934
50th	Defence Equipment Plan 2020–2030	HC 693
51st	Managing the expiry of PFI contracts	HC 1114
52nd	Key challenges facing the Ministry of Justice	HC 1190
53rd	Covid 19: supporting the vulnerable during lockdown	HC 938
54th	Improving single living accommodation for service personnel	HC 940
55th	Environmental tax measures	HC 937
56th	Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund	HC 941