

# Supporting Change

A strategy for women  
and girls in or at risk  
of contact with the  
justice system

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A multi-agency justice-wide  
strategy for Northern Ireland  
2022 to 2029



Department of  
**Justice**

An Roinn Dí agus Cirt

Männystríe o tha Laa

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# Ministerial Foreword

As Justice Minister I am committed to supporting women and girls in or at risk of contact with the justice system. I recognise that an equitable, gender responsive, evidence based approach is required to help achieve meaningful and long term change. This will not only help women and girls but will seek to reduce the harm caused to victims.



When the justice system enters the lives of women and girls it is often when many are at their most vulnerable and at a time of crisis. Although small in number we know that what we do as a justice system can have a significant and long lasting effect on victims, the women and girls themselves, their families, and wider society.

As we adopt an equitable, gender responsive, and more holistic approach we must recognise the impact that trauma and adversity can have and ensure that what we do, as a justice system, does not consolidate the harm caused, particularly to women and girls.

This strategy provides a strategic foundation for doing more to address and take account of the unique needs and situation of women and girls in our society and potential links with offending.

This strategy is not about giving women and girls an easier option nor is it 'justice going soft on crime'. It is about recognising that sometimes the most appropriate response is not an escalation of what might traditionally be seen as justice, but taking a step back and asking, what circumstances have brought this girl or woman in contact with the justice system? Would an alternative approach that seeks to resolve some of the underlying issues be better for everyone? It is also, importantly, about women and girls taking responsibility for their actions and addressing the harm that has been caused by their behaviour.

We all need to work together, to provide better services and outcomes to support women and girls in or at risk of contact with the justice system. As Justice Minister, I will continue to do all I can to support them, at a Cross-Executive level, particularly with regard to addressing the societal issues that may lead to their contact with justice, so we can all live in a safer Northern Ireland where we respect the law and each other.

**Naomi Long**  
Minister of Justice



Department of  
**Justice**

An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt

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# 1. Introduction

## A strategic approach to support women and girls

The strategy accepts that to reduce crime and make a difference to victims, we need to adopt a holistic, whole systems approach to support women and girls in or at risk of contact with the justice system. How we work needs to reflect a trauma informed, modern, and shared understanding of the underlying causes of offending and reoffending for women and girls in Northern Ireland.



A small number of women and girls come in contact with the justice system every year because of their behaviour. Many are vulnerable and present with a range of complex needs resulting from a history or lifetime of abuse and trauma.

Evidence, including the lived-experience of women and girls, indicates that the impact of their contact with the justice system can have a significant and long lasting effect on them, their families, and future generations. Equally the potential benefits of supporting them, and addressing their needs (preferably at an early stage), can be as significant for victims, the women and girls themselves, and society as a whole.

In terms of adopting a specific approach and actions for women and girls, the Criminal Justice Inspection (CJINI) have stated *'Gender responsiveness is not about a different standard being applied to police actions, prosecution decisions or probation practice because the defendant is a woman or a girl. Enforcing laws, bringing offenders to justice and the impact of crime on victims must prevail. However, it is about how criminal justice organisations take account of and deliver services specific to women and girls to provide equitable outcomes.'*

This strategy reflects this ethos and has been shaped by a range of engagement with experts, a strategy development group with cross-departmental representation, delivery partners from the voluntary and community sector, and women and girls with a lived experience of the justice system. It has also been informed by a substantial evidence base, a public consultation, and a CJINI Inspection on how the criminal justice system treats females in conflict with the law<sup>1</sup>.

This strategy contributes towards the priorities of the Department of Justice and as such will seek to embed a culture of lawfulness, support safe and resilient communities, address harm and vulnerability, challenge offending behaviour and support rehabilitation, deliver an effective justice system and secure confidence in the justice system.

We anticipate that the strategy will positively impact on wider Government outcomes for society. It will also inform Cross-Executive responses on a range of issues affecting women and girls in or at risk of contact with the justice system, for example poverty, inequality, mental health and addiction. To ensure a coordinated and effective effort we must work together within and beyond the justice system, across government, with the third sector, and wider society to support women and girls.

The strategy is shaped and delivered across three key themes; Supporting Change: **EARLY, IN THE COMMUNITY**, and **IN AND BEYOND CUSTODY**. This should encompass all stages of contact with the justice system and seek out distinct and Cross-Executive strategic opportunities.

For the purposes of this strategy, **the term 'women' relates to female adults and girls, and those who identify as female or non-binary.**

1 <http://www.cjini.org/TheInspections/Inspection-Reports/2021/October-December/Females-in-Conflict-with-the-Law>

## 2. Executive Summary

**Vision\*** - Ending harm by empowering women and society

**Aims\*** - Supporting change

<b>Early</b> A culture of prevention and early intervention for women	<b>In the Community</b> Effective and suitable alternatives to custody and supervision of women in the community	<b>In and beyond custody</b> A fit for purpose, rehabilitative, restorative, therapeutic custodial environment for women
<b>Priority 1</b> A shared understanding of women's needs and pathways into and out of offending.	<b>Priority 4</b> Tailored support and pathways from offending for women in the community.	<b>Priority 7</b> Bespoke rehabilitative support and pathways from offending for women within and beyond custody.
<b>Priority 2</b> Increased collaboration to support and prevent women with complex needs from entering the justice system.	<b>Priority 5</b> Comprehensive sustainable community-based solutions for women.	<b>Priority 8</b> A gender and trauma informed environment and workforce focused on the holistic needs of women.
<b>Priority 3</b> Accessible and effective wrap-around services for women delivered through and beyond justice.	<b>Priority 6</b> A shared appreciation of the need to support women, where we can, in the community.	<b>Priority 9</b> A collective ethos that women in custody are a part of the community, not apart from the community.

\* Within the Vision, Aims and Priorities, the term 'women' refers to adult women and girls, and those who identify as female or non-binary.

### Strategic outcomes

- Increased participation of women and girls in preventative and diversionary activities;
- Reduced level of offending and reoffending by women and girls;
- Reduced level of harm caused by women and girls in or at risk of contact with, the justice system;
- Enhanced strategic and collaborative delivery of services for women and girls by justice and partners; and
- Improved life chances and opportunities for women and girls.



## 3. Context

Every year there are a small number of women and girls who are at risk of or come in contact with the justice system, because of their behaviour. We know that the impact of women and girls' behaviour, offending, coming into contact with the justice system, and entering custody, is significant and can have a long lasting 'ripple' effect not only on victims, but on the women and girls, their families, future generations, and society as a whole.



## Complex lives and complex needs

The needs and lives of women and girls in or at risk of contact with the justice system are usually complex. They may face many challenges on a daily basis, they are more likely to have parental and caring responsibilities, including looking after siblings and other dependents. These responsibilities bring additional economic pressures and demands and often involve them putting the needs of their dependants above their own. Their vulnerabilities can be both a cause and a consequence of their offending. They are more likely to be financially motivated to offend and their offending is often used to address very practical needs and can be directly linked to financial hardship. They may also be at high risk of alcohol and substance addiction, present with mental health issues, and self-harm. They are more likely to have been a victim of crime, in particular domestic, and/or sexual violence, exploitation and abuse, and are vulnerable to further victimisation. These unhealthy relationships and the trauma they have experienced, including adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), may lead to offending or reoffending.

It should also be noted as part of this context that *'Women in Northern Ireland experience a unique matrix of oppressions: the intersection of structural harm relating to gender, class, race, disability, sexual orientation and gender identity, in line with other regions, but also through additional oppressions arising from the Conflict, persisting paramilitarism, and the manifestation of gender in a society underpinned by overlapping frameworks of sectarianism and the twin engines of conservative Christian patriarchy.'*<sup>2</sup>

## Specific groups

When we consider women and girls in or at risk of contact with the justice system this is not one homogenous group and although gender is a primary focus of the strategy, the needs of specific groups should not and cannot be overlooked (e.g. young women, foreign nationals, ethnic minorities including travellers, transgender people, and mothers). The strategy recognises that these groups have distinct needs, vulnerabilities, and patterns of offending. These needs may be hidden, for example communication issues, or a learning disability.

*'Most children who come into contact with the criminal justice system face a range of adversities and it is entirely appropriate that strategies which aim to reduce such contact address the needs of the child from a holistic perspective in order to provide the support which they require. This is particularly pertinent given the impact of the current global pandemic and its potential impact on vulnerable and marginalised children and young people.'* [Pre-consultation response – NSPCC]

<sup>2</sup> Policy briefing paper by Dr. Gillian McNaul, Queens University Belfast 'The Space In-between: The Gendered Marginalisation of Women's Custodial Remand'. Nov 2019



## Engagement on the strategy

There has been extensive engagement on the strategy. This includes a public consultation and discussions with key stakeholders, including women and girls with lived experience of contact with the justice system.

Two case studies are provided to give a sense of what the experience of women and girls' contact with justice might look like. These do not reflect any specific individuals but rather highlight some of the key themes that have been shared as part of our engagement.

### CASE STUDIES:

Ellie, 15, has been skipping school on a regular basis and really doesn't feel that she fits in. There is nothing really to do where she is. Her mum and dad find it hard to manage. They routinely phone the police when she disappears, sometimes for days at a time. PSNI and Social Services are concerned that she has been socialising with an 'older crowd' and may be at risk of exploitation. There was a recent incident at school where she assaulted another girl and she was sentenced in the community. She gets on well with her youth justice practitioner and enjoys the activities they do to look at some of the situations she finds challenging. She gets frustrated easily and this may be down to communication issues. This is currently being explored. She has decided to leave school and go to a Regional College instead. Things are looking brighter.

Catherine, 32, shop lifts on a regular basis. Sometimes it's to make ends meet as her partner spends most of their money on drink, other times an urge just comes over her. As a result, she has repeatedly received short sentences, which has resulted in her losing her job, her home, and most of her possessions. She has had an abusive past and deals with it with medication she gets off the internet. She has poor mental health on and off, but feels grand when she has her tablets, but she doesn't have them in custody. She feels like she has been failed by services for most of her life and has real concerns that her 13-year-old son will follow a similar path as he's been removed from her mum's house and is now the fourth generation of her family to be in care. The road ahead is uncertain.

## Not unique to women and girls

The strategy recognises that many of the issues raised within it and its action plan(s) are not unique to women and girls, for example adverse childhood experiences, poor mental health, addiction, trauma, and wider societal issues. However, as endorsed by stakeholders and consultation respondents, in providing support and services a gender responsive approach is appropriate and required.

## A snapshot of women and girls

The 'snapshot' of women and girls in or at risk of contact with the justice system is published separately, alongside the strategy. It gives an idea of the 'footprint' of their journey into and through the justice system while providing a baseline for the work of this strategy. We envisage that additional information and analytics may be included throughout the lifetime of the strategy as we enhance the data available.

## The global pandemic

At the time of publication, the strategy is set against the context of a global pandemic. This has, and will continue to have a considerable impact on our personal, social and economic resilience and well-being and is keenly felt by many in society including those who may come into contact with the justice system, especially women and girls. Therefore, we are cognisant that this strategy will be delivered in the context of wider competing challenges and pressures.

## Resourcing and funding

The Northern Ireland Executive have agreed that, given the pressures facing the health and social care sector, all Departments should take a reduction in their baselines to divert resources to health and social care. Therefore, to support the delivery of this strategy we will need to be innovative with resources, and identify and harness collaborative opportunities beyond departmental boundaries. If we are to realise tangible benefits, it will be necessary to make evidence based decisions on what is working and where change is needed, and demonstrate good governance and transparency in regard to finance and resources.

## Obligations and impact

The strategy and its out-workings will be rights based and take account of current and emerging international and local obligations in respect of women and girls. This includes, but is not limited to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Rules on the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-Custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules), as well as international standards and guidance.

The strategy focuses on women and girls as evidence reflects that they experience greater levels of disadvantage and gender inequality. It also recognises that particular categories of women and girls, including multiple identities, may experience further disadvantage and marginalisation. The strategy also recognises the need to support women and girls in rural areas.

## Scope

In terms of scope, it applies to the Department of Justice, justice agencies and key partners across the sectors involved in delivering services and programmes to women and girls in or at risk of contact with the justice system. It will also contribute to a range of policies and initiatives being led by other departments.

The strategy will inform Cross-Executive work/work across the Executive to address societal issues and disparities. As highlighted by a consultation respondent, in terms of *'helping women and girls make good choices' we need a society where 'good choices' are available to all – for example welfare reform, support of substance misuse, adequate housing.'*

Further information on related areas across the Executive is provided at [Appendix I](#).



# 4. Strategic Vision

## - What we will do

This document sets out a strategic vision to reduce victims, by supporting women and girls in or at risk of contact with the justice system in Northern Ireland. The vision **Ending harm by empowering women and society** seeks to modernise and enhance our response to women and girls at all stages of their contact with the justice system. From women and girls on the cusp of committing an offence, to women and girls who have been convicted of offences and are in, or have moved on, from custody.



## What do we mean by Ending Harm?

This vision recognises the harm caused by women and girls and the need to adopt a holistic, whole systems, and where appropriate, restorative approach, for victims and women and girls.

It also recognises that many of the women in or at risk of contact with the justice system have also a history of trauma and abuse. This, as research indicates, is often a driver to offending and can lead to other contributory factors, for example poor mental health, and addiction issues.

It is also about the harm caused by the justice system. Adapting to be more trauma informed and gender responsive in our practice, providing a timely response to the needs of women and girls.

## What do we mean by ‘empowering women’?

Helping women and girls in or at risk of contact with the justice system get the skills and tools needed to move away from crime. Seeking to do that in a way that recognises their needs and respects their rights.

Supporting equality and addressing disparities. This includes working with partners, across government, to provide opportunities for women and girls.

Many of the women and girls we have engaged with have spoken of feeling disempowered by the criminal justice system and processes. We consider it is vital to provide (informed) choice where we can within the justice system. This includes ensuring women and girls understand what is happening throughout their contact with the justice system.

## What do we mean by empowering society?

As well as targeting social issues that may drive offending, empowering society is about increasing awareness of women’s pathways into and out of offending and the complex needs and unique characteristics they present with.

It also relates to reducing the stigma for women and girls in contact with the justice system and challenging stereotypes and ‘myths’ that may exist.

It is also around ensuring that trauma informed and gender informed practice is shared using appropriate language.

## Taking a broader view

To deliver the vision a distinct, coordinated, and strategic approach is required to support women and girls. We will seek to deliver this through a ‘Whole System Approach’ (WSA).

WSA is about bringing services and support together in a more strategic, coordinated and sustainable way to improve outcomes for women and girls in or at risk of contact with the justice system by providing timely holistic and tailored support to address their complex needs.

The key elements of this approach will include, from a justice perspective, police triage, problem solving approach, support alongside community orders and on release from custody. To adopt this approach cross-departmental working and voluntary and community sector partners will be vital.

Given the current financial pressures this will focus on partners working together, using existing resources differently to provide a more joined up response targeting support and reducing gaps and repetition in services.



## Outcomes – what impact will we have?

The strategy takes an outcomes-based approach and will contribute to the broader outcomes of societal wellbeing and the specific outcomes and priorities aimed at ensuring we live in safer communities where we respect the law and each other.

Against these high level outcomes, we have identified five strategic outcomes that will be achieved through delivery of this strategy; these are:

- Increased participation of women and girls in preventative and diversionary activities;
- Reduced level of offending and reoffending by women and girls;
- Reduced level of harm caused by women and girls in or at risk of contact with, the justice system;
- Enhanced strategic and collaborative delivery of services for women and girls by justice and partners; and
- Improved life chances and opportunities for women and girls.

## Themes

The strategy is structured across three broad themes that reflect the range of contact a woman or girl might potentially have with the criminal justice system. Supporting Change: **EARLY, IN THE COMMUNITY**, and **IN AND BEYOND CUSTODY**. We consider that this will provide a holistic response.

The strategy recognises the importance of supporting women and girls in or at risk of contact with the justice system as **EARLY** as possible to get appropriate and timely support. The theme focuses on a collaborative approach to prevention and diversion at every stage up to, and including, sentencing, this includes addressing any underlying reasons for behaviours that may lead to or have led to offending. A holistic approach is required to deliver improved outcomes by promoting and providing solutions and sentences **IN THE COMMUNITY** to reduce the numbers of women and girls committing offences. Much of this will involve holding women and girls to account and, as with supporting change 'early', tackling offending behaviour by focusing on and addressing underlying reasons, including addiction, and/or a history of trauma and societal issues. The third and final theme recognises that there is a need to support women and girls **IN AND BEYOND CUSTODY** and that custody should be reserved for the most serious cases. It highlights that the custodial environment should be fit for purpose, trauma informed, and rehabilitative. Seeking to help women and girls build and maintain the confidence, resilience and tools needed to pursue a pathway away from offending.

## Strategic priorities

We have identified nine strategic priorities, mapped against three themes, designed to enhance our coordinated response to women and girls. The associated work streams that will help deliver the strategic priorities are outlined below:

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**Aims\*** - Supporting change

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<b>Priority 1</b> A shared understanding of women's needs and pathways into and out of offending.	<b>Priority 4</b> Tailored support and pathways from offending for women in the community.	<b>Priority 7</b> Bespoke rehabilitative support and pathways from offending for women within and beyond custody.
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<b>Priority 3</b> Accessible and effective wrap-around services for women delivered through and beyond justice.	<b>Priority 6</b> A shared appreciation of the need to support women, where we can, in the community.	<b>Priority 9</b> A collective ethos that women in custody are a part of the community, not apart from the community.

\* Within the Vision, Aims and Priorities, the term 'women' refers to adult women and girls, and those who identify as female or non-binary.



## Principles

A foundation of multi-faceted principles will be used to embed and deliver the strategy.

Gender responsive and Person centred	Trauma informed and Holistic	Pro-active and Responsive
<p>We understand that how women experience the world, interact, and communicate with others is unique to their gender. We acknowledge that we need to focus on the individual, as evidence shows one size does not 'fit all'.</p> <p>Therefore, any response to women in or at risk of contact with the justice system must be rights focussed, evidence based, and reflect and respond to their needs as a woman, a girl, and an individual.</p> <p>This includes their age, ethnicity, and their role as a parent and/ or carer. We recognise that the criminal justice response can have a significant and long-lasting impact on children and dependents.</p> <p><b>‘ensuring interventions are tailored appropriately to the particular needs of women can be more effective than applying a generic approach to men and women alike.’</b></p> <p>[CJINI inspection]</p>	<p>We recognise that there are links between adverse childhood experience, trauma (as a child/adult), and offending and most importantly that these links can be broken.</p> <p>When supporting women we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>realise</b> the widespread impact of trauma and understand potential paths for recovery;</li> <li>• <b>recognise</b> the signs and symptoms of trauma;</li> <li>• <b>respond</b> by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policy, procedure and practice;</li> <li>• seek to actively <b>resist</b> re-traumatisation.</li> </ul> <p>This can only be done through a <b>holistic</b> and <b>restorative approach</b> that focuses on, but is not limited to health, wellbeing, welfare, communication and behaviour.</p> <p><b>We must also never lose sight of the trauma of victims.</b></p>	<p>We acknowledge that a comprehensive approach will only be achieved through being proactive and responsive.</p> <p><b>Proactive</b> – a future focused, planned strategic approach anticipating potential developments, trends and challenges.</p> <p><b>Responsive</b> – reactive to unanticipated needs, situations and events as they occur.</p> <p>This approach should extend, where possible, across and beyond the justice system.</p>

# Supporting Change Early

## Priority 1:

### A shared understanding of women's needs and pathways into and out of offending.

To create a culture of prevention and early intervention for women and girls we must ensure there is a shared understanding of their needs and pathways into and out of offending, recognising and responding to the distinct needs of both women and girls.

It is important therefore to improve how we identify, capture, and record information relevant to women and girls, their complex needs, and potential drivers to their behaviour and any offending. This includes information pertaining to ACEs, poverty, domestic abuse, sexual abuse and exploitation, addiction etc.

It is also important to raise awareness of these issues and the profile of women and girls, particularly as there is often greater stigma and weight attached to women and girls in or at risk of contact with the justice system. Sharing learning around the impact of the criminal justice system on them and their family is crucial, as is highlighting the need for gender responsive community support and de-escalation while recognising and addressing the needs of victims.

We also need to close gaps in our knowledge, for example there is limited research locally and internationally with regards to girls' offending, their needs while in custody and what works in terms of interventions and support. Research and literature principally focuses on adult women and is to a varying extent skewed towards women in custody. Locally, the potential coercion and exploitation of women and girls by paramilitary groups and organised crime is also of note.

Given the holistic approach being adopted, the strategy should also be seen in the context of the wider outcomes and Cross-Executive work to tackle poverty, promote social inclusion, and create a safer society.

#### **To facilitate a shared understanding, we will:**

- Engage with those who have been affected by the behaviour of women and girls in or at risk of contact with the justice system.
- Liaise with experts, including women and girls with a lived experience of the various stages of the justice system.
- Improve the quality, quantity, and sharing of information that we gather around the profile of women and girls in contact with the justice system, their specific needs and pathways to offending.
- Seek opportunities to disaggregate data to enhance understanding, and identify and assess 'what works' for both women and girls. This includes information relating to women and girls' participation in early intervention and diversionary work, such as support hubs, problem solving and restorative justice.



- In partnership with all Criminal Justice Agencies, shape and enhance guidance and review training to ensure they are in line with international standards applicable to women and girls in contact with the justice system. Guidance and training should recognise and respond to the specific needs of women and girls, including the particular needs associated with their sex, gender identity, age, sexual orientation, caring and parental roles, ethnicity (inc Travellers). Informing a more cohesive, trauma informed, gender responsive and holistic response to women and girls in or at risk of contact with the justice system.
- Enhance, inform, and draw on the Cross-Executive work that tackles societal issues and factors that may contribute to women and girls coming into contact with the justice system (see Appendix I). This includes, but is not limited to gender equality, mental health, substance use, and violence against women and girls. We will also develop stronger links with officials shaping and delivering universal services.
- Seek opportunities to share successes, learning and promising practice with others, on women and girls in or at risk of contact with the justice system in Northern Ireland.



## Priority 2:

### Increased collaboration to support and prevent women with complex needs from entering the justice system.

To create a culture of prevention and early intervention for women, increased collaboration to support and prevent women with complex needs from entering the justice system is needed. This can only be achieved through partnership working across and beyond government, and in particular with the voluntary and community sector.

We recognise that the justice system is not always the most appropriate environment for women and girls, particularly where they have complex needs. This point has been underlined by respondents to the public consultation *'We agree with the principle of supporting women as early as possible including supporting women who are on the 'cusp' of offending. However, a criminal justice response in these situations often increases the likelihood of criminalisation. De-escalation is more likely when other agencies take the lead.'*

*For those on the 'cusp of offending' (likely to be younger women and girls) criminal justice is reliant on other agencies with 'reach into' and influence over this population. But justice must take initiative; directing and guiding other agencies (youth services, education, and health etc.).'*

Focusing on a more welfare-based approach, developing support pathways, and seeking opportunities for diversion to community services is key. We will seek to ensure practice, guidance and referral pathways are in place to facilitate this.

We recognise the importance of effective gender-sensitive needs assessment, information gathering, and reporting to decision making. This may inform decisions on diversion into community services, remand, sentencing etc. To direct gender responsive interventions appropriate information must be captured and submitted. We will seek to enhance gender-responding reporting and report writing at all stages, e.g. court reports, pre-sentence reports.

Information that is collated at an early stage of a women and girl's contact with the justice system is often used at a later stage, so ensuring this information is comprehensive and remains up-to-date is vital to supporting women and girls.

#### **A range of measures will support this, we will:**

- Enhance the collation and sharing of information relating to women and girls' early contact with the justice system, including the uptake and utilisation of preventative and diversionary measures.
- Improve the quality, level and timeliness of information we share with services and decision makers around the complex needs and relevant circumstances relating to women and girls (e.g. caring responsibilities, mental health needs, history of abuse).
- Explore how preventative and early interventions including, out of court and diversionary measures could be tailored in a more gender responsive way, seeking to ensure their effectiveness for women and girls.
- Establish a baseline and methods to ensure out of court diversion, and alternatives to custody do not draw additional numbers of women and girls into the criminal justice system.
- Provide information and support the development of guidance and expectations with partners, including universal services and support hubs, to facilitate a more collaborative, trauma informed, and gender responsive approach.



### Priority 3:

#### Accessible and effective wrap-around services for women delivered through and beyond justice.

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Navigating a way through services and the justice system can be overwhelming, particularly for women and girls. We need to provide wrap-around services.

To create a culture of prevention and early intervention we need to have a clear picture of the services and interventions available to women and girls in or at risk of contact with the justice system. An initial focus to facilitate this will be mapping the complex network of specific services available for women and girls in Northern Ireland.

There is also a need to map opportunities for intervention throughout a woman and girl's contact with the justice system so we can identify and close any potential gaps, so no women or girls slip between the cracks.

This priority is about women and girls getting access to the right services, at the right time, and in the right place, providing the support needed to realise positive life chances. It also involves not 'over loading' women and girls. Meaningful engagement will be required with women and girls, to ensure the effective sequencing of services and facilitate the delivery of, for example, a personal pathway plan.

To provide holistic and a whole systems approach for women and girls, supporting them move away from the justice system, universal services, including education, health, housing, and social care will be intrinsic. Partners in the voluntary and community sector will also have a vital role.

With regards to partnership, we need to identify what multi-disciplinary approaches are in place. It will be vital to link in with existing early intervention and support structures, such as the family support hub model. We must also seek opportunities to work in a more collaborative and gender responsive way at early stages and throughout women and girls' contact with the justice system. This will involve formalising arrangements and, given financial pressures, adopting a strategic approach to resource planning.

As mentioned previously, Cross-Executive working will be central in prevention and seeking to address potential drivers to offending like poverty, and poor mental health.

It is vital to align with and benefit from Cross-Executive work early. Linking in with work that will progress under the joint DoJ and Department of Health led regional care and justice campus programme and The Executive Office led violence against women and girl's strategy is also important to help women 'know their worth.'

'I believe that strong, firm foundations should be in place and that girls and young women should know their value and worth from a young age. If they are not receiving this at home it needs to be available somehow or somewhere.' [Consultation respondent]

# Supporting Change in the Community

## Priority 4:

### Tailored support and pathways from offending for women in the community.

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The experience of women and girls in or at risk of contact with the justice system has indicated that they often feel poorly served by services. An improved understanding of support services, and eligibility to that support, particularly in the community will enhance our ability to identify and close potential gaps, address vulnerabilities and inform operational responses allowing the justice system and partners to effectively support women and girls. It will be key to creating a safer community and addressing the harm caused to victims.

Part of this work is recognising what is needed to support women and girls moving away from offending. Notably this will involve encouraging and helping them to get the support they need to address issues potentially contributing to their offending, e.g. poor mental health, substance use, often coming from a history of trauma. It will also involve linking in with relevant Cross-Executive work and establishing gender responsive pathways and protocols.

A holistic and whole system approach will require enhancing our capacity and capability to deliver across government and the sectors and working innovatively to achieve positive outcomes. We will also require a skilled workforce to facilitate this, therefore appropriate guidance, training and continuous professional development will be an underlying factor to successful delivery.

It is also important that we consider in terms of the delivery of this strategy what 'success' looks like and adopt a victim-focused and gender responsive, tailored approach. For example, we often focus on reducing offending, given the links with Programme for Government, however looking to the lived experience of women and girls in contact with the justice system their 'pathway' with justice is often long, winding, and does not always acknowledge what they see as successes. We will therefore look to identify, capture, and monitor broader outcomes including, for example, increased participation and engagement, and a reduction in harm.

In regard to supporting and supervising women in the community in a gender responsive way, the Probation Board Northern Ireland (PBNI) Inspire Model has recently been reviewed and is being reframed to deliver PBNI services through a dedicated specialist team.

Collaborative working across government and statutory agencies to scope the provision of accommodation in Northern Ireland to support women and girls in or at risk of contact with the justice system, will help in identifying safe and gender responsive options for women and girls in the community, based on a 'step up, step down' model. This may initially involve identifying and exploring short term, and longer term options.

Best practice appears to be reflected in those community-based services for women and girls that centre on multi-agency partnership, and the provision of coherent, joined-up services for women. Strong effective relationships between women and practitioners are identified as being extremely important, as is the integration of mental health and substance abuse services.



## Priority 5:

### Comprehensive sustainable community-based solutions for women.

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To facilitate supporting change in the community there is need for gender responsive sentencing options that the judiciary can have confidence in, and female offenders can comply with. This relates to pre-trial options and alternatives to imprisonment that respect both the rule of law and the rights of victims.

There should be a range of gender-specific early intervention options, out of court, and diversionary measures and associated operational standards. These should reflect and take cognisance of trends relating to women and girls in Northern Ireland.

Diversionary work is often around timely and responsive partnership working. For example, Youth Justice Agency worked in partnership with a young woman and her grandmother following a referral for Diversionary Youth Conference by the Public Prosecution Service for Disorderly Behaviour. They identified significant vulnerabilities and welfare concerns that resulted in an initial assessment, ongoing reviews, and referrals to drug and alcohol mental health service and social services. As a result of services being put in place for the young woman and her grandmother no further justice action was required, and there is no significant risk of reoffending.

In regard to what works, outcomes will extend beyond reoffending, to include improved participation and engagement, reduction in harm, and enhanced reintegration and resettlement. Clear baseline measures will be established and monitoring will be embedded to ensure diversionary and non-custodial measures represent an effective alternative to custody and provide assurance that they do not 'widen the net', drawing additional numbers of women and girls into the justice system.

Ultimately being supported in the community can be very effective for women and girls. We are therefore seeking to maximise the use of sustainable local community services and measures for women and girls and reduce the use of, and need for, remand and imprisonment.

It is widely recognised that there is limited benefit offered by short sentences particularly in the context of public protection and rehabilitation. The use and effectiveness of remand for women is also a key issue. Given these two issues are particularly relevant to women and girls, they should be considered in more detail and gender responsive alternatives to remand and short sentences in other jurisdictions should be explored. *"It just seems to be short sentence, rinse and repeat"* [Woman in NIPS care].

We will also support this with enhanced communication, increasing awareness of the options available and their potential impact on women, their families and wider society.

Part of this work is recognising what is needed to support women and girls moving away from offending. Notably this will involve encouraging and helping them to get the support they need to address issues potentially contributing to their offending, e.g. poor mental health, substance use, often coming from a history of trauma.

## Priority 6:

### A shared appreciation of the need to support women, where we can, in the community.

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The focus of the criminal justice system must, where appropriate for women and girls, move from custody to the community, with custody being used for the most serious cases, to protect the public and rehabilitate the offender.

We need to raise awareness on an ongoing basis of the impact of the criminal justice response on women and girls and the significant and positive benefits that can be realised by providing support and, where appropriate, sentences in the community.

As referenced previously, the importance of capturing and sharing information to inform decision making is also vital.

As we adopt a more holistic, whole system's approach for women and girls, victims and the voice of victims must be central to the strategy. We will therefore seek to invite victim's views through relevant fora. They will also be central to any gender responsive restorative justice.

We need to share learning and develop best practice, where gender responsiveness is recognised, recorded and reported against. Also we will celebrate the successes of women and girls in or at risk of contact with the justice system.



## OBJECTIVES AND WORKSTREAMS

# Supporting Change in and beyond Custody

## Priority 7:

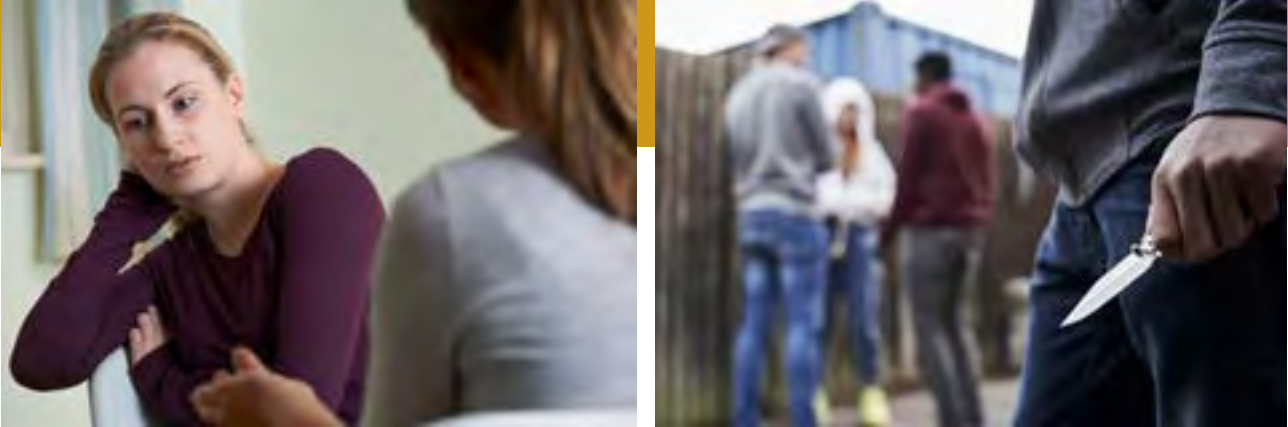
### Bespoke rehabilitative support and pathways from offending for women within and beyond custody

There is likely to remain a small number of women where custody remains the most appropriate option available. We must acknowledge that almost all of the women serving a custodial sentence will, at some point, be released, therefore rehabilitation and pathways from offending is, and must be, central to custody. Rehabilitation being key to reducing the potential for intergenerational offending, and protecting victims and society as a whole.

Women in contact with the justice system, including those in custody can present with a wide range of complex needs. These may include, but are not limited to, mental health issues relating to depression, anxiety, eating disorders and self-harm, and trauma relating to domestic abuse and other adverse life experiences. Many have a history of drug and alcohol misuse which may be both a coping mechanism and a driver to offending. They also have a range of specific health needs, relating to puberty, menstruation, pregnancy, the menopause etc.

For women, custody and the stress of custody can often aggravate the complex issues and vulnerabilities they present with. There is a need, therefore, to ensure that the custodial environment is safe, therapeutic and rehabilitative. We will work with partners in the (South Eastern) Health and Social Care Trust to support the health and wellbeing needs of women and girls in custody. Under the strategy we will work with the Trust to scope, review and enhance healthcare provision, to address their specific needs as women and girls.





The drive to embed trauma informed practice, across justice, and within the prison service, is vital to enable rehabilitation and to support women on release to break their cycle of offending and provide them with the confidence, resilience, learning and skills needed to successfully reintegrate into the community and society.

As mentioned previously, the potential on leaving custody of coercion and exploitation of women and girls by paramilitary groups and organised crime is also of note in regard to resilience. Help for women to develop and strengthen positive social relationships and a pro-social identity in preparation for leaving custody is vital.

We recognise that custody can exacerbate adversities faced by women and girls in contact with the justice system. Entering custody can lead to loss of employment, housing, and family contact. We will work with women and girls and partners, to mitigate this impact.

We will explore the services and activities that support pathways from offending to ensure they are gender responsive and meet the therapeutic and rehabilitative needs of women and girls in custody.

The needs of girls and young women (under 18, and 18 to 24) will be explored to provide a more tailored approach to address their needs and vulnerabilities as young women who have committed an offence. For example, the transition from youth justice to prison will be considered with a view to improving arrangements.

We will ensure that supervision in the community is delivered in a gender responsive way by a specialist team delivering consistent services across Northern Ireland, including in rural areas.

The strategy will improve transitions for women and girls leaving custody to ensure there is throughcare to support and deliver services in the community.



## Priority 8:

### A gender and trauma informed environment and workforce focused on the holistic needs of women

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It is important to recognise that women and girls in custody are under the care of NIPS and YJA respectively. Aligned to that, the environment and workforce should adopt a holistic, gender responsive approach, focusing on the health and wellbeing of those in their care, including their therapeutic and rehabilitative needs.

We would seek to ensure that activities and pathways in place to support women and girls are gender responsive and tailored to meet their needs. Staff working with women and girls should also be appropriately trained.

In terms of support for women in NIPS care the Women Safety Worker has been central to supporting women in a trauma informed way and enhancing partnership working. For example, through discussions with women in NIPS care the safety worker supported and facilitated women's engagement with police when they have disclosed being a victim of domestic abuse, trafficking and modern slavery, and exploitation.

Comprehensive gender responsive guidance and protocols should be in place to support mothers and expectant mothers in custody. Staff working with mothers, expectant mothers and babies should also receive timely and regular training.

Another key aspect will be reviewing and developing practice, guidance and standards (in place) to ensure they are gender responsive and reflect our modern understanding of the needs of women and girls.

Indeed, women and girls in custody have a range of needs. This may be because of their remand status, sentence length, age, ethnicity, immigration status, if they have a disability, communications issues, etc. For that reason, services available to women and girls in custody will be reviewed to ensure they are gender responsive and meet the needs of women and girls, and can be adapted to do so.

With regards to age, in a relevant inspection CJINI noted '*Girls under 18 years required special attention to ensure primary consideration of their best interests and gender-based vulnerability, especially in the context of detention.*'

Support is also needed for staff who experience vicarious trauma as a result of working with women and girls. Therefore, a programme of support should be available for staff to avail of.

We will also harness learning and draw from innovative practice elsewhere. This will involve the participation of experts, which would include those delivering innovative practice elsewhere (in terms of other jurisdictions or other policy areas), also key stakeholders and delivery partners across the sectors here, the victims of crime, and women and girls with a lived experience, who have been in the care of NIPS and YJA.

#### **Finally two other key elements linked to this priority will be:**

- the development of a new women's prison designed to meet the specific needs of women, with a therapeutic and rehabilitative focus; and
- the establishment of a new joint secure care and justice campus for children and young people.

## Priority 9:

### A collective ethos that women in custody are a part of the community, not apart from the community

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It is widely recognised, in general terms that custody is orientated to deal primarily with males. Therefore, women and girls sentenced to a period of custody often find themselves further marginalised and stigmatised.

The importance of having a positive influence from family, peers and other role models cannot be underestimated, particularly given the importance and value women give to relationships. These individuals can have an important role in supporting women and girls.

Time in custody can fracture links and relations with family, support networks, and have a significant adverse impact on children. As outlined by CJINI *'Notably, a lack of family support was considered an issue for the females more so than the males, as women had often been the source of family support before imprisonment. Helping these women to build supportive relationships that could be sustained in the community was essential.'*

We need to seek out opportunities to share the successes of women and girls within and beyond custody and provide opportunities for them to give back to society.

It is also important to reflect what is happening in the wider community (pro-social activities) in the custodial community, ensuring that transitions into and out of custody will be as seamless as possible.

An important aspect in this regard is also looking at the language we use, across the justice system and particularly in custody. This was noted by a consultee *'there remains a sense in which women who offend are somehow 'separate to' or 'other than' society in general. We would welcome a more inclusive approach that any woman who has a conviction is not separate from the rest of society.'*



## 5. Indicators of Success

In respect of indicators of success for the strategy we are extending what we measure beyond offending and reoffending. Taking a broader and more holistic view to measure, for example, engagement, participation, and the reduction of harm. Although not always referenced these measures relate exclusively to women and girls. We will also be distilling these further when developing the action plan for this strategy.



# Supporting Change - Early

## Priority 1:

A shared understanding of women's needs and pathways into and out of offending

We will:	What will tell us we are successful:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage with victims.</li> <li>• Liaise with experts.</li> <li>• Listen to women and girls in and at risk of contact with the justice system.</li> <li>• Improve the quality, quantity and sharing of information.</li> <li>• Seek opportunities to disaggregate data to enhance understanding.</li> <li>• Shape and enhance gender responsive guidance and review training across the justice system.</li> <li>• Work across the Executive to address societal issues.</li> <li>• Share successes, learning and promising practice.</li> </ul> <p>[Summarised]</p>	<p>Increased understanding and recognition of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the needs of women and girls;</li> <li>• what works for women and girls.</li> </ul> <p>Policy and practice is evidence-based, and shaped by those most affected.</p> <p>Enhanced capacity and capability to deliver gender responsive services.</p> <p>Greater consistency in gender responsive policy and practice.</p> <p>Women and girls are diverted away from the justice system.</p> <p>Increased participation and engagement of women and girls.</p> <p>Sustainable, effective and collaborative working to support women and girls.</p> <p>Better sharing of learning and best practice relating to early contact with women and girls.**</p>

\*\* In the delivery of this strategy any learning and best practice that may be useful to policy and practice for men and boys will be shared with relevant individuals and/or organisations.



## Priority 2:

Increased collaboration to support and prevent women with complex needs from entering the justice system

We will:	What will tell us we are successful:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and formalise clear support and diversionary pathways.</li> <li>• Enhance gender responsive reporting and report writing to inform decision making.</li> <li>• Ensure early interventions are gender responsive.</li> <li>• Establish a clear baseline on preventative and diversionary measures.</li> <li>• Enhance collation and sharing of information on use of measures.</li> <li>• Provide information and inform guidance on the profile and needs of women and girls.</li> </ul> <p>[Summarised]</p>	<p>Enhanced gender responsive support and diversionary transitions and pathways for women and girls.</p> <p>Decision makers feel appropriately equipped and informed.</p> <p>Women and girls are diverted away from the justice system.</p> <p>Enhanced capacity and capability to deliver gender responsive early interventions.</p> <p>Gender responsive, evidence based policy and practice.</p> <p>Increased understanding and recognition of the profile and needs of women and girls.</p>

## Priority 3:

Accessible and effective wrap-around services for women delivered through and beyond justice

We will:	What will tell us we are successful:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Map gender responsive services in the community for women and girls.</li> <li>• Map opportunities for interventions throughout contact with the justice system.</li> <li>• Maximise opportunities for adopting a multi-disciplinary approach.</li> <li>• Work across the Executive, on societal issues, in particular the regional care and justice campus, and the violence against women and girl's strategy.</li> </ul> <p>[Summarised]</p>	<p>Improved transitions and pathways to support and services for women and girls.</p> <p>Enhanced capacity and capability to deliver gender responsive services.</p> <p>Increased opportunities for early intervention for women and girls.</p> <p>Greater use of multi-disciplinary working to support women and girls.</p> <p>Sustainable, effective and collaborative working to support women and girls.</p>

# Supporting Change in the Community

## Priority 4:

Tailored support and pathways from offending for women in the community

We will:	What will tell us we are successful:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishing gender responsive pathways and protocols into services.</li> <li>Develop capacity and capability of workforce through guidance and training.</li> <li>Identify and capture broader outcomes, e.g. increased participation and engagement.</li> <li>Implementation of the new reviewed PBNI Inspire model.</li> <li>Scope and enhance accommodation provision.</li> </ul> <p>[Summarised]</p>	<p>Improved/formalised pathways and protocols into services for women and girls.</p> <p>Enhanced capacity and capability to deliver gender responsive services.</p> <p>Broader range of holistic outcomes for women and girls measured.</p> <p>Enhanced gender responsive services for women and girls informed by learning and best practice.</p> <p>Sustainable, effective and collaborative working to improve accommodation provision.</p>

## Priority 5:

Comprehensive sustainable community-based solutions for women

We will:	What will tell us we are successful:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure there are a range of gender responsive pre-trial and sentencing options.</li> <li>Establish a baseline (and monitor in respect of 'net widening').</li> <li>Maximise the use of local community services and measures.</li> <li>Examine the use of remand and short sentences in NI.</li> <li>Increase awareness of the options available and their impact.</li> </ul> <p>[Summarised]</p>	<p>Enhanced capacity and capability to provide gender responsive pre-trial and sentencing options for women and girls.</p> <p>A robust baseline reflecting relevant quantitative and qualitative information.</p> <p>Increased measures in place to reduce the potential of net-widening.</p> <p>Increased awareness of, and confidence in the use of, community services and measures for women and girls.</p> <p>Increased engagement and participation by women and girls.</p> <p>Better understanding and awareness of the (gender- specific) issues relating to the use of remand and sentences.</p>



## Priority 6:

A shared appreciation of the need to support women, where we can, in the community

We will:	What will tell us we are successful:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raise awareness of the impact of the CJS and the positive benefits of support and sentences in the community.</li> <li>• Invite victims' views through relevant fora.</li> <li>• Share learning and develop best practice.</li> <li>• Celebrate the successes of women and girls.</li> </ul> <p>[Summarised]</p>	<p>Increased understanding and recognition of the benefits of community support and sentences.</p> <p>Policy and practice is shaped by those most affected.</p> <p>Better sharing of learning and best practice relating to women and girls across jurisdictions and disciplines.**</p> <p>The successes of women and girls are recognised and (appropriately) showcased.</p>

\*\* In the delivery of this strategy any learning and best practice that may be useful to policy and practice for men and boys will be shared with relevant individuals and/or organisations.



# Supporting Change - In and Beyond Custody

## Priority 7:

Bespoke rehabilitative support and pathways from offending for women within and beyond custody

We will:	What will tell us we are successful:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scope, review and enhance health provision for women and girls in custody.</li> <li>• Work with women and girls and partners to mitigate the impact of custody.</li> <li>• Explore the needs of young women (U18 and 18-24) focusing on them as young women who have offended.</li> <li>• Improve transitions from youth justice to custody.</li> <li>• Ensure supervision in the community is delivered in a gender responsive way.</li> <li>• Improve transitions from custody to the community.</li> </ul> <p>[Summarised]</p>	<p>Improved health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Enhanced engagement and participation in support services, programmes and activities.</p> <p>Specific, tailored policy and practice for young women.</p> <p>Improved transitions and pathways from youth justice to custody (evidenced through care).</p> <p>Improved outcomes on release (e.g. accommodation, education, employment).</p> <p>Enhanced capacity and capability to deliver gender responsive supervision.</p> <p>Increased confidence in leaving custody.</p>



## Priority 8:

A gender and trauma informed environment and workforce focused on the holistic needs of women

We will:	What will tell us we are successful:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure activities and pathways are gender responsive.</li> <li>• Review guidance, protocols and standards.</li> <li>• Explore issues specific to detained girls and young women (U18).</li> <li>• Support staff in respect of vicarious trauma</li> <li>• Harness learning and draw innovative practice from elsewhere.</li> <li>• Develop new women's prison with a therapeutic and rehabilitative focus.</li> <li>• Link with work on the establishment of a new joint care and justice campus.</li> </ul> <p>[Summarised]</p>	<p>Effective gender responsive activities, guidance, protocols and standards.</p> <p>Specific, tailored policy and practice for young women who are detained/in custody.</p> <p>Enhanced gender responsive custodial policy and practice informed by learning and innovative practice.</p> <p>Staff feel equipped and supported to work with women and girls in custody.</p> <p>A therapeutic and rehabilitative custodial environment for women and girls.</p> <p>Sustainable, effective and collaborative working to support women and girls.</p>

## Priority 9:

A collective ethos that women in custody are a part of the community, not apart from the community

We will:	What will tell us we are successful:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek out opportunities to share the successes of women and girls within and beyond custody.</li> <li>• Ensure that what is happening in the community is happening in the custodial community.</li> <li>• Enhance the language we use.</li> </ul> <p>[Summarised]</p>	<p>The successes of women and girls are recognised and (appropriately) showcased.</p> <p>Sustainable, effective and collaborative working to support women and girls in custody.</p> <p>Increased social and community engagement.</p> <p>Greater use of trauma and gender informed language.</p>

## Appendix I

# Governance and working in partnership

Successful delivery can only be achieved through a partnership approach across the justice system, other statutory partners and agencies, and the voluntary and community sector. To address the complex needs of women and girls in or at risk of contact with the justice system, cohesive working with a focus on co-design, co-delivery, and through-care is essential.

## Governance

Comprehensive oversight and governance arrangements will underpin the implementation of the strategy to support both women and girls. We will be seeking to utilise, where we can, existing mechanisms that are in place and will seek to reduce unnecessary bureaucracy.

The strategy will be driven by a Delivery Group that will report to the Reducing Reoffending Strategic Outcomes Group and ultimately the Minister.

## Strategy Delivery Group Partners

The Delivery Group will lead on the governance and accountability for the delivery of the strategy and measuring its achievements. Members of the strategy development group will be invited to sit on the strategy delivery group. Membership of this development group includes representatives from:

- Department of Justice
- Youth Justice Agency
- Department for Communities
- Department of Education
- Department of Health
- Police Service of Northern Ireland
- NI Courts and Tribunals Service
- Public Prosecution Service NI
- NI Prison Service
- Probation Service for Northern Ireland
- Victim Support Northern Ireland



The significant contribution of the voluntary and community sector (VCS) is vital in delivering this framework. We will seek to engage with partners across the sectors in both a delivery and advisory capacity, including the VCS, academic organisations, and other government departments.

The **Network of Champions**, nominated by the relevant criminal justice system agencies, will also be key in helping encourage and disseminate a more gender responsive approach.



## Action plans

It is important to know whether the out-workings and actions flowing from the new strategy work. They must be evidence based and rigorously assessed and monitored to ensure that they are delivering positive change, protecting victims and society, and creating improved life chances for the women and girls in or at risk of contact with the justice system.

In particular, we will want to be able to demonstrate the value of initiatives and give the public confidence that resources are being used to the greatest effect. We will take an outcome based approach to measuring delivery and success.

Action plans will be developed annually to underpin and achieve the strategic vision and priorities.

The plans, which will outline agreed actions and clear milestones, will be measured quarterly, using report cards in line with Programme for Government reporting requirements. These will be provided to the Justice Minister and the Justice Committee through the proposed governance arrangements outlined. How we have performed will also be shared with key stakeholders.

As previously mentioned a 'snapshot' of women and girls in or at risk of contact with the justice system is published separately, alongside the strategy. This will be used as a baseline<sup>6</sup> for the work of this strategy, and will evolve throughout the lifetime of the strategy.

<sup>6</sup> Previous data may also be used to provide a baseline given the impact of the pandemic on the justice system, and on the women and girls in or at risk of contact with the justice system.

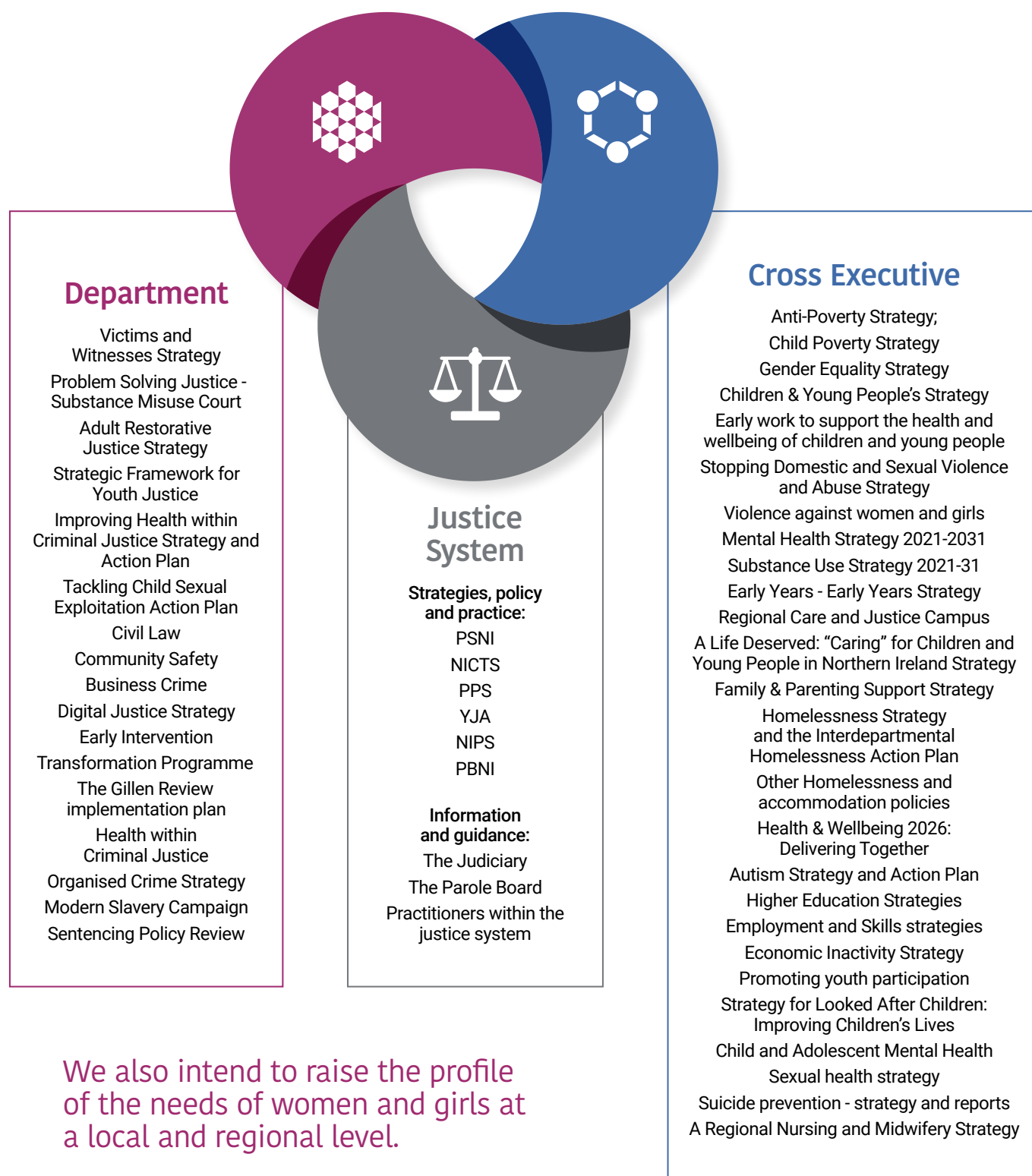


# Strategy Governance - Overview



## Maximising opportunities

We are committed to maximising the benefits and opportunities that can be realised by the range of strategies and initiatives led by the Department, the Justice System and across the Northern Ireland Executive, supporting women and girls who are in or at risk of contact with the justice system.



## Appendix II

# Glossary

This glossary has been provided for the context of this strategy and should be considered in that context. Therefore, the terminology below is explained in that context.

The terms below are not meant to replace definitions of the same terms provided for elsewhere, as they may vary dependent on policy and legislative areas.

Name	Definition
Across government Across the Executive Cross-departmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work happening in other NI government departments; or</li> <li>• Working with other NI government departments.</li> </ul>
Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)	<p>'Children who are routinely exposed to situations such as domestic violence, mental ill health, alcohol and other substance misuse problems in their homes experience a negative impact which can last well into adulthood. These chronic stress situations are called Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and are often associated with poorer outcomes for children in educational attainment, employment, involvement in crime, family breakdown, and a range of health and wellbeing measures.'</p> <p>(Source: Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland) Further information at: <a href="https://www.safeguardingni.org/aces-and-trauma-informed-practice/what-are-aces">https://www.safeguardingni.org/aces-and-trauma-informed-practice/what-are-aces</a></p>
At risk of contact with the justice system	Women and girls who are demonstrating behaviour that is of concern, and may be just short of what would be considered, under the law, criminal.
Cross-Executive	Work that has been agreed as being 'cross-cutting' and requiring a Cross-Executive approach/response.
Community solutions	<p>Community solutions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• support/services in the community (e.g. support hubs, addiction services); and</li> <li>• community sentences (e.g. problem solving justice, community supervision, community service).</li> </ul>
Custody (in custody/detained)	This relates to women and girls who are in the care of the Northern Ireland Justice System. They may be under the care of the YJA or NIPS. This also include PSNI detentions. (Please note this strategy does not relate to women and girls detained in 'Larne House' the immigration removal centre, as it is not a devolved matter.)
Diversion/diversionary	A process of diverting an individual from the formal justice system and from prosecution through courts, and instead using a less formal intervention with the aim of keeping them out of the system as far as possible.



Name	Definition
<b>Equity, equitable, equality</b>	This relates to having equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities. Individual's interests, needs and priorities are taken into consideration. Equity and equality does not mean we always treat, for example, men and women the same. It means acknowledging and embracing the differences between them and recognising that equity in service provision and justice lies in providing appropriate differential treatment to achieve equal opportunities for all. <i>(Source: UNODC Toolkit on gender responsive non-custodial measures, page 4)</i>
<b>Early intervention</b>	Taking appropriate and effective early action to tackle offending behaviour by addressing the underlying causes. The objective is to direct women and girls away from offending, and custody, and towards more positive activities and outcomes.
<b>Evidence</b>	Evidence in policy terms – 'Good quality policy making depends on high quality information, derived from a variety of sources - expert knowledge; existing local, national and international research; existing statistics; stakeholder consultation; evaluation of previous policies; new research, if appropriate; or secondary sources, including the internet. To be as effective as possible, evidence needs to be provided by, and/or be interpreted by, experts in the field working closely with policy-makers. <i>(Source: A Practical Guide to Policy Making in Northern Ireland)</i>
<b>Evidence based</b>	Policy and practice are based on the best available, current, valid and relevant evidence.
<b>Gender responsive</b>	Based on the term gender sensitive meaning services/measures consider and raise awareness on gender norms, roles and inequalities. Gender responsive measures go further, by including action to actively address them. <i>(Source: UNODC Toolkit on gender responsive non-custodial measures, page 4) The quotation from the CJINI inspection (page 5) may also be helpful.</i>
<b>Girl</b>	For the purposes of the strategy the term 'girl' relates to females, and those who identify as female or non-binary - between the age of 10 (the age of criminal responsibility) and 18 years old. However the strategy recognises that the justice system and partners across the sectors can have positive interactions with girls at a younger age to support them.
<b>Holistic</b>	Providing services and support that looks at, and works with, the person as a whole (including their physical, emotional, social, and spiritual wellbeing).
<b>Lived-experience</b>	This term relates to women and girls who have been through the justice system (at various stages). Their lived-experience means they are uniquely placed to advise on what works/may work and what does not/will not.
<b>Multi-agency</b>	Multiple agencies coming and/or working together.
<b>Multiple Identities</b>	Term used in equality to recognise that generally speaking people can fall into more than one category (for example racial group, age, marital status).
<b>Prevention</b>	Prevention is about creating opportunities and programmes that work to keep women and girls away from crime. They are often run within communities, and may involve parents and families. Access to such preventative schemes is usually open to service users who have been in contact with the police, those involved in anti-social behaviour and those identified as at risk of offending. Timely and appropriate preventative measures have the potential to create better outcomes and life chances for women and girls, this will ultimately have benefits to society.

Name	Definition
<b>Rehabilitation</b>	Supporting women and girls in addressing any underlying reasons for behaviours that may lead to or have led to offending.
<b>Therapeutic</b>	Having a 'healing' effect/making the person feel better. In a custodial environment this may relate to, for example, the design of the physical environment, or providing opportunities for reflective practice and to enhance wellbeing.
<b>Trauma-informed</b>	Trauma Informed Practice is a way of increasing the understanding of trauma and its impact through supporting development of skills and knowledge throughout the workforce. It also recognises the correlation between trauma and poorer outcomes which may be caused by the direct impact of the trauma, the impact of the trauma on a person's coping response or the impact of the trauma on a person's relationships with others. (Source Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland) Further information at: <a href="https://www.safeguardingni.org/aces-and-trauma-informed-practice/trauma-informed-practice">https://www.safeguardingni.org/aces-and-trauma-informed-practice/trauma-informed-practice</a> ) Please also see 'Principles' of this strategy (page 17).
<b>Trauma</b>	Trauma refers to experiences that cause intense physical and psychological stress reactions. This may be from a single event, multiple events or a set of circumstances experienced by an individual as physically and emotionally harmful or threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individuals physical, social and emotional, or spiritual wellbeing.
<b>Vulnerable/vulnerability</b>	At increased risk of harm from abuse, neglect or exploitation due to personal characteristics and life circumstances. For example, this might be by virtue of their age (the elderly) or their capacity (under the influence of alcohol/substances, mental health issues etc.).
<b>Women</b>	It should be noted that, for the purposes of this strategy and any out-workings going forward, the term 'women' relates to female adults and girls, and those who identify as female or non-binary. Where an issue is particular to either group this will be specifically referenced. When the strategy refers to young women this refers to women between the ages of 18 and 24 years old.
<b>Whole System Approach</b>	A whole system approach (WSA) brings agencies together to adopt a joined-up approach to providing holistic, trauma informed, targeted support that women and girls may need, focusing on shared resourcing and outcomes. The approach is likely to feature tailored (to the woman/girl) gender responsive services associated with early triage, problem solving and restorative approaches, support aligned with community solutions and transitions through and out of the justice system.
<b>Wrap-around services</b>	Co-ordinated and tailored support/services to meet the needs of women and girls that are developed and delivered by multi-agency/partnership working. This may involve the coordination and sequencing of services based on the strengths and needs of the client.

Further information with regard to the background and context to this strategy is available at: <https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/consultations/proposed-strategy-support-and-challenge-women-and-girls-contact-justice-system>.







