



Catch

by Sonia Jalaly

INFORMATION PACK

**CLEAN
BREAK**

i Catch is an engaging and impactful play designed specifically to be performed at conferences, seminars or training events. This play sparks debate with audiences about what best practice looks like in services which support women who are criminalised.

Why have we made Catch?

Catch is a new play from Clean Break theatre company which presents a compelling case for the necessity of women's centre services, and highlights how the criminal justice system places impassable barriers in front of women who are trying to survive.

Right now, the future of how women experiencing criminalisation are treated in the UK is at a tipping point. The drastic increase in isolation and neglect faced by women in prison during the pandemic has led to a crisis in mental health [1]; and despite committing to reducing the women's prison population in their Female Offender Strategy, the Government announced that 500 new prison spaces are to be built in the women's estate, at an estimated cost of £150million [2].

Since this announcement, the government have also committed to investing £24million in women's centres [3], but this is a mere 16% of what they plan to spend on prison places. These specialist centres are an alternative to prison which support women in the community. As an organisation which works closely with women with experience of the criminal justice system, and which partners with women's centres to provide creative interventions, we know that these centres provide healing for women and deliver positive outcomes which prisons by nature are not able to achieve.

We made Catch because it is vital that people working closely with women who are criminalised understand how essential women's centres are, and that they should always be prioritised for funding over the expansion of the criminal justice system. The latest plans from the government show that this is not currently the case.



Catch was developed through research and conversations with staff, peer mentors, and women from Advance. We are proud to have worked with Clean Break, our valued partners, to produce an authentic reflection of the realities experienced by many of the women who come through the doors of our women's centres.

It is imperative that people hear these stories and understand the factors which lead to the criminalisation of women, and how best to support them. We are confident that Catch will bring these realities to life for audiences in a range of contexts.



**Niki Scordi, Chief Executive
Officer at Advance**

Can I read the script?

A copy of the script can be provided to bookers upon request.

What is Catch About?

Catch is produced by ground-breaking theatre company Clean Break, who have been using theatre to shed light on the realities of women with experience of the criminal justice system for over forty years.

The play follows the lives of three women, Christina, Susan and Rachel, each trying to turn her life around, and seeking support at a women's centre. These women are accessing support for different reasons: domestic violence, addiction and unsafe housing - all leading to entanglement with the criminal justice system.

The play explores the multiple challenges women face and asks if re-entry into the criminal justice system is inevitable or if the support from the women's centre is enough to catch them.

Catch was developed with and is performed by women with experience of the criminal justice system or at risk of entering it due to the challenges they are facing, such as mental ill health or drug/alcohol issues.

Clean Break co-commissioned Sonia Jalaly to write Catch with our sister charity Advance, who supported the research period. This included running workshops for women attending Advance women's centres as well as speaking to staff and peer mentors at the centres.

Advance

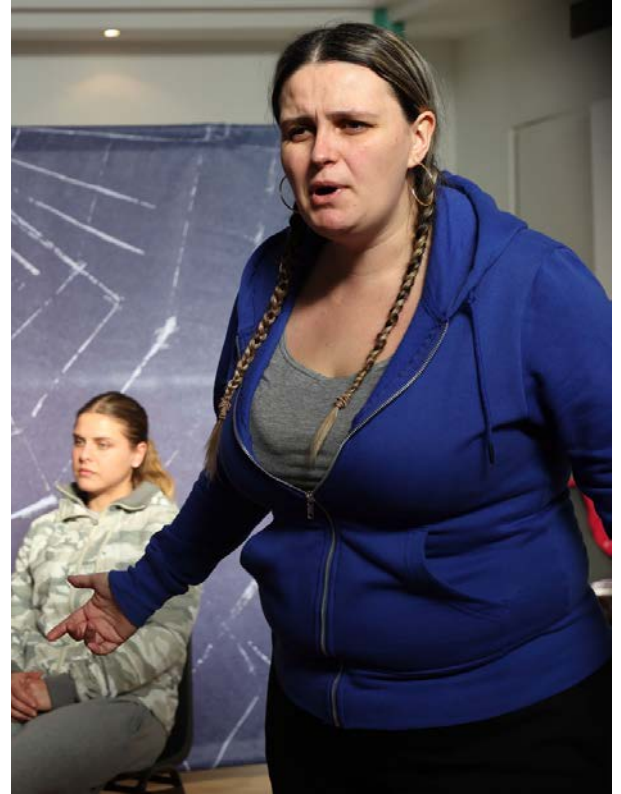
Advance is a national charity supporting women and children experiencing domestic abuse, including those in contact with the criminal justice system. Advance works in partnership with professionals and organisations to provide women with practical and emotional support so that they can be safe and lead equal lives, and to raise awareness to deliver the systems change required to improve responses to women and children's needs. Advancecharity.org.uk

Thank you to Advance and all the women who supported the development of Catch.



It was an eye-opener to women's struggles, even when they do get involved with support networks.

Audience member



Who is the play for?

Catch will make an engaging and impactful contribution for conferences, seminars or training events, and is of interest to:

- Criminal justice agencies
- Women's organisations
- Policymakers
- Probation services
- Universities (particularly criminology and theatre courses)
- Service users and staff working with women in the criminal justice system and in women's centres



It felt personal, people were not numbers or statistics.

Audience member



The performance was excellent and very powerful. You could have heard a pin drop in the room... thank you for your invaluable contribution at the conference.

Organiser of a criminal justice conference featuring Clean Break

Why should you book Catch?

The conversations we need to have around women and criminalisation are complex and can be difficult to hold. Through our experience, we know that presenting complex issues through theatre reaches audiences in a unique and accessible way. Opening up these conversations creatively makes space for preconceptions to be challenged and expands learning opportunities for a wide range of audiences.

Catch immerses audiences in a story about the value of women’s centres, and how women get swept into the criminal justice system. The topics covered in the play are:

- Coercive control
- Gender based violence
- Cuckooing
- Gang affiliation
- Anti-social behaviour orders
- Estrangement from family
- Witness Protection
- Imprisonment and criminalisation
- Re-entry into the criminal justice system
- Women’s centre services, including group work and peer support
- Probation services

Our productions are based on detailed research and development with women with lived experience, and our artistic approach allows us to reveal obstacles faced by many without divulging the personal information of individual women.

The 40-minute play can be stand alone or accompanied by a 20-60 minute workshop/discussion enabling audiences to explore in more detail the issues raised by the play.

Catch provides delegates with:

A high quality and thought-provoking theatrical experience

A platform to explore issues around imprisonment and the alternatives

An opportunity to reflect on and improve professional practice

A new way of thinking about complex issues

Strategies to improve outcomes when working with adults in vulnerable circumstances





Pictured: Sonia Jalaly

In the process of writing Catch I worked with women who were accessing services from a women's centre in London. Our time together was focused on telling the stories of women like them; who reflected their experiences and challenges. Together we created the characters that you'll meet in Catch, they are the mouthpiece for what the women want to be heard. These stories showed me how women centres can be a lifeline and safety net when there is no one else to catch them.

Sonia Jalaly, Playwright



Who is involved?

Sonia Jalaly | Playwright

Sonia is a writer and theatre maker from Manchester. Her debut solo show, Happy Birthday Without You, toured to Kiln Theatre, Paines Plough's Roundabout at the Edinburgh Fringe and the Greater Manchester Fringe, where it won the Best Newcomer Award.

She has devised and written a number of community theatre shows: Bump for Kiln Theatre; We Want to be Frank and The Competition for Company Three; Catch and She is on Her Way for Clean Break.

She was a member of the BBC Writers room's Comedy Room 2018 and has since written for a number of CBBC and CBeebies shows. She is currently developing a new series with Dreamworks and is under commission with Kiln and ETT, HighTide and the Royal Exchange Theatre.

Anna Herrmann | Director

Anna is Artistic Director at Clean Break. For Clean Break her directing credits include Missing Out by Mary Cooper, Hear by Deborah Bruce, Sweatbox by Chloë Moss and Through This Mist by various playwrights. Anna joined Clean Break as Head of Education in 2002 and led its award-winning Education programme for 15 years.

Cast

The three strong cast are Clean Break Members; women who have lived experience of the criminal justice system or are at risk of entering it. The Members selected for this production are on Clean Break's traineeship scheme and are specialising in performance. The scheme provides first-hand experience of touring, whilst providing additional training and development to support women moving beyond Clean Break to consider a career in the creative industries.

Who is Clean Break?

Clean Break is a theatre company producing groundbreaking theatre which puts women's voices at its heart and creates lasting change by challenging injustice in and beyond the criminal justice system.

Clean Break was established by two women in prison in 1979, at HMP Askham Grange. An Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation, Clean Break produces groundbreaking theatre which puts women's voices at its heart and challenges injustice within and beyond the criminal justice system.

Our collaboration with artists, women with criminal justice experience and our partnerships across theatre, criminal justice and the women's sector means we are uniquely placed to engage with audiences who are trying to make sense of the world and looking for new and inspiring narratives.

Clean Break uses theatre in prison and with women in the community, and commissions and produces plays which compellingly reveal to audiences the hidden stories of women and criminalisation. We achieve this in collaboration with theatres and other organisations including the Donmar Warehouse, Soho Theatre, Theatre Clwyd and the Royal Court.

Over the past 40 years Clean Break has proven itself to be a trailblazer in both theatre and the criminal justice system; creating bold work, innovating best practices and creating lasting change.



This phenomenal company's activity: it is vital, humane work with real theatrical heft.

Lynn Gardner, The Stage

Find us online

 cleanbreak.org.uk

 @CleanBrk

 @CleanBrk

 facebook.com/cleanbreak

The Details

There are two options for how your organisation could book this production, depending on your need and the size of the audience:

Regular performance booking

- Catch performed to your audience.
- Total time 50 minutes.
- Ideal for conferences.

Performance & workshop booking

- Catch performed to your audience.
- After the play, a workshop facilitated by a Clean Break artist to explore the themes of the play in more detail and to ignite discussion. This workshop can be tailored to a range of settings to suit the objectives and group sizes of your organisation.
- Total time 1 hour 50 minutes.
- Ideal for educational institutions and seminars.

There is also an option for bespoke packages if you have specific requirements.

 For more information and costs contact:

Maya Ellis, Producer

020 7482 8600

maya.ellis@cleanbreak.org.uk

Technical requirements

Timing

Catch is a 50 minute long play with no interval, but please allow a few minutes additional time for start and finish.

Space

We can be flexible about this depending on your audience numbers.

Set

The play tours with a compactable set and we can discuss specific requirements dependent on the performance space.

Hosting

Our team of four, three cast members and a Company Stage Manager, will require a private space they can use as a dressing room and to safely store their personal belongings during the performance.

Cover image by Anastasiya Romanova on Unsplash
Photography by Tracey Anderson U.O.S.



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

