

**Howard League
for Penal Reform**

**Arresting the entry of women
into the criminal justice
system**

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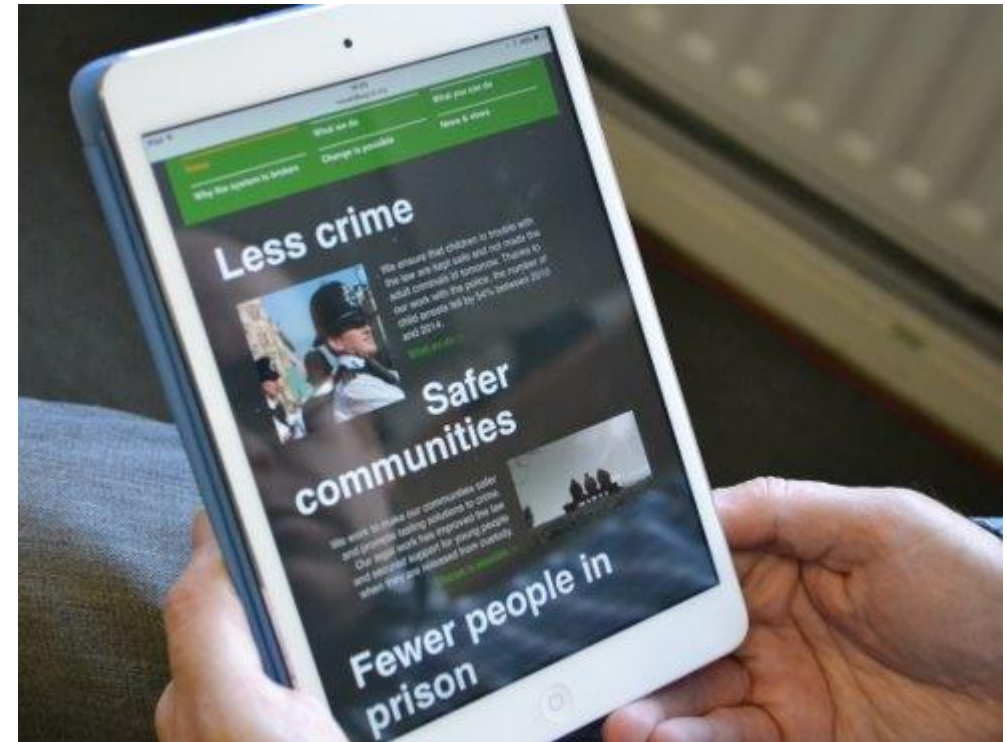
Overview

- About the Howard League
- Howard League programme to arrest entry of women into the criminal justice system
- MoJ strategy for women
- Statistics on arrests of women
- Why a gender-informed approach to policing women
- Outcomes
- Questions and discussion



The Howard League for Penal Reform

- Oldest penal reform charity in the UK
- Established in 1866
- Works for less crime, safer communities and fewer people in prison
- Campaign to reduce child arrests led to fall of nearly 70% in seven years



Reducing the arrests of women

- Three year programme to stem the flow of women into the criminal justice system
- Aim to reduce arrests of women year on year
- Influence policy
- Share best practice



Arresting the entry of women into the criminal justice system.

Key points

- The All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Women in the Penal System is conducting an inquiry into reducing the arrests of women
- The Howard League for Penal Reform is working to reduce the entry of women to the criminal justice system and is supporting the work of the APPG
- Police carried out almost 103,000 arrests of women and girls in the year ending March 2018
- Across England and Wales last year, police arrested women at a rate of one every five minutes
- Arrest is the first formal entry point into the criminal justice system
- Women with histories of being victims of violence and abuse are over-represented in the criminal justice system
- Data published by the Home Office found that BME women were more than twice as likely to be arrested than white women
- The government has estimated that in 2015/16, policing costs for dealing with women were approximately £1bn
- Women who need support should not be arrested.

All Party Parliamentary Group on
Women in the Penal System



‘Coming into contact with the criminal justice system, and in particular custody, can undermine the ability of women to address the issues that have caused their offending’

Government strategy for women

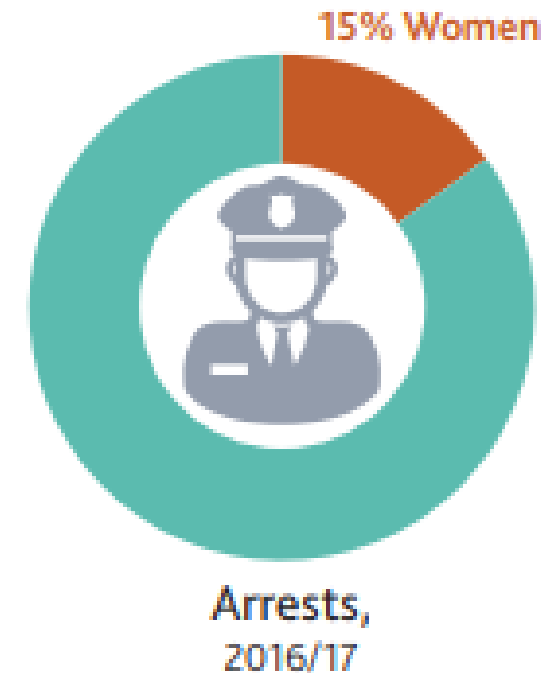
June 2018

Arrests of women

- There were 97,000 arrests of women in the year ending March 2019
- Across England and Wales police arrested women at a rate of one arrest every five minutes
- Estimated policing costs for dealing with women are £1bn



Both **black and mixed ethnic** women are more than **twice** as likely to be **arrested** than white women. (2014)



The police, as a woman's first point of contact with the justice system, have a key role to play in helping women to take the first important steps to access support in order to address the problems in their lives'

Police Guidance managing vulnerability: women

June 2018

Police as first point of contact



Why might women come into contact with the police and the justice system?



How could the police respond?

Implement a process model that ensures officers take a gender-informed approach to all women with whom they come into contact, whether or not they are arrested

**Police
Guidance
managing
vulnerability:
women**

June 2018

The Equality Duty

‘It is now well recognised that a misplaced conception of equality has resulted in some very unequal treatment for the women and girls who appear before the criminal justice system. Simply put, a male-ordered world has applied to them its perceptions of the appropriate treatment for male offenders....The criminal justice system could ... ask itself whether it is indeed unjust to women.

Baroness Hale DBE (2005) Longford Trust
Lecture

What does a gender informed approach look like?

- Acknowledges the role of gender
- Treats women as individuals with the potential to make a positive contribution to wider society
- Addresses women's vulnerability
- Trauma informed
- Delivers women-specific services

Provide strong leadership by senior officers to ensure that the cultural and practical changes needed to implement this new process model are taken forward and embedded as business as usual

**Police
Guidance
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June 2018

Reducing arrests of women

- Does the Police and Crime plan include a strategy for women?
- Is there strong senior leadership?
- What evidence is available?
- How can you share learning and best practice?
- Is a women-centred approach to managing vulnerability embedded as business as usual?



Reducing arrests of women

Good practice:

- Avon and Somerset: Bridgwater women's centre
- Gloucestershire Police: the Nelson Trust
- Thames Valley Police: Alana House



Keep in touch

- Email Lorraine.Atkinson@howardleague.org
- Visit www.howardleague.org
- Sign up to our bulletins
- Become a member of the Howard League

References

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