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STRATEGY FOR WOMEN IN CUSTODY: 2021-2025

WOMEN'S TIME SPENT IN CUSTODY WILL CONTRIBUTE TO BETTER OUTCOMES FOR THEM, THEIR FAMILIES AND THEIR COMMUNITIES

This document sets out the strategy for all women who are in custody in Scotland. It explains how SPS will work with partners, stakeholders and the women themselves to achieve the following vision:

WOMEN'S TIME SPENT IN CUSTODY WILL CONTRIBUTE TO BETTER OUTCOMES FOR THEM, THEIR FAMILIES AND THEIR COMMUNITIES

The strategy is founded on the principle that all aspects of the care of women in custody should be designed for women and take account of their likely experience of trauma and adversities. All aspects of the approach will therefore be both gender-specific and trauma informed.

The strategy applies to all women and young women who are in custody in Scotland, across all establishments, whether they are on remand or sentenced and whatever their sentence length. For young women, currently from age 16 to 21, the Strategy for Women in Custody is aligned with and applies alongside the [SPS Vision for Young People in Custody](#).

The strategy will enable SPS to maximise its contribution to the Scottish Government's intentions that people live in communities that are [inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe](#). This ambition relies on collaboration with and between a wide range of partners to enable the multi-disciplinary approach that will serve the rehabilitative needs of women in custody and as they return to their community. By better addressing the reasons why a woman might offend, SPS and our partners will be playing our part in reducing the numbers of people who suffer as victims of crime in Scotland's communities. The strategy also recognises the damaging impact that the imprisonment of a mother may have on children. It seeks, where possible, to reduce this impact and so improve the children's life chances.

THE STORY SO FAR

Historically the criminal justice system has developed around the characteristics of men, influenced by their greater numbers and higher risk

profiles. In Scotland, the report of the Commission on Women Offenders in 2012 provided a significant catalyst for change, publishing recommendations that set the scene for system-wide reform with a focus on service redesign, alternatives to prosecution and remand, sentencing and prisons. The report expressed an explicit desire to reduce the number of women in custody for minor offences and remand.

In 2015 plans to build a large women's prison in Inverclyde were reconsidered as the Scottish Government and Scottish Prison Service collaborated to rethink the approach to the custody of women. A Symposium entitled '[From Vision to Reality- Transforming Scotland's Care of Women in Custody](#)' provided an international perspective on best practice in all aspects of custody for women. Shortly after, Ministers announced that there would be a small national prison for women with more complex needs and risks, and up to five innovative community-based custodial units for those who could benefit from closer engagement with more local services.

A significant amount of collaborative work followed, conceptualising, designing and planning a Woman's National Facility on the site of HMP&YOI Cornton Vale in Stirling and the first two Community Custody Units (CCU) in Glasgow and Dundee. Community engagement and the voices of those with lived experience informed these developments. Construction began in February 2020 and, whilst the restrictions of the Covid-19 Pandemic have had an impact, all three new buildings are scheduled for completion by summer 2023. Research and evaluation of the two new Community Custody Units will be used to inform future development of the women's estate.

The new buildings are essential to the strategy, replacing the existing facility HMPYOI Cornton Vale which was no longer fit for purpose, and providing community based units that do not feel institutional but are more home like and promote independent living. Just as important, however, is the strategy's particular approach to working with women which applies whether they are living in one of the new facilities or an existing establishment. Central to that approach are the health and wellbeing of the women, the quality of the relationships established within all establishments, the skills and knowledge of staff, and the

services, approaches and tools that will be available to help to address the individual needs and risks of the women. As illustrations of progress, a specific offending behaviour programme for women is now in place and a new daily regime has been designed for the Women's National Facility to optimise the time available for women to participate in activities to develop their skills and self-reliance.

The approach recognises the effects of trauma on women's lives and seeks to minimise further harm and distress. As an example of this approach, routine body searching of women has now ceased on some sites through new procedures and technological advances.

Professional training programmes are being delivered for staff. These will equip prison officers to work in new ways, as case managers, supporters and advocates for the women with whom they work. Collaborative arrangements are in place with partners including NHS, local authorities and third sector organisations to design and deliver the appropriate range of services. An Advisory Group with stakeholders from across the wider system is in place and provides an important sounding board for the implementation of the strategy.

Further thinking has been undertaken to develop the model of change which is outlined within this document. At its heart is self-evaluation that seeks to answer the question 'how good is our care of women in custody?' using quality indicators. The quality indicators are descriptions of high-quality practice and services, and they will be co-designed with women and partners, building on the approach that has been developed for the care of young people in custody.

Progress has continued in spite of the Covid-19 pandemic. Some innovations, such as mobile phones and online virtual visits and health appointments, became possible for the first time during the Pandemic in all establishments and showed that such technologies could improve family connections and access to services. We plan to build on this progress and expand digital innovation for other purposes, such as learning and personal development.

CONTEXT

The new and distinct approach to women in custody sits within a wider national and international context. Scotland's Justice Strategy and the SPS Corporate Plan (2019 – 22) lay out a clear commitment to a 'new model for custody for women' that includes the explicit aim of reducing the number of women in custody in Scotland.

Scotland has indeed seen an overall decline in offending by women in the last 10 years, from [eight](#) convictions per 1,000 of the female population in Scotland in 2009-10 to [five](#) per 1,000 in 2019-20. The total numbers of convictions across every sentence type have [reduced](#), with the largest and most consistent falls being in financial penalties.

The organisations and authorities who make up the justice system and the wider public and third sectors in Scotland have a collective responsibility to apply their capacity and expertise both to reduce the number of women in custody and ensure, as far as possible, that they provide the necessary support to women to enable them to achieve and sustain better outcomes when they return to their communities. This kind of whole system approach will intervene early where possible and continue seamlessly through and beyond custody, ensuring that women's needs and risks are addressed through the right supports and actions at the right time. In this way the strategy will contribute to the national policy to reduce numbers of people who are victims of crime and also reduce returns to custody by women, aligning with '[Equally Safe](#)', Scotland's Strategy to prevent and eradicate violence against women and girls.

The strategy and the new model of custody for women are consistent with Scotland's international obligations, including the [United Nations standards for the treatment of women in prison](#) and the work and recommendations from the [European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhumane or Degrading Treatment or Punishment](#). They uphold the rights of women who are affected by learning disabilities and physical disabilities. The strategy takes account of the requirements of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) both for the children of women in custody and, for as long as 16 and 17-year-olds are sentenced to detention in Young Offenders Institutions, for the small number of female children aged 16 or 17 who are in SPS custody. This is in line with the Scottish Government's commitment to the incorporation of the UNCRC into Scots Law to the maximum extent possible as soon as practicable. In

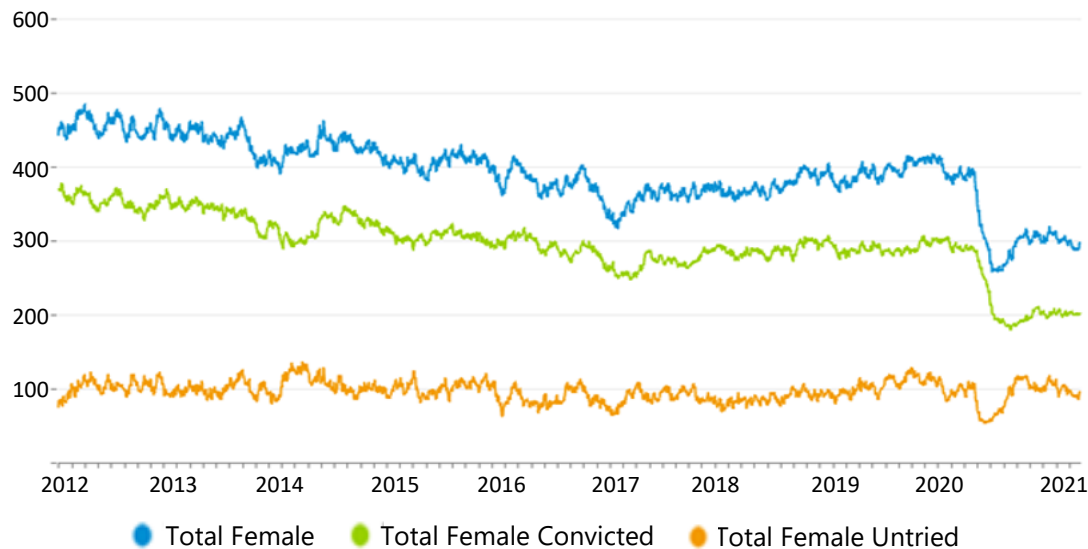
addition, the strategy is aligned with the practices, policies and operational delivery of the SPS policy and arrangements in relation to gender identity.

Women are currently accommodated in five establishments across Scotland. Three of these, HMP&YOI Cornton Vale, Polmont and Grampian, are designated as Young Offenders' Institutions, while HMP Edinburgh and Greenock only house women aged 21 and above. There are mother and baby units available in Grampian and Cornton Vale.

SOME FACTS AND FIGURES ABOUT WOMEN IN CUSTODY

The numbers of women receiving a custodial sentence in Scotland [decreased](#) by 27% between 2010-11 and 2019-20, with a notable decrease of 79% in females under 21 but an increase for the 31-40 age group.

The average daily population of women in custody since 2012 is shown in the graph below. There was a broadly downward trend until 2016 followed by a period of relative stability until the beginning of the Pandemic in March 2020. It is notable that until the start of the Pandemic there had been no appreciable decline in the numbers of women on remand since 2012.



In addition to the size of the population, the new model of custody has to take account of factors such as length of sentence, and, crucially, the needs, risks and circumstances of the women.

The information overleaf is an update of previous analyses and provides some of the most relevant findings from statistics and research that are informing the development work for the strategy. These figures will be kept up to date and published in future updates to this document. There is a need for a wider body of up-to-date evidence on the population of women in custody. SPS will work with researchers to address this gap.

The average female population was 397 in 2019. This reduced during 2020 and on 24 May 2021 there were 273 women in custody. Their age profile was:

16-21	22-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61-70
3%	25%	44%	19%	7%	2%

At any one time, around 30% of the female population are on remand.

Of women who had been sentenced, the profile of sentence lengths of women in custody on 5 March 2021 was:

Under 1 Year	1-2 years	2-4 years	Over 4 years	Life
15%	19%	23%	20%	23%

On 2 March 2021, 46% of the women were in custody for a crime of violence.

In a [study](#) of 109 women across four prisons in Scotland, almost all (98 of 107) reported mental health difficulties. Anxiety, depression, or the combination of both, were the most commonly self-reported mental health problems. In the same study, 78% reported a history of Significant Head Injury (SHI), of whom 40% had associated disability.

Through routine assessment, 51% of women who agreed to engage in assessment indicated that there could be possible learning difficulties or disabilities.

23% of the women who were assessed had literacy levels at SCQF 3 or 2, indicating that they lack functional literacy. The overall levels of numeracy are lower, with 61% of women assessed at SCQF levels 2 or 3 and potentially requiring significant support. These findings suggest that many of the women will experience barriers to daily functioning and self-management.

Within a sample of 99 women in Cornton Vale, 5% had post-secondary level qualifications, 42% had no formal qualifications, and 33% were unable to work due to illness or disability.

Women in custody in Scotland disproportionately experience both physical and psychological problems, exacerbated by using substances and mental and physical adversities in childhood and adulthood.

One [study](#) in Scottish prisons found that:

85% and 92% of women had experienced childhood and adulthood traumatic experiences respectively;

61% of women met the diagnostic criteria for PTSD (*signalling actual or threatened death, serious injury or sexual violence*); and

60% had committed at least one violent offence.

58% of women from the same [sample](#) had self-harmed.

In the SPS Prison Survey in [2017](#) a large proportion (70%) of women reported that they had been a victim of violence from their spouse or partner.

Over half (59%) of women reporting in the SPS Survey in [2019](#) felt that drug taking was a problem for them in the community, up from 38% in 2015. 34% reported being drunk at the time of their offence and 60% were under the influence of drugs.

The highest proportion of convicted women are from Glasgow, Fife, Dundee, Edinburgh and Aberdeen City.

Over [half](#) of women (54%) reported that they lost their tenancy when they came to prison. One fifth believed a lack of support in the community (21%), and unemployment (18%) played a part in their offending.

Evidence suggests women are also at greater risk of poor health outcomes post-release.

[61% of women reported having children](#) albeit it cannot yet be established if children were living with their mother prior to admission. The full picture of how many children are impacted by maternal imprisonment is therefore currently not known.

The one-year reconviction rate for all women leaving custody has generally [decreased](#); it was 26.5% in 2008-09 and 23.2% in 2017-18. The rate for females over 40 increased from 15.8% in 2011-12 to 18.8% in 2017-18.

Additional Sources: SPS Data and internal evaluation, [From Vision to reality: Transforming Scotland's Care of Women in Custody](#) (2015) Scottish Prison Service.

This information has practical implications for the development of the strategy and provision of services. For example, when we look at the proportion of women on remand and the profile of sentence length, we need to recognise that much less agency-building and recovery work can take place with a woman who has a short sentence and planning for support is very difficult for the relatively high number who are on remand. This emphasises the importance of non-custodial alternatives to remand and the presumption against short sentences.

There is evidence that the age profile of women in custody is changing, with a higher proportion of older women. There will be a need to continue to monitor the overall profile and identify any implications of trends. The very small number of young women under 21 and, in particular, the fact that there is rarely more than one female child aged 16 or 17 in custody at any time present significant challenges to avoid isolation and provide age-and stage-appropriate care and activities.

It is important to note that, while the profile of offences in any one year for which women receive a custodial sentence includes relatively few serious violent offences, the proportion of individuals in custody at any one time who have committed serious violent offences is substantial (note, for example, the 23% of women in custody on 1 March 2021 who were serving life sentences). A gender-based, trauma-informed approach to managing risk within this complex population is therefore essential as we seek to contribute to community safety and take into account the voices and rights of victims.

The evidence of women's experience of trauma, adversity and mental ill-health is informing the approach and the services that will support it. Implications include the need for practice and services to be trauma informed; the need for services that support and improve women's mental and physical health and wellbeing and recovery from addictions; the importance of work with families; the availability of screening for intimate partner violence and services aimed at reducing further victimisation; and the need for comprehensive through-care support which will enable women to return to suitable accommodation, reintegrate successfully and be welcomed by the community.

Finally, the high levels of learning need and prevalence of learning disability and brain injury within the population demonstrate a requirement for access to appropriate specialist supports to enable the women to have better life chances and be less likely to offend. This will require joint planning and a clear understanding of responsibilities across SPS, NHS and third sector organisations.

VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

The strategy is rights-based, founded upon values and principles developed from the [UN Bangkok Rules](#) and the [UNCRC](#). It draws upon international research, existing statements of Scottish Government policy, the report of the Commission on Women Offenders and those detailed in the SPS Corporate Delivery Plan 2019 – 22, as well as trauma and gender informed principles. The overarching principle of the Strategy is to ensure that everything we do for women in our care is appropriate for women, based on their gender specific needs and aspirations.

The values and principles below recognise the distinctive needs and circumstances of women and the impact of time in custody, no matter the length. They are intended to guide policy and practice for the future care of women in custody so that women can be appropriately supported in leading a healthy and fulfilling life.

Key Values

- Belief that women have the capacity to change
- Respect for individuals, their needs and rights
- Integrity, high ethical, moral and professional standards
- Openness to work with others and innovate to achieve best results
- Caring for people in distress, understanding that previous experience and fear can result in behaviours that challenge
- Humility to be able to learn from others and from evidence

Core Principles

- The principles and fundamentals of the approach will be consistent

across all of the SPS women's estate although there may be differences in how these are put into operation in different establishments.

- The accommodation, approaches and services to women in custody will reflect the women's distinctive needs and circumstances.
- We recognise an individual's potential and possibilities and that these can only be realised through collaborative working, from the very start of her involvement in the criminal justice system through her admission to custody, her time there and her return to the community.
- The aims of the strategy can only be achieved in a climate of positive relationships.
- The environment, supports and approach to custody will take account of women's likely experience of trauma and the potential for re-traumatisation and will be designed to minimise the harmful effects of custody and maximise opportunities for growth and wellbeing.
- Our approach will support the development of women's agency through opportunities to make choices, have their voices heard and rights upheld, and co-produce the arrangements that will affect their time in custody and beyond. Women will know their views and ideas are valued and this will encourage engagement and participation.
- All plans, interventions, approaches and activities will be based on sound evidence and designed to boost the factors known to promote desistance from crime and improve life chances.
- Where children who were cared for by their mother are separated by her imprisonment or are with their mothers in a custodial setting, the wellbeing and rights of the child will be paramount, in accordance with the UNCRC and best practice in [Getting It Right for Every Child](#).
- We will foster a culture of continuous improvement based on evaluation, evidence and lived experience.

THE STRANDS OF THE STRATEGY

The model of change to convert the intentions of the strategy into reality for all women in custody relies on six interconnecting strands. These are:



Communication and engagement: ensuring that all those who have a role or stake in the strategy understand its rationale and their role in realising its intentions.



Environment and facilities: establishing fit for purpose facilities and environment for women in custody and, where relevant, their children, based on research and best practice.



Culture of reflection and improvement: using self-evaluation based on a clear shared, understanding of what the vision should look like in practice (the quality indicators described earlier) to plan for implementation and guide continuous improvement, and embedding review and research.



Processes and tools: reviewing and where necessary designing new processes, approaches and tools matched to the specific needs and characteristics of women in custody, based on evidence from research.



Staff: implementing a tailored approach to staffing, staff development and support to ensure that we have the right people with the right skills and knowledge at the right time and that they are supported through reflection and supervision.



With partners, **embedding enablers of the strategy and addressing any blockers:** ensuring that all partnerships, corporate and operational processes, such as resource allocation, rules, structures and performance measures, are aligned to support the implementation of the strategy and that any potential barriers are identified and where possible addressed.

THE IMPORTANCE OF RELATIONSHIPS

For women who are in custody, it is often pro-social relationships that are critical to a positive future. The approach to working with women in custody therefore gives attention to supporting women to maintain existing pro-social relationships and supporting women who may be isolated or do not have these kinds of relationship to develop strategies to form new positive relationships with peers and other people who can give pro-social support.

The approach to working with women in custody is also founded upon the relationships between staff and women. ['It is well understood and widely agreed that at the heart of any prison is the relationship between staff and people in custody'](#).

Each woman will have an identified personal officer who will assist her at every point in her journey by constructing and reviewing her individualised support plan with her, alongside relevant partners such as learning providers or a health professional. For this relationship to be effective it is appropriate, where possible, that the officer and woman agree jointly to work together. Trust and trustworthiness are particularly important for survivors of trauma who may find it difficult to trust others. Officers must therefore be equipped with the sensitive interpersonal approach to build this trust and so support and empower women. Given the variety and complexity of women's needs it is essential to work with each individual woman in this person centred way, identifying factors that, if addressed, would assist her to turn away from crime and achieve better outcomes in her life.

THE APPROACH

The approach is designed to develop and embed the practices and other factors that are most likely to enable work to address the needs and recognise the potential of the women, and so achieve better outcomes. This can only happen in an environment which not only seeks to minimise the damaging effects of custody on a woman's wellbeing but also actively

sets out to maintain and improve her health and wellbeing.

On admission to prison many women have disengaged from supports and may feel afraid, lonely and in crisis. Aspects of custody have the potential to re-traumatise and further damage mental health and wellbeing. In this regard it is of particular importance that relevant information about a woman that is known to wider agencies in the criminal justice system is made available appropriately to the prison as early as possible. The use of physical force is a further aspect of custody which has the potential to re-traumatise a woman, and there are many less obvious examples which can have a negative impact, such as the loss of the choice to wear personal clothing. Even when they feel more settled, women are often overwhelmed by complex feelings of guilt, shame and helplessness that make it difficult to communicate effectively. In each of these examples, and across all aspects of a woman's experience of custody, the approach seeks to take steps to reduce damaging effects on a woman's wellbeing.

The approach seeks to promote women's health and wellbeing in a number of ways, including through positive relationships and appropriate facilities, services and opportunities. So, for example, collaborations with NHS will enable screening for mental health concerns, and plans for assessing and treating where necessary. Where relevant this may involve transfer to a facility to receive appropriate treatment in response to mental ill health, in accordance with the aspiration set out in the [Independent Forensic Mental Health Review](#).

The fundamentals of the approach are outlined overleaf: establishing the right conditions to enable the work with women to take place; working with women and providing opportunities for them to engage in activities that build on their strengths and address their needs; collaborating to ensure that a woman returns to her community with the greatest likelihood that she will desist from crime and have a positive future; and seeking to reduce the damaging effect of a mother's imprisonment on children.

1. ESTABLISH CONDITIONS THAT WILL MAXIMISE THE LIKELIHOOD OF HEALING AND MINIMISE THE DAMAGING EFFECTS OF PAST TRAUMA AND CUSTODY:

- An **environment** in which women feel safe and can have space to heal: women who have suffered some type of physical or emotional trauma are often hyper-aware of possible danger.
- **Staff** who understand their role and have the qualities, specialist skills, knowledge and motivation to support the women to achieve their goals. This includes appropriate forms of trauma training for all staff who are working with women, in whatever setting.
- A **culture** that is sensitive to the gender specific needs of women, focussed on individual potential, self-worth and self-efficacy.
- Embedding a **relational approach** consistently across all sites, allowing the time for positive relationships to be established.
- Reviewing and revising all **processes** and procedures to ensure that they minimise re-traumatisation.
- Using best practice in assessment to identify the **range of women's needs**, including multiple and complex needs and risks, in order to meet the demand for services and supports in establishments and in the community and so enable successful re-integration, taking account of equality and diversity needs and addressing barriers to accessing services.
- Ensuring that, wherever possible, women live in the **establishment that is most appropriate** to their needs.
- Arranging the **structure of the day and available activities** to support physical, mental and emotional health, spiritual wellbeing and the maintenance of pro social connections with families and communities.

- Using **authority** in ways that respect dignity and minimise distress; redesigning the approach to sanctions.
- Fostering a **culture of self-evaluation using quality indicators** to guide developments and enable a consistent approach for all women in custody.

2. WORK EFFECTIVELY WITH WOMEN THROUGHOUT THEIR TIME IN CUSTODY TO BUILD ON STRENGTHS AND ASSETS, ADDRESS THEIR NEEDS AND ENABLE THEM TO PREPARE FOR A MORE POSITIVE FUTURE

- With each woman, jointly developing a **phased, coordinated, individualised plan** for her time in custody, based on **assessment** of, strengths, assets, needs, risks and potential, while acknowledging the requirement to prioritise basic needs.
- Providing **services, experiences and opportunities** to address these needs and build agency, skills, attitudes and knowledge.
- Jointly developing **individualised activity plans and timetables** with each woman and service providers to enable her to engage in activities and services that promote her health and wellbeing, enabling her to exercise choice, support progression and facilitate inclusion and equality.

By engaging in a planned way across the different aspects illustrated overleaf a woman will be using her time in custody to contribute to better outcomes for herself, her family and Scotland's communities.

Improving health and wellbeing

assessing needs and addressing them
e.g. use of substances, mental health,
physical health, effects of trauma,
head injury

building knowledge and healthy living

building agency—skills and attributes
for independent living

Contributing to others' wellbeing

addressing behaviours that may harm
others

strengthening healthy family and
other core relationships

collaborating

doing and making things that benefit
others

recycling/upcycling/working with
animals

Learning

literacy and numeracy

speech, language and communication

extending learning and gaining
qualifications

improving employment prospects
through skills development and work
opportunities, including digital
competence and non-stereotypical
work

Citizenship

taking part in Issues-based activities
including through the arts

parenting

supporting peers

understanding human rights and
expectations

building empathy

- For women with the most **acute and/or complex needs**, planning for personal safety and supporting them to participate in activities that help build confidence, develop self-esteem and the ability to form safe and positive relationships with others whilst adding healthy structure to their lives.
- Working collaboratively with NHS to ensure that a **therapeutic** regime is developed and that forensic mental health issues are identified and responded to effectively.
- Importantly, recognising that **setbacks** are likely during recovery and that if a woman can have a positive response to the setback, with support from staff and service providers, it may help to build

resilience.

3. SUPPORT WOMEN TO PLAN FOR THEIR RETURN TO COMMUNITIES WITH THE BEST CHANCE OF SUCCESS

- Working with partners, including mentors where available, to establish a **network of community links** for each facility which promote women's healthy connections with the community.
- Where possible enabling **women to access CCUs** as preparation for return to the community and to their families, allowing access to local services and support.
- Continuing **appropriate assessment** to allow planning for appropriate service provision.
- **Supporting reintegration** in a way which takes account of equality and diversity and working to address the different barriers that women may face to accessing services.
- Providing individualised support to **optimise engagement and participation in activities designed to promote self-care and resilience for independent living** and facilitate pathways out of offending.
- **Ensuring continuity of multi-disciplinary services across transition points** between custody and the community through effective partnerships and processes. The Safe Housing on Release for Everyone (SHORE) Standards are an example of good practice in this regard.
- Having **comprehensive support in place to enable successful reintegration**, including continuity of trusted relationships, secure and stable housing, continued healthcare and treatment, learning, employment, training, education and meaningful supports that build on each woman's assets.

4. SEEK TO REDUCE THE DAMAGING IMPACT OF A MOTHER'S IMPRISONMENT ON CHILDREN

- Ensuring that the **needs and wellbeing of the child are paramount** in

all decisions and aspects of provision that affect children.

- Undertaking **Childs Rights and Welfare Impact Assessments**, of all provisions, policies and measures affecting children.
- Developing **systems which enable identification of these children**, in line with data protection requirements.
- Devising new ways of enabling **extended and if necessary supported contact between the child and his or her mother**, where this is in the best interests of the child.
- **Working with partners** to support mothers and their children during and after custody.
- Using **best practice** in design, facilities and provision that relate to children while they are in custodial settings – family rooms, mother and child facilities, CCUs.

WHAT WILL THE STRATEGY LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE?

As we have described, a key strand in realising the strategy is developing and using 'How good is our care of women in custody' quality indicators. These will describe what different aspects of a women's experience will be like when the strategy is turned into reality and will apply in every setting where women are in custody, with women, staff and partners gathering and reviewing evidence together. The development work, building upon the process adopted for the SPS Young People's Strategy, is one of the first priorities. In the meantime, this section provides a summary of the main characteristics and will form the backbone of the quality indicators. The descriptions encompass the guiding principles for gender responsive and trauma-informed practice for women which seeks to promote their wellbeing.

- ⇒ All women feel welcomed into the establishment. All processes are designed to minimise further traumatising and to enable women to prepare for a positive return to the community.
- ⇒ The arrangements for providing transport to women take account of the need for services to be trauma informed.

- ⇒ Women feel safe. There is a climate of dignity and respect and privacy is protected. The services and facilities provided promote physical, emotional and psychological health and wellbeing.
- ⇒ All elements of the environment, as far as possible, mirror life opportunities in the community.
- ⇒ From the outset women engage in collaborative screening and assessment that is unique, individual and gender specific, providing the opportunity to identify what her individual needs are, and also her strengths and aspirations.
- ⇒ Once a woman has told her story she does not have to repeat it unnecessarily to other people. What is known about her in the community is passed to the prison, with relevant information being passed seamlessly between services before, during and after custody. This means there is continuity in planning and a single plan for each woman.
- ⇒ Each woman plays an active part in developing a phased, individualised plan with her personal officer, describing how she will use the time during her sentence, initially to address her needs, risks and wellbeing and then to prepare for liberation and beyond. The plan is flexible, recognising that there may be setbacks which require changes in the plan.
- ⇒ As far as possible a woman who is on remand or has a short sentence has access to appropriate assessment and to services and activities that would benefit her.
- ⇒ When a woman's mental health requires treatment in a hospital setting there are smooth transition arrangements to enable her to receive the care she needs without delay.
- ⇒ Women are positive about the quality of relationships with other women and with staff. Staff are supporters and advocates and help women come to terms with the issues they face. Relationships are based on trust.
- ⇒ A range of work and pro-social activities are available to enable women to use time well, to learn, address individual needs, contribute to others' wellbeing and practise good citizenship. These activities offer opportunities to exercise choices and responsibility. Women are motivated to engage in these activities. As a result, they

are able to demonstrate skills and attributes, at a pace directed by them but supported and encouraged by staff, that will aid reintegration to their communities and help them to prepare for future employment.

- ⇒ A peer support model is in place in which formal qualifications are available. This gives women who are Peer Supporters responsibility and an opportunity to contribute to others' wellbeing, so building agency and independence. These arrangements also build trust and collaboration between staff and women.
- ⇒ Women are supported to maintain and build positive relationships involving family, community, work and learning. These contacts help to maintain existing positive relationships. Maintaining these contacts and building the confidence to recognise negative influences is an essential part of the planning.
- ⇒ Women understand and know how to access support and raise concerns if expectations are not met.
- ⇒ Children affected by the imprisonment of a family member have access to support including through links with schools where possible. In all establishments, facilities for children visiting their family member are as child-friendly and home-like as possible with dedicated play areas and opportunities for age-appropriate activities for children.
- ⇒ The wellbeing of children who are with their mothers in custody is paramount. Children experience a homely setting and have access to the positive interactions, experiences and support that they would have in the community. Children's rights are upheld. They are protected from discrimination and harm.
- ⇒ Women are supported back into the community through a programme of reintegration, based on their strengths and their needs, including accommodation, health, family, friends and community relationships, finance, continued learning, and work/ placement. Availability of appropriately-phased activities (such as access to the community and supervised work placements) helps successful reintegration.

- ⇒ All partners work closely together towards shared goals. Everyone plays their part in achieving the intended outcomes (providing person-centred records, taking part in joint planning, support and review, making connections with the community, and supporting women's reintegration through co-ordinated and scheduled activities prior to and after release).
- ⇒ Women are only prevented from associating with others when this is absolutely necessary. When this occurs it is for the shortest period possible, and support and resources are put in place to address the situation that led to the need for removal from association.
- ⇒ All those working with women understand their role, support the values of the strategy for women in custody and have the specialist skills, knowledge of women's needs and motivation to support women's development and change. Continuing professional development and reflection enable them to deepen this understanding and extend their expertise. All staff undertake the appropriate level of trauma training in accordance with [NHS Scotland National Trauma Training Programme](#).
- ⇒ Staff, women and partners are involved in evaluation of the quality of service and outcomes, and appropriate performance measures are used to review and improve practice.

In the next stage of implementation of the strategy these characteristics will be further explored and expanded to form the quality indicators for women in custody in Scotland. In the meantime, they are reflected in the logic model at Appendix 1.

HOW WILL WE KNOW? OUTCOMES AND INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

Better outcomes for a woman who has been in custody, and for the wider community, will come about for a variety of reasons, so assessing outcomes and indicators of success cannot be a simple measurement task.

We can, however, ask and seek to answer the question 'How good is our care of women in custody?' When it is known, for example, that positive relationships and particular features of practice and environment are

connected to better outcomes for women and so reduced levels of crime affecting communities it makes sense both to agree what these will look like at their best, and then look for evidence to see how far they are in place. This is one reason why self-evaluation using the quality indicators is central to the realisation of the strategy. Women, staff and partners will gather evidence together in this process, with the voices of the women being key. This kind of evidence can be much more powerful than numerical data. The quality indicators for women in custody will therefore provide important evidence of effectiveness as well as being a reference point for the change process and a basis for professional reflection and ongoing evaluation, reflection, review and improvement.

In addition, and linked to the self-evaluation process, the logic model at Appendix 1 outlines outcomes which flow from the intentions of the strategy. We will establish straightforward processes to gather information against such outcomes and to form a broad picture of the impact of the elements of the strategy and value for women, their families and their communities. Reconviction rates will remain of interest but, because they can be influenced by many different factors, they cannot be an indicator of success in isolation.

Intended benefits of the project to develop the new women's estate are set out in the benefits realisation part of the project plans. These are aligned with the logic model and will be regularly reviewed as part of ongoing evaluation.

Finally, and importantly, an ongoing programme of research and regular data analysis will complement the self-evaluation and data-gathering processes to provide additional in-depth evidence and narrative to support further change and improvement.

NEXT STEPS: STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2021-2025

Strand 1: communication and engagement

1. Support all staff who are working with women in custody to engage with the strategy.

2. By implementing a comprehensive communication and engagement plan, ensure that staff in all establishments where women are in custody, all partners and the women in custody understand the strategy, its approach and their contributions to achieving its aims.
3. Develop a user friendly version of the Strategy for Women in Custody, written by the women in our care.
4. Develop and implement arrangements for planning and ongoing engagement with statutory, third sector and, of particular importance to the Community Custody Units (CCUs), local communities and individuals, who can help deliver the vision and objectives in each establishment.

Strand 2: environment and facilities

5. Review current provision across all facilities accommodating women to identify actions required to achieve all the intentions of the strategy.
6. Work with estates and technical services to open the new national custodial facility and assessment centre for women on the site of HMP Cornton Vale and the first two CCUs, all to be operational by Summer 2023.

Strand 3: culture of reflection and improvement

7. Develop a set of quality indicators for women in custody and a phased self-evaluation process to ensure high quality of provision, and cohesiveness of approach, across the estate.
8. Review and implement the benefits realisation plan in the light of progress, to ensure that the desired benefits are delivered and best value achieved.
9. Review the new model of custody to assess its effectiveness including the extent of culture shift. This evaluation of implementation and outcomes will feed the next stage.

Strand 4: processes and tools

10. Agree a set of regime principles which embrace the gender specific and trauma informed approach at all levels and have applicability across all of the women's estate.
11. Mobilise the agreed Operational Delivery Systems and Standard Operating Procedures.
12. Collaboratively develop a tool that will enable SPS staff and other professionals to work with each woman to identify her assets, needs and aspirations and build an individual plan of support and activities that will support recovery and desistance.
13. Establish a structure and process to ensure the wellbeing, and uphold the rights, of children who are in custody with their mother or who have suffered maternal separation as a result of their mother's imprisonment, in line with UNCRC and best practice.

Strand 5: staff

14. Implement a recruitment and training plan so that all those who work with women in custody understand their role and have the specialist skills, knowledge and motivation to support the women in their care.
15. Implement reflective practice and staff supervision arrangements that will support staff and be alert to any risk of adverse effects on their wellbeing arising from exposure to vicarious trauma.

Strand 6: embedding enablers and addressing any blockers

16. Agree information sharing protocols with partners so that relevant information can be shared efficiently and swiftly in the interests of providing timeous support and reducing potential re-traumatisation.
17. With partners, ensure that there is a comprehensive and up to date needs assessment to inform provision of the necessary services for women in custody including health needs and needs for support to engage in work and learning activities.

18. Ensure the principles and objectives in the young people's strategy inform the care of young women in custody.
19. Keep under review and where possible address any corporate processes or other blockers that may inhibit the realisation of the strategy.

Taken together, these actions will build strong foundations for the full realisation of the Strategy for Women in Custody. In this way, SPS with all our partners will play our parts in achieving better outcomes for the women who come into custody and contribute to reducing the numbers of victims of crime in Scotland's communities.

Inputs and resources to implement the strategy	Examples of activities and outputs	Examples of shared outcomes
<p>Buildings and living environment</p> <p>Finance</p> <p>The women in custody</p> <p>Families and communities</p> <p>Staff</p> <p>Training</p> <p>Relationships</p> <p>Culture</p> <p>Processes (e.g. assessment and planning)</p> <p>Programmes to address offending</p> <p>Activities for women</p> <p>Partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statutory NHS Housing providers Education services Third Sector Academics Scottish Government Community Justice <p>Data and research evidence</p> <p>Inspection and monitoring</p> <p>Evaluation and self-evaluation</p> <p>Legislation</p>	<p>Build fit for purpose facilities that provide a trauma informed environment and ensure that living arrangements for women help to reduce fear and anxiety</p> <p>Design staffing complement and implement staffing plan so that the right staff are in the right place at the right time</p> <p>Deliver bespoke training for all staff who work with women</p> <p>Establish and maintain a climate of compassion and respect</p> <p>Adopt a rights- based approach and enable women to have their voices heard and participate in co-production</p> <p>Develop information sharing arrangements with partners</p> <p>Provide mental and physical health assessments</p> <p>Develop individualised co-produced assessments and plans for women’s time in custody</p> <p>Provide the services, activities and age and stage appropriate opportunities that are required to implement these individual plans and address needs, risks and underlying reasons for offending, improve mental and physical wellbeing, reduce the likelihood of harm to others, meet learning needs, and give opportunities for women to gain and practise life and employability skills</p> <p>Provide services and activities to support women to recover from addictions and ill health</p> <p>Provide support for women and their relationships</p> <p>Review and adapt practices to minimise unnecessary restrictions as far as it is safe to do so and minimise the use of force</p> <p>Further develop arrangements to support the mother child relationship wherever this is in the child’s best interests</p> <p>Refresh and implement family and mother and baby policies, ensuring that the wellbeing of children affected by women’s imprisonment is at the forefront of relevant policies and practices and that children’s rights are upheld</p> <p>Build and strengthen partnership working to enable women to engage with the services they need for a successful return to the community</p> <p>Develop and establish evaluation and monitoring processes for improvement</p>	<p>The Ministerial commitment to provide an estate that is fit for purpose is fulfilled</p> <p>Those who live and work in or visit the women’s estate report that it is a safe and secure environment</p> <p>The mental health and wellbeing of the women improves</p> <p>Advocacy and specialist services are in place and where needed hospital transfers take place timeously</p> <p>Women have individualised support plans and receive the support, programmes and services they need at each stage to address their needs and reduce the likelihood of further offending</p> <p>Women and staff report that relationships are respectful and positive</p> <p>There are fewer acts of violence, bullying and self -harm across the women’s estate</p> <p>Staff understand their role and use approaches, skills and knowledge that will support better outcomes for women, their families and communities</p> <p>Women’s learning needs are identified and they participate in appropriate programmes, learning and employment opportunities</p> <p>Women’s confidence in their skills and abilities increases - their self-efficacy improves</p> <p>Peer mentoring and activities to exercise citizenship are in place</p> <p>Positive relationships with family and friends are cultivated and maintained wherever possible</p> <p>Women experience improved transitions from custody. They have access to all the services they need to give them the best chance of success in the community</p> <p>Children have their rights upheld in keeping with UNCRC</p> <p>The services and activities for children take account of children’s needs and where possible their views</p> <p>Where evaluation shows that improvements are needed, the necessary changes are made</p> <p>The number of women being convicted of further crimes and returning to custody reduces</p> <p>The outcomes will contribute to the Scottish Government vision for a Just, Safe, Resilient Scotland</p>

OUTLINE LOGIC MODEL FOR THE STRATEGY FOR WOMEN IN CUSTODY

The outline logic model in Appendix 1 lists the inputs and resources available for implementation of the strategy, main activities which are underway or planned and outputs from these activities, and key outcomes which can be used to gauge how far and how well the strategy is achieving its intentions.

Responsibility for the outcomes is shared by all partners and the women who are in custody, their families and Scotland's communities.

The outline logic model will be refined in parallel with the development of the quality Indicators and will then be used as part of a cycle of evaluation to assess progress towards achieving the intentions of the strategy.

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