

News story: New cash to help vulnerable women turn their backs on crime

Vulnerable women at risk of committing crime are to benefit from tailored, targeted support to break the cycle of reoffending and turn their lives around for good – backed by funding totalling over £800,000, Justice Minister Dr Phillip Lee has today (28 March 2017) announced.

Successful bidders in 6 regions across the country

- Lancashire
- Shropshire
- Norfolk
- Sussex
- Surrey
- Devon

will use the cash boost to increase the support on offer to female offenders both behind bars and in the community. This should improve life chances for vulnerable women and cut crime.

The money will be used to provide a more joined-up and tailored support for local women at risk of crime and in the justice system. It will bring together local agencies and services to provide wraparound care and support to women to turn their backs on crime for good.

Some areas will use the money to help generate better working relationships with counterparts in the NHS, courts and police, making sure that vulnerable women have access to the services they need.

One area which has already benefited from the funding has developed a successful early intervention pilot, identifying female offenders as soon as they come into contact with the police.

Almost half of women released from prison reoffend within a year. Yet many suffer from a range of complex issues including substance misuse, mental health problems and domestic violence. These require specialist support and intervention to improve lives and end the scourge of reoffending which costs the taxpayer £15 billion a year.

Justice Minister Dr Phillip Lee said:

I am delighted to announce this investment in support for female offenders, which will help local areas to support vulnerable women and get them out of the cycle of crime.

Many women who are at risk of offending or reoffending have a range

of complex circumstances. Our funding will help local areas provide the support women need to lead crime free lives, helping to reduce reoffending, cut crime and make our streets safer.

I am absolutely committed to improving support for women as part of our wider reforms and we will set out our strategy to improve outcomes for female offenders later in the year.

The money will be used in these communities to put structures in place to assess and address the needs of these women at an early stage and provide the kind of wraparound support that can make all the difference in diverting them from crime.

The areas will develop their own unique strategies which are best targeted to address the needs of women in their areas, working across local public and third sector organisations.

Today's announcement builds on the wholesale changes taking place across the criminal justice system following on from the publication of the Prison Safety and Reform White Paper in November last year.

This includes giving governors more powers over education, work and health, so they can tailor support to the prisoners in their charge.