

Identifying women's pathways to offending and the primary prevention and early intervention opportunities for women at risk of offending in Wales

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Study Aims

1. Identify and understand the key risk factors for offending behaviours amongst women
2. Identify and explore the potential opportunities for early intervention and primary prevention for offending
3. Understand the different touchpoints that women in Wales make with services prior to making contact with the CJS

Methods

Stage One: Literature Review

Search stage	Search terms used
Stage One: searches to identify key themes	"Female offending", "offending", "women", "criminal justice" "pathways", "background"
Stage Two: searches to supplement literature in each key theme	"Female offending", "offending", "women", "criminal justice" "pathways", "background", "poverty", "ACEs", "domestic abuse", "brain injury", "mental illness", "learning disability", "neurodiversity", "ADHD", "autism", "race and ethnicity", "Gypsy, Romany and Traveller"

Stage Two: Case Studies

Case studies of women who have offended in Wales were undertaken to explore pathways to offending. These case studies were compared to evidence from the literature review to explore how the international evidence-base applies to women in Wales.

Findings: Literature Review One

Factors influencing women's risk of coming into contact with the CJS sit within the following themes: These factors were found to overlap and interact across themes.

- Poverty
- Domestic abuse and sexual violence
- Adverse childhood experiences
- Mental illness and substance use
- Brain injury
- Neurodiversity
- Race/ethnicity

Findings: Literature Review Two

Intervention Theme	Recommendations
Primary prevention for children of women in the CJS	Reduce the negative impacts of maternal imprisonment and promote protective factors such as educational attainment and social inclusion through specialist support for families of women in the CJS
Mental health services and interventions	Improve access to mental health services and treatments, community-based and peer-led support, and lower level mental health support to reduce escalation in to more complex mental health needs
Brain injury support	Improve access to psychological interventions, legislate a national standard for brain injury rehabilitation support services, and ensure gender-informed screening tools are used to identify needs
Multidisciplinary teams	Develop teams of experts from range of disciplines based in general practices
Support for neurodiverse individuals	Improve the identification and support offered to neurodiverse women using ensure gender-informed screening tools
Cultural competency	Services that women come into contact with should train all staff to have cultural competency when providing support

Findings: Case Studies

Four key factors influenced offending risk

Mental illness	Substance use
Bereavement	Brain injury

Conclusions

Several potential factors influencing women's risk of offending, as well as early intervention and primary prevention opportunities, were identified in Wales.