

Written evidence submitted by The West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner

In December 2021, the Government published their new Drugs Strategy (*'From Harm to Hope'*) which sets out their 10-year plan to tackle drug-related harm.

Unfortunately, this has little reference to women and girls – with only 3 mentions of 'women' and no mention of 'girls' in the whole strategy. Furthermore, there is no mention of other strategies regarding women (e.g. 'Female Offender Strategy (2018)'), despite the level of need that women and girls in the criminal justice system have around substance use.

In response to this, The Office of the West Midlands PCC and The JABBS Foundation commissioned the Centre for Justice Innovation and Staffordshire University to conduct research into women's experiences of substance misuse treatment. The research looks at the needs and experiences of women accessing substance misuse treatment with a particular focus on barriers which might make it difficult for them to access or achieve recovery in current models on substance misuse. The link to the research is here: [Exploring women's experience of drug and alcohol treatment in the West Midlands | Centre for Justice Innovation](#)

We are working with commissioners and community treatment providers locally to share this learning and recommendations but more work needs to be done centrally to ensure sex and gender based needs are considered in strategy and delivery of services to reduce the harm from illegal drugs both in terms of policy development and in ensuring sufficient resources are available for services for women.

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