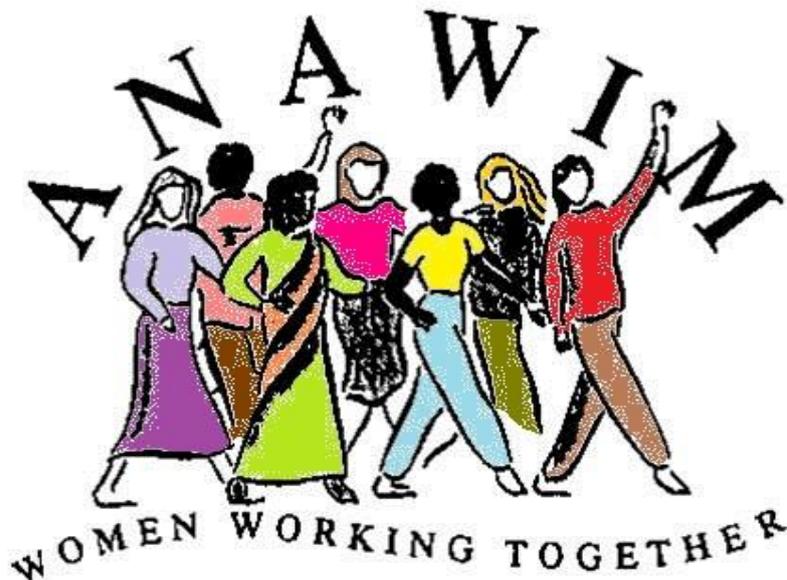

Anawim

Making the

Case



ANAWIM

“When I first came to the Centre I thought it was the worst thing that had ever happened to me. I now realise it was the best. You have given me hope”.

JH – Specified Activity Order, Benefit Fraud

This year our target from NOMS was for 195 women to achieve positive progress along 4 or more of the 9 offending pathways. When replicated at a national level these targets for the Women’s Community Projects are expected to reduce the prison population and re-offending rates – however, it is very difficult to demonstrate that these improvements are directly attributable to our services.

A reduced level of funding next year will mean that we are unable to work with as many women towards the many outcomes that we currently deliver – including better and more effective parenting that cuts intergenerational crime. In the short, medium and longer term this will be expensive in both social and financial terms – research demonstrates that the costs to a whole range of public services including NHS, criminal justice agencies, benefits and children in care is **dramatically higher** when women are living chaotic lives characterised by substance misuse and crime.

Successful interventions save the public purse significant sums:

The research identified three broad categories of experience in women with multiple needs using the women’s centres, with varying levels of support need. The model shows that a successful intervention, costing between £1,151 and £2,302 per woman per year can save the public purse between £47,000 and £264,000 per woman over five years, depending upon the level of support needed.

Revolving Doors: Counting the Cost – Findings from women-specific Financial Analysis model.

Without the option of using the Specified Activity Requirement (SAR) to attend Anawim, those with responsibility for sentencing will be impoverished in their options. It has proved extremely popular with them. Whenever Magistrates and Judges are asked about the use of short custodial sentences for women, they all answer that they do not wish to use this option but feel they have no other. The negative impacts of short custodial sentences are well documented and researched but without viable alternatives prison too often becomes the default position.

Why do women desist from crime?

The answers are many and differ from individual to individual. Motivation, relationships, inner strength, skills, social networks and self-determination are all

factors cited by Mike Nellis, Professor of Criminal & Community Justice, Strathclyde University. This is why the personalised package of case managed support that we offer works. To desist from crime women need alternatives. The Women's Centre's intensive support and range of courses all raise confidence and self-esteem, offer new skills, create social networks and offer routes into training and employment.

Women desist when they have 'something else' - we offer 'something else'.

For Anawim to be sustainable it needs a good mix of funding streams. The charitable trusts allow us to develop and trial new pieces of work but can never take the place of funding to deliver on statutory responsibilities.

Rehabilitation is the responsibility of government – mainstream funding should therefore come from statutory agencies with charitable funding offering added value.

This includes -

- Providing community sentences
- Offering support to women in prison to help them resettle back into the community and desist from further offences – interrupting the revolving door.
- Supporting women into accommodation and income, helping them to become ultimately self-sufficient and employed hence contributing to instead of costing society.
- Interventions which build on parenting skills enabling women to live successfully with their children, impacting positively on the next generation.

Individual donations allow us to do the extras which often mean so much.

- ❖ The food parcel
- ❖ The trip to the zoo for a mother with her children who may never have been in her own childhood.
- ❖ The pyjamas and toiletries in hospital for a woman with no family.
- ❖ Assistance with a funeral.
- ❖ Clothes in prison for a woman forced to wear prison issue.
- ❖ Bus pass to get to an appointment.

However all these are peripheral to the core support - without substantial, sustained mainstream funding - so the service not lurch from one year to the next - we cannot retain good staff and maintain a good quality service. We need a mixed economy of contracts and grants from a variety of mainstream budget holders whose objectives we meet. Without that the City will lose the valuable contribution that Anawim makes.

A recent inspection on alternatives to custody for women offenders, *'Equal but different'* said.

The criminal justice system has an underlying principle that everyone must be treated equally. However, this, does not necessarily mean that everyone should be treated the same. The underlying circumstances which may have led men and women to offend can be very different. To achieve equitable outcomes for male and female offenders, different approaches need to be taken. They found much to praise, that Probation Trusts had responded well to the strong lead given by the National Offender Management Service, the Ministry of Justice and other partners to develop a sound strategic framework for working with women offenders. They praised the fact that Funding had been made available to support the work undertaken to develop new initiatives. Pointing especially to **the women's community centres, who offered a great resource for women likely to offend or reoffend.**

Despite these efforts, in our view the size of the female prison population is still a matter of concern. Too many women are still serving short prison sentences, often for breach of community orders imposed for offences which would not normally of themselves have attracted a custodial sentence. The probation service has acknowledged that a different approach needs to be taken when dealing with this particular group of offenders and has made inroads into effecting the necessary change through the development of local policies and partnerships. This report contains a number of recommendations to help them to sustain their efforts so that the good work achieved so far does not go to waste but becomes embedded into routine practice.

Committing offences is not as common amongst girls and women as amongst boys and men. It is often associated with one or more other factors such as mental health disorder, physical ill-health, vulnerability linked to low self-esteem and self-harm, victimisation, abuse, substance misuse or low levels of skills and employment. These differences between men and women are supported by data from OASys, the offender assessment system. The approach endorsed by many in the criminal justice system is that it is necessary to address these issues in a holistic manner to have a realistic chance of diverting a woman from crime or help her desist from offending. For this reason there is currently widespread support for women's community centres, formerly known as 'one stop shops', where counselling, support and practical assistance are key elements of an offending behaviour 'programme'.

Key Findings

- The women's community centres provided a valuable 'safe space' in which isolated women could access services to address their needs and become better integrated into their communities.
- If used effectively, the women's community centres could play an important role in securing the woman's engagement in work to address her offending and promote compliance with her order or licence. Some offered alternatives to custody with opportunities for unpaid work or specified activity requirements.
- Where sentencers had access to and were aware of the centres, they found them credible.
- Sustainability was a key concern for all the centres.

The idea of women's community centres dates back some 20 or more years, with the former Hereford & Worcester Probation Area testing out different ways of working with women at the Asha centre in Worcester. A comparable project in Birmingham, Anawim, was developed at around the same time and along similar lines, originally providing a service to street sex workers under the auspices of a faith based charity. These two centres each provided a 'one stop shop' approach to meeting women's needs, with all the services needed by a woman being provided under one roof. At such centres, women were able to gain advice and guidance about many issues of concern to them, such as employment, finance, benefits, debt, childcare, health and substance misuse, as well as receiving social and moral support from their peers and other workers, which in turn helped to raise their self-esteem. The centres were later identified as a potential resource for women who had offended.

This model of working, praised by Baroness Corston, effectively became the 'prototype' for how to provide women-only resources effectively. Crucially, the centres were seen as community resources for *all* women, rather than just catering for offenders. Those at risk of offending, on account of their high level of need, were also welcome. The centres did not, in themselves, provide an alternative to custody unless part of a specified activity requirement (a formal requirement of a court order) but a conducive environment where women were actively encouraged to engage with their workers to address their offending. They could also be given help so that they would be less likely to reoffend in the future.

Other centres subsequently opened up across the country, some funded by the MoJ, others with the help of the Corston Coalition of Independent Funders.

Thematic Inspection Report: Equal but different?

An inspection of the use of alternatives to custody for women offenders

A Joint Inspection by HMI Probation, HMCPsI and HMI Prisons October 11

LIZ CALDERBANK
HM Chief Inspector of Probation

MIKE FULLER
HM Chief Inspector, CPS

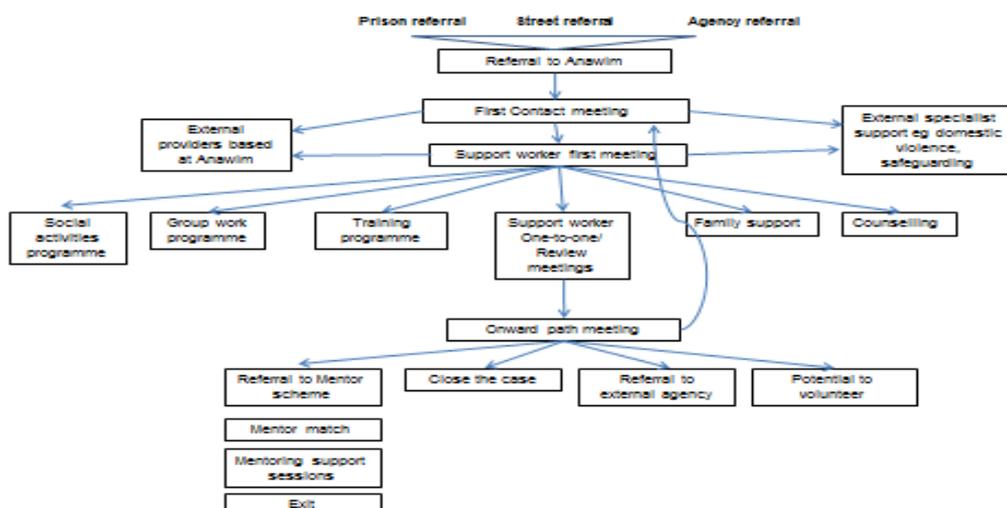
NICK HARDWICK
HM Chief Inspector of Prisons

Case Management

Anawim has initiated a new system of case managing clients that has improved the service and facilitated the training of new staff. This approach clearly sets out the process which all support workers will follow, from referral through to the 'onward path' and exit routes. Worker Guidance has been produced with step-by-step guides to all the processes involved, and all staff have been trained in the skills required to follow the case management system. Our new approach has provided greater structure to the service, with clear timescales, procedures and objectives. It has also facilitated improved feedback from co-providers based at Anawim such as tutors delivering courses, and agencies offering housing and debt support – meaning better liaison between them and the support workers. From the date of referral there are clear timetables for first contact via a first contact rota, needs assessment, initial action planning and commencement with an expectation that clients will work towards goals and then move on from the intense case managed service into volunteering/ employment or are allocated to a mentor.

At the centre of the new system is Outcomes Star, comprised of 10 'spokes' or pathways all representing an area of need – accommodation, meaningful use of time, mental and physical health, motivation and responsibility, social and relationship skills, drug and alcohol use, self care, finance and offending – on which clients are scored. The scores assist in assessment of need, developing an action plan and, with regular reviews, measuring distance travelled towards self-reliance. The case management system provides a clear beginning, middle and end point to the women's engagement with Anawim, always working towards independence. However, the fact that the Centre is consistently here to help support any of the women who encounter a crisis or need additional advice is crucial to our success in diverting women away from crime and negative lifestyles on an enduring basis.

Anawim managed case model 2011



OFFENDING AND REOFFENDING

| Reoffending | actual rate | predicted rate | % difference |
|-----------------------|-------------|----------------|--------------|
| Anawim | 3.51% | 7.62% | -53.94% |
| women (Birmingham) | 5.74% | 7.46% | -23.09% |
| women (SWM) | 5.84% | 7.25% | -19.42% |

Notes

The source for the above reoffending rates is the Ministry of Justice quarterly local adult reoffending statistics, latest release published in August 2011 and covering the reoffending of all offenders on the probation caseload between 1st April 2010 and 31st March 2011. The reoffending rates of women are generally lower than those of men and therefore the predicted rates are likely to be lower than those of men. It should be stressed the numbers are quite low in the case of Anawim, with 81 women tracked over four quarters, so the results cannot be presented as having statistical significance.

Performance is usually judged by the difference between the actual and predicted rates - for example women in Birmingham are reoffending at 23% less than expected. **In light of this the reoffending performance of women engaging with Anawim is very good - better than women in general - at 3.51%, which is under half the predicted rate.**

We are delighted that current indicators suggest that our model is successful in reducing re-offending rates, something which reflects the improvements that women have made across all the nine offending pathways in the last quarter.

| PATHWAY | % OF WOMEN SHOWING PROGRESS July – Sept 2011 |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| ACCOMMODATION | 84% |
| SKILLS AND EMPLOYMENT | 76% |
| HEALTH | 78% |
| DRUGS AND ALCOHOL | 79% |
| FINANCE BENEFIT AND DEBT | 83% |
| CHILDREN FAMILIES AND RELATIONSHIPS | 77% |
| ATTITUDES THINKING AND BEHAVIOUR | 83% |
| ABUSE AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE | 55% |
| WOMEN INVOLVED IN PROSTITUTION | 100% |

Around one third of women prisoners lose their homes and often their possessions whilst in prison.

Of the 74 women with an accommodation need July-Sept, 62 made positive progress.

In Quarters 1 & 2 31 women were assisted to move into safer and more settled accommodation and 43 were assisted to sustain their tenancies.

Accommodation

Prison Reform Trust research demonstrates that stable accommodation is one of the important prerequisites for rehabilitation - with surveys showing higher reoffending rates for those who have accommodation problems. When a woman is homeless she becomes more reliant on others, subject to their influence and vulnerable to both abuse and offending.

Anawim places emphasis not only on ensuring that all clients are supported towards finding accommodation that meets their needs, but also on supporting clients so that they are able to sustain their accommodation in the longer term. As with all 'spokes' of the star the objective is self-reliance – the woman's ability to manage her accommodation without external support.

For example, in July – September (Q2) 74 clients were assessed as having an accommodation need. In practice, these needs would range from homelessness on the one extreme to a failure to plan ahead and manage a tenancy independently on the other.

One source of support is referral to outside agencies who attend the Centre – a member of staff from the Sparkbrook Neighbourhood Office and SIFA Resettlement attend each week alternately offering appointments and follow-up work. We have an agreement with Midland Heart who have undertaken to offer us up to 40 properties a year on a priority letting scheme. This also includes the Re-Unite project, a model developed by Commonwheel to provide suitable properties to women upon release from prison so that they can be reunited with their children with support from Anawim.

Referral to Birmingham Settlement will also assist with rent arrears and claiming housing benefit. Their support can make an important difference in the transition from supported accommodation to their own tenancy.

Women also receive intensive one to one sessions with keyworkers dealing with all issues relating to their accommodation including anti-social behaviour with neighbours, budgeting for rent, difficulty with repairs and managing their children.

Case study

Shanaz came to Anawim on a Specified Activity Requirement for 30 days for affray. She had multiple needs including accommodation, debt, lack of skills and employment and low emotional well-being with susceptibility to anger. She was referred to Birmingham City Council at the Centre, and moved to secure accommodation. In one to one sessions she and her case worker discussed her tendency to react to challenging situations violently and explored more appropriate alternatives, so that she started to reflect upon the consequences of her behaviour and the prospect of another arrest. Her improved accommodation gave a base on which to build a more stable life - she attended maths and literacy classes to build her skills and the offending behaviour course to address the reasons for her offending. She engaged well with Birmingham Settlement to deal with outstanding debts and completed the expert patient NHS course, gaining a certificate. Attendance at the Centre increased her social network and she began to feel less isolated and her confidence increased. During her time at the Centre she has developed from someone with significant multiple needs with no realistic prospect of employment and a high risk of re-offending into someone with a long-term home, a range of skills, an insight into the cause of her offending with risks of recurrence therefore low and realistic prospects of employment.

'Anawim has helped me see that there is more to life! I am positive and enthusiastic for the future.'

Shanaz

When **Sabrina** was referred she was homeless, Social Services were heavily involved with her children, and one had already been adopted. She was using heroin and was offending to fund her habit. She was referred to Addaction for support with her addictions and engaged well with them. The representative from the neighbourhood office helped her get into safe housing. Our in-house counselling service took her on and she attended weekly. Her case worker advocated for her with Social Services which enabled her to keep the current baby and Birmingham settlement helped her to clear her debts. While at the centre Sabrina attended the English and Maths courses from Solihull College, completed a certificate in Hair and Beauty from Bourneville College and Offending Behaviour with our tutor Nita. Today, Sabrina is completely clean of heroin and the substitute methadone, she has been moved from temporary housing into her own flat, and has finished her counselling sessions which she says have helped her with healing from past abuse. She has committed no offences for the last two years and is living a much more self-sufficient life.

Courses available:

Life Coaching
Craft Club and
Business
Enterprise
Self Esteem &
Confidence
Maths
Employment Skills
Visual Arts &
Sculpture
Offending
Behaviour
Arts & Jewellery
Making
Drugs Awareness
Crisis Smart Skills
(family
relationships)
English
Embroidery
Harm Reduction
Workshop
Arts and Crafts
ESOL
Sugar Craft
Prejudice &
Discrimination
Hair and Beauty
And many others

Skills and Employment

"I have learnt so many new arts and craft ideas which I explore with my children in the evenings. It is not an easy option, but I am proud of everything I have achieved whilst attending Anawim. You get out what you put in, and Anawim has given me opportunities". Holly

Supporting women to develop their skills and find employment is a primary goal. While some of the women have complex needs so are not yet ready for work, others, particularly those who have lost their employment through offending, are very keen to get back into employment as quickly as possible.

Whatever stage the women are at, all are encouraged to take part in the wide range of courses on offer. The initial needs assessment focuses on 'meaningful use of time' – all the women are supported to make use of their time productively both for themselves and the wider community. If specific needs such as literacy and numeracy are identified the women can attend English and Maths classes. Women not yet ready for the more academic subjects are encouraged to take part in our range of art and craft classes which promote engagement and provide a useful lead-in to more demanding courses. Many of the women who attend the Centre are intimidated by group activity initially, often due to social isolation and lack of confidence - once this is overcome they are able to progress towards more formal training and the acquisition of work-related skills. Volunteering is also encouraged, both at the Centre and via other agencies such as BVSC.

Many female offenders have had a poor experience of education; have very low skills levels and few qualifications. 33% of female sentenced prisoners were previously excluded from school and 74% of women in prison left school and 74% of women in prison left school at 16 or younger. As a result, 71% of women in prison have no qualifications and 76% of women prisoners have literacy and numeracy ages below 11.

(Figures from Platform 51 – Crime and Violence)

Case Study

Jane was referred with a Specified Activity Requirement (SAR) for theft from her employer. She had no previous offending history and was desperate to resume employment. Mental health issues were identified at initial assessment stage and she received one to one support with this during her order. She was referred to Birmingham Settlement for benefits advice and Job Centre Plus (JCP) for support regarding employment, with particular reference to the problems posed by her conviction and the nature of it. She attended the Drug Awareness and Offender Behaviour courses. Jane was keen to reduce her reliance on anti-depressants and was supported to start an online Cognitive Behaviour Therapy course that she found very helpful. Jane has now successfully completed her order and her key worker has just written a reference for Birmingham Volunteer Service (BVSC) with whom she is starting to volunteer. She has a full awareness of her employment opportunities given her criminal record and continues in close contact with JCP.

"I love Ruby's class, I come here feeling low sometimes and after Ruby's class I feel better – either feel more confident or relieved just to talk and understand despite my faults I have a lot of good qualities and it's good to talk to girls on the same level going or have gone through the same thing or similar things".

May

Marcia arrived at the Centre homeless and in crisis. She was doing street sex work to fund her poly drug use and she had no benefits in place. She immediately accessed the housing representative who managed to get her into a hostel and she used our phone to start the long process of signing on for her benefits, something that was delayed by the fact that she had no IDs. Her support worker helped her to contact her mother from whom she had been estranged to obtain some documents, which began the process of building bridges with her family as the mother was encouraged by seeing her daughter receiving some support and taking steps to change her life for the better. Once Sabrina's crisis situations were dealt with and her life was less chaotic she started to attend courses at Anawim including Love Yourself with the tutor Ruby, Literacy and eight weeks of drug awareness sessions. Today, Marcia is re-housed in her own housing association property with floating support, having initially moved from the first hostel to a refuge as she was experiencing domestic abuse and threats from her partner who rejected her new lifestyle because she was no longer funding his drug habit with her sex work. This involved many hours of one to one support sessions with her worker to help her to psychologically disengage from him. The confidence and skills which she gained from attending courses at Anawim mean that she feels ready to attend an outside college. Marcia wants to train as a drug worker to help other women in similar circumstances.

“For many of the women the Centre is the only place they attend regularly and feel safe, so it is an ideal model for engaging an often hard to reach group and enabling access to a range of services in an integrated framework”.

“Services are not designed or developed to enable this group of vulnerable women to successfully access support or to sustain it”.

Early Analysis from a pilot project at Anawim with partners:

Revolving Doors Agency

Birmingham & Solihull MH
NHS Foundation Trust

NOMS West Midlands

Pan Birmingham MH
Commissioners

NHS West Midlands

Health

A significant percentage of the women referred have had life experiences of violence and abuse, known risk factors for mental health problems. These in turn can lead to the development of complex needs, so that women present with a combination of offending behaviours, working in the sex industry, alcohol and/or drug issues, homelessness, and for many, continued experiences of violence, abuse and exploitation.

At initial assessment both mental and physical health are separately graded on the ‘spokes’ of Outcomes Star. In some cases the woman may not be registered with a GP, in which case the case worker will help to ensure this is rectified. Women with mental health problems are internally referred – formerly to Jo Leci, a mental health nurse who worked at the Centre one day per week, and now to Mind, who offer one to one support and emotional well-being workshops at the Centre, or Angela – mental health nurse with Crisis. Unfortunately the PCT cut funding for Jo Leci recently but we are preparing a bid to the Department of Health to re-instate the service.

Where mental health issues arise from social factors such as past or current abuse, social isolation and low self-esteem, women are encouraged to participate in courses that promote emotional awareness and well-being such as Love Yourself, Stress and Assertion and Self Esteem and Confidence. Combined with one to one support these courses make a significant contribution to overcoming the sort of mental health problems that could escalate into severe depression and anxiety disorders – improved confidence and self-esteem is usually a prerequisite for the woman taking a more positive path in all areas of her life.

In terms of physical health, women are encouraged to eat healthily and take exercise. A Sexual Health Clinic runs at the Centre on the 1st Tuesday of every month. We provide healthy lunches, nutritional advice and cookery courses.

Case Study

Gill presented to the Anawim MHN in crisis with suicidal ideation. She was homeless, having previously struggled to cope in her flat, and had a history of crisis admissions to psychiatric hospitals followed by discharge without follow-up. The available GP at Gill's surgery did not know her and suggested that she attend A&E; the MHN accompanied her. Despite having experienced a recent incident of sexual violence and expressing the particular wish to be seen by a female doctor, she was initially seen by a number of male doctors. After five hours the psychiatrist arrived, who was also male, which distressed Gill further. She was asked to wait another two hours for the home treatment team, who transferred her to an inpatient psychiatric ward. Next morning, the ward manager explained that the consultant was considering discharging the woman. The MHN expressed her concern that this was repeating an unhelpful pathway for the woman. The ward manager changed the decision and the woman remained for three weeks on the ward as an informal patient. During this period the MHN and project coordinator both liaised with inpatient staff. Following this liaison, discharge was ultimately followed up by home treatment and subsequent transfer to the community mental health team.

Parveen has schizo-affective disorder and multiple associated needs. She said to her case worker: *"The support I get at Anawim means I can be truthful about my problems. I can be honest with you and tell you things I can't tell my psychiatrist"*. With Parveen's permission her case worker has been able to pass information to her psychiatrist, facilitating her treatment and continued well-being.

Ali is on a 60 Day Specified Activity Order with a supervision requirement for the production of a controlled class B drug. She is in her mid-30s but when she was 28 she fell off a 150 foot cliff whilst on holiday leaving her with spinal injuries that continue to degenerate with pain management and mobility issues. She used the cannabis as pain management and was manipulated by dealers to cultivate it in the loft of her property with the offer of free supplies. Since accessing Anawim Ali has worked closely with the Expert Patient Programme on alternative pain relief and the Self Esteem and Confidence course. With support she has managed to abstain from cannabis and is keen to look at alternative pain management. She has been referred to Uzma from Addaction who offers acupuncture which may assist with pain relief.

“Drugs Offences account for a quarter of all women’s prison sentences”.

Cabinet Office & Ministry of Justice (2009) Short Study on Women Offenders, Social Exclusion Taskforce.

“Even where the sentence itself is not for drugs, they often play a motivating role. About a third of female offenders have an alcohol problem”.

Ibid, page 11.

Drugs and Alcohol

Of our current caseload of 104 women, 77 use drugs - including alcohol. Of these, 42 were assessed as willing to accept immediate need of support in this area – 33 of whom made positive progress in Q2 (July – September 2011).

In terms of alcohol use, twenty-four have been identified as problematic drinkers. Five are currently addicted to heroin, five women have current cocaine use, eight women use cannabis to problematic levels – i.e. it affects their lives detrimentally. Six are current crack users, two are amphetamine users, and eight are abusing prescription drugs. Six are currently using crack and heroin together, one is abusing solvents and four are poly drug users.

Research has shown that rehabilitation is most effective where users and previous users are offered on-going support and activities – it is vital that women are offered an alternative lifestyle to replace the culture of drug-taking. At the Centre the women receive one to one support but also a programme of activities including our full range of courses which keeps them busy, active and working productively towards a better life. In addition they make new friends who are not involved in drugs – it is also very important that previous users develop new networks on which to rely in the future. Currently seven women are past heroin users, with additional two women who were using heroin and cannabis together. A further five were heroin and crack users and five were cocaine users. Seven had problems with alcohol and one with prescription drugs.

Three of our case workers specialise in drug and alcohol misuse having been trained by the Drug and Alcohol Team in previous roles. They have also have links with the courts and police.

Our work is supported by the other agencies we work with: in the last quarter six women have been referred to Swanswell, four to Addaction, four to the A-Team, two to SIFA and one to Stratford Road Community Drug Team.

Case Study

Mary came to Anawim on a 30 day SAR, alongside a 6 month low intensity Drug Referral Requirement (DRR) for which she was attending the Terrace. She has a record of numerous offences for shoplifting most of which are connected to her heroin use over a period of six years. Mary needed extra help with on-going abstinence from heroin. She was referred to Addaction for one to one abstinence support at Anawim alongside her DRR. When the DRR was complete, she continued to do one to one work with Addaction throughout her SA order. She had one to one sessions with her case worker to discuss positive aspects of being heroin free and it soon became apparent that Mary no longer had psychological urges to use heroin. The SA order is now successfully complete. Mary is now reducing her methadone script in the community in conjunction with the Terrace and attends Anawim for one to one support and acupuncture for relaxation – she has now been heroin free for 13 months and has no current urges to use.

Joanne attends Anawim voluntarily on the advice of her probation officer. She has learning difficulties, mental health issues and experiences problems with alcohol. Her previous offence involved the theft of over £2000 from her employer for which she was given a community order of unpaid work with a supervision requirement. As part of her unpaid work she went out on a work party and painted locks. On coming to Anawim she commented on how much she wished she had been able to come here as part of her requirement, admitting that following her offence her alcohol misuse got out of control. On her first contact assessment she disclosed that she drinks 3 bottles of wine per night. In addition she needed a lot of intensive support with housing (as she was being evicted) and in applying for ESA and DLA. Since her referral all her needs are being addressed - she is working extremely well with Kirsty from the A Team and Uzma from Addaction, who also offers acupuncture. Although she had been attending Addaction in Walsall she responds better to a woman-only environment due to past experience of abuse. Joanne is fully engaging with Anawim, thoroughly enjoying courses in self-esteem/confidence and jewellery-making and is making significant progress towards improved mental health and a future free of offending and alcohol abuse.

Finance, Benefit and Debt

DG – Assisted in choosing new 'safe' bank account as income being taken up in bank charges.

GL – serious financial hardship and risk of losing home – intervened with lender and arranged for hold on action and DWP help with interest payments. Homelessness prevented.

FC – pursued by bailiffs for old council tax debt – spoke to bailiffs direct and negotiated a 14 day hold and agreed repayment plan of £5.00 per week.

JG – debt, benefits, grants and budgeting advice given.

KD – full benefits and income maximisation advice given. Also gave grants advice.

VC – client has learning disability and benefits keep getting stopped. Intervened for reinstatement and advised on crisis loans and hardship payments.

CL – debt advice given – payment plan for priority debts.

“Instead of hiding bills away and being scared to open them I have been encouraged to open and address them”.

JH – Specified Activity Order, Benefit Fraud

Many of the women who attend the Centre have problems with money management leaving them with significant debts. They often find it difficult to face up to their financial issues and many come to the Centre with bags of unopened post. It is common for them to get trapped by what appears to be a quick fix - applying for expensive loans and then having to pay high interest rates out of benefits, leaving them with almost nothing to live on. This cycle of debt creates an obvious risk of offending and re-offending – some clients admit that unless they can resolve their financial problems they will have to shoplift or return to sex work. In addition recent changes to the benefits system have created problems for many clients.

The specialist money advice service offered by Birmingham Settlement takes a holistic approach to financial issues - meaning that it includes budgeting advice and financial capability support (advice to stop taking out high interest credit, open a safe bank accounts and recommending community savings/loan schemes such as those with Credit Unions). Wherever possible a self-help approach is recommended and useful resources are given out to clients.

Non-priority debts such as credit card debts and other forms of non-essential spending are rescheduled and affordable re-payment plans for priority debts such as rent arrears and council tax arrears are set up. Representation is offered at County and Magistrates court in proceedings such as rent and mortgage repossessions thus preventing homelessness. The service will also intervene with bailiffs. In order to help clients make a new start, Birmingham Settlement have developed very good relationships with charitable institutions and make grant applications for people whose income has dropped - these are used for utility debts and providing essential white goods. Crucial benefits advice includes form filling and guiding them through reviews and appeals process and representation at Tribunals.

Of the 37 women referred April to September almost all have a positive outcome leaving them in control and empowered. It is very difficult for women to move in a positive direction without addressing money management - once their financial situation is stabilised it is easier for them to consider options of paid employment.

Case Study

Jane was a self-referral who had financial and mental health issues including depression and anxiety. She had on-going debts partly because her benefits were being changed. Her youngest child was now nine meaning that she was no longer entitled to claim income support - she had to be transferred on to employment support allowance for health reasons, rather than job seekers allowance where she would be required to sign on. After doing the initial assessment with Jane her case worker set up appointments with the debt advisor from Birmingham Settlement who offered professional guidance / support regarding her debts and a supporting letter explaining why she should be entitled to continue her claim for employment support allowance. Increased financial stability allows Jane to come to the Centre and receive support in other areas of her life - eventually when these issues have been met with the correct interventions she will be able to fulfil her goal of returning to work.

Tash is absolutely lovely, she tries her best to try and help with benefits, debt and trying to get household items etc from different charities, she's lovely. Even when you're down she lends an ear to listen to you even though that's not part of her job. After seeing her today I feel so much better, I'm glad I come. Without Anawim and the whole team who put so much support and friendship into it I don't know where I'd be now, but certainly not at the point I am now.

Sarah

Candice has been coming to the centre from March 2009, a self-referral who was socially isolated, had debt management needs and was in an abusive relationship. An initial assessment was completed and debt management appointments arranged with Birmingham Settlement. From this appointment Candice has been able to sort and manage the debts that she had been unable to deal with on her own. Electricity supply was changed to a payment meter which had previously not been possible due to having a private landlord. After speaking with the supplier and the landlord it was agreed that Candice could spread the cost rather than have bills that she is unable to pay all at once. Through donations she was given a television and DVD player (her ex-partner from whom she had been suffering abuse from had taken hers from their former home). The support given in relation to the abusive relationship focussed on raising her awareness by identifying that what she was disclosing was in fact mental abuse. She received support and guidance regarding keeping safe and what actions were open to her and discussed the options of a safe house if required. Candice now appreciates that she is not alone, she does have a safe place to come to during the day to receive support and have the company of other women around her so she feels less isolated. Management of her own money has been crucial in facilitating improvements in other areas of her life – she is now independent of her former partner and can concentrate on moving her life forward.

Children, Families and Relationships

Of the 17,700 children separated from their mother by imprisonment, just 5% are able to remain in their own homes.

Anawim uses the Every Child Matters framework in its approach to supporting women and their children. We use the experience and qualifications of all our staff team to ensure all the children we come in to contact with our given the best care and quality of life.

Anawim works with and monitors families in the centre, during home visits and out in the community. We advocate at case conferences, core groups, during court and any meeting relevant for a child.

Health: We promote children's wellbeing and healthy lifestyles through healthy eating workshops and physical activities. Staff deliver nutritional guidance and our crèche offers a well-balanced and varied lunch to promote healthier diets and decrease obesity levels among children of all ages. The women attend a variety of workshops to improve and empower their parenting skills. We are extending our services to reach more women in early stages of their pregnancy and plan to hold a breast feeding peer support group.

Stay safe The multi-agency partnership approach addresses the women's needs and ensures that all areas are covered to maintain the safe wellbeing of a child including children's services, Drug agencies, Alcohol support and Domestic violence. We monitor children's development and undertake Safeguarding referrals where necessary. Relevant information is given to parents to protect their children on the internet, crossing roads and with risky adults in the community.

Enjoy and achieve All children under five can use our purpose built crèche. We encourage their development and provide activities to extend their knowledge. We prepare them for school and monitor their progress, highlighting areas of concern and addressing areas of weakness. We work with mothers to access school places and address non-attendance.

Make a positive contribution We have built links with the Boys Brigade and are encouraging our young people to attend these groups. We are working closely with them and between us and ensuring the children are learning new skills and confidence to make choices in life. We also support mothers in their life choices to protect their children from getting caught up in an otherwise never ending cycle of deprivation.

Case Study

Sally was referred by her Social Worker after her children were removed due to neglect and she had separated from her partner who was a negative influence on her. She had very low esteem, being nervous to the point that she brought her sister along to her first two appointments as she lacked the confidence to attend on her own. Sally had an impending court case for the neglect of the children. Her solicitor felt a custodial sentence was likely and asked for a report outlining her progress and her worker's opinion on how she would cope with custody. The report recommended Sally receive a SAR - the solicitor was sent details of the SAR and approached the Centre for more information. The solicitor liaised with Sally's Offender Manager who recommended a SAR to attend Anawim. Sally received 40 days SAR and can now continue rebuilding her life. Social Services are looking to replace the children once appropriate housing is found. After a Star reading and action plan she was referred to appropriate courses – she felt could not participate in large groups, only feeling able to join in with the art classes. Although not normally allowed under an SAR in this instance art classes provided a good start to improve confidence, meet new people and express herself. Once she had begun the art sessions she was encouraged to attend confidence and self-esteem classes and she was able to take part in the group workshops after her first week. One to one sessions with Sally have been regular and her first star review showed vast improvements in her confidence and self-esteem. Sally had developed the ability to cope with the situation she was in and although her accommodation had not yet improved and the children had not been returned she could see a light at the end of the tunnel. Sally is much more confident - she is benefiting enormously from the services Anawim offers, with the obvious positive impact on the likelihood of re-offending.

Janet first attended the Centre over six years ago when she was in her early twenties and also undertook Community Service hours here. She had difficulties controlling her anger and had little patience. She has two children – her second child three years ago who attended the crèche from when she was a young baby. Janet had problems with both her mental and physical health and continued to have difficulties managing her anger. She has recently undertaken a DJ and Dance Workshop at the Centre and participated in the production that the women put on at the end of the course. She also passed her driving test and bought a small car that has greatly contributed to her independence. She is a great deal calmer. She found it hard to relate to her children and the crèche support worker has been supporting her with this – recently her three year old child told a crèche worker: “my mummy said she's proud of me”, a statement which indicates the considerable improvement in the relationship between mother and child. Janet is unlikely to have heard positive reinforcement from her parents – but intense parenting support has shown her how to offer more supportive parenting to her own child thus promoting her daughter's self-esteem and confidence in the future.

"My immediate feeling when I first was introduced to the group was daunting, only on my part being negative, but after my first session I was totally bowled over, and now I look forward to my meetings. I feel safe, comfortable and staff are top notch. Thank you".

"I have only been coming to Anawim for a couple of weeks but have found the staff and volunteers here very kind and helpful with making sure I'm happy and occupied while I'm here."

"Ruby's confidence class is brilliant, she's the most down to earth, lovely person you can meet. The confidence building course has made such a difference to my life, it has made me motivate myself, feel better about myself and more assertive, it is great".

Attitudes, Thinking and Behaviour

"I have called to say sorry. I have given you abuse when all you have done is be kind and try to help me".

Alishia, Specified Activity Order

Low self-esteem affects almost all the women who attend Anawim in varying degrees – and to a great extent underpins all the other problems that affect their lives, including failure to look after their own health, manage their finances, desist from drugs and alcohol and gain employment. If the women do not believe they are worth anything, they cannot believe that their lives are either. They often become involved in abusive relationships which reduce their sense of self-worth even further, creating cycles of despair.

Women who feel out of control and disempowered find it difficult to take responsibility for their lives and for their decisions, developing an external locus of control and blaming those around them when things go wrong. Often, particularly when bad decisions have adversely affected their children, the guilt they feel makes accepting responsibility completely overwhelming. However, taking control and responsibility is a prerequisite for self-reliance and leading a more productive life for themselves and those around them, including their children.

Anawim therefore places great emphasis on increasing women's self-esteem, via one to one support, courses directed at confidence building such as Love Yourself, promoting expression and creativity through art classes and developing skills including English and Maths. We run a counselling service to which women who can benefit from this type of intervention are referred. 20 women are currently receiving counselling. The Outcomes Star focuses both on 'motivation and taking responsibility and 'self-care and living skills' and promotion of self-esteem and belief is constantly reinforced. Women who are confident and motivated not only improve their own lives but pass these characteristics on to their children, helping to stop despair and deprivation reappearing in the next generation.

Case Study

Lana was referred to Anawim for Community Payback in connection with an offence of theft (breach of trust in the workplace). She undertook her work placement at Anawim. At her Initial Assessment she was very anxious about her situation. She had always worked throughout her life and this was her first period on benefits, as a consequence of which she was feeling socially isolated and her self-esteem was adversely affected. She felt her life had no purpose or direction and she was upset and distressed during her first few sessions at the Centre. She was also in debt. The work which she undertook at Anawim included domestic duties alongside the volunteers such as cooking and cleaning, while her child was looked after in the crèche. She also engaged in the Self Esteem and Confidence workshop on a weekly basis and her sense of self visibly improved. Not only did she make a positive contribution in terms of work, but her self-esteem returned and she continued to apply for jobs despite feeling that she had ruined her job prospects with her offence. Staff encouraged and supported her in this and by the end of her placement she had been successful in securing part time employment. Lana explained to staff how she had used some of the techniques that she had been taught in the workshop before and during her interview. On Thursday 15th July Lana completed her last day and was thanked by staff and clients alike.

Donna was referred with a SAR for theft of a car having suffered domestic violence and associated mental health issues including OCD, depression and anxiety. She was living in a refuge, her child was in foster care and she is pregnant. She has very low self-esteem, was nervous of leaving the house and her attitude towards her SA order was negative - stating that 'she was not here to make friends, just wanted to complete her order and go'. A supporting letter regarding a new tenancy was provided and she was given assistance with contacting social services – her case worker also advocated for her at a case conference about her child as well as supporting her at a meeting with her solicitors with reference to care proceedings and a meeting with Social Services at Anawim. She had an assessment appointment with the mental health nurse and a letter was sent to her GP requesting a referral to Birmingham Healthy Minds. Contact was made with the midwife. Assistance was given in the completion of benefit forms and in relation to Council Tax. Donna has attended Maths and English, art, employment, confidence and self-esteem, Platform 51 (mental health, budgeting and well-being). She has achieved a huge increase in confidence, stating that, 'it is good to have found my voice and realise that my opinion is as valid as anybody else's'. She is in her own house, with her benefits sorted and is due to finish her order successfully - she plans to continue at Anawim afterwards to attend counselling and well-being courses. All her 'star scores' (i.e. along all pathways) have increased - however, her improved self-esteem and assertiveness is particularly relevant to her likelihood of re-offending given that at the PSR stage it was acknowledged that an element of duress/influence (from a boyfriend) in relation to commission of the offence.

“Women’s sexual and violent victimisation can play a part in the onset and persistence of offending”

Home Office (2007)
The Corston Report: a review of women with particular vulnerabilities in the Criminal Justice System.

One in every three women experiences some sort of domestic abuse in their lives. For the women who attend Anawim it is the majority. It is important to remember that this can occur within any domestic context - brothers, sons, mother in laws as well as boyfriends and husbands.

Often women lack insight into the extent of abuse they are suffering or feel that they deserve it.

Supporting Women Who Have Been Abused, Raped or Experienced Domestic Violence

As the women we work with are already vulnerable due to their involvement in drugs, living in sub-standard, unsettled housing, poverty or having had a childhood within the care system, it is not surprising most experience some sort of abuse and sometimes rape. Abuse is about exerting power and control over another to detrimental effect, there always seems to be someone ready in this position to exploit. It is so often a downwards spiral of which women see no escape. Gangs and criminal groups often have a part to play bringing in another level of control and fear.

Abuse can also be emotional and financial. A common offence for which women are sent to us on SARs is benefit fraud. Many are women of South Asian decent with little English or understanding of the system, used by uncles/ brothers to falsely claim benefits, often signing forms with no clear understanding of what they are signing. Alternatives to custody are not only morally right as for these women prison would be particularly harsh – but also at Anawim they can attend ESOL classes and gain better understanding, often learning from other women to become more assertive and confident in future thus reducing the likelihood of reoffending.

Many courses on the timetable are designed to improve confidence, self-esteem, opportunities for employment, gain better understanding of relationships including power relations, parenting and helping others. Courses in anger management, counselling, mentoring, victim impact and offending behaviour all help the women to take time to examine their lives and gain the tools to make positive changes. For sexual violence we link into the Rowan centre, our local SARC and we also use the facility of the Visual Evidence for Victims enabling us to collect evidence of injuries which can be used once the woman is ready to report abuse. We have good knowledge and links into refuges with many of our case workers coming from a work background in this field.

Case Study

Kerry had been in an abusive marriage for many years but had recently separated. Following self-referral her case worker provided one to one support regarding domestic abuse, talking through the issues, promoting insight and encouraging her to come in to the centre. Kerry has been isolated for years by this relationship leaving her self-esteem and confidence very low. She has recently been engaging with the confidence building workshop which she is really enjoying – it is and a remarkable achievement for her to join in with group work, something which when she first came to the Centre she thought she would never be able to do. In consequence she has made sustained progress over the last three months. The interventions that have taken place so far have improved her quality of life and it will continue to do so in a positive way enabling her to achieve full independence in the future.

Henna had an arranged marriage and suffered several years of domestic violence before fleeing the relationship with her two children. She struggled to bring up her children alone and her health continuously deteriorated. Her family disowned her so she was alone and isolated with no friends or relations. Henna is here today on a community order for benefit fraud - working less than 16hrs she thought she was entitled to claim a specific benefit which was not the case and thus was given 60 days specified activity order to attend Anawim. Henna has engaged continuously and we have seen her grow on a weekly basis. She has had counselling, engages in arts and crafts and has demonstrated that she is a woman of many talents. She has also started college courses to obtain qualifications and her case worker has assisted her with a housing application. She has received help from Birmingham Settlement regarding debt and arrears. Henna has engaged really well with the other women at the centre and has become a good friend of many clients. She is hardworking, reliable, and friendly with a bubbly personality and has continued to attend after successfully completing her order as she feels she has come such a long way. One day shortly before Christmas 2010 she was rushed to A&E from Anawim due to a burst blood clot. Her case worker stayed with her and visited her in hospital and at home to ensure she made a full recovery and was being well looked after. She appreciated Anawim's care and support in a time of need when there was no one else to turn to and is grateful for the support she has received in making the many positive changes in her life.

Street prostitution has a long history in Birmingham. Anawim was founded by two Catholic Sisters who moved into Balsall Heath in 1986 when the area was, essentially, a toleration zone of sorts - it was renowned for not only street work but women working indoors from their windows.

Many women suffer from post-traumatic stress from the violence they have been subjected to from punters and partners. The nature of sex work often causes women to disassociate - most assume a pseudonym in order to differentiate their street persona from that of mother, wife, and girlfriend in the 'real world'. This can lead to personality disorder, something extremely difficult to treat.

153 offences linked to street prostitution were recorded by the 4 Birmingham LPUs. These offences have been committed by 67 named sex workers (61 female, 6 male), and 21 where the offender is not named in the crime details. All are stated as known sex workers. *West Midlands Police Nov 2011*

Supporting women who are/have been involved in prostitution

Anawim has been involved in street outreach for the last 25 years, building good relationships and a reputation with the women. We still have contact with some women from those early days - it is striking to see the impact this life has no matter how far back in their history it goes. The lack of self-worth and confidence means that they often pass up employment or relationship opportunities - this has a long term effect on their children's lives and impacts upon levels of poverty and educational achievement.

Birmingham has over 100 brothels, saunas and flats, figures of how many women are involved are difficult to gauge as it is such a hidden and transient group. We also have a disproportionate amount of lap dancing clubs which sometimes normalises the selling of sex as something mainstream and legitimate. This can feed into a general attitude of women as objects and not as the independent strong women they can be, contributing to cases of domestic and sexual abuse. This is especially detrimental in the multi-cultural and diverse community we have here, consolidating some discriminatory attitudes that some groups and individuals hold about women.

Women who are or have in their past been involved in prostitution suffer discrimination with some people believing they can't change or shake off that label. The centre itself suffers from this at times with some women refusing to attend due to a perception that it is only for sex workers.

Anawim has been involved for a few years in the Sex Workers in Custody and Community course -training prison staff and police aimed at changing attitudes and behaviour towards this group.

Case Studies

Rosanne was working on the streets of Birmingham throughout July and August, to pay for drugs and food. At the beginning of she became homeless as she could no longer stay at a friend's house where she had been sleeping and said she would like to obtain some accommodation of her own. Rosanne and I worked together to find suitable and safe housing. We attended an assessment and she was accepted into a hostel, moving the next day and we were able to help her settle in. Once Rosanne was settled in her accommodation, her case workers at the hostel and from Anawim were able to support her in maintaining her prescription for methadone and ensuring her other health needs were met. Rosanne feels as though obtaining new accommodation is a new start for her and is keen to continue engaging and progressing with her life. She recognises that there are certain areas that she should stay away from in order for her not to be tempted to start using drugs again. She has had advice from Anawim with me about safety awareness and harm minimisation. She is currently engaging at the Centre on a weekly basis and is taking part in various courses and activities.

Mona was working on the streets in early July 2010 - she was already aware of Anawim as she had received support previously. She was happy to speak to staff from Anawim during outreach sessions on the streets, but was not engaging at the Centre. She was then caught shoplifting and was ordered by the court to attend Anawim on a Specified Activity Order. Mona began attending the Barker Street Centre and although she was reluctant to engage initially, over the course of 2-3 weeks she began to participate in discussions during the 'Dealing with Difficult Situations' and 'Life Skills' courses. Since Mona has attended the Centre she has also participated in the one to one workshops with our financial services and has begun dealing with her debts. Although she still has areas to address in her life, she has not been seen working the streets since her order started and is attending the Centre on a weekly basis as part of her order. She now knows not only that an alternative lifestyle is available to her, but also that the support is there to help her achieve this, and to deal with any issues that might be preventing her moving forward in a different direction. She has a real choice.

Conclusion

We hope that reading this report has highlighted the positive contribution that Anawim and other Women's Community Projects make across all the offending pathways. This reduces pressure upon the budgets of all the statutory services in the City – just as we offer a holistic service to the women we also provide a holistic service to the community, alleviating social problems from homelessness, drug use and crime and promoting family relationships, children's welfare and school attendance. We serve and reach the most socially-excluded women and children in society who some statutory agencies find very hard to engage. As we are located in the voluntary sector women are quicker to trust – we can then go on to facilitate engagement with the statutory agencies.

Anawim has built up expertise and knowledge over the last 25 years and continues to attract staff with relevant skills, training and contacts from many backgrounds and sectors. Our history is one of creatively innovating and piloting approaches, taking advantage of the flexibility and freedom that we enjoy in the voluntary sector. We are constantly building upon this knowledge and are currently looking at how we can incorporate restorative justice and victim impact into the case work and developing a specialised course to deliver to all women on community orders. This will help us to further augment our ability to rehabilitate the women – we want to develop new types of community order for the courts to use, thus contributing to the creation of more and better ways to reduce the social and financial costs of custody.

We are able to offer a uniquely flexible service that responds to the individual needs of the woman – in practice some women need just a few weeks of support to get through a crisis and put their lives back on track – others may need sustained and prolonged support if we are going to make a real difference to how they live their lives. A few will never be completely self-reliant but their dependence on other statutory agencies can be dramatically reduced if they receive a little on-going support consistently from us. The theory that good results can be achieved from short interventions across the board is false - and any attempt to comply with this model brings us back to the revolving door and wastes valuable resources. Many women who offend have multiple problems many of which are of longstanding and have become entrenched. Common sense dictates that these cannot be overcome in a few weeks or even months. A key strength of our service is that after the period of intensive support is over we continue to be available to the women, so that if they feel they are 'slipping back' they have somewhere to go to prevent this from happening. The added value that this offers the community is difficult to quantify but makes a huge difference to outcomes in the medium and longer term.

"When I came I thought I wasn't worth anything. I didn't expect to feel better about myself. I leave the building feeling different about myself".

"Yes. Confidence and Assertiveness – I arrived in tears and over the course was able to learn the strength and the consequence of saying "no".

The absence of services does often put us in a position where we have no choice and I think the courts would say the same. So the key thing here is how do we get funding for services that we could use or we could draw on prior to charge, which would stop them (women) coming into the criminal justice system, stop them getting a criminal record, stop them getting more of a criminal record that then leads to prison.

Stephen Otter, Chief constable, Devon and Cornwall constabulary.

"Yes I have the ability to achieve things no matter how big or small. And I am a person in my own right".

"I'd like to say thank you to Anawim your support and help has blown me away. Just to know someone cares is a help in itself. Once again thank you".

Dawn

"It is helping me to move on with my life. I have gained a lot of information coming here that has helped me. It covers every need".

**For further information
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The Government wants to reduce the prison population to save money, (but) you're not going to save significant amounts of money unless you close whole prisons. We've got to do that by ensuring that for the short term offenders we have strong, challenging and viable community programmes that they can respond to.

John Thornhill, Chairman of the Magistrates' Association.