

Women in Focus: an evaluation

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**A REPORT FOR SOUTH WEST SCOTLAND COMMUNITY JUSTICE
AUTHORITY**

June 2011

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS	2
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	3
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
INTRODUCTION	10
BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT	11
THEORETICAL OVERVIEW	15
WOMEN IN FOCUS	17
WOMEN REFERRED TO WOMEN IN FOCUS.....	21
ASSESSMENT AND IDENTIFIED NEEDS	25
ACCESS TO SERVICES	27
DELIVERING THE SERVICE: SUPPORTING WOMEN	33
DEFINING SOCIAL WORK AND SUPPORT WORKER ROLES	35
GROUP WORK	38
OUTCOMES	41
OBJECTIVE 1: BREACH AND CUSTODY RATES	41
OBJECTIVE 2: RECONVICTION AND REOFFENDING	44
OBJECTIVE 3: IMPROVEMENTS IN COMMUNITY INTEGRATION.....	45
CONCLUSION	55
REFERENCES	57
ANNEX ONE: PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES	59
ANNEX TWO: METHODOLOGY	60
ANNEX THREE: COMMUNITY INTEGRATION	64
ANNEX FOUR: ADDITIONAL TABLES	65
ANNEX FIVE: EVALUATION OF GROUP WORK	68
ANNEX SIX: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE OUTCOMES	69

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank everyone who contributed to this evaluation. Firstly, the staff at Women in Focus, in particular Angela Curran and Frances Emmerson; and all the support workers. Many criminal justice social work staff played an important part in the evaluation and we would like to make special mention of Christine Murray, who tirelessly compiled the data on which we drew. We would also like to thank all the members of the Women in Focus Steering Group particularly Fiona MacKinnon, who chaired the group and made an important contribution to the evaluation. Thanks also to Fergus McNeil and Susan Batchelor from the Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research.

Finally, and most importantly, we would like to thank all the women involved with the service, who spoke with us, shared their experiences and who are the main focus of this research study.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The development and operation of Women in Focus resulted from the concerns that many practitioners, policy-makers and others have expressed in relation to the increasing imprisonment of women in Scotland (and internationally). There is evidence of considerable innovation and insight in the development of recent initiatives and actions which have emerged in Scotland; for example the 218 service in Glasgow (Loucks et al, 2006; Easton and Matthews, 2010) the Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee on Female Offenders (Equal Opportunities Committee, 2010). However, innovative attempts, while making a significant difference to the individual women who are able to access them, are introduced and required to operate within, a wider social, political and economic context that can influence how services operate (i.e. short-term funding imposes its own constraints) and how 'effective' these innovative services can be seen to be.

The objectives, and thus measures of effectiveness, which Women in Focus required to attain (reductions in reconviction/reoffending; reduction in rates of custody; increased community integration/reintegration) are themselves influenced by wider trends in sentencing practice at local, national and international levels (Sudbury, 2005; McIvor, 2010; McIvor and Burman, 2011; Sheehan et al, 2011) while at the same time, attempts to integrate socially marginalised individuals into local communities also places agencies under the sphere of current policies and practices in the distribution of resources and welfare provision. In recent years, cuts in welfare spending have impacted on women with the increasing 'feminisation of poverty' (Pearce, 1978; Carlen, 1998) and the introduction of increasingly punitive policies which impact disproportionately on the poor (Wacquant, 2009).

This wider context highlights the importance of addressing welfare-related issues as a mechanism for alleviating some of the contributory factors for offending by women, while at the same time, creating very real challenges for the service in attempts to 'evidence' real change, in terms of rates of reconviction, breach and custody, in the short-term. This evaluation examines the implementation and operation of Women in Focus, however, the wider context which impacts on the experiences of criminalised women in the community and criminal justice system should not be overlooked.

The service

Women in Focus offers support to women subject to community-based Court Orders in the South West Scotland (SWS) Community Justice Authority (CJA). The service, a partnership between Barnardo's and Criminal Justice Social Work Services, operates across the four local authority areas of the CJA: Dumfries & Galloway and East, North and South Ayrshire. Women in Focus developed from a smaller scheme initiated within South Ayrshire which ran successfully from 2004-2009 (the Women Offender's Support Project).

Four Barnardo's women's support workers are co-located with criminal justice social work teams across the CJA, providing a service to each local authority area, in conjunction with supervising officers who act as case managers for women accessing the service. Formal line management is provided by Barnardo's, while day-to-day supervision of support staff is carried out by criminal justice social work managers.

The service has three operational objectives which are to: (a) reduce levels of breach and levels of custody for women, (b) reduce rates of re-offending and re-conviction for women and (c) support women towards positive community reintegration. In order to achieve this the role of the support worker is to assist women in completing their order while also equipping them to achieve stability in their lives, for example by helping them to secure permanent housing, maximizing their income and engaging in a positive way with a range of helping agencies.

The evaluation

The evaluation of the service was conducted by researchers from the Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research (SCCJR) between 2009 and 2011. The evaluation was based on both qualitative and quantitative research methods and included data from semi-structured interviews with: Women in Focus support workers and managers; criminal justice social workers; staff from other agencies working with women; and with service users. Analysis of documentary material, including annual reports and Steering Group meeting minutes was also undertaken. Quantitative data, provided by Scottish Government Justice Analytical Services, criminal justice social work across the four South West Scotland local authorities and Barnardo's was collected, cross-referenced and analysed. This data included statistics relating to types of offences, sentencing patterns, breach rates and circumstances of, and outcomes for, women in relation to re-offending and the extent to which identified issues were addressed. Different start up dates in each area meant it was not possible to compare outcomes across local authority areas.

The women and identified needs

Professional respondents indicated that women referred to Women in Focus often had highly complex needs including considerable financial problems and poverty-related difficulties; significant rates of domestic abuse; and addiction issues. In most cases, the needs of women reflected the difficulties that were acknowledged as features of women in the criminal justice system more generally (poverty, addiction, abuse, trauma, bereavement, and childcare issues). The narratives of distress which were features of many of the women's lives are evident from the case studies included in this report and could often appear overwhelming to workers, as well as to the women themselves.

Women were, in many cases, living in unstable housing and a substantial number had, or were still, experiencing domestic violence. A majority of the women were unemployed and living on benefits and a high proportion experienced problems with their use of alcohol and/or drugs. Many of the children of those women who had them were being cared for, at

least partly, by relatives and many women were socially marginalised and isolated, often without the support of family and friends.

Women referred to Women in Focus had received court orders for offences that were typically recorded for women in the criminal justice system across Scotland. The majority of women were on Probation Orders, mostly those of 12 months duration and under, although in a significant number of cases women received lengthy Orders. Women referred were predominantly in the 21-30 age-group although in two of the four areas slightly older women were more likely to be referred.

Women referred to Women in Focus typically required support to: engage with addiction, criminal justice and family social work services; access full benefit entitlement and health services (GP and dental care); negotiate housing and tenancy problems. Women needed help to address a range of identified needs which were often directly linked to their criminalisation. Women in Focus support workers were important in linking women into local community supports. A pre-requisite for this was often the need for women to feel ready and capable of making changes through enhanced self-esteem and confidence.

The focus of the interventions

The Women in Focus support workers aimed to help women to address their individual needs at a pace which was appropriate for them. The support workers, along with criminal justice social workers, achieved this by identifying issues in women's lives with which they required help to complete court orders; and by providing practical and emotional support in order to achieve set outcomes. This included one-to-one support sessions, practical assistance, help in engaging with other agencies and support to participate in group work; focusing on life skills, confidence building and preparation for employment/training. In some cases the group based work led to direct community involvement, focused on community payback, such as refurbishment work undertaken for a local hospice. Given the limited case-load, relative to criminal justice social workers, Women in Focus support workers were able to respond quickly to women in crisis, were easily accessible and were able to spend longer periods with women who required emotional support.

Impact of the service on outcomes

Attempting to measure outcomes requires that a significant period of time has been made available to implement the service and for interventions to take effect. The outcomes reported here are short-term and changes that may have resulted from the Women in Focus service may continue to take time to materialise. Importantly, when considering the impact of an intervention in terms of reconviction rates and impact on custodial sentences, wider factors need to be considered including practices at local and national level in relation to sentencing practices and responses to breach. The implementation of Women in Focus took place at a period when the number of women being admitted to prison in Scotland has been increasing, a trend that is reflected both nationally and internationally (McIvor, 2010; McIvor and Burman, 2011).

The evaluation concluded that Women in Focus may have contributed to the recorded reduction in breach rates in three of the four local authority areas. Re-arrest data also indicates that most of the women who engaged with the service have committed fewer or in most cases, no further offences to date. Twenty seven women have successfully met their outcome objectives and a further 45 are currently working with the service. Detailed outcome information, recorded at review, was available for 60 women and showed that 54% of women with housing problems at the point of referral were in more stable housing; while 52% of women with benefit-related needs had increased access to their benefit entitlement as a result of their involvement with Women in Focus. Sixty three percent of those with drug and/or alcohol problems had reduced their substance use or were using substances in a safer way. More women were now registered with a GP and a small number were receiving dental care where before they had not. As many as 16 women were in an improved situation in relation to their exposure to domestic violence. The service had assisted half the women for whom outcomes information was available to strength their links to community-based organisations, including training opportunities. The feedback from interviews conducted with service users and workers (both Women in Focus support workers and criminal justice social workers) indicated that many of the women who had fully engaged with Women in Focus had experienced higher levels of confidence, self-esteem and self-efficacy. Importantly Women in Focus workers provided both practical and emotional support aimed at assisting women to deal with issues likely to have both a direct, and indirect, impact on their ability to meet the requirements of court orders, including reducing reoffending.

Key learning points from the evaluation

Women in Focus was informed by the principles of a desistance-based approach; this included an expectation that making support available to women, with the objective that they would meet the requirements of a court order, would reduce the likelihood of breach. Significant attention was placed upon the relationship between the support worker and service-user, which included practical support and models of problem-solving; and a focus on improving the service users' well-being. The evaluation highlighted the following points:

Service provision

- Support to deal with practical issues and the availability of emotional support were both important to women. Provision of support at a point of crisis helped women to avoid the need to offend, for example to shoplift in order to buy drugs or to obtain essentials such as food.
- Women in Focus support workers' attention to welfare-related issues was viewed as significant by social workers who could subsequently focus on addressing other issues related to the requirements and fulfilment of court orders.
- Supporting women to make changes in their circumstances was sometimes challenging, but building confidence and self-esteem was a crucial factor in this process. This had the potential to help women to approach agencies confidently in

the future. Women with seemingly intractable problems were able to make significant changes in their circumstances which might be sustained with on-going support.

- Support needs to be available at a stage where women feel able and ready to make changes. Recognising that change can be a difficult and overwhelming process, and must happen at a pace appropriate for the individual, meant that realistic expectations of the woman and the support worker could be set.
- Overcoming women's initial reluctance to take part in a service such as Women in Focus can be a challenge –as knowledge about the service spread this reluctance may have reduced over time.
- The Women in Focus support workers had sufficient time to provide practical support and the ability to respond quickly to women in crisis compared with criminal justice social workers who had onerous caseloads. Support workers were able to deliver agreed actions and this was greatly valued by the service users who took part in the evaluation.
- Informal contact and the ability to talk easily with support workers was important to women; in many cases, this was more important than whether the worker was from Barnardo's or another voluntary agency.
- As part of a voluntary agency, Women in Focus support workers could help women access other forms of funding and resources.
- The support worker role was multi-faceted and included supporting women to engage with agencies, co-ordinating agencies and clarifying roles, helping women to sustain long Probation Orders and linking women into community resources. Women in Focus could provide ongoing weekly support after the contact with criminal justice social worker had reduced (due to length and stage of order).

Organisational issues

- The co-location of Women in Focus support workers within criminal justice social work offices was crucial in enabling joint working relationships to be forged and to assist in the referral and on-going collaborative working process.
- Initial attempts to cover wide and dispersed geographical areas presented challenges to support workers in terms of time, energy and focus and were not always sustainable within existing resources.
- The Steering Group had an important role in guiding service development and facilitating partnership working. It was beneficial that it included relevant agencies able to respond when a particular need was recognised. It meant that potential issues could be resolved relatively quickly and appropriate advice provided. The role of the Chairperson was crucial in maintaining consistency and direction, especially during management changes within Barnardo's.
- Women in Focus helped establish a better understanding of the roles of different agencies and helped to improve relationships between women and social workers, and women and other agencies in some cases.

- The group-work received very positive feedback – but there was an identified need for ongoing support (follow-up) after the group ended to allow for support while women applied the skills learned; this was addressed by the introduction of a mentoring group work programme.
- There was a need to ensure sufficient access to the service. The implications of short-term funding are clearly significant for all aspects of the service. This resulted in ongoing uncertainty about the service and set limitations on the benefits of evaluation.
- The evaluation showed evidence of short term benefits (e.g. compliance with court orders, regular attendance at key appointments, improved access to health care and other services) for women who engaged; factors which are likely to reap long term benefits over a longer time-frame.

Conclusion

The evaluation findings indicate that Women in Focus is valued by women attending the service and workers in other agencies. While the project is established across four local authorities (South Ayrshire, East Ayrshire, Dumfries and Galloway, North Ayrshire) and experiences have differed in terms of worker input and length of service, responses have been positive overall, and women accessing the service who have taken part in the evaluation have benefitted from the input of support workers, the opportunity to access additional services (i.e. advice, support, a women's group) and the additional time that support workers are able to provide – something that statutory criminal justice social workers often struggle to make available given the number of pressing demands on their time and resources.

There does appear to be evidence that women who engage with the service are more likely to experience improvements in a number of areas of their lives; improvements which increase their ability to comply with court orders, and reduce the likelihood that orders will be breached and subsequently that they will be at risk of a custodial sentence. Women who made use of the service also indicated that they had experienced improvements in terms of confidence and self-esteem and had developed relationships with support workers and indeed other women, which was likely to support personal resilience and desistance from further offending in future. Through Women in Focus, women have also been able to link into other community based resources and agencies (notably in relation to addiction, accommodation and domestic abuse); services which many of the women struggled to access in the past. Once these links are established, the potential for women to retain and benefit from other services is considerable.

INTRODUCTION

Women in Focus is a partnership between Barnardo's Scotland and criminal justice social work within South West Scotland (SWS) Community Justice Authority (CJA) which works with women involved with the criminal justice system, on community based orders, to address issues which contributed to their offending and lack of integration in their local community. South West Scotland CJA (SWS CJA) covers four local authority areas: North Ayrshire; South Ayrshire; East Ayrshire; and Dumfries and Galloway. Women in Focus was established in 2008 in line with the longer term target outcome set out by South West Scotland CJA in the Area and Action Plan ((2008-2011) to: "Meet the offending needs of women and reduce imprisonment levels for non violent offences" (Action Plan, Section 2.6).

SWS has a high number of women in custody (11% of all women prisoners), just over the average 10% of the general population, with reconviction rates slightly higher for women in SWS at 38% compared to the Scottish average of 36%. The CJA covers a mix of urban, semi-rural and rural areas with some areas of significant multiple deprivation, accounting for a population of just over 516,000 (about 10% of the population of Scotland). East and North Ayrshire have significantly higher recorded crime rates than South Ayrshire or Dumfries and Galloway.

Women in Focus is aimed at reducing the number of women imprisoned from SWS CJA by offering additional support within the framework of a statutory order. Using a mentoring model, this can include promoting personal safety, self esteem, health/diet, and the establishment and maintenance of appropriate community and family support. The role of support workers (employed by Barnardo's) is to target 'criminogenic needs' as identified by LSI-R¹ assessments (e.g. accommodation, relationships, education, employment, finance, social interaction, alcohol/drug addiction, physical and mental health) (see Annex One for further details).

Women in Focus targets women:

- aged 16 years and over;
- assessed as being at moderate to high risk of re-conviction and/or custody at the SER stage (LSI-R assessment);
- at risk of custody at the SER stage due to seriousness of offence;
- at risk of breach of any statutory community based order;
- at risk of remand through failure to comply with bail;
- resident in the SWS CJA area.

The Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research (SCCJR) was commissioned to evaluate the Women in Focus service, with the evaluation taking place between 2009 and 2011. The

¹ This assessment tool was being replaced by the LSCMI.

evaluation is based on a mixed method approach combining qualitative and quantitative data (see Annex Two) and aims to assess the extent to which Women in Focus is able to meet its key operational objectives to:

- reduce levels of breach and levels of custody for women (Objective 1);
- reduce rates of re-offending and re-conviction (Objective 2);
- support positive community integration (Objective 3).

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

As a result of ongoing concern at the increasing female prison population in Scotland (HM Inspector of Prisons, 2007; Equal Opportunities Committee, 2009), each Community Justice Authority (CJA) was charged with prioritising women offenders as a key policy objective. Given the high level of breach rates among women on community disposals, initiatives which aim to reduce the likelihood of breach by supporting women to comply with statutory requirements are of importance. Women in Focus is intended to do this, by providing support (provided by workers employed by Barnardo's) within the context of a statutory court order.

Women in Focus was modelled on a smaller scheme that operated successfully within South Ayrshire Council (the Women Offender's Support Project, WOSP). WOSP was initiated by South Ayrshire Council Criminal Justice Social Work in 2004, with the overall aim of preventing the reception into custody of women who were subject to statutory supervision orders. Workers employed by Barnardo's supported women to complete community based orders by assisting them to address personal and social issues directly related to their offending behaviour, thus reducing the incidence of breach proceedings that could lead to custody. WOSP evidenced short term benefits for service users, notably improved uptake of services and regular attendance for pre-arranged appointments with other agencies (Barnardo's, 2005 and 2008). The introduction of WOSP was linked to a reduced breach rate for non-compliance with Community Orders for women in South Ayrshire from 37% to 14.5% in the first year of the pilot project (Barnardo's, 2008 and 2009). In subsequent years (2007-2008) the breach rate for non-compliance for women attending WOSP started to increase (to 22%) (Barnardo's, 2008). An evaluation of the service (Barnardo's, 2008) suggested that the closure of a support service provided by Ayr Action on Mental Health may have contributed to this increase in the breach rate, highlighting the inter-dependence of services.

The context of a rapidly increasing female prison population provided a background to the implementation and operation of Women in Focus. As McIvor and Burman (2011) have highlighted, increasing number of women are being imprisoned in Scotland as a result of sentencing practices rather than increases in women's involvement in crime. This wider context impacts on the potential for initiatives like Women in Focus to be able to demonstrate any significant impact in the short term.

While there was significant commitment within SWS CJA to develop this model of service across the authority, expanding the service to the four local authority areas has not been without its challenges. It is well understood that most interventions take as much as 18 months to overcome initial teething problems (Hedderman et al, 2008); however, there were a number of delays that impacted on the development of the service in addition to the time required to smooth implementation issues.

In order to expand this model of intervention, the aim was to provide the service through the location of Women in Focus support workers in the main centres of population across the authority (Stevenston, Kilmarnock, Cumnock, Dumfries, Stranraer and Ayr). From the outset, there was a preference that the service was provided by a single voluntary agency working with a range of other services, both for reasons of expertise and cost. Despite the fact that Barnardo's Scotland was already providing the service in Ayr and had contributed to the development of the pilot project, a tendering process was instigated and agencies were required to tender for the contract to deliver this service. This caused a delay in getting the service in place. Although Barnardo's were eventually awarded the contract to provide the service in February 2009, this delayed the implementation of the service from the originally intended start-up in 2008.

After the contract had been awarded, staff had to be appointed and existing paperwork developed to fit the needs of the wider project, for example referral forms and protocols. In addition, there were a number of changes at management level within Barnardo's. This led to delays throughout 2009 in establishing links with criminal justice social work managers in each area and partnership working with other key partners and service providers. Management stability was not achieved until 2010. Meanwhile there were various delays in recruiting support workers across the four areas. The changes in key personnel at Barnardo's and delays in recruitment of women's support workers led to difficulties in establishing the service in each local authority and, as a result, the service began at different times in each area: South Ayrshire was operational from 1 April 2009 having transferred the service from WOSP to Women in Focus; North Ayrshire was operational from 8 June 2009; East Ayrshire from 1 September 2009; and Dumfries and Galloway from 5 January 2010.

Four Barnardo's women's support workers were co-located with Criminal Justice Social Work Teams across the CJA, providing a service to each local authority area, in conjunction with supervising officers who act as case managers for women accessing the service. Formal line management is provided by Barnardo's, while day-to-day supervision of support staff is carried out by Criminal Justice Social Work Managers with communication sustained through regular three-way monitoring and management meetings. At the outset, Women in Focus was expected to engage with 25 women per year in each of the four local authority areas, amounting to 100 women in total, per year.

The different start dates had implications for the evaluation as discussed below, but also impacted on the operation of the service. This was exacerbated by the short-term funding

available which has affected the security of the service; with funding only guaranteed until March 2011 there have been difficulties in retaining support workers and developing confidence in the sustainability of the service among criminal justice social workers and women referred to Women in Focus. Support workers in East and North Ayrshire had left the service by December 2010 and the support worker for Dumfries and Galloway resigned in March 2011. Sessional/temporary workers were put in place to cover gaps in provision as workers left.

From the outset, a Steering Group was put in place to oversee the implementation and operation of Women in Focus. This group consisted of key managers in each of the four local authority areas, Barnardo's managers and other service providers considered relevant to the smooth operation of the service². Although there was some initial difficulty in sustaining consistency in representation on the Group, this was addressed over time ensuring increased levels of stability. The Steering Group was managed by the Criminal Justice Partnership manager who had a significant role in taking developments forward. This strategic overview was crucial in supporting the work of the project, resolving difficulties as they arose and maintaining focus and commitment to achieving the objectives of the service as well as ensuring shared understanding of these key objectives.

²For example, in response to concerns about the reorganisation of addiction services, the Addiction Development Officer of the Ayrshire Criminal Justice SWS Partnership was invited onto the Group. She contacted Women in Focus workers to identify any difficulties in accessing substance use support and/or treatment for service users. This established links for addressing potential difficulties and established mechanisms for publicising training etc. Input in relation to employment, training and group-work has also been provided.

Case Study One

Jennifer is 28 years old and lives alone in a local authority tenancy. Her son has lived with his granny since he was a baby. Jennifer has been diagnosed with borderline personality disorder and has a history of anxiety and depression. She started using substances in her teenage years due to bullying at school and involvement with an older peer group, developing a heroin addiction at the age of 16. Jennifer was subjected to years of domestic violence from her ex-partner, leaving her with low self-esteem and confidence issues.

Jennifer was charged with police assault and Breach of the Peace after an incident at home which involved a group of substance using friends and for which she was given a 12 month probation order. Initially Jennifer did not engage well with criminal justice social work and was unable to follow up tasks she was set in relation to her social needs. Jennifer's lifestyle became increasingly chaotic and she self harmed as a way of dealing with her distress and the harassment she was suffering from peers who had moved in to her home.

The referral to Women in Focus identified that Jennifer needed help with: tenancy support, substance misuse issues, emotional wellbeing, health, relationships and personal safety. Initially Jennifer did not attend appointments with her Women in Focus worker; however, the worker maintained limited contact with Jennifer and slowly built a relationship with her.

The Women in Focus support worker helped Jennifer to liaise with the ASBO team to remove her 'house-guests' and enforce better gate-keeping. She was supported to regular meetings with her addiction worker; stable methadone and medication use has reduced her incidents of self harm.

Jennifer has accessed community resources to help with debt issues and to apply for financial support. She engages with her housing officer now and is working towards rebuilding her home and has regular contact with her son. Jennifer was involved in the group-work programme and is now participating in mentor training which has given a massive boost to her confidence. Since being referred to Women in Focus Jennifer has not re-offended and has completed her probation order.

THEORETICAL OVERVIEW

The importance of addressing the broader issues that impact on women's pathways into the criminal justice system has been recognised. Research has consistently identified the high levels of physical and sexual abuse, poverty, problematic substance use, bereavement and family breakdown that characterise the experiences of many women who appear in courts and prisons (Corston, 2007; HM Inspectorate of Prison 2007; Loucks et al 2006; Equal Opportunities Commission, 2009). A growing understanding of the impact of these issues on crimes committed by women has resulted in increased emphasis on multi-dimensional, inter-agency responses to tackle the 'root causes' of women's offending (Bloom, Owen and Covington, 2003; Sheehan et al, 2011).

Recent initiatives in Scotland have highlighted the importance of providing responses which can address the wider issues facing women who come into contact with the criminal justice system and to develop and make use of, community-based provision (Equal Opportunities Commission, 2009). In particular, recent focus has been given to mentoring and peer-support programmes and the important role that support workers can provide in enhancing the impact of statutory services (e.g. Loucks et al. 2006; Salgado et al, 2011).

The interest in mentoring in criminal justice settings has been increasing in recent years with particular relevance identified in relation to women (Rumgay, 2004; Sheehan et al, 2011). This interest has been noted internationally (Brown and Ross, 2010) and draws on theories of desistance. While definitions of mentoring vary (see Trotter, 2011) some common themes which have been noted include: the relationship between the mentor and mentee which includes practical support and models of problem-solving; the aim of mentoring which may (or may not) be related to reducing offending but generally focuses on improving the clients well-being. Trotter (2011: 262) notes that: "For the most part the studies suggest that mentoring has a moderate impact on reoffending but this impact is greater if the mentoring is based on 'best practice' principles". He summarises these principles as follows:

- "Assist clients to address a wide range of issues that are related to their offending behaviour (criminogenic needs) such as drug use, employment, criminal associates, criminal attitudes, family relationships, finances and housing;
- Address these issues through problem-solving approaches that involve reaching agreement between workers and clients on goals and on strategies to achieve them;
- Provide services in a collaborative or partnership manner. The worker-client relationship is an important factor in achieving positive outcomes;
- Provide prosocial models for clients, encourage and reinforce clients' prosocial comments and actions and appropriately challenge procriminal comments and behaviour;
- Help clients to understand the role of the professionals working with them, particularly their dual helper/social control role;
- Provide services to medium- to high-risk clients".

Each of these principles was encapsulated in the development of the Women in Focus service, with the evaluation examining the extent to which they were reflected in practice, alongside the key objectives of the service itself.

Case Study Two

Mandy is 29 years old and lives alone in a local authority tenancy; her two sons were adopted due to her substance misuse and chaotic lifestyle. Mandy was coerced into prostitution and shoplifting by her partner to fund their heroin dependence. Mandy received a 12 month Probation Order for a shoplifting offence; she engaged well with the Probation Order and attended all of her appointments with her criminal justice social worker.

The social work referral to Women in Focus identified that Mandy needed support in the following areas; tenancy support, financial issues, substance misuse issues, bereavement/loss issues following the removal of her children, health, relationships and access to community resources. Mandy attended all of her appointments with her Women in Focus worker and a trusting working relationship developed quickly between them.

During the assessment process the Women in Focus worker examined Mandy's financial situation and was able to help her resolve a complex benefits situation. She also supported Mandy to access temporary accommodation and then her own tenancy, with additional help to access money from a charitable trust for the purchase of household items. The Women in Focus support worker also referred Mandy to a befriending service to avoid her becoming socially isolated. She supported Mandy to establish contact with her sons through a letterbox scheme which allowed her to send and receive letters and photos and helped her to accept the adoption. Mandy is now working well with a housing support organisation, has not re-offended since being referred to Women in Focus and remains stable on her methadone prescription.

WOMEN IN FOCUS

At the outset, all women on a community-based order within SWS CJA were considered for referral to Women in Focus, should their supervising social worker consider this appropriate, targeting women assessed as medium-high risk of custody or breach. In practice, this required social workers to identify women and refer them to Women in Focus (generally following a discussion with the Women in Focus worker and the subsequent completion of a referral form). Initially there were variations in referral rates across the four areas; waiting lists were introduced while workers were inducted and in place, while in other areas referrals were not as high as anticipated. Subsequently, to maximise the use of Women in Focus, the referral system was changed from an 'opt-in' to an 'opt-out' system, meaning that every woman placed on an order in SWS CJA should be referred to Women in Focus unless it was not appropriate to do so. The number of women eligible for the service in 2009-10³, is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Disposal by area and age group (2009-2010)

Area	Age group	PO	CSO	Section 229 ⁴	DTTO	Other	TOTAL
Dumfries and Galloway	16-20	11	5	0	0	0	16
	21-30	24	12	0	1	1	38
	31-40	7	7	1	2	1	18
	Over 40	6	1	0	0	0	7
	Total	48	25	1	3	2	79
East Ayrshire	16-20	4	5	1	0	0	10
	21-30	17	11	3	0	1	32
	31-40	12	5	8	0	0	25
	Over 40	4	2	3	0	0	9
	Total	37	23	15	0	1	76
North Ayrshire	16-20	3	2	7	0	0	12
	21-30	10	7	7	2	2	28
	31-40	10	3	10	2	0	25
	Over 40	5	1	1	1	0	8
	Total	28	13	25	5	3	73
South Ayrshire	16-20	9	0	1	0	0	10
	21-30	9	0	5	0	1	15
	31-40	13	2	2	0	0	17
	Over 40	4	1	2	0	0	7
	Total	35	3	10	0	1	49
All areas	Total	148	64	51	8	7	278

With an opt-out system in place, social workers were required to indicate the reasons why they did **not** refer a woman who they were supervising to Women in Focus. Reasons for not

³ All figures for 2009-10 cover the period 1 January 2009- 31 December 2010.

⁴ Probation and Community Service Order.

referring were generally because a woman was already accessing appropriate support from other agencies or due to low levels of individual need. Table 2 outlines the reasons provided by social workers for not making a referral to the service.

Table 2: Recorded reasons why women were not referred to Women in Focus⁵ (2009 –2010)

	Dumfries & Galloway ⁶	East Ayrshire	North Ayrshire	South Ayrshire	Total
No need for support: low level of need	30	8	8	17	63
No need for support: in receipt of other supports	16	12	15	12	55
Declined support	1	33	11	0	45
Currently in custody	0	4	2	0	6
Order breached	8	3	4	1	16
Non-compliance with Order	2	0	1	3	6
Staff member not available	4	0	0	0	4
Awaiting social work assessment	14	0	15	12	41
Order completed /revoked /transferred	15	2	20	0	37
No reason given	31	1	20	4	56
Other*	5	0	3	4	12
TOTAL	116	63	99	53	331

*Other reasons included: insufficient time left on order (x5), known to Women in Focus support worker (x3), mental health issues [x 3], risk of harm (x1).

Referral Process

Supervising social workers who identify women who may benefit from Women in Focus will generally have an informal discussion with the Women in Focus support worker before making a formal referral to the service. The opportunity for informal discussion was considered important by all professional respondents and the location of the support worker in social work offices was seen as essential for good communication and practice between the agencies (statutory social work and Barnardo's). Support workers are supervised on a day-to-day basis by criminal justice social work managers; this was considered necessary to ensure that referrals are screened and workloads managed within social work teams.

Initially, differences existed across areas in terms of access to information on women referred to the service by Women in Focus workers; in some areas support workers had

⁵ It is possible that for some women, more than one reason applied.

⁶ A support worker was not in place in Dumfries and Galloway for much of this time.

access to case files while in others information tended to be passed on verbally. Ongoing changes with the referral forms created additional delays. In some cases, Women in Focus was only able to access women as their orders ended, although this was largely due to the delays in getting workers in post, in which case there was not sufficient time to work with them. However, these difficulties were resolved through the work of the Women in Focus Steering Group. As the service became better known and workers were able to establish themselves within criminal justice social work teams, the referral process improved.

Where referrals were considered appropriate, a three-way meeting would be held between the support worker, the woman and social worker to conduct an assessment and develop a support plan. Communication processes were seen to be working well with good two-way information sharing in place. Generally support workers appeared to feel supported within criminal justice social work offices.

Importantly, women access Women in Focus on a voluntary basis⁷; it does not form a statutory part of the court order. However, the existence of the service was made known to the courts in different ways across the local authorities. In North Ayrshire, workers referred directly to Women in Focus in breach reports either to say that Women in Focus had supported the woman or would be supporting the woman if the Order was continued. Workers did not refer to Women in Focus as a matter of course in social enquiry reports, mainly because the full needs of the woman had not been fully assessed at that point. Social Workers in East Ayrshire referred specifically to Women in Focus in the Court report if it was clear that there were areas for intervention, in all breach reports where there was intervention from Women in Focus and in any probation progress reports where there was involvement from the service. Social workers in Dumfries and Galloway did not as a rule make mention of Women in Focus in social enquiry reports while South Ayrshire tended not to refer to Women in Focus specifically, but reports did on occasion refer to 'additional supports' for women. It is possible there may be more inclination to make specific reference to Women in Focus with the new Community Payback Orders under 'supervision' conditions.

The variations in practice across areas meant that Sheriffs were in broad terms aware of Women in Focus and the role of the service in supporting women. However, feedback from Sheriffs indicated that while they had seen reference to it in breach reports and believed that the provision of support to assist individuals to complete their orders was beneficial, they had rarely seen it referred to in social enquiry reports and knew little about the *details* of the service. Although the service was launched with a large public event addressed by Kenny MacAskill, Justice Secretary, in July 2010, there was little or no attendance by Sheriffs. The difficulties in getting sentencers to attend events which publicise services for women in the justice system are not, however, unique to Women in Focus (for example, see also Loucks et al, 2006).

⁷ Although within the context of a court order. A lack of engagement with Women in Focus did not however, constitute non-compliance with the order itself.

Case Study Three

Alison is 22 years old and lives in a local authority tenancy with one of her two children. Her other child has lived with a family member since infancy. Alison is currently unemployed. Alison spent her childhood in local authority Children's Homes; she started to use alcohol when she was in her early teens and heroin when she was 16. She has a long history of offending behaviour dating back to her early teens and all of her offences are related to substance misuse. Alison has been convicted for shoplifting and fraud and has received varying court disposals; custodial sentences, fines and probation orders.

Alison's probation order had been breached for non-compliance, the court made a new order and Alison was referred to Women in Focus. Support needs were identified in the areas of housing, finance, health (initially pregnancy and Child Protection concerns), social isolation and compliance with probation and other statutory services. Having had a negative experience of services in the past, Alison was resistant to engaging with them and fearful about her unborn child being removed. Much work was undertaken with Alison to support her to make and maintain contact with Child and Family social work and health services. She has engaged with both and with Criminal Justice services and has maintained the care of her child. Alison was supported to leave her violent partner; this has resulted in improved confidence and self esteem.

Alison has ceased substance use and support was offered to prevent relapse; she is being encouraged to access community resources to reduce social isolation. Alison was supported to apply for a tenancy, benefits and grants, in accessing household items, and in writing appeal letters in order to be housed in an area where she would be able to sustain, and settle into, the tenancy. Alison was supported to engage with her criminal justice worker and has complied with her present order; she has not committed any further offences. Alison lives a settled lifestyle and is now able to trust people more, thus helping her to access mainstream support systems. She has improved self respect and self esteem and is able to make more positive life choices.

Women referred to Women in Focus

The characteristics of women referred to Women in Focus illustrates that referrals to the service are predominantly within the age ranges 21-30 and 31-40, with North and South Ayrshire slightly more likely to refer women in the slightly older age group of 31-40. Table 3 includes **all referrals** prior to assessment, thus including those who were not subsequently accepted into Women in Focus and those who did not engage with the service.

Table 3: Referral by age groups of women⁸

Age groups	Dumfries & Galloway	East Ayrshire	North Ayrshire	South Ayrshire	Total
16-20 years	5	6	5	5	21
21-30 years	13	12	15	17	57
31-40 years	4	9	16	22	51
Over 40 years	4	6	4	8	22
Total	26	33	40	52*	151

*6 of the 37 South Ayrshire women were referred prior to April 1st 2009

Offending patterns for the women referred to Women in Focus are generally representative of offences recorded against women in prison in Scotland (Scottish Government, 2009; Mclvor and Burman, 2011); in other community-based disposals (Loucks et al, 2006); and in other CJAs (Barry and Mclvor, 2008), as outlined in Table 4. While assaults make up the largest single group of offences (35 out of 151; 23%), there were also a large number of referrals involving shoplifting and breach of the peace (58 out of 151; 38%).

⁸ This covers all referrals during the data collection period (from service start up in each area – December 2010). As the service was in place in South Ayrshire from November 2008 (in the form of WOSP) referrals made during this period are included, as are all subsequent referrals during this period as the other areas began to operate.

Table 4: Main offences recorded against women referred to Women in Focus⁹ (2009 -2010)¹⁰

Offences	Area				Total
	Dumfries & Galloway	East Ayrshire	North Ayrshire	South Ayrshire	
Assault	4	11	9	11	35
Shoplifting	4	2	11	11	28
Theft	4	2	1	1	8
Breaking and entering	0	0	1	0	1
Misuse of drugs	0	2	2	9	13
Breach of Peace	5	9	5	11	30
Children Scotland act	1	0	4	1	6
Driving offences	0	2	0	5	7
Sexual offence	0	0	0	1	1
Carrying an offensive weapon	0	0	1	2	3
Wasting police time/contempt of Court	0	2	0	0	2
no record	8	3	6	0	17*
Total	26	33	40	52	151

*In addition, no offence or area was recorded for one woman.

While women could access Women in Focus if they were subject to any community order, the majority of referrals (81 out of 150; 54%) were subject to a Probation Order (see Table 5).

⁹ These were the main offences listed; however women may have had additional offences recorded.

¹⁰ Figures from 1 Jan 2009- 31 Dec 2010 are used for accuracy, due to significant gaps in data prior to this point.

Table 5: Disposals and Orders imposed on women referred to Women in Focus (2009-2010)

Disposals	Area				Total
	Dumfries & Galloway	East Ayrshire	North Ayrshire	South Ayrshire	
Probation	16	16	15	34	81
Probation and community service	5	7	11	9	32
Probation and condition (addiction/alcohol services)	0	3	7	8	18
Community service order	0	3	1	0	4
DTTO	1	0	1	0	2
Throughcare licence	0	0	1	0	1
Supervised release order/ non-parole order	1	0	0	0	1
No record*	3	4	4	0	11
Total	26	33	40	51	150

*In addition, no disposal or area was recorded for one woman

Although as Table 6 illustrates, the majority of orders imposed (probation only, and probation and CSO) were for 12 months or less, professional respondents noted that women often received lengthy orders from the courts¹¹. Among all groups of respondents (support workers, social workers and women) there was concern expressed about the perceived disproportionality in sentences administered to women in relation to men. This is reflected in other Scottish studies (Barry and McIvor, 2008; McIvor and Burman, 2011).

Table 6: Length of probation and community service orders

	Dumfries & Galloway	East Ayrshire	North Ayrshire	South Ayrshire	Total
Probation Order					
12 months and under	8	12	13	26	59
13--18 months	5	5	7	10	27
19-24 months	0	1	2	6	9
Probation Order with CSO					
12 months and under	1	5	6	3	15
13-18 months	2	1	5	3	11
19-24 months	1	1	0	3	5
CSO 12 months	0	3	1	0	4
No record of disposal or length of disposal					5
TOTAL	17	28	34	51	135

¹¹ See Annex Four, Tables 1 and 2 for Scottish Government figures for the same period.

One social work respondent commented: *“A man might get a year for the same offence, where women will get two years”*. Another respondent noted: *“Women first offenders are more likely to get an order than a man in the same position would be”*.

Respondents indicated that difficulties could arise for some women in completing what were often perceived to be relatively lengthy orders, in terms of sustaining the requirements imposed. In such circumstances, workers welcomed the role of Women in Focus support workers both in terms of addressing welfare issues that could impede progress, and also in sustaining motivation to get to the end of a lengthy order. One social worker commented: *“I think you’re looking for early terminations for women all the time because it is sometimes great lengthy orders and there’s not a lot you can do. It’s maintaining them; it’s just about a balance and trying to maintain them”*.

In this respect, social workers generally welcomed the Women in Focus service. One worker commented:

“I think it’s excellent, I think it’s really good because women get unfairly treated in a sense by the courts, they tend to get longer orders, longer sentences than men do...and there is a lot more welfare issues with women, so to have someone here that we can use, I mean to me it’s a valuable service that we require. And it’s something that we have been looking forward to coming for a long time”.

Referrals to Women in Focus were generally seen as appropriate and welcomed by social workers, some of whom indicated that their role was increasingly one of case management, leaving them limited time to spend directly with individual clients. Furthermore, social work respondents noted that their role was to manage the **statutory** aspects of court orders, however many of their female clients had extensive difficulties in their lives which required some form of intervention in order to support them to address welfare issues which could, without support lead to offending. The support workers were also willing to take on women who social workers may have had difficulty referring to other local services (due to previous issues arising, or women being known in the local area). By the end of 2010, Women in Focus had started work with 102 women (34 in 2009 and 68 in 2010) as shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Number of women commencing work with Women in Focus by area¹²

Period	Dumfries & Galloway	East Ayrshire	North Ayrshire	South Ayrshire	Total
1/1/09-31/12/09	0	4	14	16	34
1/1/10-31/12/10	13	17	15	22	68
Total	13	21	29	38	102

Women tended to be involved with the service for between three months and 15 months. Most women who failed to engage with Women in Focus did so within the first month or two and their case was subsequently closed.

Assessment and identified needs

Following each appropriate referral to Women in Focus, a support plan was developed for each woman; this involved input from the woman herself, the Women in Focus support worker and criminal justice social worker, and was developed around her individual needs using factors indicated in the initial LSI-R and social enquiry report, and social work Action Plan, as well as drawing upon the women's personal indication of current issues. These plans were reviewed, generally coinciding with scheduled probation reviews, and could be altered to reflect changes in the woman's circumstances. Plans were aimed at focusing on goals that the woman agreed were realistic and achievable.

The identified completion period for assessment was 28 days. Although on occasion this could take longer, largely due to difficulties in initiating and sustaining contact with women, Women in Focus workers made every effort to engage women. One support worker noted:

"It's a double edged sword because the harder to engage they are...they are maybe the ones that need the most support. So that's why you keep trying to hook them in and generally I've found once you've got them engaging they're pretty good to stay engaged. It's just that initial getting them through the door..."

As the number of referrals increased it became important to focus resources. As a result, workers became much better at assessing women's motivation to engage with the service and withdrawing at an earlier stage if they failed to do so.

Criminal justice social workers generally had a good understanding of the aims and objectives of the service viewing it as a way of *"supporting vulnerable women who are at*

¹² Differences in numbers are linked to service start-up in each area (i.e. South Ayrshire was operational from 2008 having transferred the service from WOSP to Women in Focus; North Ayrshire was operational from 8 June 2009; East Ayrshire from 1 September 2009; and Dumfries and Galloway was operational from 5 January 2010).

risk of offending. Providing different levels of support to meet their needs” (social work respondent).

Another social worker commented:

“The way I view it is it’s about bringing stability, hoping that the clients achieve a level of stability in their lifestyles and in their life which will help them in a way to get through their order and to reduce their level of risk of reoffending through the use of practical support, and dealing with so many other kind of practical issues that we maybe just don’t have the time to get involved in”.

Criminal justice social workers recognised the importance of the woman’s motivation as key to successful engagement. One social worker commented:

“Quite often women will be motivated, they’ve maybe been spared the jail and they want to kind of get their life sorted out. But at times they lack the tools to do that , they don’t have the skills to do that so that for me is the kind of ‘ideal’ if you like, the type of client I would refer – somebody who has strong motivation, who is keen to kind of move forward, maybe address their alcohol issues, or needs support to look at lifestyle issues but maybe struggles, doesn’t have the support in the community, or lack support networks, or lack skills, so its maybe a referral to help build that”.

Social workers recognised that the women whose orders they were supervising generally had a number of welfare related issues that needed to be addressed, including low levels of self-esteem. At the same time, most women on orders did not have particularly long records of offending or previous involvement with the criminal justice system before being put on orders (particularly probation).

Respondents indicated that women often had highly complex needs including considerable financial problems and poverty-related difficulties; significant rates of domestic abuse; and addiction issues. In most cases, the needs of women reflected the difficulties that were acknowledged as features of women in the criminal justice system more generally (addiction, abuse, trauma, bereavement, and childcare issues). The narratives of distress which were features of many of the women’s lives are evident from the case studies included in this report and could often appear overwhelming to workers, as well as to the women themselves.

Issues of rurality and poverty underpinned the social marginalisation that many women referred to Women in Focus experienced, adding to their sense of isolation. This was expressed by a support worker who noted:

“This area is extremely poor for resources. We have to be quite innovative sometimes...but there are not a lot of resources, this area is poor and there’s a lot of

unemployment and there's not a lot of resources for people to be tapping into. As I say, I'm looking on the internet, I walk about the town in the dry weather and see if there are things for them, listen out, check the papers...but there is really the swimming pool and that's it".

The wider context of de-industrialisation, poverty and isolation had a major impact on women's experiences, creating challenges for services such as Women in Focus.

Access to services

Women had experienced a range of difficulties leading up to their involvement in the criminal justice system and often had encountered the intervention of a number of agencies at various points in their lives. In some cases, this meant there was little or no need for support from Women in Focus, making it unlikely that a woman would engage with the service if she had support from a number of other agencies already in place (evident from Table 2 above). In other cases, Women in Focus workers liaised with existing agencies if they had something additional to offer, and women were keen to access the additional support. For example, one woman said of the Women in Focus worker:

"She has helped with practical things like benefits forms and put me in contact with the Welfare Rights officer. I ring her about some things, and other people like my (Community Psychiatric Nurse) CPN or PO (Probation Officer) about other things – it depends what it is. My CPN deals with Turning Point although I don't go there now. She (Women in Focus worker) has contact with both my PO and my CPN".

In other situations, the Women in Focus support worker could help co-ordinate the input of other agencies (see Table 8) where there may have been little actually happening in practice or because the woman was not engaging with services that were available to her. For some women, there was no support from other agencies in place. However, a significant number of women, for whom this information was available, were in contact with two or more services in addition to criminal justice social work and, in some cases, Women in Focus. This illustrates the range of issues which women were coping with (or not) at the point of referral, and where they needed support and/or intervention. Table 8 also gives some indication of the number of appointments that some women were required to keep and the range of professionals involved in their lives.

Table 8: Agency contact at point of referral

CJA	Agency	Total
All areas	Housing/housing support only	5
	Addiction services only	19
	Housing and addiction services	11
	Children and families social work services only	12
	Children and Families Social work services and addictions	7
	Mental health services/counselling with other services	15
	Three or more services	14
	College only	1
	Not known	67 ¹³
	TOTAL	151

¹³ It is possible that this information relates to women who were referred to but did not engage with the service, and where this information was not known at the point of referral to Women in Focus.

Case Study Four

Mary is 35 years old and has two children, one of whom is an adult. Mary has been known to the criminal justice system throughout her adult life and has been convicted of a variety of offences including assault, robbery, breach of the peace and being in possession of a dangerous weapon. She has received custodial sentences, fines, probation and community service orders for her offences. Mary has engaged with statutory agencies in the past but has generally not followed through on tasks that had been agreed.

The referral to Women in Focus identified needs with health, social isolation and to support the probation plan which was not progressing; she was also using heroin at the time of the referral. Although Mary engaged with the service, progress was extremely slow. She then attended a personal development group work programme delivered by Women in Focus and the change in Mary's outlook to her life altered dramatically. Mary began to seek support to deal with the issues that she felt would help her to improve her life.

Since Mary's involvement with Women in Focus she has stabilised her substance misuse and engages with addiction services, she has changed the relationships in her life that she had identified were preventing her from moving on. Mary has begun to use resources within her community and is very motivated to continue to improve her lifestyle. Mary's outlook to her life is more positive and she is able to see that she has the ability to achieve positive outcomes for herself and her family. The service has worked alongside Mary to explore areas of her life that could be improved and supported Mary during difficult and emotional times; she feels it has given her the opportunity to realise her full potential and opened up opportunities that she would otherwise not have had. Mary has not been reconvicted of any offences and has completed her court order.

A significant number of women referred to Women in Focus (50 out of 151; 33%) across all the areas were recorded as having insecure housing, as shown in Table 9. The women living in local authority housing in South Ayrshire appeared to have the most stable housing situations (see Annex Four, Table 3 for a breakdown by area).

Table 9: All women referred to Women in Focus by Housing Type and Stability

CJA	Housing Type	Stable	Unstable	Not known	Total
All areas	Local authority	53	17	6	76
	Housing association	7	0	0	7
	Private rented	12	4	2	18
	Private owned	1	3	0	4
	Temporary	4	13	0	17
	Homeless/ unsettled	0	13	0	13
	Not known	0	0	16	16
	Total		77	50	24

Financial difficulties were evident amongst the majority of women referred to Women in Focus with most in receipt of benefits, and a number in receipt of multiple benefits as shown in Table 10. Over one third of those whose benefits were recorded were in receipt of Incapacity Benefit and/or Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Employment and Support Allowance (ESA). This would suggest the recipients had health problems, either mental, physical or both.

Table 10: All women referred to Women in Focus by type of benefit claimed

	Type of Benefit	
All areas	Job Seekers Allowance only	29
	Income support only	9
	Incapacity Benefit/ESA	32
	Income Support and DLA/Incapacity	10
	Income Support and Child Benefit/Child Tax Credit	13
	Child Benefit/Child Tax Credit or Tax Credit only	3
	DLA only	3
	Other combination	11
	Not known	41
	TOTAL	151

The majority of women referred to Women in Focus were unemployed (121 out of 151; 80%), seven women were employed (three full-time and four part-time) while four attended training or higher education (see Annex Four, Table 4).

The majority of women referred to Women in Focus had children with most of this group having more than one child (48 out of 82, 59%).

Table 11: Women referred to Women in Focus by number of children (all areas)

Number of children	Total
One	34
Two	27
Three	13
Four or more	8
No children	48
Not known ¹⁴	21
Total	151

¹⁴ It is possible that this information relates to women who did not engage with the service and where this information was not known at the point of referral to Women in Focus.

Where women had children, most were being cared for elsewhere (although there are significant gaps in the information available). Only 26 women who had children were the main carer (see Annex Four, Table 5).

Women in Focus workers had considerable expertise in the provision of welfare-related support and were able to provide important assistance in terms of income maximisation. This was seen as an important outcome of the service. As one social worker noted: *“addressing financial needs (is the key outcome) because a lot of times the reason why women offend is related to their finances, lack of money. So, if you can deal with issues, underlying issues then obviously you are going to start to address the reasons why people offend in the first instance...its prevention, working on that basis rather than reacting to situations”*.

As well as dealing with significant financial difficulties, a number of women were living in circumstances where serious domestic abuse was a feature of their lives; it is difficult to quantify this as it was often not disclosed at the point of referral (and therefore not recorded) and only became evident once workers had built up a trusting relationship with women. Support workers indicated that they would attempt to refer women on to appropriate services; however support workers and social work respondents indicated that they were often limited in their ability to help women in these situations, particularly where the abusive male partner attempted to hinder the woman’s attendance at appointments and access to other agencies. This raises the importance of the social worker’s role in monitoring women’s safety, and the need for ongoing training of support workers. Domestic abuse is prioritised across SWS CJA as an area for increased action and initiatives in this area are currently being implemented across the four local authorities.

Case Study Five

Chloe is 46 years old, lives alone in a Local Authority Secure Tenancy house and until very recently lived in private rented accommodation. She receives income support and long term incapacity benefit due to long term physical and mental health problems, many of which result from years of sustained abuse from an ex-partner. Chloe was completely isolated in the community with no friends or family at the point of referral to Women in Focus.

Chloe was given an 18 month probation order with 150 hours of community service for shoplifting. Past criminal offences include multiple shoplifting offences and breach of the peace during a domestic incident. Her ex-partner was a heroin addict who coerced her into shoplifting to feed his addiction; she feared the consequences of not complying with the order. Chloe engages well with the criminal justice social worker and with her Women in Focus support worker.

The referral to Women in Focus identified that Chloe required support with imminent homelessness and her Women in Focus support worker helped her to secure a long term tenancy. Practical assistance has been given with applications for grants to pay for essential household items. Furthermore, there has been a noticeable change in Chloe's outlook on life which is now very positive; previously completed isolated, Chloe is now in touch with a community Church and is set to undertake counselling via Women's Aid. Her support worker has provided emotional support and helped her to reflect on the outcomes of past situations which negatively impacted on her life and well being.

Delivering the Service: Supporting Women

Both support workers and social work respondents were clear about the remit of Women in Focus and emphasised the importance of providing support to women who were likely to be experiencing a range of (often structural) circumstances that could make it difficult to comply with the requirements of a statutory order.

The geographical lay-out of the local authority areas – which cover quite considerable distances – could be a drain on time for the support workers. In areas where workers had to divide their time between two social work offices, there were challenges in providing the same level of service. This was particularly problematic in Dumfries and Galloway and eventually led to an agreement that the focus of intervention in this area would be Dumfries, leaving the service provided to Stranraer, which had received one day cover per week, temporarily suspended. Where workers were covering two sites, there could be additional problems in accommodation as they generally had to identify one area as a base.

One of the key benefits of Women in Focus was the time available to support workers to develop relationships with individual women and to be able to respond flexibly to needs as they arose. However, this could be difficult where workers were, in effect, splitting their time and energy across wide areas of the local authority. Support workers also noted that

part of their role, which was to support women to attend appointments, required them to provide transport for women. They also assisted women with other practical issues, such as contacting social services, housing departments, and other agencies where difficulties could be encountered making contact; particularly where women did not have landline telephones and could be kept on hold for long periods when phoning on a pay-as-you-go mobile phone.

Women in Focus workers also got involved with families, attending relevant meetings and providing support for women to attend meetings in relation to their children. While social workers retained their statutory involvement, for example attending child protection meetings, support workers would attend some of the meetings where statutory involvement was not required but where they could offer important insights into issues affecting children.

Social work respondents all spoke very highly about Women in Focus workers and their ability and competence, and praised their knowledge of local services. The flexible working approach of Women in Focus workers was appreciated by women and social work respondents who recognised that Women in Focus workers could engage with women in a relatively informal way – not just through office-based appointments – and could respond quickly to needs. One social worker commented: *“sometimes we just don’t have the diary space. You know, so although they are in crisis it maybe has to wait a few days before I would even be able to make a phone call”*. Another social worker described Women in Focus intervention as: *“very prompt, very efficient, and acted straightaway regarding the women that I have”*. However, support workers reported that it could be difficult to maintain this level of flexibility if one or more women were in crisis and this also had a knock on effect on their ability to retain contact with other, more stable women.

Women respondents were particularly appreciative of the advice and advocacy provided by Women in Focus workers in relation to housing, rent and benefit issues. Women in Focus workers were also able, where there were children in the woman’s care, to access Barnardo’s In-house Grants which provided help in obtaining a variety of household goods. A number of women had problems with tenancies which Women in Focus workers helped address along with supporting applications for funding (i.e. for furniture): these were tasks which were sometimes carried out alongside social workers. Support workers were also able to access Barnardo’s resources – for example, holidays and activities with children - which were greatly valued by the women. In addition to this practical assistance, emotional support was also considered important, as was assistance with negotiations regarding access to children. One woman commented: *“I can talk to her (support worker) about my feelings – about anything really, she is a good listener and follows through with the things she says she will do which people haven’t always in the past”*.

Another woman noted: *“I’ve had lots of help from support workers and social workers and I’ve still got a social worker and family centre worker but (support worker) is different, she gives me coping strategies and practical help”.*

One social worker gave an example of the combination of practical and emotional support provided by Women in Focus which had involved supporting a woman to attend a counselling service and then waiting for her and taking her home; *“given the nature of the service she is really distressed when she comes out and I think on that occasion it would be unfair to ask her to go on public transport”.* In this case, a woman who workers did not think would engage with services has done so effectively.

Social workers also commented on the importance of the emotional support provided by Women in Focus: *“which I kind of think tends to be not forgotten, but that’s the bit that we don’t always have time to do properly and unless somebody feels good about themselves and feels part of their community they’re not going to have any reason to buy into it, to conform”.*

All women respondents indicated that Women in Focus workers were easy to talk to, easy to get hold of and women appreciated being able to phone or text them as required. Good communication was established with social workers as a result of support workers’ location in social work offices. As support workers’ case loads increased, they were required to spend more time out of the office, working directly with women. This meant, in some cases, there was less opportunity for the informal communication that had been considered useful. This appeared to be more of a problem where workers were covering large areas/two offices.

Defining social work and support worker roles

The non-statutory contacts established with support workers seemed to be important to women; this informality and associated flexibility seemed to be significant rather than the fact that the worker was from Barnardo’s, or another voluntary agency. Most importantly, it appeared that Women in Focus workers had more time to spend with the women. While women often indicated they had good relationships with criminal justice social workers, they recognised that their time was limited and thus focused upon the supervisory aspects of court orders. This was recognised by social workers, one of whom noted that *“Women enjoy having somebody who isn’t constantly looking at their watch...”* Initial interviews with social workers emphasised their expectations that Women in Focus workers would focus on financial problems, accessing benefits and housing... *“I would say generally tasks that are kind of time consuming for us”.* At the end of the evaluation they had increasingly come to appreciate, in addition, the flexibility of Women in Focus workers.

A woman respondent commented: *“I still see my Probation Officer but it’s all very regimental, by the book, impersonal. You feel part of a system with rules and standards. And*

time is an issue – the lack of it, she has lots of people on her caseload. I see her once a month”.

Social work respondents also commented that they were able to get a lot of information from Women in Focus support workers that they probably could not have obtained otherwise. *“I definitely think you know more about what is happening in somebody’s life when you have a support worker in place”.* This was particularly noticeable given the distinction between the office based appointments of social workers and the home visits of Women in Focus workers. One social worker commented: *“so that’s useful, that’s good, it’s really useful for the women as well. I think in your home environment you are definitely going to open up more anyway”.*

Women in Focus do not have the same statutory obligations that social work has which often made a difference to the women. A social work respondent noted:

“I do think there is another side when somebody is a support worker, they (the women) are not as scared in some way of the consequences of what they are saying, so they maybe open up more towards her (support worker). I think that’s to do with the role rather than how you are working with somebody a lot of the time”.

All respondents were very aware of the distinctive roles of criminal justice social worker and Women in Focus worker. While the social work role was to supervise the order, the Women in Focus worker was generally considered to be easier to speak to in depth, had more time, and could be approached informally. One social work respondent stated:

“I think I would say that having the Women in Focus project kind of clears a space for us to do our work, a lot of that can be focused on building motivation, behaviour change, building the skills needed to look at reducing reoffending...whereas without the Women in Focus project every appointment could end up being about benefits issues, health issues, chasing up appointments, have you been here? Have you been there? You know, you’re never really getting out of the kind of day to day stuff, the kind of lifestyle issues you know?”

It was noted that where good three-way relationships were in place, Women in Focus workers could undertake tasks that social workers had identified but did not have time to address, providing them with an opportunity to focus on issues more directly related to offending/order completion. In some respects, this meant that social workers were left with the ‘social control’ aspects of the order.

One social worker indicated: *“I thought it was a great idea, especially say in the caseload that I have of women on probation, I had quite a high number of probationers that were female, and I think a lot of the time we don’t have the time that we want for female offenders. When (support worker) was speaking about her*

service (Women in Focus), it was the support really... I think that's what they need because women are kind of missed really in the justice system for that, because our role really is specifically looking at the offending and we don't get the opportunity to look at the wider support".

Women commented on the distinctive roles of the support workers: *"I don't think it was said that it was Barnardo's but it was definitely a good thing that it isn't criminal justice. You're not sure what you can say to them – you have to tip-toe around them because of what they might say in their reports".* While another women said: *" I think it's a good thing that its not the criminal justice service, because she looks at you differently; like you're a normal person, not a criminal".*

Where women were reluctant to engage with social workers, support workers could suggest ways of dealing with this; meeting with both support worker and social worker was cited by several women as a way of improving relationships and developing a better understanding of the role of probation officers.

Social work respondents also appeared to recognise and value the fact that Women in Focus helped women to do things for themselves: *"she (Women in Focus worker) wouldn't just do it for them she'd support them to go and sort it out themselves you know? So I would say a lot of the times it was building their confidence, it was getting them to deal with their problems, it was just (support worker) there giving them that wee bit of an extra push".*

When statutory contact was reduced (i.e. from weekly to monthly) contact with the Women in Focus worker could continue on a regular basis. This was of particular relevance given the length of some women's orders (e.g. 12-18 month probation orders). At the same time, relationships with Women in Focus workers built up over time; several of the women interviewed indicated that they were reluctant to meet the Women in Focus worker initially, had trouble trusting people and that it had taken a bit of time to establish the relationship.

Obviously a number of women did not engage with the service. In some cases respondents suggested this may be due to 'negative' relationships and/or controlling partners (referring specifically to the high rates of domestic violence in the area) while for others, as one social worker noted: *"it's not that they won't change or they can't change it's just at this point in time they're not ready and we need to keep trying".*

One social worker commented: *"I think the most important objective is to try and build the women's self esteem again so that they are able to speak for themselves without a service, because I think from that everything else will fall into place for them..."* There was a general recognition of the need to be realistic: for example, workers could help get women 'stable' but they may not leave violent partners. Considerable emphasis was, however, given to the importance of supporting women to get things into their lives such as stable housing which would give them some hope for the future. As one social worker commented about a client: *"she has something to lose now".*

Group work

There appears to have been a long-standing recognition of the need for some form of group-work for women across SWS CJA. While there have been attempts to set this up previously (by social workers) there was no group-work in place at the point that Women in Focus was implemented. Women in Focus support workers were keen to deliver group work programmes but there was a need to develop their skills in this area. It was decided that a partnership approach with external providers would be a preferable option in terms of service delivery and training for Women in Focus workers. Cazbro Coaching and Fab Pad¹⁵ were the two companies commissioned to work with Women in Focus to deliver the programmes. The work was tiered to support personal growth, teamwork, community payback and further training and employability opportunities.

The partnership with Cazbro Coaching was very successful in sustaining the interest of a group of women (a total of 20 women attended two group-work programmes, with more taking part when the service was provided in Dumfries and Galloway) and initial waiting lists were created as more women expressed an interest in taking part. The 'Illuminations Programme' provided, focused on a number of areas including confidence building, communication skills, managing stress and conflict and participation in the community. In relation to teamwork and community payback, the group undertook to decorate a space in the local hospice which received considerable media attention¹⁶ and appears to have had a significant positive effect on the women involved. The evaluations of the partnership highlight the range of benefits that the women experienced as a result of participating in the programme (see Annex Five).

Indeed the only negative comment about the group-work provision was the lack of follow-up from the group after completion of the programme. As a result, Barnardo's identified a programme to extend the skill base covered in the Illumination Programme with a focus on accessing opportunities in further education, employment and training. This involved a criminal justice social work-based Employment Development Officer being linked in with Barnardo's and Cazbro to enhance the opportunities available to women. This has subsequently allowed several women to link into a mentoring programme as a follow-on that sustained the support that women were accessing through the group while also leading potentially to the possibility of accreditation (through Glasgow Mentoring Network – Peer Mentoring and Support Award which is SQA accredited).

The group work overall was viewed very positively by social work respondents and was considered important in reducing the stigma of criminal justice involvement: *"I think that a few of the women got to know each other, again that helped to improve their social sort of network because some of them are quite isolated"*. A social work manager noted of Women

¹⁵ Fab Pad is an interior design project for vulnerable people aged 16-35 with a new tenancy.

¹⁶ <http://www.cumnockchronicle.com/news/roundup/articles/2011/01/24/409481-women-in-focus--success/?mode=print>

in Focus: *“I think if all they help is one woman then it’s great but I think the difference you can see in a number of women and in their confidence and self esteem is amazing”.*

Case Study Six

Anthea is 40 years old and lives alone in homeless temporary furnished accommodation. She is unemployed, is in receipt of welfare benefits and suffers from epilepsy and depression, anxiety and panic attacks. Anthea has three sons who were removed from her care approximately six years ago and a 5 month old son who was removed from her care in February 2011. She has been involved with the criminal justice system on a regular basis over the past four years: she has been on probation, served time on remand in custody and has recently served a sentence for ‘assault to severe injury’ in HMP and YOI Cornton Vale. Anthea’s offences often involve violence and alcohol has usually been a related factor. She received a ‘detox’ in prison and states that she did not use any substances during her sentence, including her prescribed antidepressant medication. She discovered that she was pregnant whilst she was in prison and was liberated from prison in September 2010.

Prior to custody Anthea had worked with Women in Focus while on a Probation Order. She was referred to the Wrap Around pilot by Throughcare Addiction Service (TAS). A protocol had been devised between the two services (TAS and Women in Focus) and Anthea fitted the specified criteria for referral. On release from custody, she identified her support needs as health care during pregnancy, support with housing and welfare benefits, along with support to ‘stay out of trouble’, support with mental ill health (although this was minimised initially) and support during the ‘child protection processes. Support needs identified for her included support with mental health, support with abstinence from alcohol and other substances; support to attend appointments, building up coping, problem solving and life skills, increasing self esteem and confidence, looking at ‘change’.

Anthea engaged fully with the Wrap Around service on release from prison, keeping every appointment. The support provided was intensive, and initial appointments/home visits took place three times a week. Support remained flexible and reactive. The support worker attended the birth of Anthea’s baby who was born prematurely, and a strong and trusting working relationship was built up over a relatively short period of time. Anthea has had two ‘lapses’ in connection to substance dependence issues but no further criminal charges since engaging with Wrap Around in September 2010.

The intervention of the Women in Focus Wrap Around service has provided the level of intensive support for Anthea to feel able to address some very entrenched beliefs and behaviours which would, no doubt, have prevented her from having the care of her son, which she now has with ongoing support. She has demonstrated that with consistent and focussed support she can desist from offending, manage her addictions and be an active participant in learning and development opportunities within the community.

Links with HMP and YOI Cornton Vale

Following ongoing concern about the imprisonment of women on repeated short term sentences and the lack of support on release, Women in Focus intended, from the outset, to engage with HMP and YOI Cornton Vale in terms of service delivery. Barnardo's developed a proposal for a 'wrap around' service for women from SWS who were serving sentences with the aim of linking women into appropriate community based services on release. The Wrap Around service was set to operate for short term prisoners at Cornton Vale with the intention that it would be piloted for six months starting in July 2010. This remains work in progress and, following some difficulties in establishing the referral process, by March 2011 was delivering a service to five women. Whilst still in the very early stages of contact with some of the women, one woman (and her baby) has experienced positive outcomes from engagement with the service.

Training

Support workers received a variety of training provided by Barnardo's (Safeguarding Children), Criminal Justice Social Work (Working with women who offend), Women's Aid (improving Practice), Dumfries and Galloway Council (Domestic Abuse – Raising Awareness; Child Protection), Child Protection Committee (Mental Health).

Case Study Seven

Carol is 27 years old; she has no children and lives in a hostel for the homeless, while awaiting an offer for a council tenancy. Carol is a qualified beautician and worked in England for three years before returning to Scotland and becoming involved with past acquaintances who were heroin users.

Carol was charged with theft by shoplifting and breach of the peace, for which an 18 month probation order with 150 hours community service was imposed. She has committed similar offences over a number of years. Carol has failed to complete two Orders previously and has had a number of periods in custody. She is on a methadone programme and receives drug counselling.

Carol was referred to Women in Focus for help with housing support, emotional support, and to help her to access bereavement counselling. Carol's engagement with agencies is overall very good although support is needed to ensure attendance. Carol suffers from anxiety and depression and frequently misuses drugs when feeling low. Carol's lifestyle can appear quite chaotic and she requires daily telephone contact in addition to weekly visits. This contact keeps Carol motivated and can be effective in calming her when she is experiencing anxiety or negative thinking. This complements the work of the drug agency worker who tries to support Carol to reduce her consumption of illicit drugs and abuse of alcohol. Partnership working between Women in Focus and the drug agency has ensured a comprehensive provision of support for Carol which in turn has assisted in the prevention of re-offending to date.

OUTCOMES

Three key areas of outcome were identified as the basis for evaluating Women in Focus, relating to the extent to which Women in Focus was able to meet its key operational objectives to:

- reduce levels of breach and levels of custody for women (Objective 1);
- reduce rates of re-offending and re-conviction (Objective 2);
- support positive community integration (Objective 3).

The underlying basis for the Women in Focus intervention is that improved community integration will impact on rates of re-offending and re-conviction, leading to improved compliance rates and engagement with services, meaning that women are less likely to reoffend. As mentioned previously, the impact of interventions such as Women in Focus require time to demonstrate the longer term impact of the service in relation to reductions in reoffending/reconviction, increases in compliance with orders and subsequent reduction in breach proceedings; and ultimately reductions in the number of women being imprisoned. While the available data is presented and discussed here, the wider caveats should be kept in mind, in particular:

- the very low base rate (small number of women to whom this statistical data refers) makes any changes very difficult to interpret meaningfully;
- the national picture across Scotland indicates a steady increase in women remanded and imprisoned;
- ‘trends’ can only be identified over a much longer period of time.

Objective 1: Breach and custody rates

As a key indicator of the impact of Women in Focus, breach rates were accessed across the four local authority areas. Information on breach is recorded for 30 women (of those 12 were referred to Women in Focus while 18 were not¹⁷).

Of the 12 women who were breached and who were also referred to Women in Focus, nine have a recorded start date for the service. The three referred women who did not participate with Women in Focus had orders breached for the reasons recorded:

- Order breached (n=1) Reason for Breach – non-compliance [Outcome Not Yet Known]

¹⁷ Of the 18 women who **were not referred**, reasons given were: Service not required (Order Breached=13; Low need level=1; No reason stated=2; Failed to engage=2). Seven of these breaches were due to non-compliance, while three related to a further offence. Outcomes (for non-compliance) were recorded for two women – one where the order was continued, and one where the order was revoked and a custodial sentence imposed. No information is available for nine of these women.

- Custody (n=1) Reason for Breach – non-compliance [Outcome Not Yet Known]
- Low level of need (n=1) Reason for breach – on-compliance and further offence. [Outcome – Probation Order revoked and Custodial sentence imposed]

Of the nine women facing breach proceedings who did start working with Women in Focus, the following outcomes were recorded:

- Failed to engage (n=4)
- Withdrew (n=2)
- Active with Women in Focus (n=2) Order breached within 3 weeks of starting Women in Focus and allowed to continue.
- Completed Women in Focus (n=1) Order breached 6 months after ending with Women in Focus

Figures published by the Scottish Government (Table 12) indicate that during this period (2008-2010), there was a 12% **decrease** in orders breached by women across SWS CJA. This rate varied across local authorities (from 2% in East Ayrshire to 22% in Dumfries & Galloway); however there was a significant **increase** in the rate of breach in North Ayrshire (by 23%) during this period.

CJA	Local Authority	2008/2009		2009/2010		Reduction/increase	
		No.	(%)	No.	(%)	No.	(%)
South West Scotland	Dumfries & Galloway	47	(30)	25	(17)	-22	(47)
	East Ayrshire	44	(28)	42	(29)	-2	(5)
	North Ayrshire	38	(24)	61	(42)	+23	(+61)
	South Ayrshire	28	(18)	17	(12)	-11	(39)
	Total	157	(100)	145	(100)	-12	(8)

When Women in Focus was introduced, rates of imprisonment for all groups in 2008 (men, women and young offenders) were generally higher than the national average across all areas of SWS CJA, with only Dumfries and Galloway (at 139 per 100,000 population) being below the national imprisonment rate (168 per 100,000). North Ayrshire has one of the highest rates of imprisonment across Scotland (at 259 per 100,000 in 2009). Custodial rates for women are low in comparison to those for men (figures for 2009 indicated that women in custody on 30 June 2009 accounted for 416 prisoners out of a prison population of 8,183;

5% Scottish Government 2010). From this prison population, women from South West Scotland accounted for 56 prisoners from 416 (13%) (Scottish Government, 2010).

Data provided by the Scottish Government Analytical Team provides a breakdown (by remand and custodial sentence) of women with a home address in SWS CJA¹⁸. Tables 13 and 14 provide figures for the total number of women from SWS CJA received into custody during April 2008 -2009; and 2009-10 by local authority area and by remand/convicted.

Table 13: Individual Females Placed on Custodial Remand with a Home Address in South West Scotland CJA

Area	Adult 2008/9	YP 2008/9	Total 2008/9	Adult 2009/10	YP 2009/10	Total 2009/10
Dumfries &Galloway	15	5	20	13	1	14
East Ayrshire	19	3	22	24	7	31
North Ayrshire	21	7	28	20	2	22
South Ayrshire	12	8	20	15	7	22
Total	67	23	90	72	17	89

Figures for remand show variations across local authority areas; with a **reduction** in custodial remands in Dumfries & Galloway, and North Ayrshire, and an **increase** in the number of women remanded across this period in East and South Ayrshire.

Table 14: Individual Females Placed Under Custodial Sentence with a Home Address in South West Scotland CJA

Area	Adult 2008/9	YP 2008/9	Total 2008/9	Adult 2009/10	YP 2009/10	Total 2009/10
Dumfries &Galloway	21	4	25	19	4	23
East Ayrshire	34	2	36	29	9	38
North Ayrshire	38	2	40	34	1	35
South Ayrshire	19	4	23	24	7	31
Total	112	12	124	106	21	127

¹⁸ The same individual may appear in both tables and therefore the figures cannot be added. As individuals may have more than one period on remand or under sentence during the same year, it is possible that their home address may have changed over the year. These tables have been produced using the initial address for 2008/09 and 2009/10.

For women under sentence, Scottish Government figures indicate a **reduction** in the rate of imprisonment in Dumfries & Galloway and North Ayrshire; and an **increase** in both South Ayrshire and East Ayrshire. While North Ayrshire evidenced an increase in breach proceedings, it is possible that the existence of Women in Focus prevented these cases from resulting in the imposition of custodial sentences. However as noted above, it is not possible to identify trends in sentencing practice within a short time frame.

Objective 2: Reconviction and reoffending

At the outset of the evaluation, it was anticipated that changes in circumstances for women attending Women in Focus would be measured in a number of ways, all with varying degrees of clarity. One of the key measures was intended to be LSI-R scores, used at assessment stages by criminal justice social workers and which could feasibly be used at review and completion stages to measure outcomes. However it would appear that while these scores may be recorded at the outset, they are not consistently recorded throughout the duration of Orders. For example, Barnardo's (2008) noted that LSI-R scores were recorded for 30 out of 32 women accessing the service in Ayr at the assessment stage, but were only included for five women at further assessment at the six month stage. This makes it impossible to determine increases or decreases in the risk of re-offending based on this method of assessment at this stage. This presented a very real challenge for local authority data collection systems and it was not possible to access full scores across all four local authority areas¹⁹. This may be partially due to the current phasing out of the LSI-R assessment and implementation of LSCMI assessment. Problems of this nature are not unique to Women in Focus and are noted elsewhere (Barry and McIvor, 2008; Easton and Matthews, 2010).

Given the small number of women who had completed their involvement with Women in Focus, it was not possible to draw any meaningful conclusions from reconviction data, which would normally require two years from the end of an intervention and would require larger numbers across the datasets. However, it was possible to access information on re-arrest rates for a sample of women (43) who had engaged with Women in Focus.²⁰

The data indicates that for 19 (44%) women, there was a reduction in the rate of offending recorded (ranging from one recorded offence to no recorded offences; up to a reduction from 10 offences recorded to no offences recorded). For 17 women (40%) there was no change (of this group three women had one offence recorded in the year prior to referral to Women in Focus and one offence recorded subsequently). This group however also includes 14 women who had no offence recorded either in the year before or after their involvement with Women in Focus. **This indicates that for 77% of women, where re-arrest data was available, there was a reduction in offences or no further offences recorded.**

¹⁹For this evaluation, LSI- R data was obtained for 128/151 women at referral, 23/151 women at 6 months, 9/151 women at the end of the evaluation.

²⁰ It was not possible to access this information for a comparative group of non-engagers.

For six women (14%), recorded offences had increased following their involvement with Women in Focus. This compares to the average reconviction rate for women of 37%. However, the small numbers make it very difficult to draw conclusions while the short time frame gives little opportunity to assess the longer term impact of the service on patterns of offending.

Objective 3: Improvements in community integration

The role of Women in Focus workers in supporting women to access services was viewed as important in achieving compliance with court orders. One social work manager noted that Women in Focus was making a difference to women in her area: *“there’s a number of women who especially at the initial stages wouldn’t have managed to keep their appointments and (support worker) was taking them to addiction appointments and encouraging them to come to their criminal justice appointments and they wouldn’t have managed otherwise”*.

Another social worker noted: *“there are people who you know have breached before or are likely to breach and certainly also from the court’s point of view, when even if they have breached if it’s a further offence or whatever, if we’re putting in a report that they’re working with a Women in Focus worker the courts are taking that onboard and quite often allowing the order to continue which has made a big difference”*.

One woman described how her social worker was good at getting her to do things while the Women in Focus worker was good at being there to talk to and encourage her. Attendance at the group helped build her confidence and supported her to take action in her life. All elements, she considered, had supported her ability to ‘move on’.

Several women respondents considered that Women in Focus had actually helped them get through their order. While others indicated that they would probably have attended appointments on their own (particularly probation appointments) and while they would have attempted to comply with the conditions of their order, they appreciated the additional support they received and were of the view that this may have helped avoid problems developing in other areas - that might in turn have impacted upon their compliance - because they were able to access practical and emotional support at an early stage.

A number of women respondents talked about their hopes of going to college, and felt that their ambition had been supported by discussions in the group-work programme. One woman who is hoping to go to college next year, and who is one of several women who have had their order discharged early due to progress, reported how important the Women in Focus worker had been for her: *“just having someone and not being left to get on with it. I’ve been in the criminal justice system for years and I’ve looked for help before but there wasn’t enough support – if there’d been more I wouldn’t have got into drugs maybe”*.

One woman indicated (and others agreed) that she could have done with the support provided by Women in Focus sooner: *"it was a pity I had to have a crisis first to get it"*. Women indicated that with Women in Focus:

- they were not 'forced' to do things, but given choices that made them think.
- workers were non-judgemental - there was no sense of 'them and us'.
- contact was informal and relaxed
- workers were viewed as caring and practical/ resourceful.
- they valued being seen as a person and not as a 'criminal'.

The only negative aspect identified by all groups of respondents was the short-term funding and the consequent uncertainty when workers left the service. This was a particular difficulty for women who had previously struggled to sustain relationships but had succeeded in building one with a support worker who had subsequently left. One social worker noted: *"it's unfortunate the way things have turned out because for some people building up a relationship is difficult and for that to break can be quite traumatic for people, especially when they've confided in someone"*.

The significance of the group-work programme is crucial in this respect, as it enabled women to develop a wider support network and to access resources that they could sustain after their contact with criminal justice social work, and Women in Focus, had ended.

Case Study Eight

Cheryl is 35 years and currently lives alone in a Housing Association one bedroom rented flat. She is currently facing eviction for rent arrears and alleged anti-social incidents involving her son. Cheryl commenced professional training after leaving school but became pregnant at nineteen and has been unemployed since. She has four children who do not live with her; however Cheryl has an extremely close relationship with her eldest son who visits her on a daily basis.

Cheryl is hoping to rebuild her relationship with an ex partner (father of her youngest child) who is due for imminent liberation from prison. Their relationship was volatile and abusive in the past. Cheryl has had no contact with her direct family for fifteen years; they disowned her due to drug addiction issues. She has one friend who helps with her shopping and who supports her financially at times. Cheryl's offences all relate to substance misuse and incidences of retaliation to domestic violence from her most recent partner. Her addictions have had detrimental effects on her physical, emotional and social wellbeing and she has mobility and mental health problems.

Initially, Cheryl was unable to comply with Criminal Justice and Addiction Services, but this has improved immensely of late. The Women in Focus support worker is also liaising with a number of agencies to establish a positive outcome in relation to a current housing issue. Cheryl was referred to Women in Focus to access support to attend appointments, address financial difficulties and engage with substance misuse services. She has engaged extremely well recently with Women in Focus and as a result has completed the majority of her community service order, made appointments and negotiated with addiction services, the NHS and judiciary and legal bodies.

Cheryl's state of social, emotional and physical wellbeing has improved, even under adverse circumstances, such as possible eviction. Her constructive progression is evident in her recent attendance at the Barnardo's Mentoring Group Work which she thoroughly enjoyed and which has helped her build self confidence. Unfortunately due to ill health and current housing issues she has not felt able to sustain this.

Women in Focus have offered Cheryl emotional support and motivation to attend appointments. The service is facilitating self-sufficiency and helping her to be less isolated. Through encouragement to attend and engage with support/criminal services Women in Focus has had a positive impact on her holistic wellbeing and helped her to overcome some of her issues.

Statistical information on outcomes was available for 60 women for the period April 2009 to December 2010. The outcomes information was recorded at service reviews and related to changes across two review periods (n=36 women), three review periods (n=18), four review periods (n=4) or five review periods (n=2). The time between reviews varied according to individual circumstances.

Outcomes were recorded by Women in Focus support workers using the following categories:

- 1) Needs met – blocks to meeting need are no longer of sufficient degree to warrant concern.
- 2) Mild Need- need can be met without continuing support from the service.
- 3) Moderate need – need can only be met with continuing support from the service.
- 4) Serious need – an urgent response is required to meet need.
- 5) Critical need – an immediate response is required to meet need.

Changes between categories were recorded at each review and these changes (improved situation, unchanged situation or situation indicating higher level of need) were used to measure the extent to which the women's situation in relation to each area had altered. This information was collated in order to populate the following diagrams.

It is important to note that changes in need (particularly recorded increases) could be the result of developing relationships between a woman and support worker. In this context, recorded increases may mean that the woman was able to disclose difficulties (which could then be addressed) rather than simply indicating deterioration in current circumstances.

Accommodation

Of the 60 cases where outcomes were available, 50 women (83%) had an identified need in this area. **27 women (54% of those with needs in this area) were supported to access more secure accommodation through their involvement with Women in Focus.** Where 'no change' was recorded 20 women (40% of those with needs in this area) experienced moderate or mild levels of need in this area, indicating that most of this group had fairly secure tenancies. In three cases, women's accommodation had become less secure.

Benefits

Fifty two women (87% of cases where outcomes were available) had an identified need in relation to access to benefits. **However, where needs in this area were identified, 27 women (52%) had increased access to benefits as a result of their involvement with Women in Focus.** Twenty two women (42%) experienced no change in this area while three women (6%) had experienced a decrease in benefits. The women for whom no change is recorded were almost all assessed as having mild levels of need, or needs met in this area,

suggesting that they were in receipt of their correct entitlement to benefits across the review periods or from the beginning of their intervention with Women in Focus.

Substance use

Of the 60 women for whom outcomes are available, 40 (67%) had an identified need in relation to substance use. **However for those who did have a recorded need in this area, 25 (63%) experienced reduced or safer use;** 13 (33%) experienced no change, while for two women recorded needs in this area increased. Where 'no change' was recorded, about one third had stayed as 'serious or critical' levels of need with the remainder assessed as remaining at mild or moderate levels of need; perhaps indicating the entrenched challenges associated with 'addiction' and problematic substance use.

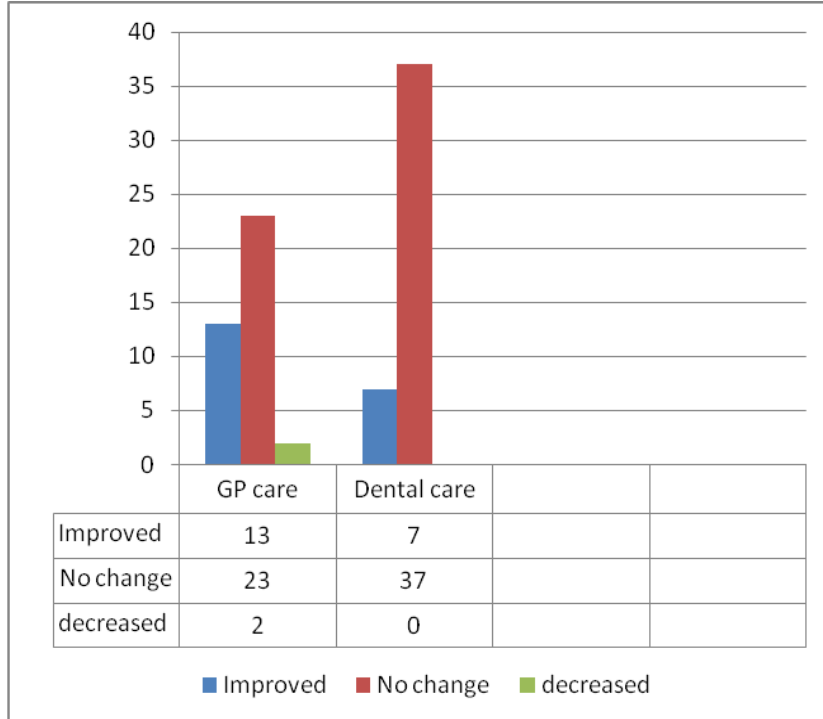
Domestic abuse

Recorded figures relating to domestic abuse are unclear due to initial difficulties in identifying this issue prior to engagement with the service and as a result it is problematic to make accurate claims for improvements or changes over time (see Annex Six). **However data on outcomes does suggest that in at least 16 cases it would appear that there were improvements in the risks faced by women from domestic abuse; with nine women moving from 'critical' or 'serious' need to having these needs met.** It may be that women have been supported to move from an abusive situation in the home or that, for example, violent partners have left the family home; which may have been for a number of reasons.

Additional information was available for some women in relation to the following outcome indicators:

- Registered and in receipt of GP care (n=38)
- Registered and in receipt of dental care (n=44)
- Supported in accessing employment, education and training (n=21)
- Access to/use of inclusive activities in the communities (n=22)

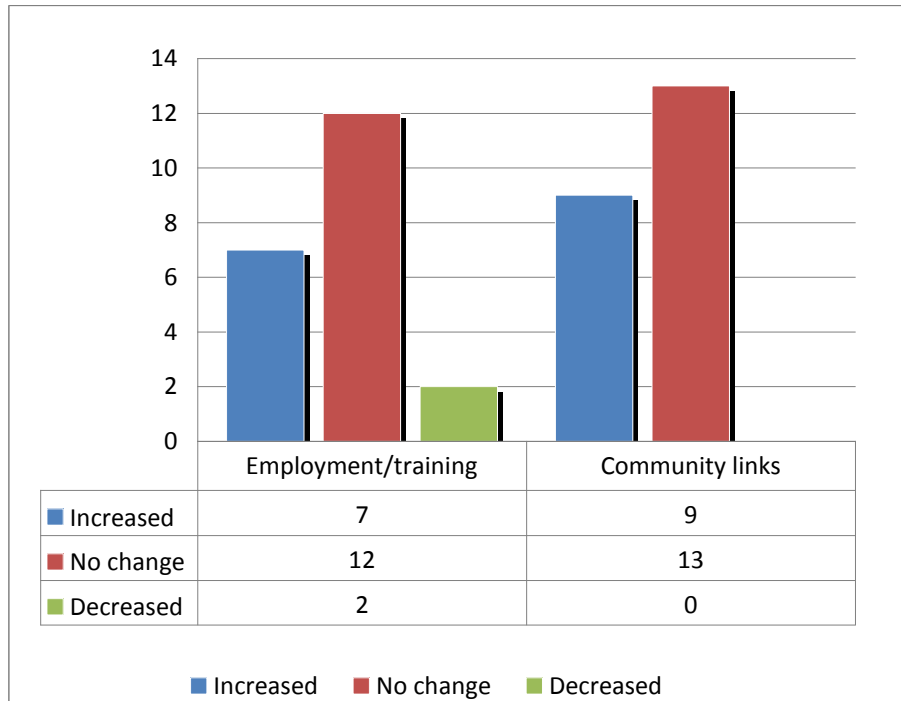
Chart 1: Number of women registered and in receipt of GP care and dental care



Number of women (GP care n=38; GP and Dental care n=44)

The women for whom 'no change' was recorded were almost all recorded as being at a level of 'needs met' or 'mild need' which indicates that they were already registered with a GP and required little or no support to attend appointments (Chart 1). In relation to dental care, 'no change' indicated a more varied situation with more than half the women appearing to already have access to dental services.

Chart 2: Number of women accessing employment and training and wider community links.



Number of women (Employment/training n=21; Community links n=22)

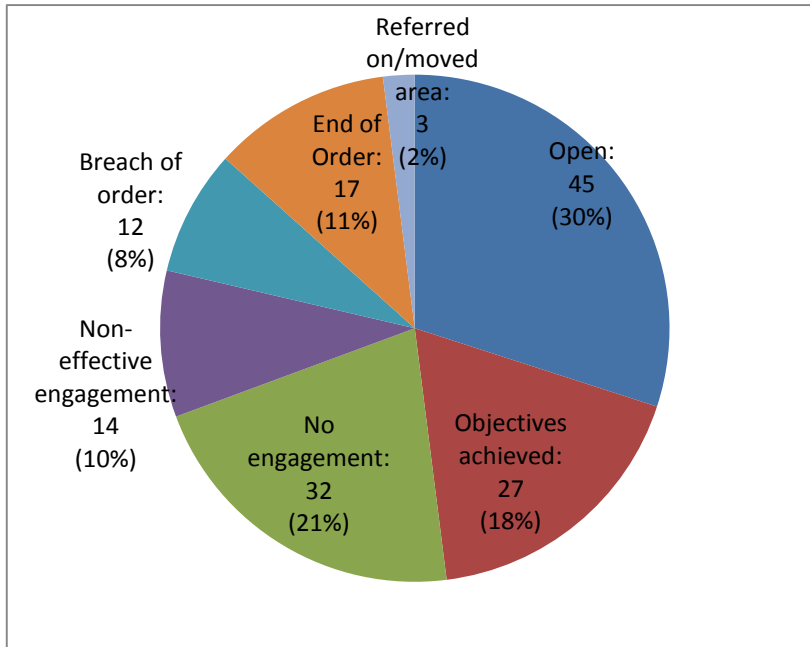
In cases where 'no change' was recorded, women were in general assessed as still having 'mild' or 'moderate' levels of need (Chart 2). This may mean that they still required some limited support to reach the stage where they felt able to apply for paid work or training opportunities.

Within this outcome area, the assessment of women's level of need which was recorded as unchanged varied from 'moderate' to 'serious' which suggests that nearly two thirds of the women required support to feel confident about making local links within their communities.

At the end of the evaluation (see Figure 1), 45 cases were still open, while objectives of the intervention had been met in 27 cases. Under these circumstances contact with Women in Focus could continue until the court orders which had provided the basis for initial referral had ended. Women had come to the end of their court order in 17 cases, although it was possible for some of these women to continue their contact with Women in Focus through the group work programme. Twelve orders had been breached and engagement had either been ineffective²¹ (in 14 cases) or there had been no engagement (in 32 cases).

²¹ Ineffective engagement refers to situations where initial contact did not continue after initial assessment; while no engagement refers to a lack of engagement from the point of assessment (i.e. women did not attend for assessment or have any subsequent contact with Women in Focus).

Figure 4: Status of women referred to Women in Focus by end of evaluation period 31/12/2011



N=150

Aftercare

The issue of 'aftercare' provision, and length of Women in Focus intervention overall did not appear entirely clear. There was an expectation that by the time women had reached the end of a court order, they should be effectively linked into appropriate mainstream services. While the importance of voluntary support was crucial for the duration of orders (to reduce the likelihood of breach), there was a recognition from all respondents that there may be situations where women required support beyond this time. Support workers noted that they would work towards completing their intervention to coincide with the end of an order (or before wherever possible and appropriate), but indicated that individual circumstances could vary and some women may need ongoing support beyond this. This was facilitated wherever possible. Clearly this has implications for support workers' caseloads and use of resources. Women service users also expressed their concern that relationships with support workers were important and they would appreciate an opportunity to contact support workers after a statutory order had ended. In some cases, women suggested that they may not require any further support, but knowing that they could access it (by phoning up the support worker) was important to them. Women recognised the importance of linking into other services but also said they would like to have access to a drop-in service or possibility of phone contact should they need that extra support after their formal contact with the service had ended. It is envisaged that the Mentoring Service which has been made available to women as a follow-on from the group work will meet this need.

The group-work programme was important in developing wider support networks and, importantly, the community element of this programme led a number of women to indicate their desire to help other people. This had resulted from the work several women had been involved with at the hospice, where they worked together as a team to 'give something back' to the community. The mentoring training that had been introduced also provided them with a potential opportunity to help other women who: "*are going through what we've been through*".

While there has been some indication that criminal justice social work services may introduce a group-work programme focusing on addressing offending, social workers themselves noted that there could potentially be significant differences to the service that Women in Focus, as a voluntary organisation, was able to provide:

"While we are currently looking at setting up a women specific group we obviously still have to work with people on orders and if they don't attend they're going to be breached. Whereas that was not the case if they don't meet the Women in Focus worker, they're not breaching them, it's not a condition of the order, it was an added support. And we were always quite clear about that but if social work set up group work then it's going to be a part of their order".

Case Study Nine

Shona is 36 years old and is currently under threat of eviction from her local authority housing provider. She is in receipt of benefits; her inability to work relates to addiction issues and previous childhood trauma. Shona has two children, one of whom has recently returned to live with her. She is in a long-term relationship with her partner who seems to be a secure and positive influence for her and a good role model to her children. Shona has found it difficult to integrate within her local community due to her years of substance misuse.

Shona's offences are in relation to possession and supply of illegal substances and assault. She was referred to Women in Focus so that support could be provided with personal/emotional issues and help meeting appointments, assistance with finances and to encourage engagement with substance misuse services. Shona was previously reluctant to attend appointments but is, with the support of Women in Focus, complying extremely well with criminal justice and community social work services. She now also appears to be engaging well with Addiction Services. She is currently abstinent from amphetamines and diazepam and is making good progress with Addiction Services.

Shona has engaged positively with Women in Focus and appreciates the support they provide. She is making progress in all areas and Women in Focus have been instrumental in providing support with her current situation; providing assistance, encouragement and reassurance with regard to addiction, housing and emotional issues. Shona is now currently completing and complying with all conditions of her probation and community service order. She is also making progressive steps to deal with lifetime addiction issues. She has taken on the responsibility of having her child back in her care and is coping reasonably well considering her previous circumstances. The Women in Focus support worker has been there to support her through judicial, personal and parenting issues and, thus far, her response to the involvement has been very positive.

CONCLUSION

From the outset, this project has attracted national and international attention due largely to a growing recognition that women and men involved with the criminal justice system, despite many similarities, have different experiences that result in diverse pathways into crime, and on which criminal justice responses often impact differentially. In Scotland, significant advances have been made in addressing these differential experiences. The recognition that women are not always able to access, or indeed, to comply with community disposals while prison is often an inappropriate intervention provided the basis for the implementation of more innovative responses to women, of which Women in Focus is a key example. Women in Focus recognises the importance of community integration/reintegration for women who may have become isolated through their offending behaviour and the factors which underpin this; factors which also impact on their ability to meet the requirements of statutory orders.

The evaluation indicates that Women in Focus is valued by women attending the project, workers in other agencies, and particularly social workers with responsibility for administering court orders. While the project is established across four local authorities (South Ayrshire, East Ayrshire, Dumfries and Galloway, North Ayrshire) and experiences have differed in terms of worker input and length of service, responses have been positive overall, and women accessing the service who have taken part in our evaluation have benefitted from the input of support workers, the opportunity to access additional services (i.e. advice, support, a women's group) and the additional time that support workers are able to provide – something that statutory social workers often struggle to make available given the number of pressing demands on their time and resources.

There is evidence that women who engage with the service are more likely to experience improvements in a number of areas of their lives; improvements which will make it less likely that orders will be breached and subsequently that they will be at risk of a custodial sentence. Interviews with women who have made use of the service also indicate that they have experienced improvements in terms of confidence, self-esteem and perceived self efficacy and have developed relationships with support workers and indeed other women, which is likely to support personal resilience and desistance from further offending in future. Through Women in Focus, women have also been able to link into other community based resources and agencies (notably in relation to addiction, accommodation and domestic abuse); services which many of the women struggled to access in the past. Once these links are established, the potential for women to retain and benefit from other services is considerable. Although only indicative, the analysis of re-arrest rates suggests that women who engage with the service do not generally continue to re-offend; for those who do, in the short-term at least, offending rates appear to be reduced.

To summarise, the findings of this evaluation provide support for the benefits of this service, despite some of the uncertainties currently experienced due to short-term funding arrangements and the impact this has had on worker stability. Importantly, it is notable that services such as Women in Focus take a significant period of time to develop and implement, and while the service is 'bedding in' it can be difficult to evidence longer-term aims and objectives. This is a shared experience for innovative projects internationally and highlights the importance of allowing time for services to make an impact, particularly in terms of integration/reintegration and reductions in re-offending (see for example, the evaluation of the Diamond Initiative, Dawson et al., 2011). A particular problem for relatively 'small' initiatives is that they are unlikely, over a short period of time, to generate a sufficiently large sample of cases that would enable reductions in recidivism – even if they existed - to be robustly demonstrated (Harper and Chitty, 2005).

The importance of Women in Focus in financial terms is worthy of consideration (NEF, 2008), particularly at a time when CJA funding, initially identified at £280,000 for work with women offenders, is about to be reduced in 2011 to £120,000. A brief cost analysis carried out by Barnardo's managers estimated the cost of Women in Focus per woman is £1698 (based on 37 average contacts per woman, 980 worker contacts per year). This is significantly less than the cost of even a short term prison sentence and as the evaluation has highlighted, there are potential benefits to women, their families and the wider community.

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ANNEX ONE: PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES

Specific programme objectives (as set out in the SWS CJA programme overview) are:

- “to assist women offenders to adhere to their penalty by supporting them to complete and make the most effective use of supervision;
- to develop closer links with HMP and YOI Cornton Vale promoting family contact and facilitating community re-integration;
- to assist offenders to obtain and maintain stable accommodation;
- to assist offenders to access addiction services;
- to support offenders to maintain contact with addiction services;
- to assist offenders in accessing and using relevant health services;
- to assist offenders in accessing appropriate employment and training opportunities, resulting in improved employability;
- to assist offenders in maintaining supportive family relationships;
- to assist offenders in developing and maintaining pro-social community involvements;
- to assist offenders in the management of finance;
- to empower offenders to access and maintain post-supervision support services”.

Outcome targets were established for the project by SWS CJA. These targets are:

- to reduce breach levels of Orders in North and East Ayrshire to below 25% ;
- to reduce breach levels of Orders in Dumfries and Galloway to below 20%;
- to maintain breach levels of Orders in South Ayrshire at below 20%;
- to reduce the rate of custody for women offenders engaged in the project in SWS CJA;
- to increase levels of stable accommodation and to improve ability to access and sustain suitable accommodation including independent living where appropriate;
- to increase levels of access to addiction services resulting in reduced or stabilised substance misuse;
- to increase levels of access to relevant health services with emphasis on women returning to the community from custody;
- to increase numbers of women offenders in employment/training and who are ready for work;
- to increase levels of involvement in pro-social community activity;
- to increase levels of financial stability;
- to develop a better understanding of ‘what works’ with women offenders.

ANNEX TWO: METHODOLOGY

The evaluation is based on a mixed method approach combining qualitative and quantitative data and aims to assess the extent to which Women in Focus is able to meet its key operational objectives to:

- reduce levels of breach and levels of custody for women offenders;
- reduce rates of re-offending and re-conviction;
- effect positive community integration.

While the first two objectives are useful measurements for quantitative assessment it is difficult to obtain and use them for several reasons: 1. Proving that the service actually impacted on these rates/levels and 2. Obtaining these figures due to the time that the service has been in operation and more generic problems of data collection.

The evaluation draws upon both statistical data (where available) and qualitative data (specifically interviews with service users, service providers and key stakeholders) in order to assess the extent to which the objectives are addressed and to identify the experiences, perceptions and opinions of individuals directly involved with Women in Focus. The development of the research tools and data collection systems used has been informed by the literature review.

Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the University of Stirling, School of Applied Social Science Ethics Committee in August 2009.

Quantitative data

- (a) Data was collected from the Scottish Government Analytical Team. This includes prison statistics used to identify changes in the number of women imprisoned from SWS CJA. Sentencing patterns across courts were not compared given the small number of women appearing in court and the variable circumstances they are likely to have experienced (i.e. this makes it impractical to compare sentencing patterns for similar offences across courts or between individuals).

Criminal Justice Social Work statistics (also published by the Scottish Government) were examined to identify differences in rates of access to and completion of court ordered social work disposals.

- (b) Each of the four local authority criminal justice social work departments provided statistics which were collated centrally and locally and used to examine disposals allocated across SWS CJA, levels of breach instigated and circumstances where women on orders are not referred to Women in Focus. An administrator was

identified to support the research team in collating standardised data across the four local authority areas.

- (c) Background information on women service users was collected on an anonymised basis on an existing programme database held by Barnardo's and developed with the research team to meet the requirements of the evaluation. All statistical information was used in aggregate to give an overall picture of the client group and local context rather than to identify individual participants.

While every effort was made to collect the data necessary to evaluate Women in Focus on the identified objectives, significant challenges were experienced by the agencies in gathering and collating the necessary statistics. This is evident from the gaps in local authority data in relation to the data made available by the Scottish Government Justice Analytical Services. Wherever possible, available data was cross-referenced across agencies (criminal justice social work and Barnardo's) to attempt to obtain information that was as accurate as possible. However, gaps in the data have impacted on the extent to which the evaluation is able to make clear conclusions in some areas.

Qualitative Data

Interviews with service users, service providers and key stakeholders were conducted to facilitate identification of the following:

- range of services provided;
- relevant supports available elsewhere in the community for women to link into both during contact with Women in Focus and upon completion;
- reasons potential service users agree to participate or choose not to do so;
- any difficulties women have in participating fully with Women in Focus and exploration of possible solutions to these;
- women's progress while attending Women in Focus including follow-up after leaving, where possible;
- an overall picture of the support offered and impact made, particularly in relation to: accommodation, addiction services, health services, employment and training, family relationships, community involvement, management of finance, access and maintenance of post-supervision support;
- paths of communication between staff and relevant partners and agencies as well as barriers to communication and information-sharing.

This involved:

- (a) Analysis of documentary material such as minutes of management and steering group meetings (from 19 February 2009-2 March 2011), annual reports and other relevant material charting the development of the service.
- (b) Semi-structured qualitative interviews with service users, service providers and key stakeholders. The following interviews were conducted with:

- women's support workers in each local authority area on at least two occasions (8) and informally on several occasions;
- other criminal justice professionals: social workers, community service, through-care workers in the four local authority areas (12)
- service users in each area (20 individuals and 11 in groups)

Interviews were conducted with criminal justice social work managers, Barnardo's project managers (10)²² and other staff involved with the project on an ongoing basis.

All Women in Focus service users were invited (by their support worker) to complete a consent form if they were willing to be contacted for follow-up by the research team. This allowed the research team to contact women who engaged with Women in Focus as well as women who engaged initially but subsequently did not participate, and women who had participated and completed their orders.

In total, 50 consent forms were completed by women involved with the service across the four areas. Of these, all the women gave consent for their information to be used in the evaluation and 45 women agreed in principle to be interviewed by the researchers. Attempts were made to contact 42 of the women, the exceptions being two women who were in prison and one whose support worker advised that she was suffering acute mental health problems and would be unlikely to make herself available for interview.

The methods used to make contact with women to arrange interviews were by telephone, letter (with stamped addressed envelope enclosed) or through Women in Focus support workers. It was not possible to arrange interviews with 16 of the women, either because the telephone number was unobtainable or reply letters were not returned. Interviews were arranged with 26 women, six of whom did not attend.

A total of 20 women were interviewed across the four areas as follows:

- Dumfries and Galloway: four interviews
- East Ayrshire: two interviews (both by telephone)
- North Ayrshire: nine interviews (including four by telephone)
- South Ayrshire: five interviews (including one by telephone)

In addition, two groups of women were also consulted. One researcher conducted participant observation of the Cazbro Group session in December 2010 which included the Cazbro Life coach, three support workers and five women; on a second occasion two researchers discussed the evaluation and women's overall experiences of the service following a group work session in March 2011. This was attended by six women and two support workers.

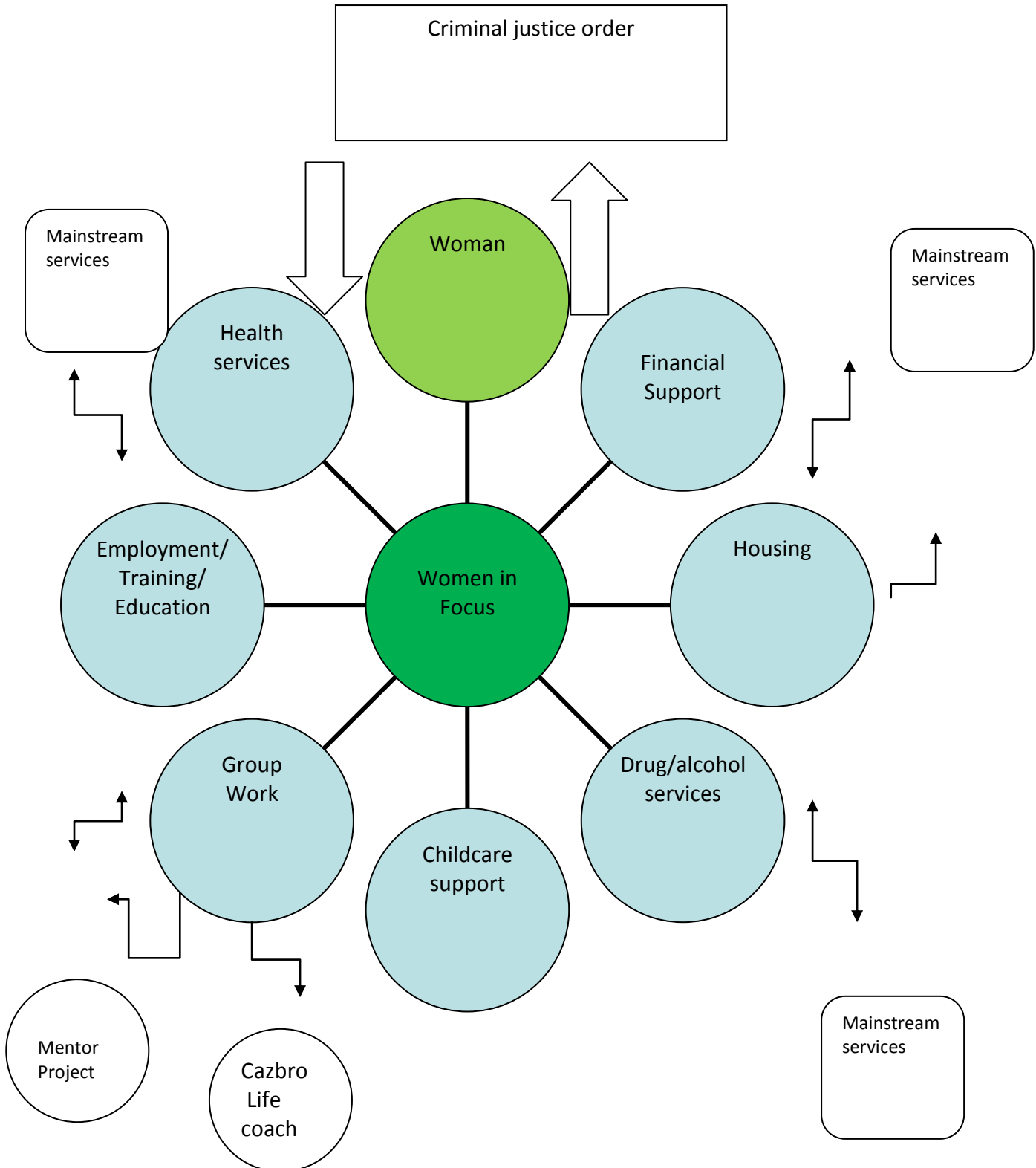
²² There were several changes in project management during the course of the evaluation.

Interviews with women service users considered their personal histories and circumstances, reasons for taking part, expectations of the service, relationships with statutory and support workers, perceived effectiveness, potential barriers, and availability and uptake of follow-on support. Interviews with professionals and support workers investigated the procedures for sharing pre- and post-sentence information about individual service users; shared planning processes; joint decision making; timely referral to key agencies; examination of overall numbers of participants arrested and sentenced for new offences after taking part in the programme; resourcing for the project; and evidence of added value in meeting the objectives of individual agencies. Interviews also considered: the appropriateness of information sharing; collaborative (inter-agency) working; management and the support of workers; clarity and efficacy of collaborative relationships.

The data from interviews was digitally recorded where access was obtained; transcribed, coded and analysed.

Indicative case-studies were collated by Women in Focus support workers.

ANNEX THREE: COMMUNITY INTEGRATION



ANNEX FOUR: ADDITIONAL TABLES

Table 1: Order imposed by local authority area 2008/2009 (source: Scottish Government data)

	Dumfries &Galloway	East Ayrshire	North Ayrshire	South Ayrshire	Total
	No. %	No. %	No. %	No. %	No. %
Probation Order	71 (50)	61 (60)	54 (54)	57 (66)	243 (56)
Community Service Order	35 (25)	22 (22)	34 (34)	15 (17)	106 (25)
Probation & Community Service Order	25 (17)	13 (13)	10 (10)	11 (13)	59 (14)
Drug Testing & Treatment Order	11 (8)	6 (5)	2 (2)	4 (4)	23 (5)
Total	142	102	100	87	431

Table 2: Order imposed by local authority area 2009/2010 (source: Scottish Government data)

	Dumfries &Galloway	East Ayrshire	North Ayrshire	South Ayrshire	Total
	No. %	No. %	No. %	No. %	No. %
Probation Order	49 (45)	70 (57)	67 (52)	53 (62)	239 (54)
Community Service Order	27 (25)	31 (25)	30 (23)	23 (27)	111 (25)
Probation & Community Service Order	27 (25)	18 (15)	25 (19)	7 (8)	77 (17)
Drug Testing & Treatment Order	5 (5)	4 (3)	7 (6)	2 (3)	18 (4)
Total	108	123	129	85	445

Probation includes orders with requirement of unpaid work as part of order
CSO excludes POs with requirement of unpaid work

Table 3 : Women referred to Women in Focus by housing type and stability

TOTAL PERIOD

	Area								not recorded	Total
	Dumfries & Galloway		East Ayrshire		North Ayrshire		South Ayrshire			
	not stable	stable	not stable	stable	not stable	stable	not stable	stable		
Local authority	1	9	3	15	8	4	5	25	6	76
Housing association	0	0	0	3	0	2	0	2		7
Private rented	0	1	1	2	1	5	2	4	2	18
Private owned	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	0		4
Temporary	1	3	2	0	4	1	6	0		17
Homeless accommodation	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		1
Unsettled	3	0	3	0	2	0	4	0		12
Not known				5		11				16
Total	6	13	9	26	16	23	19	31	8	151

Table 4: Women referred to Woman in Focus by Employment Status

CJA	Employment status	Total
All areas	Employed full-time	3
	Employed part-time	4
	Training	1
	College/university	3
	Unemployed	121
	Not known	19
	TOTAL	151

Table 5: Women referred by main carer or children

Main carer of children	Total
Service user	26
Not service user – not recorded ²³	45
Partly by family	10
No longer dependent	1
No children	48
Not known ²⁴	21
Total	151

²³ It is likely that this information relates to women who did not engage with the service and where this information was not known at the point of referral.

²⁴ As above.

ANNEX FIVE: EVALUATION OF GROUP WORK

“From taking part in this course I have learned not to be so hard on myself. I also think my confidence has had a bit of a boost which is a good thing as I had little to none when I started. I’ve enjoyed the course and I am glad I took part. Carol is a good person to know, a very bubbly person. I have more determination to achieve my goals now”.

“I found this course to be a breath of fresh air. The way it was delivered made learning the material interesting and fun. The course was delivered to clients and staff and I feel everyone got something from the course. Personally, it made me take stock of my current situation and make positive changes for the benefit of myself and my family. It has given me the encouragement to set goals and work on achieving them. The course has made me more aware of who I am and what I want out of life. I would encourage anyone at any point in their life to complete the course because everyone will learn something about themselves by doing it”.

The course taught me a lot of things that I did not even know about, i.e. how the brain works on the left and right side, stress related, problem solving and other things that were interesting.

My experience doing this course has been very rewarding and uplifting also. I have gained a lot of control over aspects of my life where I felt trapped and like I was just existing, going through the motions, where now I have direction and focus and drive I thank you fully for. As a group it’s been fun and entertaining at times also, but the knowledge and tools that has been taught is extremely superb, very practical and well, in my opinion, I can’t praise it enough. Without Cazbro I still would be struggling. It has been like a lifeline if you like. Thank you and with my full respect and praise

Given me much more confidence within myself. Made me take a long hard look at my life. Good experience. Fun meeting new people and team work. Getting me out the house more. Thank u.

As the name suggests it is an Illumination. It gives you the tools to take life in a direction that you want it to go on. I was initially unsure that this was the course for me but from the start it was interesting and enlightening. I like seeing the values I have and the way I can impact on my own life. I enjoyed every part of the course and would recommend anyone who has issues with self esteem or coping strategies would benefit from this course.

To start with my main goal was to come to the group. I enjoyed the good and the bad (having to think about myself). The games/tasks were fun and are a great way to explain things. And it wasn’t until today, our last group, when I was talking to you that unknown to me I have been trying to use some of the things we have talked about this week to deal with my situation. I hope I remember it in the weeks to come to get to the other side and move on. I know it’s going to be hard and with the “TOOLS” you have given me I hope to get there. X

ANNEX SIX: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE OUTCOMES

There were 41 women for whom the outcome 'not exposed to domestic abuse/violence' was recorded. The situation for women in relation to this outcome was recorded as having remained unchanged for 19 of the women. In most of these cases needs were recorded as (1) 'need met', that is that 'blocks to meeting need are no longer of sufficient degree to warrant concern' or (2) 'mild need – need can be met without continuing support from the service'. Three women for whom the situation had been assessed as remaining unchanged were recorded as (3) 'moderate need – need can only be met with continuing support from the service or (4) 'serious need – an urgent response to meet need'.

Six women were recorded as having increased need in relation to 'not exposed to domestic violence /abuse. Two women had moved from (1)'need met' to (2) 'mild need' while the other four women were assessed as having moved from 'low' or 'moderate' need levels to serious, or in one case, critical levels.

On the other hand, 16 women were recorded as having improved levels of need in relation to 'not exposed to domestic violence/abuse'. Seven of these women were recorded as having moved from (3) 'moderate' or (2) 'mild need' to (1) 'needs met' while nine women were assessed as having moved from (5) 'critical need' or (4) 'serious need' to (1) 'needs met'.

In order to understand these outcomes fully, it would be necessary to have information about the context within which these changes have taken place and the individual situation of each women.