



Ministry
of Justice

Lord Timpson
Minister of State for Justice

Ruth Jones MP
Chair, Welsh Affairs Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

MoJ ref: SUB124655

5 June 2025

Dear Ruth,

Independent Sentencing Review and the Residential Women's Centre

Thank you for your letter dated 23 May 2025 regarding the Independent Sentencing Review and the future of the Swansea Residential Women's Centre (RWC). I welcome the Committee's engagement and your continued focus on improving outcomes for women in the criminal justice system in Wales.

I share the Committee's recognition of the importance of non-custodial and community-based sentencing, particularly for women. The Sentencing Review's emphasis on sustainable, rehabilitative approaches aligns with our broader commitment to reducing reoffending and supporting women closer to their communities.

As you note, the Swansea RWC was originally announced under the previous government, with the site purchased in March 2022 and planning permission secured in August 2023. Unfortunately, delays in the planning appeal process led to the withdrawal of allocated funding in Autumn 2022 June. However, I want to assure you that the Ministry of Justice remains committed to exploring community sentence options for women.

The establishment of the Women's Justice Board and the Women in Justice Partnership Delivery Group earlier this year marks a significant step forward. These forums, comprising of key stakeholders (including the Welsh Government), will play a central role in shaping the strategic direction of women's justice policy. Their initial focus is on early intervention and diversion; community solutions, including alternatives to custody; and improving outcomes for young women, mothers of dependent children and pregnant women in the criminal justice system.

While the Swansea RWC project is currently paused pending the strategic direction from these forums and funding considerations through the Spending Review, I recognise the strong stakeholder support in Wales for such a facility and want to reiterate our commitment to ensuring that the majority of women are diverted from custody into community options where appropriate to do so. We must however ensure that we are delivering a model that is fit for purpose, and one that is sustainable.

I appreciate the Committee's continued interest in this matter and will ensure that you are kept informed as discussions progress.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James', written in a cursive style.

Lord Timpson
Minister for Prisons, Probation and Reducing Reoffending