



Ministry
of Justice

A Whole System Approach for Female Offenders

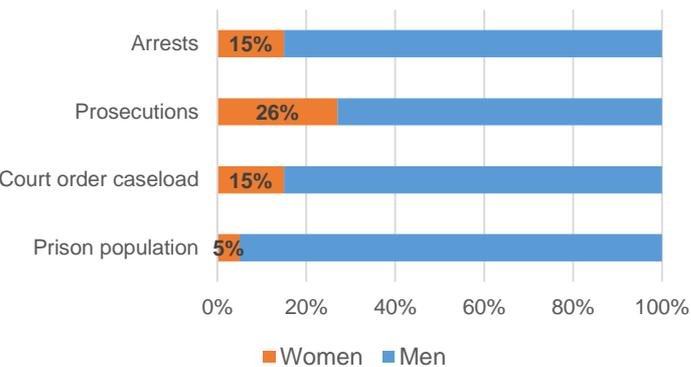
Emerging evidence

June 2018

Protecting and advancing the principles of justice

There are fewer women in the CJS but they can have poorer outcomes and distinct issues which require a tailored approach

Proportion adult women account for at different stages of the CJS, 2017^{1,2,3}



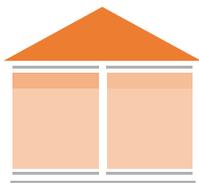
On average, women commit less serious offences than men.² In 2017:

- Adult female defendants were less likely to be prosecuted for indictable/triable either way offences (11% compared with 23% of adult male defendants).
- 30% of adult women were prosecuted for TV Licence evasion (4% of men).
- 72% of immediate custodial sentences for women were for six months or fewer, compared with 56% of men.
- 36% of immediate custodial sentences for women were for shoplifting offences (12% for men), with an average custodial sentence of 1.7 months.

However, women who do commit crime often have complex needs.

- Female prisoners are more than twice as likely as male prisoners to report needing help for mental health problems, 49% and 18% respectively.⁴
- Almost 60% of female offenders have experienced domestic violence.⁵
- Female prisoners are more likely than male prisoners to report having been taken into care, experienced abuse, and witnessed violence in the home as a child.⁶
- Imprisoned mothers are more likely to be living with their children prior to custody (around 60% of women compared with about 45% of men in prison who have children).⁶

Court order



c. 17,300³

Prison



c. 3,900⁸

Caseload/
population

Several outcomes for women in custody are poor.

- In 2017, the rate among women was 2,093 self-harm incidents per 1,000 prisoners, nearly five times higher than the rate of 445 per 1,000 prisoners in the men's estate.⁷
- At 31 May 2018, about 650 women were held more than 100 miles from home⁵ (out of a population of c.3,900).⁸

The evidence supports tailored approaches for women convicted of crime that address seven key priority areas for intervention

- MOJ's Rapid Evidence Assessment analysed a broad range of robust evidence from the UK and overseas to identify what works in reducing women's offending.⁹
- There is some evidence that a gender-informed approach that addresses the causes of women's offending, including previous abuse and trauma, is more effective than a gender-neutral approach in rehabilitating female offenders and addressing their often complex needs.
- Based on this evidence, we published guidance Better Outcomes for Women Offenders in 2015 to inform the commissioning of services.¹⁰ This sets out the following seven priority areas for intervention:

Address substance misuse problems: Stabilise and address individual problems, in particular address class A drug use, binge and chronic drinking.

Address mental health problems: Expedite access to services that address mental health problems, in particular anxiety and depression, personality disorder, post - traumatic stress disorder, and trauma.

Improve family contact: Help women to build healthy and supportive family relationships, especially with their children.

Build skills in emotion management: Help women to build skills to control impulsive behaviour and destructive emotions.

Help women to resettle and build social capital: Help women to find somewhere safe to live, to learn how to manage their money, access education, and improve their employability.

Help women to develop a pro-social identity: We should encourage and reinforce a positive, non-criminal identity in the women in our care. We should enable women to do good for their community or for others, and use this to help them to change the way they describe themselves.

Help women to believe in their ability to control their lives and have goals: Motivate women to believe that they can work to achieve their goals.

International and domestic evidence highlights the importance of a gender-responsive, multi-agency approach

Gender responsive approach

- There is some evidence that a gender-responsive approach that addresses the causes of women's offending, including previous abuse and trauma, may be more effective than a gender-neutral approach.¹¹

Multi-agency approach

- A multi-agency approach brings together criminal justice, statutory and third sector agencies, to provide holistic support.
- There is a developing evidence base that multi-agency working can play an important part in addressing the complex needs of offenders, for example:
 - The Integrated offender management (IOM) evaluation, 2011, found that co-locating staff facilitated cultural change, case management processes, knowledge transfer and information sharing.¹²
 - The 2015 evaluation of the whole system approach (WSA) for young offenders, Scotland, found the WSA had improved welfare outcomes for young people and improved partnership working.¹³

A gender responsive, multi-agency approach

- A multi-agency approach for female offenders seeks to address the complex needs these women often have by bringing local agencies together to provide joined-up, holistic support, which recognises and responds to women's distinct needs, including experience of abuse.

International examples

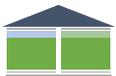
- The Developing Partnership programme, the Netherlands, is a multi-agency programme for women prisoners. It is estimated that only 7% of participants have reoffended, compared to the average reoffending rate in female offenders of 35%.¹⁴ Whilst other factors could be involved, the programme may have contributed to this lower reoffending rate.
- The gender-specific Women's Integrated Skills and Health (WISH) project, San Francisco, diverts women with mental health issues away from prison and into mental health treatment services.¹⁵
- The Female Offender Intervention and Diversion Program (FOID), Oklahoma, offers community-based supervision with wraparound services for women with complex needs.¹⁵

Women's centres can be effective at reducing reoffending

- Women's centres can provide a 'one-stop shop' approach within a women-only environment, providing holistic and individual support packages. They can be a key partner in whole system approaches (*see following slides*).
- Centres vary in their approach and the interventions they offer (e.g., offering one-to-one advice and support in a range of areas (such as housing, substance misuse, domestic violence); providing group courses; or working with the CJS to provide a community resolution, conditional caution or Rehabilitation Activity Requirement as part of a court order).
- Women Centred Solutions estimate the average cost of holistic community-based services to be £1,300 per woman.¹⁶
- Women's centres typically receive funding from a variety of sources e.g. Department of Health, Local Authorities, Police and Crime Commissioners, The Big Lottery, national and local charities and a range of local commissioners.
- HMI Probation's thematic on community provision for female offenders flagged that funding was a major concern for women's centres.¹⁷
- Women's centres can be effective at reducing reoffending (*see below*).

MOJ Justice Data Lab Analysis

32 women's centres¹⁸



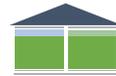
(across England)



Reduction in reoffending rate of between **1 and 9 percentage points***

*compared with a matched group of similar offenders.

Brighton



women's centre¹⁹



For every 100 participants, a reduction in the frequency of reoffending by between **27 and 79 re-offences***

Example: Together Women Centre, Salford

- Established in 2007, the centre supports women offenders and women at risk of offending.
- The centre is a partner within Greater Manchester's whole system approach (*see next slides*).
- It offers a broad range of support services.



- Indicative, early estimates by GM estimate that over **£6 is saved for every £1 spent** on the Together Women Project women's centre, with around **£16** of wider economic value created for every £1 spent.²⁰

MOJ has part-funded several areas to develop a whole system approach (WSA)

- The aim of a WSA for female offenders is to assess a woman's needs at her first contact with the criminal justice system, and to provide gender responsive, multi-agency support throughout her justice journey.
- The intention is to use existing resources differently to target support more effectively, avoiding gaps or duplication in service provision, and supporting women to access provision successfully so that they can turn their lives around.
- A WSA should therefore divert women away from the CJS, where appropriate, and reduce reoffending and demand on services.
- Different models are being developed in several areas based on local needs and services (*see below and next slide*).
- In 2015, MOJ allocated £200k seed funding to develop WSAs for female offenders. Funding was awarded to Greater Manchester, Norfolk, Surrey, Sussex and Wales.
- This investment helped secure **a further £325k** from local agencies to support projects and supported Manchester's women's centres to successfully apply for funding from the Big Lottery and Tampon Tax Fund.
- In 2017, MOJ announced the successful bidders for a further £800k multi-year funding to six regions to develop (or continue to develop) a WSA for female offenders. Funding was awarded to Lancashire, West Mercia, Norfolk, Sussex, Surrey and Devon.

Greater Manchester (GM) WSA

- Lead organisation: GM Combined Authority.
- GM established the first WSA for women model, which has been fully operational since January 2015.
- The WSA includes self-referral, police referral, a problem solving court, and support alongside community orders and on release from prison.
- Women's centres have been established in all boroughs in GM to provide women-only 'one-stop shop' support for women.
- 2015-16 MOJ funding was used to address the barriers to engagement for some women (e.g. BAME women and young adults).

Wales

- 2015-16 MOJ funding funded research looking at sentencing decisions in Wales to inform their WSA and to share learning with MOJ and other areas.
- A Diversion Scheme has been operational since 2014 in Cardiff and was rolled out in four other locations in 2015/16.
- Going forward the Women's Pathfinder is working with South Wales PCC, Gwent PCC, HM Prison and Probation Service and Welsh Government to roll out the Whole System Approach Service Delivery Model across South Wales and Gwent.

Surrey

- Lead organisation: Surrey Transforming Justice Programme Board (multi-agency board).
- 2015-16 MOJ funding helped establish a police triage scheme whereby women are allocated a support worker who coordinates a multi-agency plan to address women's needs.
- 2017-18 MOJ funding contributed to expanding the WSA across Surrey and to additional stages of the CJS.

Areas are developing a WSA for female offenders based on local needs and services

Sussex

- 2017-20 MOJ funding has been provided to Sussex PCC and Criminal Justice Board to build on learning from the initial funding and develop an evidence based WSA model operating at each stage of the CJS.
- A new, enhanced Women's Triage and Diversion project, Women's Steps to Change Team (WSCT), became operational in May 2018.

Lancashire and Cumbria

- Lead organisation: Lancashire Women's Centres.
- 2017-20 MOJ funding funds a post to provide the strategic support and leadership to embed a WSA in Lancashire and Cumbria, and expand and strengthen multi-agency collaboration.
- The lead will bring in new partners, e.g. health, and provide strategic oversight to existing and new programmes of work (e.g. police triage, support for women offenders in the community).
- The expansion of the WSA aims to identify and address unmet need for women with multiple and complex needs and address barriers for groups of women less likely to engage with services (e.g. BAME and LGBT women).

Norfolk WSA

- Lead organisation: Office of the PCC.
- 2015-16 MOJ funding supported the development of the WONDER (Women Offenders of Norfolk Diversion, Engagement and Rehabilitation) project: a multi-agency, police triage scheme that went live in early 2017.
- 2017-20 MOJ funding is contributing to the expansion in the geographical coverage of the multi-agency WSA, as well as expanding it to cover all stages of the CJS – the WONDER+ project.
- Link workers coordinate the tailored, holistic support provided to each woman.

Devon Resilient Woman: Resilient System

- Lead organisation: Exeter Council for Voluntary Services (CVS).
- 2017-18 MOJ funding enabled Exeter CVS to build on their new CoLab to develop a women-centred offer. CoLab Exeter is a cross-sector and multi-agency health and well being hub housing 25 different organisations including CRC. Evaluation of CoLab Exeter identified the need for a women-centred offer.
- An offer was co-designed with women to offer them multi-agency gender specific services and support using a resilience based approach.
- A range of projects will be developed to divert women from the CJS and support women in the CJS to regain the capacity needed to control their lives.

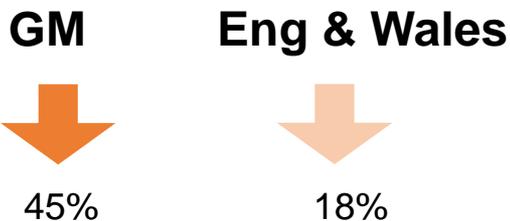
West Mercia

- Lead organisation: Willowdene Rehabilitation & Training Ltd.
- 2017-20 MOJ and West Mercia OPCC funding supports the development of a WSA that uses Single Point of Contact (SPOC) and LINC (Local Initiatives Nurturing Change) workers to assess women and put in place a multi-agency care plan to help them begin to establish a stable and structured lifestyle.
- Also, the development and support of dedicated women's groups across all four counties of West Mercia and access to Willowdene's women centre.

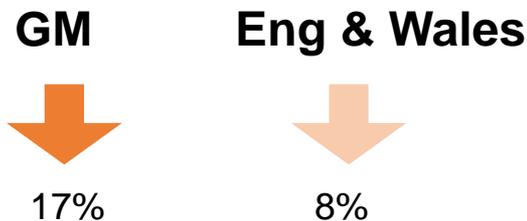
Emerging evidence from the Greater Manchester (GM) WSA is promising

- Whilst we cannot conclude that the WSA has had a direct impact, there has been a reduction in the number of adult women arrested, prosecuted and in the number sentenced to custodial sentences in GM since 2014.

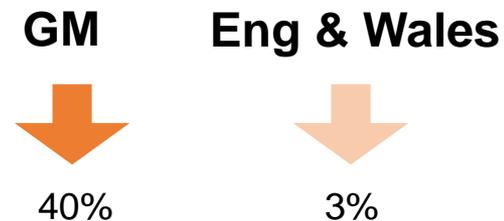
Percentage change in the number of adult women arrested since 2014/15:¹



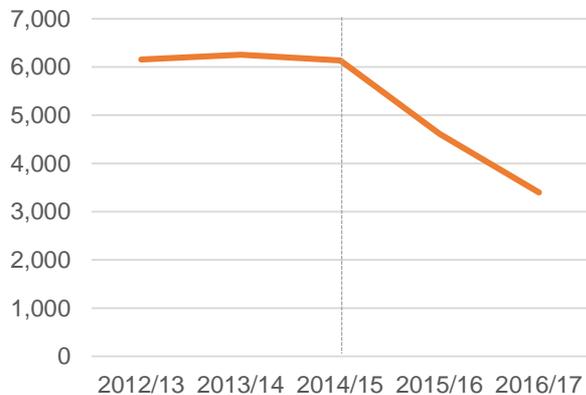
Percentage change in the number of adult women prosecuted since 2014:²



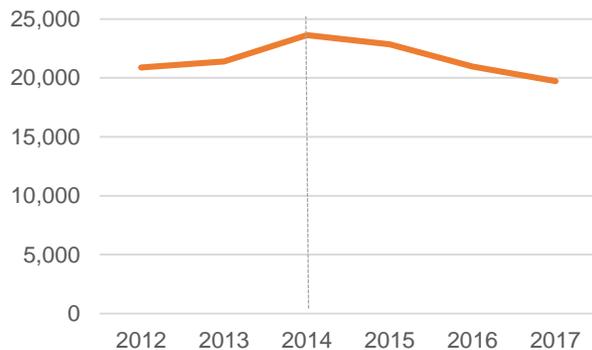
Percentage change in the number of adult women sentenced to immediate custody since 2014:²



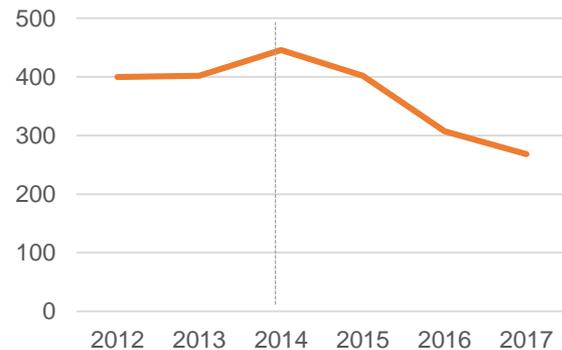
Adult women arrested in GM



Adult women prosecuted in GM



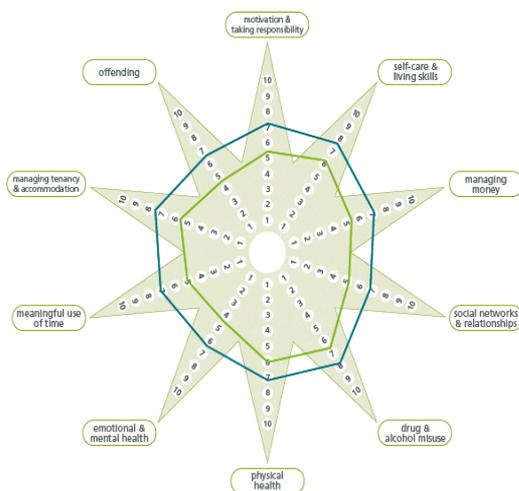
Adult women sentenced to immediate custody in GM



On average, women who engage with the WSA in GM are making positive progress in all areas of assessed need

- Women supported by the WSA in GM are assessed against the Outcome Star, which assesses a range of needs (see *below*) and can measure the 'distance travelled' by those supported.
- To end March 2017, 1,824 women had been assessed in GM.²⁰
 - Of the women assessed, **91% have multiple needs**, with almost half (48%) having needs in at least 5 of the 12 areas assessed.
 - By end March 2017, 605 women had completed more than one Outcome Star assessment. On average, a **positive change of 1.5** was seen against every assessed need (on a scale of 1-10).
- Proven re-offending was calculated at 17% for a small cohort of women referred to the centres.

Example Outcome Star



Percentage of women with assessed needs

Mental health/wellbeing	73%
Attitudes, thinking & behaviour	61%
Finance/debt	56%
Accommodation	48%
Substance misuse	46%
Domestic abuse	42%
Physical health	25%
Employment	25%
Training	23%
Education	16%
Volunteering	15%
Sex working	4%

Area of need

Area of need	Average change (scale of 1-10)
Offending	2.4
Emotional and mental health	1.7
Motivation and taking responsibility	1.6
Meaningful use of time	1.6
Managing tenancy & accommodation	1.5
Managing money & personal admin	1.4
Social networks and relationships	1.4
Self-care and living skills	1.2
Drug and alcohol misuse	0.9
Physical health	0.9
Overall average	1.5

Provision for female offenders has been up-scaled across GM and there is now consistent provision across boroughs

Interim Evaluation Key findings, 2015²¹

- Prior to the introduction of the WSA, provision for female offenders across GM was patchy. The WSA has up-scaled provision to ensure consistency of approach across the boroughs.
- Strategic stakeholders reported that the WSA provides a more efficient and effective system with less duplication between services.
- There was good buy in from stakeholders to the aims of the WSA, its collaborative approach, and the importance of offering a women-only space to secure women's engagement.
- Service users interviewed reported a high level of satisfaction with the service received. Their trust in the women's centre project workers was viewed as improving their trust and compliance with services that are recommended by their project worker.
- Project staff emphasised that addressing the complex and multiple needs of women required long-term and intensive work, particularly to build up trust and overcome women's distrust of services.

"Women are often initially quite angry, not particularly compliant, don't really want to do anything, social anxiety, withdrawn, very distressed and within a few weeks they're interacting in a group, participating and talking openly – [it's] about creating the right conditions for people to flourish."
(Project staff member)

"I was begging for this support – I had to offend to get here. I wouldn't have offended if I'd come here first."
(Service user)

"Offending is often just acting out...it goes a lot deeper...I needed to go deeper and look at the reasons why, try and get to the core of it"
(Service user)

"It's a nice feeling 'cos it's not something you've had. I've been a drug addict for 25 years so trust is a big thing as you learn to trust nobody, so having that trust and having someone who's non-judgemental and pulls out all the stops to try and help you, it's a nice feeling."
(Service user)



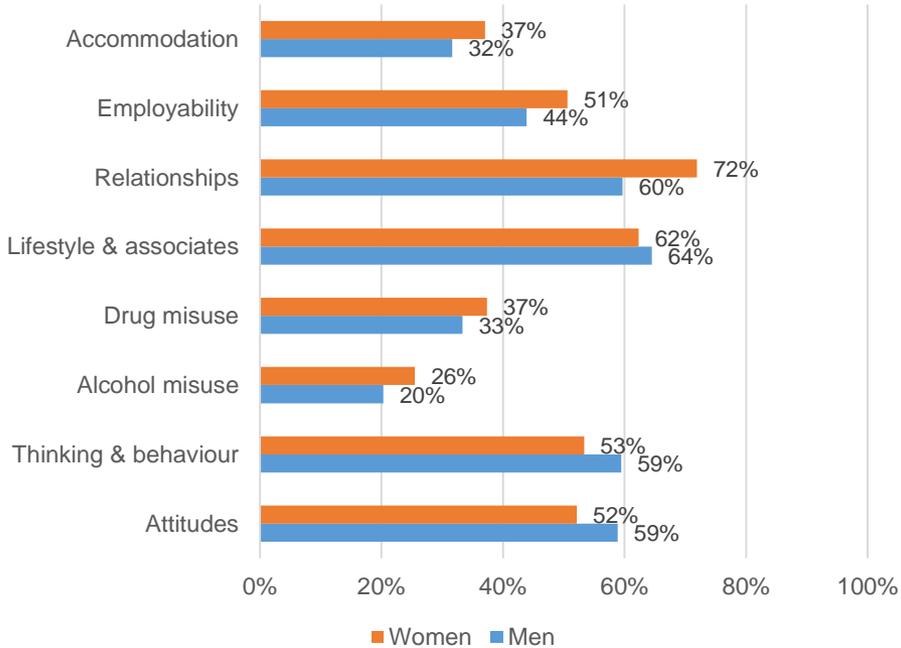
MOJ are working with areas to continue to build the evidence base

- MOJ are committed to building the evidence base for a WSA for female offenders and are providing analytical support to funded areas.
- Areas receiving MOJ funding from 2017 onwards are required to collect data on the women supported to inform our understanding of what works, value for money, and good practice.
- Routine data collection by areas will include, at a minimum:
 - the number of women referred
 - the number of women who engage
 - the characteristics and support needs of women who engage
 - progress/outcomes for women supported against their identified needs, including any needs in the areas of domestic violence and sexual abuse; mental and physical health; substance misuse; accommodation; finance and debt; education/training needs and employment; learning difficulties and disabilities
 - And, where applicable, progress/outcomes for their children (e.g. prevention of being taken into care)
 - For those under statutory community supervision, the risk profile of the women supported to monitor engagement and outcomes for women by risk level, and to demonstrate engagement with women at all levels of the risk spectrum.
- In the longer term, areas must engage with MOJ's Justice Data Lab (JDL) to measure the local WSA's impact on proven reoffending, where the JDL team deem this feasible. *It takes about 24 months post release from prison/start of a community sentence for reoffending data to become available.*

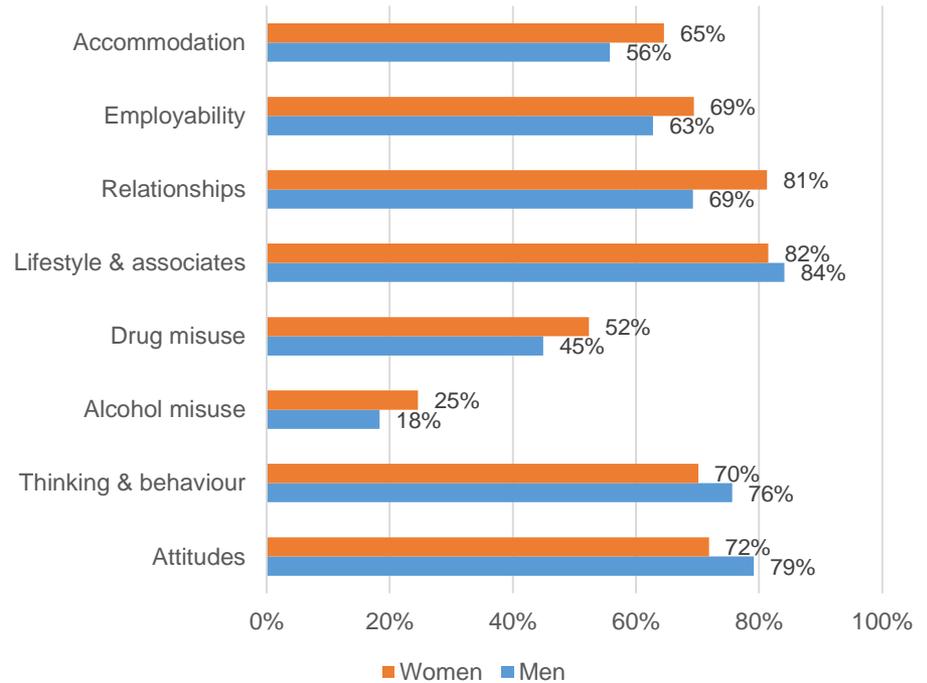
Annex 1: Prevalence of criminogenic needs identified⁵

- The graphs below show data on the prevalence of criminogenic needs identified amongst offenders in the community and custody.⁵
- A criminogenic need is one that is directly associated with offending.

Proportion of offenders supervised in the community with identified criminogenic needs, 30 June 2017*



Proportion of prisoners with identified criminogenic needs, 30 June 2017*



*These figures exclude women and men without a valid OASys assessment or needs data at this point in time.

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