

CLEAN BREAK

Seen *Catch* and want to find out more?

This document contains links to key reports, statistics and information about women and the criminal justice system, as well as ways to support the call to end the imprisonment of women and increase investment in specialist support services.

Key Reports

[Women in Prison: The Value of Women's Centres](#)

This report published in October 2022 makes the financial case for why women's centres should be invested in over prisons, while also highlighting their therapeutic benefits for women.

[Fabian Women: Solidarity, Equality and Opportunity: creating strong social justice systems for women](#)

A recent report from thinktank Fabian Women on how a women's centre model based on social justice rather than criminal justice would meet women's needs.

[The Tavistock Institute: Why Women's Centres Work](#)

This 2018 briefing gives evidence on how women's centres provide services to women which address the root causes of criminalisation, such as gender-based-violence, homelessness and problematic substance use.

[The Corston Report 10 Years on](#)

In 2007 Baroness Corston commissioned the most comprehensive report we had ever had on women in the criminal justice system, which revealed that drastic changes needed to be made. 10 years on in 2017, Women in Prison explored what little progress had been made.

Recent news

Four years after releasing the [Female Offenders Strategy](#), which aimed to reduce the women's prison population, the government recently released a [delivery plan for 2022-2025](#). While an important step in providing accountability, the delivery plan highlights that the women's prison population is set to increase rather than decrease. [You can read Revolving Doors response here.](#)

Despite their stated commitment to reduce the women's prison population, the government also announced plans to build 500 new prison spaces, which organisations have been [campaigning against](#). Until recently there has been little information available on their exact plans for these spaces, but in February the [locations of the proposed prison spaces were released](#), including over 100 spaces at HMP Eastwood Park, which recently received a damning [inspection report](#).

Racism and Intersectionality

When looking at the criminalisation of women, it is important to forefront the experience of Black women, who are [far more likely to receive a custodial sentence](#).

Published by the Prison Report Trust in 2017 [Counted Out: Black, Asian and minority ethnic women in the criminal justice system](#) is an important report highlighting racism and cultural disparities which women in the criminal justice system face.

In 2022, [Tackling Double Disadvantage: A 10-point action plan for change](#) was published by Hibiscus Initiatives in partnership with four other organisations, which detailed the discrimination faced by Black and global majority women in the criminal justice system and outlined 10 actions the government should take to effect change.

Women from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities are also overrepresented in the criminal justice system, as evidenced in this [report from The Traveller Movement](#).

People with disabilities are routinely failed by the criminal justice system, firstly by being [disproportionately criminalised](#) and once in prison [by not having their needs met](#).

People with disabilities also refers to people with mental ill health. We know that there have been devastating increases on the number of incidents of [self-harm in women's prisons](#). Advance charity [released a report in 2021](#) as part of their campaign demanding better mental health support for women affected by the criminal justice system or who are at risk of entering it.

LGBTQ people, particularly trans and gender-non-conforming people, experience high levels of discrimination within the criminal justice system, as outlined in [this report by the Bent Bars Project](#).

Actions you can take

Volunteering

There are lots of different ways you could volunteer your time to organisations who support women with experience of the criminal justice system. At [Clean Break](#) we often have volunteering opportunities in catering, gardening and with our Members.

[Forward Trust](#) have a variety of volunteering opportunities which support people with experience of the criminal justice system or at risk of entering it, including advice and support roles, mentoring and campaigning.

If you have lived experience of the criminal justice system, you could be a Peer Mentor at [Advance's Minerva centre](#), and make a profound difference in women's lives.

Petitions

Signing petitions is an easy way to support campaigns, for example campaigning group Level Up are currently calling for an end to the imprisonment of pregnant women, you can sign their petition here: [Stop sending pregnant women to prison.](#)

Staying informed

Following organisations which support women with experience of the criminal justice system and campaign for an end to imprisoning women means you will be aware when there is a change in policy and when you can take action, for example when a protest is being organised so you can show your solidarity, stand up and be counted. Here is a list of organisations:

[Advance](#) – women's centre services and campaigns

[Agenda Alliance](#) – advocacy and campaigns

[Clean Break](#) – holistic support and theatre skills for women

[Level Up](#) – campaigning to end the imprisonment of pregnant women

[Women in Prison](#) – support services, women's centres and campaigns

[Working Chance](#) – supporting women with convictions into employment

Donate

If you are able to [support Clean Break](#) with a donation this helps us continue to use theatre to change lives and bring the hidden stories of women and criminalisation to new audiences, challenging assumptions and creating lasting change.