

# Road to Reduction?

## Women's Custodial Estate Review: Six Month Assessment



### Monitoring implementation of the Women's Custodial Estate Review

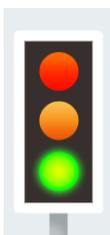
Women in Prison believes that no women should be in prison as prison exists today and is committed to mitigating the harm that prison causes to women, we believe that the recommendations in the [Women's Custodial Estate Review](#) outline some positive developments (our response is contained in [Road to Reduction](#)). To ensure that the positive steps are delivered and negative impacts are monitored we are closely monitoring the implementation of the Review. This report is not intended to be a blanket endorsement of all of the recommendations in the Review; we have commented briefly on our concerns where necessary.

### Summary

The most positive development is that there are now two Open Units planned, with a unit due at HMP Drake Hall as well as HMP Styal. Additionally the Central Case Management system for women with complex needs has been established. However, there has been little or no progress on many of the recommendations and no timetable for overall delivery has been published. Additionally, we have serious concerns about the impact of the MOJ's Benchmarking process, the review of Release of Temporary License and the implementation of Transforming Rehabilitation the effective and positive delivery of the Review.

### A Traffic Light Report

This traffic light report gives a quick overview of the progress to date in implementing the recommendations in the Women's Custodial Estate Review.



red for no progress

amber for some progress

green for implementation

**Women**  
in Prison

Supporting and campaigning for women affected by the criminal justice system



## Recommendation by Recommendation: How far have the government got on the road to reduction?

### Recommendation 1 – Proximity to home location

*NOMS and other criminal justice partners should work together to ensure that women prisoners can, wherever appropriate, be held as close as possible to their home location (while taking into account wider criminogenic need).*

As far as we are aware there has been no change to the way that women are allocated and transferred.



### Recommendation 2 – Strategic Hubs

*NOMS should provide strategic hubs for women prisoners, reconfiguring court alignment and making flexible use of custodial capacity to keep women as close to home as possible for as much of their sentence as possible. This should be achieved by:*

*re-rolling Downview from a women's to a men's prison. This recommendation has already been accepted and it was announced on 4 September 2013;*

*increasing capacity at Foston Hall through upgrading current buildings;*

*formation of a strategic hub between Foston Hall, Drake Hall and Styal to facilitate closeness to home and progression;*

*refurbishment of mothballed places at Eastwood Park;*

*giving priority to keeping Welsh women in Eastwood Park and Styal;*

*creating additional places at Drake Hall to facilitate the progression of midlands women;*

*working with all women's prisons to develop community employment regimes, subject to appropriate risk assessment, while maintaining closeness to home; and*

*giving priority to keeping Welsh women in Eastwood Park or Styal for as much of their sentence as possible. It is proposed that Eastwood Park focuses on meeting the needs of Welsh women, and that the two prisons work closely together to ensure that they are responsive to their needs.*



The increased capacity at HMP Foston Hall and HMP Drake Hall is due for completion by the end of 2014. The increased capacity at HMP Eastwood Park is due summer 2015.

There continues to be some confusion as to how the strategic hub will work in practice and whether this approach will be used beyond the North West and West Midlands region.

The Welsh Women's Pathfinder includes work on supporting the maintenance of family contact and the resettlement of Welsh women held in English prisons. This work has been largely focussed on HMP Eastwood Park and will need to be replicated in HMP Styal if that is to be a joint hub for Welsh women. In 2012-2013 20% of Welsh women were held in prisons elsewhere in England.

### Recommendation 3 – HMP Styal Open Unit

*An open unit, possibly on the site of Styal, should be established for women from the region to work in the community and test the impact on reoffending. The unit will provide a pathway from prison to employment in their local community.*



The Open Unit at HMP Styal is due to be open by the end of 2014.



An Open Unit is now planned for HMP Drake Hall to be live by the end of year. This is a very positive in terms of being able provide access to this setting for more women, trialling slightly different approaches and being clear that this is not a one off and that other prisons may also develop Open Units.

### Recommendation 4 – Closure of Open Prison for Women

*Following the successful implementation of community employment regimes in strategic hubs, which enable women to prepare for release and progress in their sentence closer to home, closure of the two open prisons should be considered as they will no longer offer the best option for the majority of women due to their location.*



The decision to close the only two Open Prisons for women is currently subject of Judicial Review and as a result all activity towards closing these prisons should have been halted.

Work is being undertaken to “develop employment opportunities for appropriately low-risk women across the entire women’s prison estate and encourage regional employers to work with women’s prisons.” However, we have not seen any real changes on the ground as yet.



Women in Prison believes that the open prisons are not the prisons that should be prioritised in a reduction of the women’s estate. It is essential that these prisons are not closed until the all women’s prisons are able to offer the minimum security regime required for each of the women they hold and that the culture of increased responsibility offered by the Open Prisons is in place as well as the measures outlined in the review.

We are concerned that the current review of ROTL will negatively impact on the ability of women’s prisons to operate as resettlement prisons due to possible restrictions on access to ROTL. We have received assurances that there is a specific workstream in the development of policy following the ROTL review and will continue to share our concerns with those leading on this workstream.

### Recommendation 5 – Learning from the Offender Personality Disorder Pathway: joint commissioning

*Forthcoming evaluation of the Offender Personality Disorder pathway should be used to inform further development of joint commissioning and delivery of services to those with the highest levels of need.*



No activity that we are aware of

### Recommendation 6 – Women with complex needs: central case management system

*A central case management system for women with complex needs should start work as soon as possible to provide direction for the care and management of these*



*women ensuring that they benefit from the most appropriate interventions and regimes available for their particular needs.*

A new “dedicated team to oversee the care and supervision of a small number of women with complex needs in custody which work to guarantee that these women benefit from the most appropriate interventions and regimes available for their particular needs” has been established.

**Recommendation 7 – Women with Restricted Status: central case management system**

*Restricted Status (RS) women should be included in the central case management system for women with complex needs which will ensure their access to the most appropriate regimes and interventions taking into account their security status.*



No activity that we are aware of

**Recommendation 8 – Women with Restricted Status: review reports**

*RS review reports should focus on reporting behaviour and progress made by the women in the context of their risk factors and offending.*



No activity that we are aware of

**Recommendation 9 - Women with Restricted Status: access to interventions**

*RS women should be assessed for their suitability to access relevant interventions to enable them to evidence a reduction in risk, where this has been the case.*



No activity that we are aware of

**Recommendation 10 – All Women’s Prisons to be Resettlement Prisons**

*All women’s prisons will be resettlement prisons under the Transforming Rehabilitation Programme.*



No activity that we are aware of

**Recommendation 11 – Increased provision of family days**

*Provision of family days in women’s prisons should be increased and other methods of maintaining contact between visits should be explored.*



How to improve family contact has been the subject of a workshop in the Advisory Board on Female Offenders but we are not aware of any increase in the number of family days or other measures to improve family contact.

**Recommendation 12 – Interventions to be more widely available across the estate**

*Interventions should be commissioned more widely across the women’s estate to ensure that strategic hubs meet the needs of their populations. Holding women closer to home and reducing the need to transfer between prisons will support the development of appropriate and supportive relationships with staff and other prisoners. This can reduce feelings of isolation, distress and the risk of self-harm.*



No activity that we are aware of

**Recommendation 13 – Explore women-specific substance misuse services with a focus on relationships**

*NOMS will explore with NHS commissioners responsible for commissioning substance misuse services in custody, whether substance misuse services provided to women should include a focus on relationships as a core element of encouraging future abstinence.*



No activity that we are aware of

**Recommendation 14 – Consistent services for survivors of domestic violence and women involved in prostitution**

*Provision of services to women who are survivors of domestic violence or who have been sex workers should be of a consistent quality and should meet the relevant NOMS framework.*



Despite policy statements committing to deliver services for women who have experienced violence and/or prostitution there continues to be a lack of consistent services across the estate. At present the following services are due to be delivered in 2014/15:

Prison	Programme
HMP Askham Grange	Domestic violence-women's abuse counselling
HMP Bronzefield	Power to Change Programme
HMP Drake Hall	Power to Change Programme FOR Project
HMP East Sutton Park	Freedom Programme
HMP East Wood Park	Reducing Re-offending Intervention Fairs (All Pathways covered) supporting women who have been affected by violence
HMP Foston Hall	
HMP Holloway	Women Ahead Programme Safe Choices Thyme Project
HMP Low Newton	Freedom Programme The Trauma Service
HMP New Hall	Athena Project Bradford Rape Crisis counselling service
HMP Peterborough	Women's Rape & Sexual & Domestic Abuse Counselling
HMP Send	
HMP Styal	Sexual and domestic abuse in childhood counselling Freedom Programme

It is unknown how many women will be able to access these services.



At the end of her recent visit to the UK the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women that the history of violence many women in prison have experienced “cannot be adequately addressed in custodial settings.” Support services in prison should be provided by specialist women –only providers who can support women on release as well as in custody.



### Recommendation 15 – Expansion of peer-led life skills training

*Existing provision of life skills training should be increased and expanded so all prisons offer peer led services in the following areas:*

*independence skills classes;*

*classroom assistant roles;*

*self-harm support and prevention; and*

*advice giving in other settings, including induction, pre-release, motivational work and preparation for other regime activities or interventions.*



No activity that we are aware of

### Recommendation 16 – Closure of the Mother and Baby Unit at HMP Holloway

*The mother and baby unit at Holloway should close in order to reduce over-supply without affecting closeness to home. There would be a further reduction of ten places should Askham Grange close.*

The Mother and Baby Unit in HMP Holloway has been closed. Pregnant women in HMP Holloway who are successful in applying for a place on a Mother and Baby Unit are not transferred to HMP Bronzefield or HMP Peterborough.



This has resulted in women being transferred significantly further from home and family. We continue to believe that a review of the decision making process for access to Mother and Baby Units is needed before any further decisions about capacity are made.

### Recommendation 17 – Foreign national women: Hub at HMP Peterborough

*Work should be undertaken with the Home Office to develop a hub at Peterborough for foreign national women who are likely to be deported, taking into account best practice from the male hub and spoke system. This will allow for more effective decision making by the Home Office while providing clarity earlier in their sentence for these women.*

A 38 bed unit in HMP Peterborough has been established to for foreign national women that the Home Office is seeking to deport. The criteria for allocation to the unit are still being decided and at transfer is on a voluntary basis until the policies and processes are in place. The unit will have “embedded team of immigration staff”.



We have an ongoing concern that this will result in women being held further from family.





### **Other issues and concerns**

There is still no published timeline for delivery of the recommendations and there is a continuing lack of clarity about what some of this means and how it will be delivered in practice. For example, there is no outline of what is required of a resettlement prison or how the Open Units will operate.

We are deeply concerned by the threats to the progressive elements of this review posed by other work currently being undertaken by MOJ and NOMs, in particular Benchmarking process for public sector prisons and the review of ROTL. We are concerned that the Benchmarking process, driven by economising, will make it harder for prisons to deliver the breadth of interventions called for in the Review. Similarly, any curtailing of ROTL will impact on the extent to which a closed prison can be considered to be a resettlement prison.





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## Road to Reduction?

### Women's Custodial Estate Review: Six Month Assessment

The Review of the Women's Custodial Estate was commissioned by the Secretary of State for Justice because the "female estate should be organised as effectively as possible to meet gender specific requirements whilst also delivering best value for the public."

This short report provides an update on progress towards implementation in the six months since the Review was published. Women in Prison does not endorse all of the recommendations of the Review and this report highlights where we have ongoing concerns.

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