

Neurodiversity in the Justice

Sector: Women in Prison

Do-IT >

How many women?

Women represent a small minority of the prison population – around 4.6 % of people in prison in England and Wales, around 4.7 % in Northern Ireland and around 4.9 % in Scotland¹.



1 in 20 people in prison are female¹

What are women prosecuted for?

Women are more likely than men to be prosecuted for minor crimes^{2,3}. These include TV licence evasion, truancy (i.e. permitting or failing to prevent a child from not attending school) and shoplifting³.



30%
of all female
convictions are for
TV licence evasion³

Many of these prosecutions occur simply because women are more likely than men to be at home during the day and are more likely than men to be lone parents.

Although most of these prosecutions do not result in a prison sentence, they demonstrate how the Justice System is stacked against women. However, as with men, not all women are affected equally.

Black women are
TWICE
as likely to be
prosecuted as White women³



How long are women in prison?

As women are more likely to be prosecuted for minor crimes, they are also more likely to be given short sentences³.



57%

of women in prison have a
sentence of 3 months or less³

There have been increasing calls to end short prison sentences⁴⁻⁶. Evidence suggests they disrupt family life and employment but have little effect on reoffending.

Women in prison are highly vulnerable

Women in prison are some of the most vulnerable in society. They often have extensive traumatic histories including:

- Childhood abuse^{7,8}
- Sexual victimisation⁷
- History of being 'in care'⁹
- Mental health difficulties^{10,11}
- Domestic violence victimisation¹²
- Homelessness¹³



57% of women
in prison
report having been
abused as a child⁹



67% of women
in prison
report having been a
victim of domestic violence¹⁴

Domestic violence¹² and substance abuse¹¹ are major drivers of women's offending and re-offending. However, women's drug use is often initiated by men^{15,16}.

How many have a neurodisability?

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