

## **TRT BRIEFING PAPER**

# **Improving the well-being of Women and Girls**

**February 2017**

## Where we've come from

Our interest in improving well-being for women, and particularly women who are at risk of negative outcomes as a result of specific social or structural issues which they face, was borne out of our involvement in the criminal justice sector.<sup>1</sup> In particular, our interest was prompted by the [2012 Commission on Women Offenders](#).

The Commission recognised that there were a range of interrelated factors which coalesced to have a specific impact on women offenders and recommended that “services and programmes need to be tailored to the multiple and complex needs of women offenders to achieve reductions in reoffending and better outcomes for local communities”.

The Commission recommended that Women's Centres be established ‘for women offenders to enable them to access a consistent range of services to reduce reoffending and bring about behavioural change’.

Feedback we received suggested that, whilst a joined up model of delivery could support women in the criminal justice system, there was a risk of further stigmatising them within their communities by adopting an approach that focussed on their offending. It was suggested that a more holistic approach, which provided support to vulnerable women within a wider community setting could provide better results. As a result, research was carried out into work going on under the banner of “Women’s Centres” in England, Northern Ireland and Wales to see if there was learning to be taken from there which could inform a possible Programme of Work.

From the research, it was proposed that The Trust look to develop two physical “Women’s Centre’s”, one in a rural location, and one in an urban location, which would provide evidence of the benefits of community led approach to engaging and supporting vulnerable women at risk of entering, or already in, the criminal justice system. It is hoped that the findings from this programme would be used to inform policy and practice around support to this target group.

### **Broader issues impacting on women**

It is recognised that there are a wide range of structural and social issues affecting the day to day lives of women which fall under this thematic area of interest. Further research needs to be carried out separately from this report to see if there is a role for The Trust to develop other programme areas. The rest of this document focuses solely on the Women’s Centre Programme (although some of the research findings are obviously relevant to both).

## Our definition

Our approach recognises that there are structural and social issues which can disproportionately impact on the well-being of women and girls. It also recognises that there are some women who are more likely to be impacted by these issues, and therefore suffer negative outcomes, than others.

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<sup>1</sup> 2014 03 28 Developing Women Centres in Scotland - FINAL

We use the term “vulnerable women” to identify those specific groups of women who this might apply to, and who we want to specifically target through our approach.

‘Vulnerable women’ encompasses, but is not limited to:

- women with experience of: (i) poor mental health, (ii) alcohol and drug misuse, (iii) domestic abuse, (iv) housing and budgeting issues; (v) child custody issues; (vi) lack of parenting skills and (vii) unemployment<sup>2</sup>
- women involved in the criminal justice system or at risk of becoming so<sup>3 4</sup>
- women whose lives are limited for reasons and causes that may be attributable to poverty and social disadvantage, abuse and domestic violence, use of drugs and alcohol, poor mental health and involvement in the criminal justice system<sup>5</sup>
- lesbian, bisexual and transgender women, women and girls from diverse communities and those with disabilities.<sup>6</sup>
- girls and women from a looked-after background
- girls and young women not engaging with, or at risk of exclusion from, mainstream education
- women at risk of exclusion or marginalisation as a result of any of the aforementioned issues.

## What we already know

The scale of the problem or the population of ‘vulnerable women’ in Scotland is potentially huge and varies depending on the particular population or target group being considered.

What we do know is:

### Women in Criminal Justice System

- the female prison population more than doubled between 2001-2011 and, at that time, Scotland had the second highest female prison population in Northern Europe (Prison Reform Trust, 2015).<sup>7</sup>
- 80% of women in Cornton Vale had mental health problems
- 60% of women in prisons were under the influence of drugs at the time of their offence and 35% of women committed offences to obtain money from drugs (compared to 16% of male prisoners)
- 71% of women prisoners have no qualifications (compared to 15% of the general population who have no qualifications)

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<sup>2</sup> 2014 03 28 Developing Women Centres in Scotland - FINAL

<sup>3</sup> 2014 03 28 Developing Women Centres in Scotland - FINAL

<sup>4</sup> 2015 08 12 Women Centre Programme Plan (1)

<sup>5</sup> 2015 08 13 Early stages Women's Centre Development, Clare Jones

<sup>6</sup> 2015 08 12 Women Centre Programme Plan (1)

<sup>7</sup> 2016 08 18 CYCJ Interim Report, Developing and designing the Women and Family Centres: Exploring effectiveness and sharing learning, University of Strathclyde, 2016

- female prisoners have higher incidences of trauma than male prisoners or women in the general population<sup>8</sup>

Women offenders are more likely than male offenders to:

- Be remanded in custody
- Have histories of physical and sexual abuse
- Have underlying health issues
- Have dependant/children<sup>9</sup>

Overall, estimated economic and social cost of reoffending over a 10 year period is, on average, over £75k per female offenders.

The link between poverty and poor outcomes (including criminal behaviour) is highlighted in the National Strategy for Community Justice in Scotland:

*“We know that the people who live in the most deprived parts of our society are more likely to have experienced challenges at school: mental ill health; alcohol or drug addiction; unemployment or homelessness. It is little surprise therefore that people who are victims of crime, and those who offend and their families, are disproportionately from these areas.”*

Michael Mathieson, Cabinet Secretary for Justice<sup>10</sup>

Away from the specific lens of criminal justice, inequality and discrimination is still prevalent for women within our society. For some women (disabled, BME, refugee & asylum seeker, older women, those from deprived and rural areas) they are also at risk of multiple discrimination. Some key facts:

- 60% of unpaid carers are women. Unpaid carers save Scotland an estimated £10.3bn per year (over 1/3 of our national budget).
- 74% of Carer’s Allowance claimants are women and women are twice as likely to give up paid work in order to care
- one in five women will experience domestic abuse in their lifetime
- 3 rapes against women are reported every day
- domestic abuse is a major cause of homelessness in Scotland. In 2013-14 Scottish Women’s Aid reported that 11% of all homelessness applications made (4124 total) reported the cause as “a dispute within the house”. Of those stating this as the main cause, 71% were made by women
- 92% of lone parents are women
- 78% of the part time workforce are female.
- the pay gap for part time work still stands at 32%
- welfare reform and austerity measures introduced since 2010 have also disproportionately impacted on women. 85% of the £26bn worth of cuts are seen to have directly affected

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<sup>8</sup> Commission on Women Offenders, pp20

<sup>9</sup> Commission on Women Offenders, pp 3

<sup>10</sup> National Strategy for Community Justice, Scottish Government pp2

women's economic independence. Engender identify the reason for this disproportionate impact on women being to do with women's pre-existing inequality

- women are twice as dependent on social security as men, with 20% of women's income coming from the benefits and tax credit system, compared with 10% of men's.
- women have fewer financial assets and less access to occupational pensions than men and there are considerably more women than men in the lowest income decile in the UK.<sup>11</sup>
- 62% of all workers below the living wage are female
- UK has the 6<sup>th</sup> highest gender gap in the EU – and this worsens for women over 30 indicating an ongoing motherhood pay gap
- 90% of people who are inactive due to home/family responsibilities are female
- 93,000 more women than men are recorded across the UK in the NEET group. Young women with children face particular problems in finding employment that pays sufficiently to cover their travel, time and childcare costs
- as women are more likely than men to use public services, cuts to these services have again, disproportionately affected women
- the average cost of a part time nursery place is £6k per annum. These high childcare costs often limit women's work<sup>12</sup>
- a significant number of women, girls and families are achieving negative outcomes such as entering the criminal justice system; being in abusive relationships; experiencing trauma; experiencing poverty; experiencing poor physical or mental health.<sup>13</sup>
- key issues for women with such vulnerabilities (attributable to poverty and social disadvantage, abuse and domestic violence, use of drugs and alcohol, poor mental health and involvement in the criminal justice system ) are their fear of being judged and misjudged, their sense of shame and self-blame, their isolation and often negative experiences of education and statutory services. <sup>14</sup>

We understand that women who are or become vulnerable do so because:

- they are socially excluded/ isolated within their communities; there is a lack of support or positive opportunities available to them in their communities; the support that is available is delivered in such a way that vulnerable women, girls and families either can't or don't want to engage with it. <sup>15</sup>
- there are structural inequalities which place women at greater risk of deeper and sustained poverty and serve to further impede women's abilities to engage fully with society and to become economically active and independent

## Existing evidence

The Evidence in this section is broken into three main aims which represent the possible areas of interest we have in this field:

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<sup>11</sup> All above from Engender, Gender Matters Manifesto, 2016

<sup>12</sup> All above from LSE, Confronting Gender Inequality, 2015

<sup>13</sup> 2014 05 22 Women Centre Outcomes

<sup>14</sup> 2015 08 13 Early stages Women's Centre Development, Clare Jones

<sup>15</sup> 2014 05 22 Women Centre Outcomes

- what works in reducing female re-offending
- what works in supporting preventative interventions for women (and particularly vulnerable women) which support their empowerment and achievement of better outcomes. Specifically, we look at the evidence around *community led development* approaches and *women-only* interventions

The evidence does not exist in each of these areas in isolation, and there are relevant elements and principles which can be extrapolated across all areas.

## 1. Reducing Re-offending

[The Commission](#) (2012, p22) found that, “international evidence suggests that the following factors are of critical importance to reduce reoffending amongst women”:

- Effective interventions around thinking skills should be in place to challenge antisocial attitudes in women.
- Empathetic practitioners who develop good relationships with women offenders and provide practical and emotional support.
- A focus on motivation and providing women offenders with the confidence and skills to change.
- Holistic interventions rather than stand-alone interventions.
- Basic services need to be addressed before they will be ready to deal with longer-term needs such as education or employment.
- Mentoring as part of a package of interventions.
- Residential drug treatment if delivered alongside other programmes aimed at improving healthcare, child care and mental health issues.
- Interventions for women prisoners to forge and sustain positive and emotional bonds with their families; improving parenting skills can reduce substance misuse.
- Alternatives to court disposals, especially for young people where they address offending behaviour and needs concurrently”.<sup>16</sup>

The Commission also identified that:

“Services and programmes need to be tailored to the multiples complex needs of women offenders to achieve reductions in reoffending and better outcomes for local communities” (pp4)

It also made recommendations on how services could be delivered to best address the needs of women:

- Services should be brought to where women are located
- Services should be flexible – should be at a variety of times and locations
- There should be co-location of multi-agency services
- Services should facilitate the development of life skills
- They should be based on trustful, non-judgemental relationships
- They should encourage healthy family functions

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<sup>16</sup> 2013 11 26 CJVSF briefing - Women offenders - Nov 2013

- Services should build and maintain strong community links
- They should take account of women's backgrounds of abuse/neglect and encourage confidence, discipline, responsibility and self-esteem
- Users should be involved in planning services
- They should include robust performance management and evaluation arrangements

It identified three key predictors for re-offending in women:

- Dis-functional family relationships (poor attachment, marital conflict, drug abuse, controlling and abusive peers and partners)
- Poverty, deprivation and debt
- Immediate issues including problems with childcare, accommodation

The Commission went on to recommend the creation of Women's Community Justice Centres to deliver on these recommendations.

The IRISS evaluation of these Centres showed that they had achieved progress in delivering short term outcomes such as problem solving, engagement with services, willingness to work on problems, mental health and substance misuse. However it found less progress around longer term outcomes.

Research suggested that future initiatives might usefully consider developing provision for women that includes more rewarding activities at an earlier stage and forging links in their community. It identified the following as important factors for any future work:

- Women only premises that are located separately from Community Justice facilities
- Informal, safe environments to build supportive relationships and connect with workers/other women
- Emotionally supportive, non-judgemental practitioners
- Provide practical help to overcome the barriers to accessing services
- Sequenced support which prioritise stability, readiness to change and immediate needs (e.g. housing)

It stated that there is a strong rationale for the continued development of WCJS that adopt holistic, gender-responsive and flexible practices to addressing the underlying drivers of women's offending behaviour.

## **2. Women-only interventions**

There is strong evidence around the benefits that can be achieved through adopting a gender specific approach. The Women's Resource Centre paper *Why Women Only* (2007) sets out the rationale for adopting a women's only approach including the ability for this approach to make women feel safer, more engaged, empowered and listened to.

Women at the Centre, *Innovation in Community* (Duffy and Hyde, 2011) identifies the challenges faced by women as:

- Poverty and challenges around the welfare system

- The limited focus of public services
- Failures to address issues of equality and power

Their report identifies the role of Women's Centres in:

- Reducing abuse/domestic violence
- Reducing offending
- Tackling mental illness and improving healthcare
- Keeping families safe
- Helping women into work

It identifies a model which places intensive case work embedded within a suite of other services

The rationale or evidence we have for supporting vulnerable women through Women's Centres includes:

- Women benefit from a place in which they feel safe and not judged, an environment that is welcoming and non-stigmatising. They need to build trust and self-confidence which will enable them to see their situation and options more clearly, have better access to other local services, can build self-esteem and plan for more positive futures. Women are often defined by their responsibilities as mothers and carers and need a space to have some time for themselves. Finally women consistently speak of the strength and hope they gain by joining with other women in shared activities and endeavours. So Women's Centres offer an asset based, community based approach built on an ethos of empowerment rather than a problem solving service type approach. In dealing with serious social issues Women's Centres take a holistic, person centred and universal approach. Indeed to achieve early intervention and long term effectiveness the Centres must have a lively offer for all women and girls.<sup>17</sup>
- Some key characteristics of an effective Centre are that they are:
  - Safe, welcoming and respectful
  - Vibrant and positive
  - Offering a variety of opportunities and activities
  - Involving and empowering
  - Person centred, transparent and reliable
  - Have good links and connections with other local services
  - Sustainable and adaptable
  - Are supported by experience<sup>18</sup>

The nature of the Women's Centre is then one of inspiration and new opportunities, both in terms of activity, learning and social connection. This environment is conducive to personal growth as well as social and community development. Ideally this place should offer aspirational and learning opportunities to women and girls from all walks of life and support their widening engagement and influence in different areas of life including civic life, vocational and professional life,

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<sup>17</sup> 2015 08 13 Early stages Women's Centre Development, Clare Jones

<sup>18</sup> 2015 08 13 Early stages Women's Centre Development, Clare Jones

entrepreneurship, the arts and creativity and both therapeutic and political dimensions. In practical terms a centre will probably emerge with two or three of these directions in view. The important factor is that this provides a continuity of approach and development that can reach those in the greatest personal and social need as well as other women and girls whose needs may be less urgent but for whom such an environment will have personal and wider benefits.<sup>19</sup>

There have been a number of evaluations of Women's Centre's operating in England (Calderdale Young Women's Resilience Project, Evaluation of Liverpool Women's Turnaround Project etc) which have provided evidence and recommendations on effective interventions with women. These included many of the same recommendations made from the review of Women's Centre's in Scotland and also highlight:

- Need for interventions to be multi-agency
- Benefits of having a multi-agency steering group
- The central role of the key workers in building relationships with clients
- The benefit of locating services and support in non-statutory locations
- The desire for a consistent point of contact
- Having a clear ethos and values that is shared with all clients
- Operating below statutory thresholds, which means engaging with clients before they would traditionally be engaged with statutory services

### 3. Community-led development interventions

Community led approaches can be defined as

*“activities undertaken by individuals, groups or organisations within defined geographical neighbourhoods in order to achieve social, economic or environmental objectives defined by participants with minimal external control”<sup>20</sup>*

This definition includes activities that may be facilitated by a third party (e.g. the state) through formal programmes but where outcomes are set by the beneficiaries.

Various typologies have been developed around community led development and there are a variety of delivery approaches which can lead to a variety of outcomes.<sup>21</sup> It is recognised that there is no one approach which will address all of the issues faced by a community in one go and that “the most-effective combination of activities to support anti-poverty work is...highly context dependant”.<sup>22</sup>

There are a number of factors which are identified in Community –Led development approaches which appear to have an important bearing on the effectiveness of interventions:

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<sup>19</sup> 2015 08 13 Early stages Women's Centre Development, Clare Jones

<sup>20</sup> Community-led approaches to reducing poverty in neighbourhoods, Centre for regional Economic Research and JRF

<sup>21</sup> Community-led approaches to reducing poverty in neighbourhoods, Centre for Regional Economic Research and JRF, pp 5

<sup>22</sup> Community-led approaches to reducing poverty in neighbourhoods, centre for Regional Economic Research and JRF, pp 46

- Appropriate upfront financing and ongoing subsidy
- Managed expectations around the potential sustainability of any initiative (which the JRF report highlights is often not realistic)
- Skills and leadership qualities of key individuals
- The existence of an active and supportive voluntary and community sector infrastructure
- Recognising the elements of a programme which may/ may not make it transferable to another community
- Community-led approaches can never reach their full potential in isolation and need to be embedded within wider partnerships, strategies and funding opportunities

### Gaps in existing evidence

- There is little systematic or comparable empirical evidence of the impacts and effects of service user involvement in and across the design, delivery and evaluation of criminal justice services and even less on their process of development and implementation. Although policy / practice documents on how to go about partnership working and enlisting and engaging service users are now relatively commonplace, research into organisations that have attempted to implement co-production, even to a small degree, is more limited – more so in the community justice arena.<sup>23</sup>
- There has been limited research carried out in Scotland around the effectiveness of a gender specific, community development approach to addressing the needs of women (including their risk of engaging with the criminal justice system). There are various examples of research and evaluation of Women’s Centres in England which have employed a multi-agency approach. In Scotland, the IRISS evaluation of the Community Justice Women’s Centres looked at their impact through a criminal justice (statutory provision) lens. There is the opportunity to build evidence around gender specific community development approaches in a Scottish setting
- Finally, from a funder point of view, there is an opportunity through this programme to look at reviewing and building recommendations around what the role of funders should be supporting community development initiatives.

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<sup>23</sup> 2016 05 23 Weaver Lightowler Nugent Women and Family Centre Evaluation Revised

## What is happening already?

### Current policy & practice context

Policies relevant to addressing issues for 'vulnerable women' include:

- [Equally Safe](#) - Scotland's 2016 strategy for preventing and eradicating violence against women and girls. The updated strategy, originally published in 2014, was developed by the Scottish Government and COSLA in association with a wide range of public and third sector organisations.
- The Scottish Government's National Strategy for Community Justice states that "the evidence is clear that better access to welfare, housing and health services, wellbeing and employability assistance can reduce or even prevent offending from occurring in the first place". It recommended a new model for Community Justice which had a local approach based around partnership working. It recognised a key role for the third sector and communities in delivering this strategy.
- As a result of this, The Scottish Government invested £3m in 2013-2015 to support 16 criminal justice projects delivering new or enhanced services for women, in response to the 2012 Commission. This included the development of three Community Justice Centres with coordinated, multi-disciplinary teams for women offenders in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen. Other projects were established as "touring" hubs or one-stop shops in different rural locations. Not all of these services have been sustained in the longer term as funding transferred from central to local government.
- The Scottish Government's Reducing Reoffending Change Fund (RRCF, funded until March 2018) includes the Shine mentoring service for women, which works with up to 720 women per year to help them to develop their independence and quality of life, improve their social skills and motivation and work towards addressing a life free of offending.<sup>24</sup>
- The Christie Commission set the policy and practice framework for a wide range of interventions focussed on community led, early intervention and collaborative service design and delivery. At a local level, the development of the Community Planning Partnership Model, flawed though it is, has become the focus for decision making in communities
- The Scottish Prison Service is currently developing a model for Community Custody Units based in up to five communities in Scotland where women with low-tariff offences and deemed to be at low-risk to communities will be able to serve their prison sentences. They will be minimal security and women will be able to access local services for appointments, work placements etc. Their location and operating model are still being defined.

More broadly, the policy context around *how* support or services might be delivered with vulnerable women includes:

- The 2011 Christie Commission, which emphasised the need for public services to be built around people and communities and for a shift towards preventative approaches<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> 2013 11 26 CJVSF briefing - Women offenders - Nov 2013

<sup>25</sup> 2016 08 18 CYCJ INTERIM REPORT

- An emerging policy narrative around a '[Scottish approach](#) to the transformation of public services' which expands on the Christie commission's recommendations to articulate the need for asset-based approaches, partnership working, innovation and an outcomes focus (Social Work Strategic Forum, 2015: 14).<sup>26</sup>
- In Scotland, community development is adopted as a general approach in a wide range of policy areas, including regeneration, health improvement, environmental improvement and community safety. It is part of the broader field of the community learning and development function of Scottish Government, defined as: "learning and social development work with individuals and groups in their communities using a range of formal and informal methods. A common defining feature is that programmes and activities are developed in dialogue with communities and participants. The main aim is to help individuals and communities tackle real issues in their lives through community action and community-based learning."
- The Community Empowerment Act, including "participation requests" which will allow community organisations to put forward their ideas for developing services that affect them
- There are wide ranging examples in Scotland now of third sector organisations working in partnership with other agencies, using a community led approach to address problems within communities. However, evidence of the longer term impact of this work is still patchy and there has been little focus on evaluating the outcomes of gender specific work

Current Approaches which are being employed to address some/all of the issues identified are:

- Gender-responsive or women-centred services. These are defined by Covington (2008, p377) as *'the creation of an environment – through site selection, staff selection, programme development and program content and materials – that reflects an understanding of the realities of women's and girls lives and that addresses and responds to their challenges and strengths'*.<sup>27</sup> For example:
  - The [218 Service](#), run by Turning Point Scotland and Glasgow Addiction Service, was opened in response to growing concerns about the needs and treatment of women in the criminal justice system. The service helps women offenders to address the complex range of needs which they may have including substance misuse issues, physical and mental health, housing and childcare.<sup>28</sup>
  - Community Justice Centres, e.g. in Glasgow (Tomorrows Women), Aberdeen, Edinburgh (Willow Centre), Dundee
- Embedding support/interventions within services. E.g. Assist in police departments.
- Sacro's [Another Way](#) service provides one-to-one support to any woman involved in or at risk of sex work. This support can cover a range of issues including addictions, domestic abuse, healthcare, housing and parenting. The Sacro worker works closely with other professionals, linking the women in to other services where appropriate, by providing information, making referrals and supporting the women to attend appointments.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> 2016 08 18 CYCJ INTERIM REPORT

<sup>27</sup> 2016 08 18 CYCJ INTERIM REPORT

<sup>28</sup> 2013 11 26 CJVSF briefing - Women offenders - Nov 2013

<sup>29</sup> 2013 11 26 CJVSF briefing - Women offenders - Nov 2013

- Venture Trust's [Next Steps](#) programme offers women time, space and intensive support away from their day-to-day circumstances, where they can unlock the skills and motivation they need to make positive changes in their lives.<sup>30</sup>
- [Time for Change](#) (delivered by Up-to-us) provides dedicated intensive, relationship-based support for young women and girls at high risk of being drawn into secure care and custodial detention.<sup>31</sup>
- [Tea in the Pot](#) is a Drop-in & Support Service for women, and is run by women, for women in Govan. See [here](#) also. Est. 2005<sup>32</sup>
- Community Led Development Approaches (CLD) have been adopted widely over the last five years as a result of Community Planning Partnerships becoming the focus of local area planning and delivery. Funding has been put into this area through the Scottish Government's Charrette Mainstreaming Programme and through support provided to Community Planning Partnerships. Outwith of formal statutory environments, CLD approaches are now commonly found within Development Trusts and within NHS and Health bodies engaged with co-production.
- Funders such as Lloyds TSB Foundation Scotland have adopted CLD approaches through their place based work
- Evidence on the impact of CLD approaches in Scotland is still patchy and there is room to build on this. One aspect of CLD approaches for consideration is that it can tend to focus on the "hardware" aspects of development e.g. physical developments required within a geographical community and can often be light on the "software elements" e.g. the social and economic challenges that may affect specific groups of people within a geographic community.
- Co-production approaches, where (usually statutory) agencies work together with services users to redesign services has become more prominent particularly within NHS over the last five years.

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<sup>30</sup> 2013 11 26 CJVSF briefing - Women offenders - Nov 2013

<sup>31</sup> 2013 11 26 CJVSF briefing - Women offenders - Nov 2013

<sup>32</sup> Setting up a Women's Centre.msg

## Programme Proposal

Our work to date in this field has identified that there are significant structural and social challenges facing many women and girls in communities across Scotland today which can lead to them experiencing negative outcomes, including entering into the criminal justice system.

Our proposal brings together several key elements for investigation:

- What impact does a gender specific community-led development approach have on:
  - Negative outcomes experienced by women (including offending behaviours)
  - Wider community engagement, support and cohesion (beyond the population of vulnerable women that are identified)
  - Supporting enhanced multi-agency service delivery and support for individuals and communities
- What role funders can play in facilitating and supporting community-led interventions

Specifically, the approach adopted will look at outcomes on three levels:

- Outcomes for vulnerable individual women and girls
- Outcomes for the wider community at an individual level and around community capital and cohesion
- Outcomes for agencies around collaborative practice and service design and delivery

We will test these elements through supporting development of two Women's Centres in one urban community (Renfrewshire) and one rural community (Cumnock).

### What are the "critical factors" for consideration in developing this programme?

The Trust's research into existing Women Centres and services suggested some key aspects which should be built in to increase the likelihood of success. It is recommended that these criteria form part of the conditions for developing projects within this programme as they will form part of the evaluation of "what works":

Primary:

- Multi agency partnership working: women are able to access the holistic, wrap-around support they need and bring public and third sector partners together to develop appropriate services and support pathways that are accessible to all women
- Gender Specific: shall work primarily with women and girls and that women and girls should lead on development
- Target Groups: Whilst adopting a whole community approach (women only) work should be done to ensure that women from key target groups are identified, engaged and supported. Recognising the variety of approaches required to deliver outcomes for vulnerable individuals alongside providing a space for all women in the community .
- Community Led: participants will be encouraged to lead the process of building on their strengths and aspirations to address challenges that affect their day to day lives

## Secondary

- Peer to peer support: approaches which enable peer to peer support between participants should be considered
- Access barriers: being aware of, and addressing, physical and psychological barriers which may prevent engagement
- Flexible programming and support: recognising that a range of approaches, interventions and supports may need to be identified and employed to deliver the different outcomes
- Geographical focus: Be located within communities with a defined boundary to enable a sense of community ownership over the centre and the services it offers<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> 2015 08 12 Women Centre Programme Plan (1)