



Department of  
**Justice**

An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt

Máinnystrie O tha Laa

[www.justice-ni.gov.uk](http://www.justice-ni.gov.uk)

# Our plan



To help women and girls  
move away from crime

# What's it all about?

Every year a small number of women and girls come in contact with the justice system. Some are at risk of committing crime. Others have already committed crime.



We know that lots of things can lead women and girls to commit crime. For example problems around poverty, family, mental health, and addiction. Even being around the wrong people, and being used or abused by others can lead to crime.

How the justice system acts when a woman or girl commits crime can have a huge 'ripple' affect. Not only on the women and girls involved but on their family, friends, victims, and society.

As a justice system we will work better to support women and girls to change. A specific approach is needed.

- We will stop asking 'What's wrong with you?'
- And start asking 'What's happened to you?'
- And 'What's going to stop this from happening again?' (to you and others)



We know the justice system needs to improve to help women and girls move away from crime.

To create this plan, we got advice from experts. We asked women and girls who have been in contact with the justice system. We asked the public. We read lots of reports and research. We looked at what works in other countries.

**A big thank you to everyone who shaped this plan.**

Experts tell us that the justice system is designed mainly for men

Women have different and complex needs

A lot of the time their crimes can be less violent or serious

One size does not fit all

What works for men and boys does not always work for women and girls



So, why do we need a plan just for women and girls?

How women and girls get into crime is often different to men and boys

How they think and act is different to men and boys

The negative impact of women and girls in custody can last a really long time

Women and girls can pose less of a risk to the public

Focusing on their needs as females is important

Providing support and help works for women and girls

Research supports the idea

# The plan

The central focus of the plan is:

'Ending harm by helping women, girls and society'



What does that mean?

Ending harm:

- that is caused to victims
- that may lead women and girls to turn to crime



Helping women and girls:

- by giving them the support and skills needed to move away from crime
- by working better, together

Helping society:

- by focusing on factors in society that can lead women and girls to commit crime (e.g. poverty)
- to know more about women and girls who commit crime (e.g. why they commit crime, what might help them stop.)

We will now work with partners to agree a more detailed plan.

# What will the plan do?

We will focus on:



## Helping - early

We, with partners, will do more earlier, to help women and girls move away from crime. For example - we will find out what would help them move away from crime. We will map the services that are in place. We will also work 'smarter' and work together more.



## Helping - in the community

We will support women and girls move away from crime while in the community. We want to provide more options. **Why?** For example, there is more of a chance they will stay in education or stay in work. They are more likely to improve family contact, keep their home, and keep their children.

## Helping - in and beyond custody

Sometimes to protect the public and help women and girls to change the only safe option is custody. We want to improve how we can help women and girls in our care. We also want to support them the best way we can when they leave our care.



# Helping early

We will:

Find out what works to help women and girls move away from crime



Find out more about why women and girls commit crime



Provide more support earlier

Look at all the needs of women and girls (e.g. health, home)



Make sure work and support is joined up

- Give the right support
- at the right time
- in the right way

Talk to each other and share more

Work better together

Check what is already in place to help

# Helping in the community

We will:

- ✓ Check what is working well
- ✓ See what could be improved
- ✓ Make sure support meets the needs of women and girls
- ✓ Promote ways to support women and girls in the community
- ✓ Try to support women and girls in the community more
- ✓ Work and plan how we work together better
- ✓ Improve how we share and use information to provide services and make decisions
- ✓ Speak to women and girls who are, or have been, in contact with the justice system
- ✓ Keep getting better at how we help women and girls



We will:

Explore and improve support for women and girls in custody

Help create and build positive contact with family and others

Learn and improve all the time

Make sure support in custody links with support 'outside'

## Helping in and beyond custody

Show what women and girls in custody can give to society

Focus on the health and welfare of women and girls

Look for and share success

Design services with experts, including women and girls who use our services

