

### Written evidence from a serving prisoner

I've seen [your] questions and gonna give it to you straight. Not only me as a single prisoner but through the (GRS). Just last week, basically most days we speak about women in prison. The facts are the mens prisons always get more support, better courses, better education and learning a trade.

Most women are left wing cleaning or in kitchen, just cleaning, pot washing or maybe cutting veg I been. Most of us [want to] learn to be a plumber, electricians, welder, car mechanic. Also more projects to teach how to turn [your] business idea into a reality. All of us would love to be our own boss running hostels for domestic abuse, mental health. A lot of us would love to open our own rehabs especially for youths and also the elderly. But for example there is some, well [a] hell of a lot, of support for low risk women offenders but if a woman (has) been beaten up by their partners, their boyfriend ends up coming at you to kill you so you fight for your life, knife drops [out of] his hand, you grab it first, stab him and get away. He likes you get done with crime, Sec 18 wounding, then [your] house gets taken over by fellas coming from big cities. They got guns, threaten you, [your] family, kids, so the woman left when police do drugs bust. The woman got done with cocaine, heroin stashed in her house, selling, too afraid to tell police, takes the chance, loses her house, her home and kids gets 4 maybe 6 years for selling drugs. This happens a lot of street working girls/women, their house gets take over. A few other working [girls], no money for their service, their not given cash just drugs off the gansta crew that's moved in. So women are not getting community sentences because even though they're being made to do crime the court sees it as high risk crime so years in jail.

Pregnant women in jail, there's not even enough space in jail on a mother and baby unit for babies. Sometimes family can't have them due to ill health or they have been in jail, even [though] the offence is 30 years old social services get involved.

When my wife got pregnant we planned for the baby she was still on a probation order. Probation felt because of her past, drugs and jail time in the past (nothing against children). But probation let social services know she had shared a house, shared with her mother and I had flat. We were clean of drugs stayed [out of] trouble, had all the cot, clothes etc, negative drug tests. The social worker was lovely then she left and we got a new one who judged us all for our past. She put her on parent classes even though she had brought up younger siblings. The parent class one day fell [on the] same day as a probation appointment, She left a message to probation to re-arrange and went to parent class. She only had 4 months till baby was born. The probation recalled her, heavily pregnant. Back to jail. I put myself back in jail to support her, no room in mother and baby but a room did come up two days before she was going to hospital to be induced. Baby girl born 9 pound 10, no withdrawal (unreadable).

But baby went to foster car then adopted, last time we seen her was when she was 1½ in contact centre. She's 10 years old now. We both suffered nervous breakdowns and she went into MH hospital for 3 weeks. We had no support apart from one jail nurse and two officers in the community no support offered.

With that said there is no way the whole female system in prison considers all women offenders. Most low risks get a lot more help and get to go to top super enhanced wings and open prisons when the rest of us rot in squalor, dirty conditions doing a lot more bang up or without Covid going on. Yet you find on super enhanced wings they're out of their cells all day apart from 1pm-2pm. Also go to their rooms by 10pm, doors still open so front door locked. This is a wing that s in this jail

called F wing and although it's hard to believe most of the sexual monsters get the easy life and a lot of them in open when they deserve to be locked up 24 hours a day, kept away from us all. We in most of womens prisons have women prisoners who been victims of physical, sexual assaults and rape. There is still not enough help from the government to put counsellors, one to one therapy groups, mental health groups such as Hearing Voices, because a lot of us suffer with PTSD, Bi-polar, depression. Sometimes you get half an hour with a therapist but then locked in [your] cell, head everywhere, more stressed, on-one to talk to. If we were open a lot more we could all hug and chat with our friends. The way womens prisons are now even before Covid are 1970s, Cat A mans jail. Not enough support, confidence boosting. There are charities willing to work with us a lot more but funding is low. So many barriers from confidence to housing. We need places that we can go inside and out to start a new life but there's none. Plus [you've got to] have local connection so [you] can't go new so back to the abusive partners life of a slave.

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