



Ministry
of Justice

The Right Honourable
David Gauke MP
Lord Chancellor & Secretary of
State for Justice

Katharine Sacks-Jones
Director
Agenda
18 Victoria Park Square
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MoJ ref:

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Dear Katharine

PUBLICATION OF FEMALE OFFENDER STRATEGY

Thank you for your letter dated 27 June 2018 in relation to the publication of the female offender strategy and the funding attached to it.

I would firstly like to thank you for the support and challenge you have provided as part of the Advisory Board, which has been critical in shaping the vision and the commitments outlined in the strategy. It has been a long journey, but addressing the complex needs of women in the criminal justice system is not straightforward and we wanted to get this right.

I am heartened that you welcome the direction and aims of the strategy, particularly our focus on community over custody, but I note too the concerns you have expressed about the level of investment in the strategy and your disappointment that the funding allocated for building five new Community Prisons for Women has not been invested in this. However, I do not think the strategy risks being a missed opportunity. The publication of this document is the start of a new and significant programme of work to deliver better outcomes for female offenders at all points of the justice system. This will take some years to deliver and we will have the opportunity to revisit funding issues as we take work forward. I am committed to ensuring there is sufficient funding for female offenders.

As a first step, across Government we are investing £5m in community provision over the next two years, and expect that women's centres will be amongst those applying for the £3.5m Female Offender Community Investment Fund competition we have launched – we will certainly welcome and encourage applications from them. I recognise the concerns about long-term sustainability of the women's centre network, and this is something that we will continue to look at as we develop our National Concordat on Female Offenders.

I want to deliver real change through our strategy. This is not something that we can do alone, and I look forward to working with you to ensure that we make our aims a reality.

Yours ever
David

RT HON DAVID GAUKE MP