



Ministry
of Justice

Edward Argar MP
Parliamentary Under-
Secretary of State for
Justice

Sir Mark Hendrick MP
House of Commons
London
SW1H 9AJ

MoJ ref: ADR70095

4th July 2019

Dear Mark,

WOMEN IN PRISON CAMPAIGN

Thank you for your email of 24th June, on behalf of your
regarding Women in Prison's #OpenUp campaign.

I was delighted to be invited to speak at the campaign's lobbying day on the 26th June and enjoyed meeting representatives from women's centres across the country. Our Female Offender Strategy, published in June 2018, recognises the valuable role that women's centres can play in improving outcomes for female offenders and women at risk of offending. The holistic wrap around support that community services, such as women's centres, provide is key in supporting women to turn their lives around and can be central to the development of a successful 'Whole System Approach' (WSA). Multi-agency WSA models bring together local agencies (criminal justice, statutory and voluntary) to take a joined-up, gender-informed approach to providing the targeted support that female offenders need.

I have been pleased to have the opportunity to visit a number of women's centres over the past year. I have also engaged regularly with the sector via the Ministry of Justice's Advisory Board for Female Offenders, which I chair, and through smaller meetings with individual organisations. I will always welcome the opportunity to hear from organisations with expertise in this sector and see the valuable work that they do for vulnerable women. Regarding the work taking place in your constituency, we are pleased to have been able to provide seed-funding for a multi-year project with Lancashire Women since 2017. This aims to support the development of an effective WSA in the area which sees statutory and voluntary partners from across the justice system and beyond working together to ensure a joined up, person centred approach to the rehabilitation of women in the justice system.

As part of the Strategy, we announced a £5m investment into community provision for women in 2018-2020, to provide a wide range of front line services that provide specialist support for vulnerable women. I am heartened by the progress and outcomes already achieved by the projects supported and look forward to seeing how this investment continue to facilitate support for this cohort and their communities. As this is an ambitious programme of work, I remain committed to look at the scope to increase the sustainability of the sector as we take forward the delivery of the Strategy into its second year and beyond.

EDWARD ARGAR MP