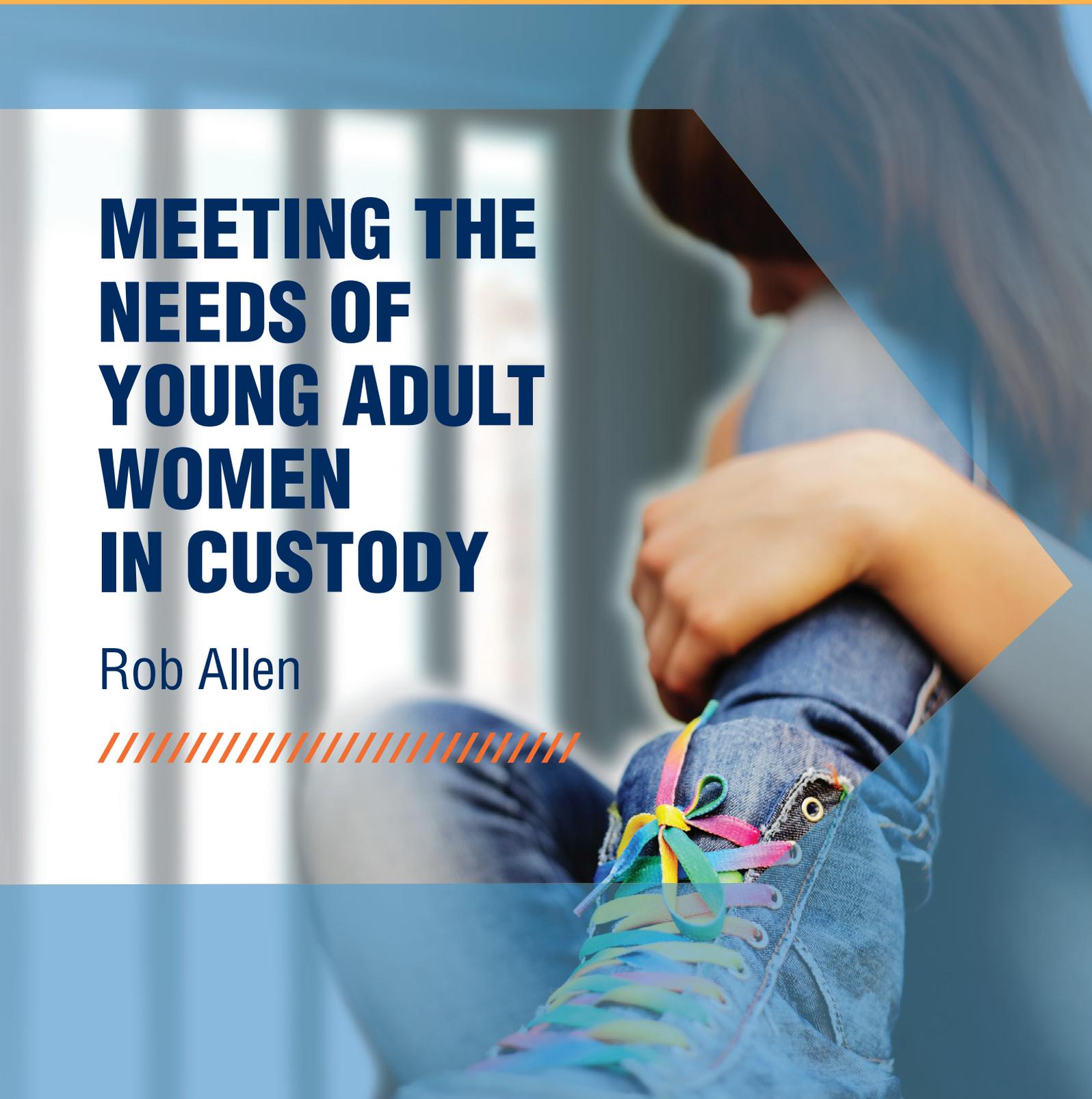


MEETING THE NEEDS OF YOUNG ADULT WOMEN IN CUSTODY

Rob Allen





About T2A Alliance

The T2A Alliance is a broad coalition of organisations, which evidences and promotes the need for a distinct approach to young adults (18-24 year olds) throughout the criminal justice process. Building on the work of the 2005 Commission on Young Adults and the Criminal Justice System, the T2A Alliance was convened by the Barrow Cadbury Trust in 2008. T2A has produced more than 40 research and policy reports, and has worked with researchers, experts, professional bodies, policy-makers and service users to make its case for change.

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Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank those who participated in the roundtable event which took place in London in August 2015 to discuss the draft report and Jenny Earle at Prison Reform Trust for commenting on the draft.

Published February 2016 © T2A, 2016

Cover photograph and page 3: library image posed by models
Photographs pages 13, 21 © prisonimage.org

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INTRODUCTION



“
**YOUNG ADULT
WOMEN CAN BE
A PARTICULARLY
VULNERABLE
GROUP**”

This report looks at how best the prison system can meet the needs of young adult women. It follows T2A's 2013 report *'Young Adults in Custody: the way forward'* which considered the broader issues relating to young adults in prison. That report coincided with proposals by the Coalition Government to dispense with specific young offender institutions (YOIs) and instead to detain young adults in mixed establishments - a practice that has been increasing over the last few years¹. The Government's plans were put on hold pending the outcome of Lord Harris's independent review into self-inflicted deaths in custody of 18-24 year olds which reported on July 1st 2015.² The Government responded to the review in December 2015.³ In the meantime the House of Commons Justice Select Committee has embarked on a major inquiry into young adults in the criminal justice system.⁴

1. <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/transforming-management-of-young-adults-in-custody>

2. <http://iapdeathsincustody.independent.gov.uk/harris-review/>

3. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/486564/gov-response-harris-review.pdf

4. <http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/justice-committee/inquiries/parliament-2015/young-adult-offenders/>

In preparing *Young Adults in Custody: the way forward*, it became clear to me that one group whose needs have not been fully analysed were young adult women. There is no real consensus about the best types of custodial orders or accommodation that should be provided for young adult women. Indeed there is a paradox in the fact that girls under 18 are nowadays deemed vulnerable enough to be accommodated outside the prison system altogether - in secure children's homes or secure training centres. When they reach 18, however, all young adult women in custody are held not only in prisons but co-located with older women prisoners. In their response to the Justice Committee's 2015 report on Prisons, the Government noted that research which informed their review of the Women's Custodial Estate (undertaken in 2013) "concluded that the needs of young adult women and older women were not sufficiently different to warrant developing a separate service for young adult women".⁵

While the specific arrangements made to meet the needs of young adult women vary from one establishment to another, the system as a whole has developed in a pragmatic rather than principled fashion.

The Government's 2013 consultation paper on YOIs centred largely on proposals for improving the system for young men rather than young women.

The Government's paper did recognise that female offenders may have some different needs and risks and that there may also be differences in the nature and drivers of violence amongst young adult females compared with young adult males. But these issues were not further addressed in any detail.

Similarly, the Harris Review did give some consideration to the needs of young women but the bulk of its recommendations concern young men. The report was clear however that young adult women can be a particularly vulnerable group, a fact confirmed by the young adult women who came to speak to the Harris Review inquiry team.⁶

The T2A report did make some recommendations about young adult women - for example suggesting that the Prison Service Order (PSO) prescribing the management of young adult women should be revised in order to promote good practices and interventions relating to violence and abuse counselling, and help to raise self-esteem and resist peer pressure. There was not scope within the original T2A research to analyse in detail what might be needed or to outline learning from good practices in the UK and abroad. This report seeks to address that omission.

The report has been compiled following a literature review, an analysis of prison statistics and of Prisons Inspectorate and other reports about women's prisons as well as visits to four prison establishments. Discussions were held with a number of young women prisoners and staff. An expert seminar was held to discuss a draft of the report in August 2015.

5. Government Response to the Justice Committee's Ninth Report of Session 2014-15 Prisons: Planning and Policies

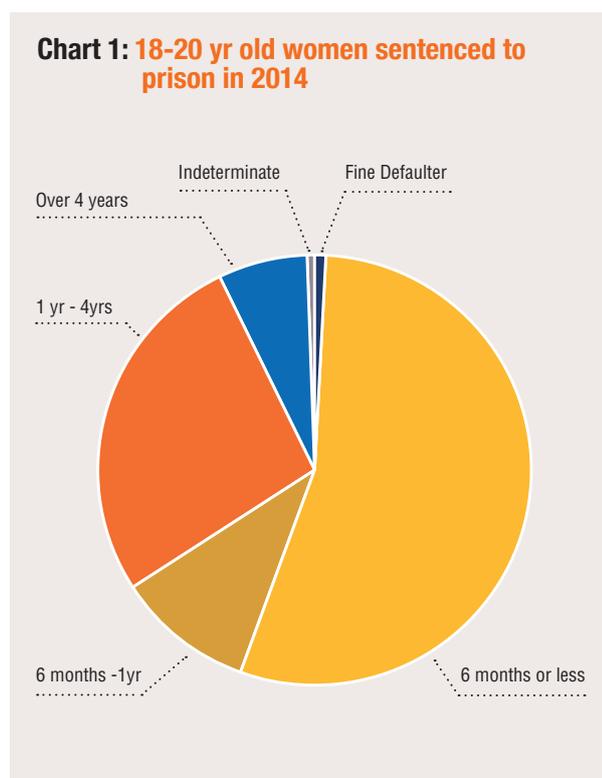
6. <http://iapdeathsincustody.independent.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Harris-Review-Report2.pdf> 4.33

THE CURRENT SITUATION

a) Numbers

In 2014, 402 young women aged 18 to 20 were received into prison under sentence, (out of a total of 7,033 women). Of the 402, 220 were sentenced to six months or less⁷ as shown in **Chart 1**. A further 808 21-24 year olds received immediate prison sentences.⁸

Chart 1: 18-20 yr old women sentenced to prison in 2014



On 30 June 2015, there were 171 young women aged 18, 19 and 20 in prison out of a total women's prison population of 3,904.⁹ Of the 171, 132 were serving a custodial sentence, 26 were on remand awaiting trial and 13 had been convicted and were awaiting sentence.¹⁰ A further 366 women were in the 21-24 age group, of which 72 were on remand and 294 serving sentences.¹¹

The number of receptions and the average population of young adult women has fallen substantially in recent years. 18-24 year old women as a percentage of the total female prison population fell from 24% in 2008 to 16% in 2014. As Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) have put it, "the reduction in young adults over recent years in total and as a percentage of the total prison population has been significant, and is to be welcomed. However, those who remain are some of the most vulnerable, troubled young adults and have complex needs¹²."

Chart 2: 18-20 year old Females under sentence by Offence

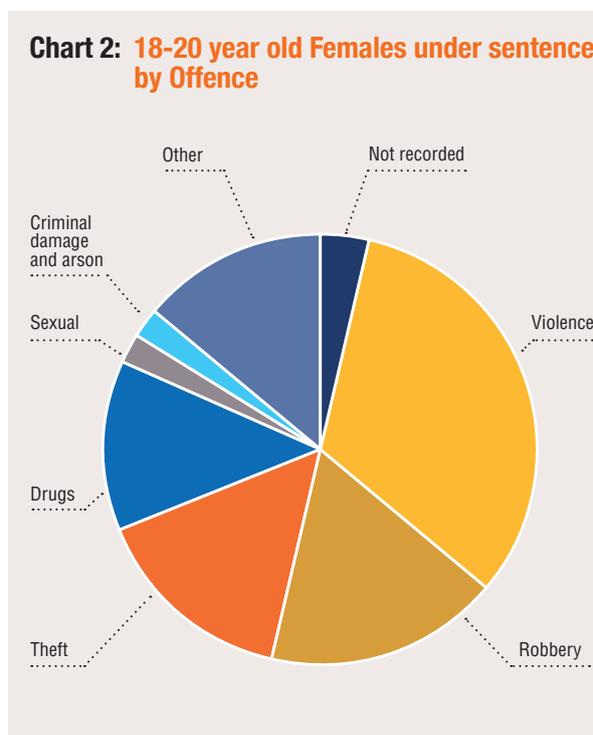


Chart 2 shows that of the 132 18-20 year old females serving prison sentences at the end of June 2015, 43 had been convicted of violent offences, 23 of robbery, 20 of theft and 17 of drugs offences.¹³ While young women are more likely than older ones to be in prison for violent offences, women's offending is, for the most part, not of the most serious nature.

7. Prison receptions 2014 Table A2.1 <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/offender-management-statistics-quarterly-october-to-december-2014-and-annual>

8. Prison Receptions 2014 Table A2.3 <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/offender-management-statistics-quarterly-october-to-december-2014-and-annual>

9. Prison Population 2015 <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/offender-management-statistics-quarterly-january-to-march-2015> Table A1.7: Prison population under 21 by type of custody and sex and Table A1.6: Prison population by type of custody, age and sex

10. ibid

11. Prison Population 2015 Table A1.6: Prison population by type of custody, age and sex <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/offender-management-statistics-quarterly-january-to-march-2015>

12. HMIP Submission to the Harris Review

13. Prison Population 2015 <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/offender-management-statistics-quarterly-january-to-march-2015> Table A1.3b: Prison population under an immediate custodial sentence by offence group, age group and sex

The 2015 Conservative Manifesto promised to “improve the treatment of women offenders, exploring how new technology may enable more women with young children to serve their sentence in the community”, but at the time of writing no details have emerged about how this will be implemented.

In view of the fact that half of 18-20 year old women sentenced to prison receive sentences of six months or less, and the fact that over half of women receiving such prison sentences are convicted of theft and handling stolen goods,¹⁴ there is considerable scope for greater use of community based sentences.

While numbers are very small, consideration needs to be given to meeting the needs of young women facing very long or indeterminate sentences.

There is now a statutory obligation on the Secretary of State for Justice to ensure that the needs of women are addressed in “arrangements for the supervision and rehabilitation of persons convicted of offences” and it is important to ensure that this includes the particular needs of young women.¹⁵

b) Characteristics and needs

There has been little specific research about the characteristics of young adult women in custody. A 2014 report by the Criminal Justice Inspectorates about girls in the criminal justice system contained information about under-eighteens in custody.¹⁶ The small number of girls under 18 in custody are currently all held outside the prison system, either in Secure Children’s Homes or Secure Training Centres. The Inspectorate report found that these girls had a wide range of complex needs. And earlier studies have found that almost half of girls in custody reported having been in care.¹⁷

It is almost certainly the case that young adult women in custody share these characteristics. Many will have suffered from abuse and trauma and experience mental health and addiction problems. Some of the experiences young women have in prison may compound the damaging experiences of childhood and adolescence, but a period in custody may also offer the chance to make a fresh start and to address some of the underlying problems which have led young women into trouble. INQUEST’s submission to the Harris Review noted that *“many young women enter the criminal justice system as a result of unmet welfare needs including neglect, abuse and poverty”* (p 23). Women in Prison in their submission suggested that women have high rates of trauma, victimisation, substance misuse and mental health issues. Following her visit to the UK in 2014, the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women recommended the establishment of specific safeguards to ensure that women’s histories of victimisation and abuse are taken into consideration when making decisions about incarceration, especially for non-violent crimes.¹⁸

Women in Prison have argued that further research is needed on the specific needs of young adults. Young adulthood *“is a time of significant hormonal change for young men and young women. The impacts of these hormonal changes and the way they affect behaviour, resilience and feelings of being able to cope in both young men and young women should be further explored and considered in the identification of and response to vulnerability”*¹⁹ NOMS has recently recognised that *“the parts of the brain associated with impulse control, and regulation and interpretation of emotions, are the last to mature, and continue to develop well into adulthood. This means that control over impulses and emotions is likely to be poorer among younger adult women”*.²⁰

14. Immediate custodial sentenced receptions of females, by offence group and sentence length in 2014, excluding Quarter 2(1), England and Wales <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/foi-releases-for-august-2015>

15. S.10 Offender Rehabilitation Act 2014, amending Offender Management Act 2007 s 3(6A)

16. <http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2014/12/Girls-in-the-Criminal-Justice-System.pdf>

17. Tye D 2009

18. UN A/HRC/29/27/Add.2

19. Women in Prison submission to Harris Review

20. NOMS Better Outcomes for Women Offenders, September 2015

NOMS has also noted that *“younger women are particularly susceptible to the influence of peers, as they are still in the process of developing a stable identity. It is particularly important to promote the development of a healthy, pro-social identity in younger adults, to provide a positive influence on their development, and to help young women become more self-sufficient and less reliant on others”*. Women’s offending is often driven by abusive and coercive relationships, and this may be particularly true for young women.²¹

Recently available data has not surprisingly found that young adult women in prison are much less likely to be mothers of dependent children than are older women. In 2012, between 3% and 4% of 18-20 year olds in prison are estimated to have had dependent children compared to 24-31% of women overall. 16-21% of women in the 21-24 age group are thought to have been mothers.²² While numbers are small, it is important that appropriate provision is made for them.

c) Young women’s experiences in custody

There is limited recent evidence about what young women think of their time in prison. A Thematic review published by HMIP in 2010 drew on survey data from 2006-8.²³ This found that for 66 (35%) of the survey questions young women reported a poorer experience than women aged 21 and over and a better experience for 27 (14%) of the questions. There was no significant difference for the other 98 questions.

Young adult women reported a poorer experience in the first few days and were less likely to have felt safe on their first night. They were also more likely to have felt threatened or intimidated by staff, and say that staff had made insulting remarks about them or their family. They reported a poorer experience on wings, such as having

access to clean clothes and showers, and only a quarter (24%) said that the food was good compared with 38% of women aged 21 and over. Young adult women were also less likely to feel that staff treated them with respect or report that they had been involved in activities in the prison. However, young adult women were more positive about visits and staff help in maintaining contact with family and friends.

More recently it has become clear that particular attention is required to meet the needs of young women who move into the adult prison system from the juvenile estate. HMIP have found that the small number of young women entering prison from Secure Training Centres need particular support to integrate into the main population. *“Holloway showed what can be done to support this vulnerable and needy group”*.²⁴ Staff at Peterborough Prison visit girls at the Secure Training Centre in order to prepare them for the forthcoming move.²⁵ At our expert seminar it was suggested that what might be helpful is for young women to be enabled to spend a weekend at the adult prison before being transferred. In a discussion group in an adult prison, a young woman who had moved from an STC ten days after her eighteenth birthday explained how different the experience was and how ill-prepared she had been for the change. Without support, her first weeks in the new prison were marked by her ‘kicking off’ and spending time in segregation.

More broadly, it is the attitudes and behaviour of staff which seems key to ensuring that young adults are appropriately managed within the prison setting. The Harris Review concluded that *“those working with these very vulnerable young people need to have the necessary skills to support them through the custody process.”* This involves an understanding of the social care elements of the role as well as security. In discussion with young women in prison undertaken as part of this research, most

21. Prison Reform Trust briefing Why Focus on reducing women’s imprisonment, July 2015

22. Female offenders and child dependents Ministry of Justice

23. <http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprison/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2014/05/Women-in-prison-short-thematic-2010-rps-.pdf>

24. http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprison/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2014/10/HMIP-AR_2013-141.pdf

25. Interview

suggested that staff needed to show greater patience, tolerance and flexibility in applying standards and rules - although one young woman saw merit in a more military approach. The need to improve the ratio of female to male prison officers and governors is often commented on in HMIP inspections of women's prisons, and this is particularly important when there are young vulnerable women to manage. When the Prison and Probation Ombudsman looked at why women and young people in custody do not tend to make formal complaints, they found *"widespread mistrust of the internal complaints system, fear of reprisal and a belief that formal complaints were a waste of time as they would not be dealt with, or would be tampered with by staff."*²⁶ For Women in Prison, training in gender responsive and trauma-informed ways of working are required. It is encouraging that in a number of settings accreditation is being sought as an 'enabling environment' - that is a place where positive relationships promote well-being for prisoners and staff alike.²⁷ 2015 has seen training sessions on trauma-informed practice in most women's prisons.²⁸

There are still, however, some fundamental weaknesses to overcome. There was consensus at our expert seminar that there are insufficient staff in women's prisons - the ratio of one staff member for 24 prisoners was considered too high and made no allowance for the greater needs of young adults. In London at least, staff are not recruited specifically to a women's prison but allocated after a three day training course.

While resolving such matters requires long term cultural change, there are some more straightforward practical issues which can start to help to make young women's time in prison less damaging. At one prison, young women were made to feel more comfortable by being given duvets rather than blankets and to make their cells more homely than is strictly permitted

by the rules. A number of establishments have developed ways of enabling young women to buy cheap or second-hand, but stylish, clothes. In another, the Independent Monitoring Board reported that while older prisoners in general consider that food portions are usually satisfactory, "many younger women find that they are inadequate"²⁹. Focusing on where young women stay, what they wear and what they eat seem to be the basic building blocks from which an age appropriate environment can be created.

“ MORE BROADLY, IT IS THE ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOUR OF STAFF WHICH SEEM KEY TO ENSURING THAT YOUNG ADULTS ARE APPROPRIATELY MANAGED WITHIN THE PRISON SETTING ”

26. http://www.ppo.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Why-do-women-and-young-people-in-custody-not-make-formal-complaints_final.pdf#view=FitH

27. <http://www.enablingenvironments.com/>

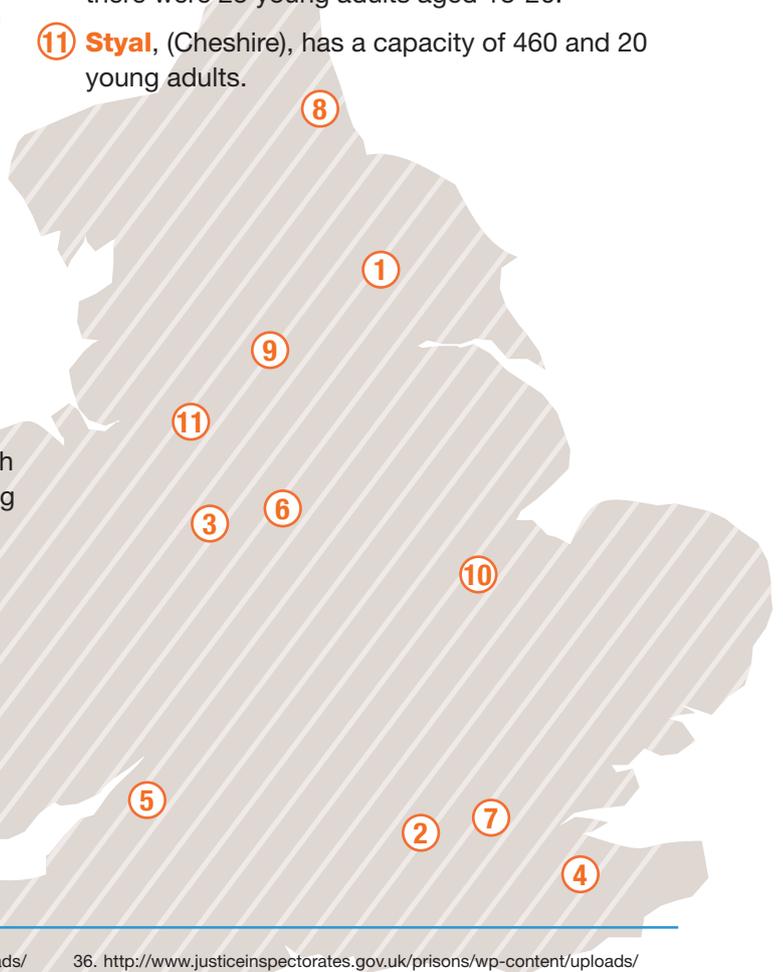
28. <http://www.onesmallthing.org.uk/news-item/stephanie-covington-at-drake-hall/>

29. <http://www.imb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Styal-2014-15.pdf>

Where are young adult women held?

There are no Young Offender Institutions which exclusively accommodate young adult women. All young adult women in custody are mostly integrated with adults in the prison system. At the time of writing, there are 11 women's prisons in England and Wales which take young women.

- ① **Askham Grange**, (York) is an open prison for sentenced adult and young adult women. In July 2014 it had an operational capacity of 128 and a population of 100. There was one young offender under the age of 21.³⁰
- ② **Bronzefield**, (Greater London) is a privately-run prison with an operational capacity of 527. In April 2013 it held 446 women of whom 22 were young offenders.³¹ According to the 2013-14 Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) report it holds approximately 50 young offenders aged between 18-21 who are accommodated in the same house blocks as the adult women.³²
- ③ **Drake Hall**, (Staffordshire), is a closed prison for women with a capacity of 315. According to the 2013-14 IMB report, the number of young offenders out of the total averaged nine.³³
- ④ **East Sutton Park**, (Kent), is an open prison with a capacity of 92 women of whom eight are young offenders.³⁴
- ⑤ **Eastwood Park**, (Gloucestershire) has a capacity of 363 with 293 adult places, 58 young offender places, and 12 places for mothers and up to 13 babies.³⁵
- ⑥ **Foston Hall**, (Derbyshire), is a local women's closed establishment, which holds remand, unsentenced, short and long-term young adults and adult prisoners, including those serving life sentences. It has a capacity of 304.
- ⑦ **Holloway**, (Greater London), has a capacity of 591 of whom about 5% are young women aged between 18-20.³⁶
- ⑧ **Low Newton**, (Durham), has a capacity of 329. In September 2014 there were 298 women of whom 10 were under 21.
- ⑨ **New Hall**, (West Yorkshire) can accommodate up to 415 residents from the age of 18.³⁷ In February 2012 just under 10% of the population was under 21.³⁸
- ⑩ **Peterborough**, (Cambridgeshire), is a privately-run prison with a capacity of 384. One of its 10 wings is for 18-25 year olds.³⁹ In June 2014 there were 25 young adults aged 18-20.
- ⑪ **Styal**, (Cheshire), has a capacity of 460 and 20 young adults.



30. <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisonswp-content/uploads/sites/4/2014/12/Askham-Grange-web-2014.pdf>

31. <http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/prisonswp-content/uploads/sites/4/2014/03/bronzefield-2013.pdf>

32. <http://www.imb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/bronzefield-2013-14.pdf>

33. <http://www.imb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/drake-hall-2013-14.pdf.pdf>

34. <http://www.imb.org.uk/reports/2014-annual-reports/page/2/>

35. <http://www.imb.org.uk/reports/2014-annual-reports/page/2/>

36. <http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/prisonswp-content/uploads/sites/4/2014/03/holloway-2013.pdf>

37. <http://www.imb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/new-hall-2013-14.pdf>

38. <http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/prisonswp-content/uploads/sites/4/2014/03/new-hall-2012.pdf>

39. <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisonswp-content/uploads/sites/4/2014/10/Peterborough-web-2014.pdf>

Living arrangements for young adult women

The arrangements for accommodating young women in these establishments vary, but in most young adults are fully integrated with the adult population.

At Holloway in 2013 HMIP found that the small number of young adults were integrated with the adult population and staff knew who they were. They received some support and most of those with whom the inspectors spoke felt well looked after. Our expert seminar heard how the decision to integrate young adults some years back had led to reductions in violence and self-harm, thanks in part to the quasi-parenting role provided by some of the older women prisoners.

At Bronzefield, by contrast, in 2013, inspectors were not assured that the distinct needs of the sometimes very young women held were identified or met. Twenty-two young adults were accommodated within the general population; the youngest was 18.

At Low Newton, according to the IMB adult prisoners and young offenders are integrated. There are no more than 30% of young offenders on each wing, with risk assessments carried out before it is decided on which wing a particular young woman should be located. HMIP found that most felt well cared for but would have valued the opportunity to participate in a forum specifically dedicated to their age group. HMIP also questioned the placement of young adults on wings catering for long-term prisoners.

At Eastwood Park “the prison management and some prisoners felt that the challenges of managing young adults had been reduced by mixing them with adults,” but HMIP were concerned that their specific needs were not identified and addressed in a number of areas. HMIP recommended that young adults should be located together, where there is specific regime provision and staff dedicated to them.

Some prisons do accommodate young adults in a specific location. At Peterborough, there is a specific wing dedicated to women under the age of 25 and HMIP found that young adults were provided with some very good specific support. At East Sutton Park young adult women are accommodated together in one room. Inspectors considered furnishings were sparse and women had to share the single chair, table and television available. At Drake Hall, young offenders were previously accommodated together in one of the 15 residential units but this had become, in the words of one interviewee, something of a “party house”⁴⁰. Young women are now integrated into the wider prison community and according to HMIP this appears to have worked well. In another prison, four young women on the enhanced privilege level were allowed to share a dormitory but within a week all were back on the basic level.⁴¹

At Eastwood Park HMIP found 21 young women aged 18 to 20 were accommodated within the general population. They were allocated to particular dedicated cells but were not formally recognised as having specific needs within the institution’s equality protocol. At New Hall, “some younger women wanted more opportunities to interact socially with others of a similar age in other houses”⁴².

In discussions with young offenders in prison, a number of tensions were mentioned between older and younger prisoners. Young women for example like to play loud music and on occasion wander around the units in their pyjamas (although this is against the rules). Younger women admitted to mocking some of the older prisoners too. For these and other reasons young women are not always popular with older prisoners. In another prison where there are no 18-20 year olds but about 10% of the population is aged 21-24, staff described the younger prisoners as “louder and more argumentative”.

40. Interview with staff member

41. Personal communication staff member

42. Report on an unannounced inspection of HMP & YOI New Hall by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons 8–19 June 2015 <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprison/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2015/10/New-Hall-Web-2015.pdf>

Given the numbers involved, there may not be a strong case for developing specific establishments for young adult women. Further research is however needed to identify if better outcomes are achieved when young women are simply mixed with the adult population, or accommodated in separate wings, units or locations within adult prisons.

Consideration also needs to be given of the kinds of risk and needs assessments that should be completed when integrating young adult women with women over the age of 21 and to strengthening the case management of young women so that their experience in custody is as positive as possible.

Women's prisons may also benefit from the development of specialist approaches such as those provided at HMP Send. While the prison takes women only from the age of 21, its range of provision for women facing particular kinds of challenges (whether with drugs, mental health or other problems) offers the opportunity for a more individualised approach than is usual.

Standards and expectations for young adult women in custody

Prisons for men and those for women generally operate within the same rules and policies. These comprise the Prison Act, the Prison Rules and, for under-21-year-olds, the Young Offender Institution Rules. All women's prisons are additionally required to comply with gender specific standards for working with women prisoners, which are set out in *Prison Service Order PSO 4800*, one of the long-term mandatory instructions which regulate how prisons are run. The aim of *PSO 4800* is to enable staff to be aware of the gender specific issues that affect women prisoners and respond appropriately.

PSO 4800 includes some specific guidance about how prison establishments should meet the needs of young women.⁴³

The PSO points out the need to address vulnerabilities such as high levels of self-harm, mental health needs and victimisation from their peer group. The PSO also says that younger prisoners will tend to need more supervision and organisation in their leisure time and that they should be consulted at least once a year to determine their need for particular activities, regimes and programmes. Younger women may need particular supervision and encouragement to use their spare time constructively and to avoid boredom and may need particular help in overcoming barriers to learning.

The PSO describes how many older prisoners take on the role of parent to young prisoners but points to the risks involved in mixing age groups – “*young women may be vulnerable to exploitation by other prisoners – both adults and other YOs*”.

In 2012 the Women and Equalities Group within NOMS published an additional guide to working with women offenders.⁴⁴ *A Distinct Approach: A guide to working with women offenders* identified similar concerns to the PSO about the raised vulnerability of young women including levels of self-harm, mental health needs and victimisation from their peer group.

Young women were considered likely to need: “*violence/abuse counselling, help to raise self-esteem, help to resist peer pressure, offending behaviour work around acquisitive crime, and substance misuse support. Younger women may need particular encouragement to use their spare time constructively and to avoid boredom*”. In 2015, *Better Outcomes for Women Offenders* sets out principles for commissioning prison and probation services for both young adult and adult women, taking into account the requirement to meet the particular needs of female offenders under the Offender Rehabilitation Act 2014 and relevant recommendations from the Women's Estate Review.⁴⁵

43. <https://www.justice.gov.uk/offenders/psos>

44. *A Distinct Approach: A guide to working with women offenders* March 2012, NOMS Women and Equalities Group <https://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/publications/noms/2012/guide-working-with-women-offenders.pdf>

45. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/457922/Better_Outcomes_for_Women_Offenders_September_2015.pdf

HM Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP), who scrutinise all of the prisons, have also set out some specific expectations in relation to young women in prison.⁴⁶

It expects young women to be treated equitably and according to their individual needs. The indicators that inspectors use to judge their treatment include whether staff are aware of the distinct needs of young women and recognise and respond to individual levels of maturity.

HMIP also expect prisons to undertake comprehensive risk assessments to ensure that young women are, and feel, safe from other prisoners. All young women should be given, where appropriate, a multi-disciplinary care plan which is kept up to date and reviewed regularly. Behaviour management processes should be applied proportionately to young women. Young women should be consulted about the range of age appropriate activities offered and resettlement support should reflect the specific needs of young women.

Young women arriving in the adult prison system from the children and young people's estate after turning 18 should be carefully prepared for transfer into the adult estate, identified systematically on arrival and actively supported; and staff should be aware of the needs and entitlements of young women who have been in care, and ensure that these are met.

At a management level, HMIP expect to see evidence that a strategic approach to safer custody makes reference to the specific needs of young adults and that a prison has an equality and diversity policy in place that outlines how the needs of all groups within the prison, including young adults, will be recognised and addressed.

There is a case for consolidating existing guidance in respect of young women in prison and for developing concrete operational models for putting this into practice, drawing on examples of good practice from the under-18 and adult estates.

“
**IT [HMIP] EXPECTS
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THEIR INDIVIDUAL
NEEDS**”

46. http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisons/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2014/02/final-womens-expectation_web-09-14-2.pdf

KEY ISSUES



“
**THERE IS A
CLEAR NEED
TO ENSURE
THAT THEIR
AGE SPECIFIC
NEEDS ARE
CONSIDERED,**”

Meeting specific needs

Since young adult women are in large part integrated with older women throughout the prison estate, there is a clear need to ensure that their age specific needs are considered and age appropriate measures are put in place to meet them. Recent evidence from HMIP and IMBs suggest that there is much more that could be done to achieve this.

In their 2011/12 Annual Report, HMIP considered that young adult men were much more consistently recognised as a distinct group with separate need from older adults than young adult women: *“A failure to identify and address the specific needs of young adult women is becoming a consistent feature of our inspections of women’s prisons”*. More recent reports have painted the same picture. At Eastwood Park in 2013 “services for this group were

rudimentary and there had been little thought about their specific needs” and in the same year inspectors were “not assured that the distinct needs of the sometimes very young women held were identified or met at Bronzefield”.⁴⁷ More positively the IMB at Styal reported that a monthly forum for young women was held and a similar forum had met at Drake Hall, although no detailed analysis of the needs of the young adults had yet been undertaken.

Some of the specific needs of young adult women will be similar to those of girls under the age of 18. During a recent study, inspectors were told that all staff were trained to work with girls and to be aware of their needs and difference of approach required. “This included higher levels of self-harm and mental health needs amongst girls; that building trust/relationship was important; and that the type of bullying that might be present was different to a male establishment. There was also consideration of the importance of ensuring gender balance of staff on residential units and efforts to make units more homely”.⁴⁸

While there is consensus that analysis of the specific needs of young women should be undertaken in prison, there is no specific template or checklist which staff can use to do this. Consideration should be given to creating such an instrument.

When such analyses are undertaken, they are likely to identify issues in a number of areas.

a) Education and activities

The NOMS guide *A Distinct Approach* reports that “Ofsted have highlighted that the level of education, training and employment achievements among young women are often very low. Many young women will have been excluded from school so their last memories of education may not be positive. The ‘building blocks’ of learning may not be there and they may have limited capacity to learn until these skills are developed.”

This is illustrated at Foston Hall where the IMB found “an increasing number of younger prisoners is entering the prison below level 1” (which is the equivalent of GCSE Grades D-G). Efforts to meet the educational needs of young adults have a number of weaknesses. At Peterborough in 2011 education was not suitably geared to the needs of young adults: “In the previous two years the prison had invested in the development of vocational training to ensure it provided specific activities for young women and those with longer sentences. However, some of these courses were not accredited or were accredited at a level that was not high enough to promote employability.

HMIP found in 2013 that young adults at Eastwood Park were less likely than adults to make progress in education. There were insufficient and missed opportunities to provide accredited learning and the needs of some groups, such as young adults, were not being adequately addressed.⁴⁹

In a discussion group, held as part of this research a number of young women considered the education too basic and objected to sharing classes with older women. As part of the current review of prison education, it is clearly important that consideration is given to how learning contributes to the effective rehabilitation of young adult women.⁵⁰

In its evidence to the Harris review, Women in Prison note that “there continues to be only one women-specific accredited offending behaviour programme (the CARE programme) and this is not specifically designed for young women”. Staff at one prison visited during this research thought that some of the programmes designed to assist young women to manage their anger “barely scratched the surface”, ignoring the deeper causes and requiring an individualised approach. One young woman who attended a discussion group in a prison had lost a child and had been waiting what was in her view far too long for bereavement counselling.

47. HMP Bronzefield by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, 8–19 April 2013

48. <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/cjji/inspections/girlsinthecjs/>

49. Report on an unannounced inspection of HMP Eastwood Park by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, 11–22 November 2013

50. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-prison-education-terms-of-reference>

Formal programmes are not the only example where age appropriate activities for young women are lacking. At Foston Hall, HMIP found that provision for younger women was under-developed, especially in relation to dedicated activities. At New Hall “some older and younger women complained of boredom; a ‘knit and natter’ club for both groups was being planned”⁵¹ although experience from elsewhere suggests young women may need more than this.

There are however, a number of examples of good practice in the custodial estate. At one prison, a special film night was organised for young women, though the activity was marred by a serious assault. Inspectors found seven young adults doing their Duke of Edinburgh Bronze award scheme under the care of dedicated gym staff at Bronzefield. One prisoner, who was on ROTL, was playing football for a local football club. The Duke of Edinburgh Award is also available to young women on the young offender wing at Peterborough. Six young women were working towards an award when inspectors visited in 2014, and some were released on temporary licence to work in the community. Young women could participate in a project involving visits to schools in Peterborough to talk about their experiences in prison. Despite a finding that overall, provision for this group was good at Peterborough, some of the young women who spoke to Inspectors complained of being bored.⁵² At Holloway a media suite is being developed as part of a prison radio service and training courses with potential employment opportunities (as baristas, lifeguards or football stewards) planned, with young women as a particular target.

Some prisons benefit from voluntary sector input. For example at Holloway, the Nia Project has continued to advise on safe choices for young women who have been involved in violent offending, gang culture, sexual exploitation or been victims of violence. It offers a group

work course, helping young women to explore their identity and relationships. At Low Newton sexuality was the one area in which specific provision was soon to be available for young adults through a local young person’s support group.

b) Substance misuse

HMIP’s thematic review in 2010 found that young adult women were more likely than older women to report an alcohol problem on arrival at prison and to feel that they might have an alcohol problem on release. Although they were less likely to report arriving at prison with a drug problem, they were more likely to report developing a drug problem in prison. In 2011, HMIP found that at Peterborough assessment data indicated a much higher need for support for young adult women with alcohol problems, but nothing different or specific for this group had been provided. Substance misuse is also likely to be a continuing concern in respect to young women in custody and there is a need to identify specific programmes or approaches which can help address problems in this age group.

c) Suicide and self-harm

Between 2000 and 2014 there were 15 deaths among 18-20-year-old women in custody and a further 13 among 21-24-year-olds. The last self-inflicted deaths of young adult women were in 2011 (one death in each of the two age groups).⁵³ The fact that only two of the 87 cases considered by the Harris Review were females meant it was not possible to identify specific trends or themes. Longer term analysis found that that between 2002 and 2013, the average rate of self-inflicted deaths per 1,000 was much higher for female 18-24 year old prisoners than for male, with an average of 0.67 incidents per 1,000 male prisoners and 1.51 incidents per 1,000 female prisoners. While this pattern has

51. Report on an unannounced inspection of HMP & YOI New Hall by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons 8–19 June 2015 <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisons/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2015/10/New-Hall-Web-2015.pdf>

52. Report on an unannounced inspection of HMP and YOI Peterborough (Women) by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, 16–27 June 2014

53. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/safety-in-custody-quarterly-update-to-december-2014-and-annual>

changed in the last five years, with a higher rate of self-inflicted deaths among male prisoners compared to female prisoners, the pattern is still different between young adult males and young adult females. Analysis of data between 2002 and 2013 (which is the only period during which this data is available) shows that the average rate of self-inflicted deaths generally decreased with age for female prisoners (with the exception of 15-17 year olds), which is the inverse of what happens with males. This meant that from 2002 to 2013 a higher proportion of young adult women who were 18-24 took their own lives than older females.

Young adults are also more likely to self-harm than older prisoners. In 2013 18-20-year-olds accounted for 17% of self-harm incidents among women prisoners although this fell to 11% in 2014. The number of individual women in the 18-20 year age group who self-harmed represented 12% in 2013 and 11% in 2014.⁵⁴

At Eastwood Park in 2013, young adults were likely to be involved in self-harm. In the year to September 2013, HMIP reported that 31% of self-harm incidents were by young women aged 18 to 21, who accounted for 9.4% of the population. Data showed that a very large number of self-harm incidents were being carried out by a small number of prisoners, with some young adults being particularly prolific self-harmers. However the IMB found that subsequently there was a significant drop in self-harm incidents among young offenders, from 281 incidents in 2013 to 98 in 2014. While inspectors found that Styal did not specifically monitor the safety of young adults⁵⁵ at Drake Hall each young woman was discussed at the weekly multi-agency safety and health meetings and an allocated officer saw each woman twice a week to offer support and identify any concerns. In New Hall the suicide and self-harm prevention policy (dated April 2015)

was found to be comprehensive, referring to self-harm among young women, “recognising their specific risks and needs, which included more frequent and spontaneous acts of self-harm”.⁵⁶

d) Violence and anti-social behaviour

NOMS has recently noted that “evidence suggests that there are gender differences in the expression of anti-social behaviour among maturing boys and girls. Girls tend to display less physical aggression but more relational forms of aggression, such as ostracism of peers, non-physical bullying, and manipulation, than do boys”.⁵⁷

Nevertheless, in the women’s prison estate, young women are over represented in assaults and anti-social behaviour. Compared to males the incidence of assaults on staff for example are very low, with 17 assaults on staff by 18-20 year old women recorded in 2014.⁵⁸ There are examples of assaults by young women on other prisoners however, and participants in the expert seminar considered that levels of violence are sometimes under-estimated, particularly when young women have affiliations to gangs.

At Eastwood Park HMIP found that 18-21 year-old women who represented 9.4% of the population, had been involved in 16% of incidents of anti-social behaviour in the year up to the inspection – but this needed greater scrutiny. As with self-harm, the IMB found improvements between 2013 and 2014 with “a drop in anti-social behaviour and assaults between prisoners in the year and a big drop in incidents involving young offenders”. At New Hall Inspectors found that incidents involving young adult women (aged 18-21) were not specifically monitored to see if they were more likely to display problematic behaviour.⁵⁹

54. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/safety-in-custody-quarterly-update-to-december-2014-and-annual>

55. Report on an unannounced inspection of HMP & YOI Styal by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, 3–14 November 2014

56. Report on an unannounced inspection of HMP & YOI New Hall by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, 8–19 June 2015 <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisons/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2015/10/New-Hall-Web-2015.pdf>

57. Better Outcomes for Women Offenders, September 2015

58. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/safety-in-custody-quarterly-update-to-december-2014-and-annual>

59. Report on an unannounced inspection of HMP & YOI New Hall by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons 8–19 June 2015 <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisons/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2015/10/New-Hall-Web-2015.pdf>

NOMS has recently proposed that “targeting bullying behaviour and helping younger women to build healthier, more positive relationships with each other will help reduce the level of negative peer influence they might be subjected to. This could aid the development of healthier and more robust identities”.⁵⁹ Identifying the most effective ways of doing this should be a priority.

e) Incentives, earned privileges and discipline

INQUEST’s analysis of deaths in custody concluded that “many young women have a complex set of needs (including acute mental health problems, histories of substance misuse problems, abuse and self-harm) yet their symptoms and distress are often managed through increased discipline and segregation leading to isolation.”⁶¹ Inspections have found an over-reliance on adjudications for dealing with low level offences, especially for young women.⁶² East Sutton Park prison held 16 women under 21 in 2011 and these young adults were over-represented in some disciplinary processes.⁶³ In 2014 inspectors found two young adults at Low Newton who were being disciplined by being locked up alone in their cells for most of the day with very little to occupy them, despite being known to be at risk of suicide or self-harm.⁶⁴

At Drake Hall there had been concerns about the behaviour of young adults, who had previously been accommodated in one house, but with their subsequent integration with older women prisoners, this appeared to have improved. At New Hall, Inspectors found more use of informal, short term sanctions such as loss of television for a couple of hours or exclusion for a short time from an activity, where the sanctions could be tied more tangibly to the behaviour that had prompted them.⁶⁵

The system of Incentives and Earned Privileges is often the same for women as men and for young adults as adults. While Downview was holding women in 2013, young adults were disproportionately represented among the small number on the basic level of the IEP scheme, for whom the weekend regime was curtailed. At Peterborough in 2011, “an appropriately differentiated approach to Incentives and Earned Privileges had been developed”.

In discussions with young women held as part of this research, some felt that more tolerance was needed in application of the system. According to one, some members of staff “go hard on it”, while others do show more flexibility, for example in relation to the way that rooms are decorated and maintained. There seems to be a reasonable case for specific systems of discipline and incentives to be developed for young women or for individual establishments to be able to develop approaches which best fit their needs. In this respect, the announcement that prison governors are to be given greater autonomy in running establishments may enable the development of more appropriate and individualised ways of managing young adult women.⁶⁶ For the youngest, access to electronic games (such as Xboxes) may prove a more powerful incentive than existing privileges.

f) Resettlement

A recent study has found that the resettlement needs of girls and young women have been ignored partly because they make up a small proportion of the custodial population, and partly because they usually offend less frequently and seriously than young males.⁶⁷

Particular challenges include the distance from home and the fact that they are less likely to return to family than young adult males. Housing is a particular priority for this age group.

60. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/457922/Better_Outcomes_for_Women_Offenders_September_2015.pdf

61. Inquest http://inquest.org.uk/pdf/reports/INQUEST_T2A_report_final.pdf

62. Report on an announced inspection of HMP/YOI Drake Hall 4–15 March 2013 by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons

63. Report on an announced inspection of HMP East Sutton Park 21–25 November 2011 by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons

64. Report on an unannounced inspection of HMP & YOI Low Newton by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, 29 September–10 October 2014

65. <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/cjji/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2015/03/Learning-Disabilities-phase-two-report.pdf>

66. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-34608630>

67. Beyond Youth Custody 2014 Resettlement of Girls and Young women

Inspections have found prisons often fail to identify specific resettlement needs of this age group. At Eastwood Park for example, there was a “lack of any differentiated strategy for the young adult population”. On the other hand at Holloway convicted young offenders have an enhanced entitlement to visits with three every 14 days, (as opposed to one for most adults), which should help to maintain relationships.

There are several examples of good voluntary sector activities with young women in custody. Pecan offers resettlement support for 18-22-year-olds in Holloway and for up to a year after release.⁶⁸ Spurgeon Sisters provide a mentoring service for young offenders aged 18-25 nationwide, signposting and supporting them from custody into the community. The organisation visits Eastwood Park, Foston Hall, Drake Hall, New Hall and Styal. When Inspectors visited New Hall in June 2015 they found two young women were receiving one-to-one mentoring from Spurgeons, “and 37 young women had received mentoring support since May 2014”. The project was set to end in September. It is not clear whether this is due in any way to the reorganisation of the probation service and creation of Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs).⁶⁹

Coaching Inside and Out (CIAO) is also active in Styal offering life coaching to help women change their lives using their own solutions, rather than by telling them what to do.⁷⁰

Other examples of good practice include the Family Engagement Workers that are in place in public sector female prisons. The Harris Review noted a pilot that used an integrated approach to family support including the use of Family Engagement Workers. The approach appeared to result in improved custodial behaviour and reduced self-harm, demonstrating the potential for engaging the family to support desistance.

The Government is committed to ensuring the accommodation of all female prisoners in resettlement prisons and anticipates that all women will be provided with ‘through the gate’ support on release. The IMB at Holloway reported in 2014 that “four women were released into paid employment including a young offender who had no work experience and desperately wanted to work with animals – a placement was found at a local animal shelter, she was released and is still working there”.⁷¹ A distinct approach to resettlement needs to be implemented for women being released from prison.

The changes introduced by the Offender Rehabilitation Act 2014 will provide a year’s post-custody supervision for short-sentenced prisoners for the first time but with it a longer period during which young adults are liable to be breached if they fail to comply.

The expert seminar held in August 2015 heard that already women were being returned to prison for breaches of supervision. Alongside supervision provided by the criminal justice system, there is a need to ensure that local authorities meet their obligations to support those young women who have been looked after by them beyond the age of 18. A review of girls in the youth justice system found serious gaps in this regard in relation to girls under 18 and these are likely to be greater in respect of the 18-21 age group.⁷² The Probation Inspectorate is currently conducting a thematic review of services for women offenders, which provides an opportunity to scrutinise what is available for young women post-custody.⁷³

68. Report on an unannounced inspection of HMP Holloway by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, 28 May–7 June 2013

69. See CLINKS http://www.clinks.org/sites/default/files/basic/files-downloads/early_doors_tracktr.pdf

70. McGregor C 2015 Coaching Behind Bars

71. <http://www.imb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Holloway-2014.pdf>

72. <http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2014/12/Girls-in-the-Criminal-Justice-System.pdf>

73. <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/about-our-inspections/thematic-inspections/call-for-evidence/n>

INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES AND THE WAY FORWARD

In 2010 the United Nations adopted Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules).⁷⁴ These include a number of provisions of particular relevance to young women. For example the rules require that:

- Women prisoners shall be allocated, as far as possible, to prisons close to their home or place of social rehabilitation, taking account of their caretaking responsibilities, as well as the individual woman's preference and the availability of appropriate programmes and services. (Rule 4)
- All staff assigned to work with women prisoners shall receive training relating to the gender-specific needs and human rights of women prisoners. (Rule 33)
- Prison administrators shall develop and implement classification methods addressing the gender-specific needs and circumstances of women prisoners to ensure appropriate and individualized planning and implementation towards those prisoners' early rehabilitation, treatment and reintegration into society. (Rule 40)
- Prison authorities shall utilise options such as home leave, open prisons, halfway houses and community-based programmes and services to the maximum possible extent for women prisoners, to

ease their transition from prison to liberty, to reduce stigma and to re-establish their contact with their families at the earliest possible stage. (Rule 45)

- Appropriate resources shall be made available to devise suitable alternatives for women offenders in order to combine non-custodial measures with interventions to address the most common problems leading to women's contact with the criminal justice system. These may include therapeutic courses and counselling for victims of domestic violence and sexual abuse; suitable treatment for those with mental disability; and educational and training programmes to improve employment prospects. (Rule 60)

In addition, international norms increasingly accept that it should be possible for young adults under the age of 21 to be treated in a way comparable to juveniles and to be subject to the same interventions, when the judge is of the opinion that they are not as mature and responsible for their actions as full adults. The UN Beijing Rules on juvenile justice for example state that "efforts shall also be made to extend the principles embodied in the Rules to young adult offenders." Young adults in general are in a transitional stage of life, which can justify their being dealt with by the juvenile justice agencies and juvenile courts". In England and Wales no such system exists and there is a strong case for introducing it.

74. <http://www.ihra.net/files/2010/11/04/english.pdf>

In the absence of flexible jurisdiction, international norms support the notion of specialised institutions for young adults.⁷⁵ For young adult women there are no specific institutions. Arguably their absence breaches the requirement in the Beijing Rules that: that young female offenders placed in an institution deserve special attention as to their personal needs and problems. They shall by no means receive less care, protection, assistance, treatment and training than young male offenders. Their fair treatment shall be ensured.⁷⁶ The Bangkok Rules require:

- Prison authorities to put in place measures to meet the protection needs of juvenile female prisoners (Rule 36);
- Juvenile female prisoners to have equal access to education and vocational training that are available to juvenile male prisoners (Rule 37) and
- Juvenile female prisoners to have access to age and gender-specific programmes and services, such as counselling for sexual abuse or violence (Rule 38). These provisions can certainly be read to have some application to young women over the age of 18 as well as those under the age of majority. Certainly young women aged 18-21 have less in the way of age appropriate provision than do young men in that age group.

There are a number of ways in which that might be improved.

One would be to make much more vigorous efforts to meet the needs of young adults within the adult estate. This would be easier if the main recommendation of the Corston Review were implemented - that is the creation of suitable, geographically dispersed, small, multi-functional custodial centres⁷⁷

Another might be to make use of the girl's units which until 2013 accommodated under-18s. HMIP suggested that when New Hall had been given notice that the Josephine Butler Unit (for under-18s) was to close, "this created an opportunity to use the skills and experience of the staff from the unit to improve provision for young women in the main prison". It also created an opportunity to house the 18-21 year olds who would benefit from being kept separate from adults.

A third option would be to take a more radical look at the kind of campus model used in certain parts of Europe. *Young Adults in Custody - The Way Forward* proposed that a campus for young offenders of both sexes could include a separate unit for young women to stay in but joint education, work and recreation activities.

Most of the young women who participated in a discussion group in prison said they would have preferred a mixed environment. One, (serving a long sentence) who had been in a Secure Training Centre where boys and girls attend mixed education classes, accepted that this would require close management but would provide a normal environment, more likely to help young women adjust to their release.

75. The Council of Europe's rules on juvenile offenders state that "juveniles who reach the age of majority and young adults dealt with as if they were juveniles shall normally be held in institutions for juvenile offenders or in specialised institutions for young adults unless their social reintegration can be better effected in an institution for adults"

76. United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (The Beijing Rules) Rule 26.4

77. Corston Review 2007

CONCLUSION



“
**THERE IS A CASE
FOR CONSOLIDATING
EXISTING GUIDANCE
IN RESPECT OF
YOUNG WOMEN IN
PRISON**”

The new Government has shown signs of wishing to undertake radical reform of the criminal justice and prison systems. It is “committed to further improving the treatment of female offenders and reducing the number of women in custody”.

This work is being driven and overseen by the Advisory Board on Female Offenders, chaired by Justice Minister Caroline Dinenage MP.

Reviews are due to report next year on education, on youth justice and on residential care (whose remit appears to extend beyond children’s homes to include all settings including prisons where young people in care may find themselves placed). The response to the Harris Review has been published,⁷⁸ and the Justice Committee has started its inquiry into young adults.

78. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/486564/gov-response-harris-review.pdf

It is quite possible that because they are small in number, young adult women in custody will receive relatively little attention in all of these investigations. This would be a mistake. The conclusions of this review are that:

- ▶ **A stronger presumption should be introduced against the use of custody,** both for remand and sentencing for young adult women, particularly for the majority whose offending is non-violent. This would involve increased provision of appropriate diversion and community sentencing opportunities using services and programmes tailored to the needs of troubled young women, backed up by training and information for police, magistrates and judges.
- ▶ **Further research should be undertaken** into the nature and seriousness of the offences involving violence for which women are imprisoned, and effective multi-agency responses.
- ▶ Given the evidence that **sexual abuse and domestic violence are common underlying factors** for young women's involvement in offending, priority should be given to ensuring that they have access to appropriate counselling, support and therapeutic programmes both in custody and in the community.
- ▶ **Systematic research** is undertaken into the benefits and drawbacks of mixing young adult women and adults within adult prisons, the kind of assessments that should be undertaken before doing so, and the range of regimes that should be offered to women in prison.
- ▶ **Existing guidance from NOMS and HMIP on young women should be consolidated** and a more flexible framework of rules and regulations introduced which enables governors to develop appropriate regimes, incentives, and arrangements for education and activities inside prison and on temporary licence in the community. This should reflect international best practice.
- ▶ **Staff, particularly female staff, should be recruited directly to women's prisons** rather than allocated to them. Ratios for young adults should be more generous than adults with specialist training drawing on trauma-informed and enabling environment approaches.
- ▶ **Through the gate mentoring should be prioritised for this age group,** with much greater efforts to arrange housing and work, building on the good practices developed already.
- ▶ **The Advisory Board on Female Offenders** should be asked to monitor and report on outcomes for young women in the criminal justice system, and ensure that particular attention is paid to the needs of young women in custody as well as the scope for early intervention and diversion into women's support services.

FURTHER READING

Available at www.t2a.org.uk

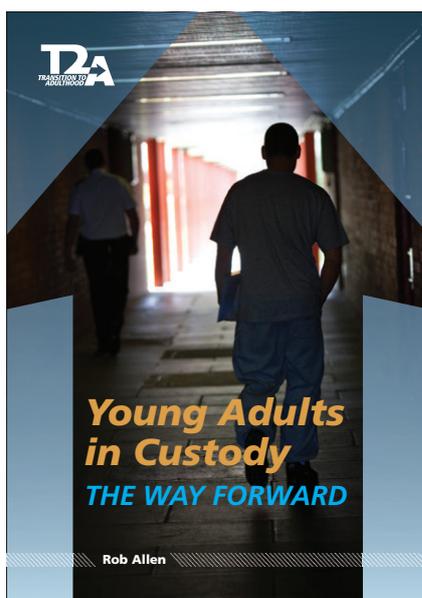
Young Adults in Custody The way forward

Rob Allen

September 2013

The report, 'Young Adults in Custody: The Way Forward,' was written by Rob Allen, co-founder of the Justice and Prisons and former Chair of the Transition to Adulthood Alliance. It includes an examination of the situation in other jurisdictions, including Germany, where young adults can be sentenced either as juveniles or adults, depending on the offence and maturity.

Among recommendations included in the report are that young adults be placed near to home, in institutions which provide high-quality activities. Rob Allen identifies effective leadership from governors as key to meeting the distinct needs of young adults – making specific commitments to meeting the health, development and resettlement needs of that group. His report also recommends a wider range of residential placements, age-appropriate discipline systems, targeted staff training, a remodelling of all YOIs as Secure Colleges and research into effective means of violence reduction which don't reduce activities.



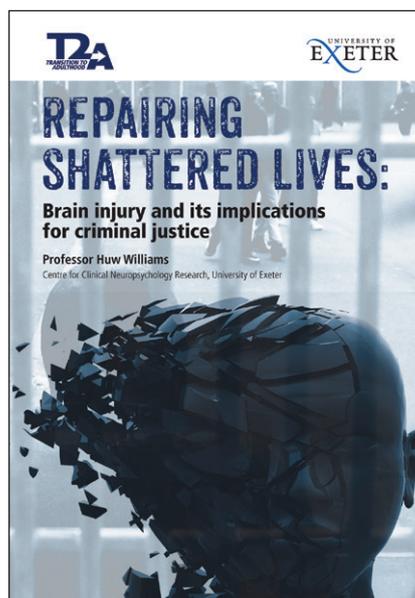
Repairing Shattered Lives: brain injury and its implications for criminal justice

Professor Huw Williams

October 2012

In the report 'Repairing Shattered Lives: Brain injury and its implications for criminal justice', Prof Huw Williams of the University of Exeter notes that a shocking 60% of young people in custody report having experienced some kind of brain injury. Acquired brain injuries can lead maturing brains to "misfire," interrupting the development of temperance (ability to restrain and moderate actions), social judgement and the ability to control impulses. If undetected these injuries, which may be the result of falls, sporting injuries, car accidents or fights, can leave young people untreated and increase their risk of offending.

The report recommends early intervention to identify and manage brain injuries, including training for school staff, to ensure that young people receive the required neuro-rehabilitative support. Repairing Shattered Lives also calls for increased awareness of brain injuries throughout the criminal justice process, including screening of young people as standard.



MEETING THE NEEDS OF YOUNG ADULT WOMEN IN CUSTODY

Rob Allen

One small but important group in the prison system whose needs have not been fully analysed are young adult women aged 18-24. Unlike young adult men, there are not specific establishments for them. When girls reach eighteen they are held in prisons and co-located with older women prisoners. Arrangements to accommodate young adult women vary from one establishment to another.

The Government's focus has centred largely on proposals for improving the system for young men, though it has acknowledged that female offenders might have different needs and risks.

This report analyses in detail what might be needed as well as looking at existing good practice.



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