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# **Release Planning Guidance**

# **For staff delivering immediate resettlement needs and pre-release activities**

V1.0 July 2021

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1. **Introduction**

On 26th June 2021, the NPS and CRCs will unify to become our new Probation Service. All CRC contracts will end, including the current eTTG contracts. This guidance is issued in response to requests from a number of Probation staff for a greater level of specificity in relation to what will be delivered from day 1 of the new service and what the end state approach will be.

Background

Release Planning delivers pre-release and post-release activity from probation practitioners; supports non-convicted people in prison and provides a bespoke approach to release planning for women released from prison.

Our approach to release planning is intended to address the issues identified in Her Majesty`s Inspectorate of Prisons/Probation (HMIP) reports on resettlement and Through the Gate services. The approach aims to retain and build on good practice. It also takes the lessons from the evaluation to enhance release planning services, ensure alignment with other key programmes, remove duplication and focus on supporting individuals to achieve outcomes in the communities where they are released, enabling transition from prison to community.

It incorporates HMPPS change programmes which have impacted on the environment in which eTTG teams operate, including;

* **Offender Management in Custody** (OMiC) has been implemented for Key Work and Case management with the introduction of Prison Offender Managers in prisons.
* **Reconfiguration** project is implementing changes to the prison estate, so all male prisons will have one or more of the following functions: Reception, Trainer, Resettlement.
* **Programmes / Projects** to improve outcomes in specific areas such as DWP work coaches based in prison, New Futures Network and Prisoner Bank Account programme, Prison Leavers project.
* **Prison’s Capacity,** including new build of prisons
* **Prison’s Recovery,** utilising the on-going work introduced by recovery through exceptional delivery models, through to business as usual

Our approach means that people held in either resettlement or non-resettlement prisons (trainer prisons following reconfiguration) will be able to access interventions[[1]](#footnote-1) delivered in the community to support achieving outcomes, with local information provided via a resettlement pack, including appointments arranged with local providers. Community Probation Practitioners and Commissioned Rehabilitative Services (CRS) providers work to place the transition from prison to community at the heart of services.

COCCO

Community Probation Practioner

CRS

POM

1. **The Resettlement Approach Overview**

**The Resettlement Approach** builds on best practice developed by Through the Gate teams and aims to address some of the remaining challenges to effective immediate resettlement needs and pre release planning.

In addition to the mandated pre-release activities by Community Probation Practioners (referred to by prisons / OMIC as COMs), there are 5 key features, with delivery based around a Fixed, Flexible and Free approach.

1. Levelling up with OMIC
2. Short Sentence Function
3. Digital Solutions
4. Commissioned Rehabilitative Services
5. Resettlement Packs



* 1. **Resettlement Approach, Day 1 Services**

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| Digital System | The “Refer and Monitor” tool will be available to access resettlement pathway support.BCST1 & 2 continues to be completed (Pre-release planning at 12 weeks pre-release for high risk people in prison completed by Community Probation Practitioner / COM via OASys ) |
| Commissioned Rehabilitation Services (CRS) | Providers of CRS will be based in the community where people in prison are released to. Accommodation CRS providers will be based in prisons with a resettlement function, able to deliver services to those who will be released into the region where they provide a service and offer an in-reach service to those detained in prisons without a resettlement function or in prisons outside of their region. CRS providers within a resettlement prison will not be meeting the needs of the whole prison population. CRS providers can only work with individuals who are referred to them via the Refer and Monitor Tool. Personal Well-Being Providers will deliver an in-reach mentoring service to prepare people for release and to build a relationship with the mentor who will continue to support them post-release. This will be via visits or phone / video contact and will be available to eligible cases whatever type of prison they are in. For work to commence before release, the referral must be made under the Social Inclusion Category, in the Refer and Monitor Tool.Over time, as the reconfiguration project delivers its objective to ensure men are released from prisons close to home, the numbers released from non-resettlement prisons will decrease. The services are delivered by specialist providers mainly based in the community who will work with people to achieve outcomes supporting rehabilitation. Referrals can be made pre-release to enable delivery to start post release or at any stage during the licence period should circumstances change.  |
| Resettlement Pack | Resettlement packs will be given to individuals leaving prison in the months before their release. Specific resettlement packs will also be provided to individuals who are on remand in custody. In the first instance we will be distributing the male immediate needs and male Unconvicted packs. There will be one national pack with appropriate variation for Wales. These packs have been developed with support from people with lived experience. |
| OMiC | Continues unchanged. POMs will continue to manage people in prison as now. |
| Short Sentence Function | Although there have been some early adopters in Wales and Yorkshire and The Humber region, the short sentence function in the majority of Probation Service Regions will be post day 1. The aim is to provide a responsive service to those serving a short prison sentence to continue to support existing services and fast track into new services based upon need. The function will provide the following: * A focused package of support and monitoring including strong engagement.
* A multi-agency approach in partnership with local services including those providing Commissioned Rehabilitation Services, to provide a total package which aims to reduce reoffending in community and break a cycle of multiple short sentences.
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**What is in reach and what is embedded?**

An embedded service is based in the prison for one or more days. An in-reach service is based in the community with contact via visits to prisons, virtual communication such as video links or telephone and written communication via letter or e-mail. As each prison varies in terms of availability, methods of in-reach will vary depending upon the prison and what needs to be achieved.

* 1. **Resettlement Approach from June 26 2021**

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| **What remains the same**  |
| * Colleagues allocated to Probation Service currently delivering eTTG services remain in the prison continuing the same work.
* Probation Officers and Probation Service Officers will continue to manage people on probation licence
* OMiC handover processes from Prison Offender Manager to Community Offender Manager continue unchanged

* Probation immediate resettlement needs and pre release planning staff will continue to complete BCST 2 plans with reviews 12 weeks pre-release apart from those assessed as high risk.
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| **What’s changing** |
| * Providers of Commissioned Rehabilitation Services (CRS) will start to deliver resettlement support based in the community where individuals are released to, this will be for all people in prison whether released from a resettlement or non-resettlement prison. However, CRS providers within a resettlement prison will not be meeting the needs of the whole prison population but working with those who will be released to that area.
* Pre-release CRS will be available in relation to:
* Accommodation - providers will start to deliver services based within those prisons with a resettlement function to those who will be released to that area and via in-reach for those prisons releasing individuals without a resettlement function. Referrals need to indicate if the person has 14 days or less to serve which will lead to an urgent response.
* A referral can be made at the start of a long sentence when there is a need for a tenancy to be closed down. If no COM has been allocated, the referral can be made by a POM for this specific purpose.
* Mentoring – Social Inclusion (for men’s services one of the elements of Personal Well-Being) Providers will deliver an in-reach mentoring service to prepare people for release and to build a relationship with the mentor who will continue to support them post-release. This will be via visits or phone/ video contact and will be available to eligible cases whatever type of prison they are in.
* Referrals to Commissioned Rehabilitation Services will be completed by Community Offender Managers (also known as Community Probation Practitioner). Colleagues based in the prison can also refer **following consultation with the Community Offender Manager** and in line with sentence planning. Liaison with the COM is needed as the referral also needs to include the CRS which will be needed post-release.
* The Rate Card will be replaced by a new digital Refer and Monitor tool. (There will no longer be a requirement for a COM to raise an NSI)
* Everyone leaving prison, including those released direct from Court will receive a resettlement pack with local information to reduce the anxiety often experienced leading up to release, continuing a current eTTG practice in many prisons.
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1. **Resettlement Activities Day 1**

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| **What remains the same** | **What`s changing** |
| All current services provided to **non-convicted** persons will remain the same.Keyworkers maintain contact and a relationship with unconvicted people. | Probation Regions will determine what services can be maintained based on available staff.  |
| **BCST 1**. Prison staff will continue to complete. (completed with 72hrs)**BCST 2** immediate needs and pre-release planning will continue until the revised risk and needs assessment is introduced (completed with 5 working days of receiving a completed part 2) | BCST 2 at 12 weeks pre-release will not be completed for individuals assessed as high risk. For these individual’s Community Probation Practitioner / COM will complete a pre-release OASys assessment removing duplication with existing processes*Wales are implementing changes on Day 1 – completing OASys on all people in prison and removing BCST. Further details will be provided by Probation Service in Wales* |
| **Finance, Benefits and Debt**. Services provided will continue to be delivered, including referrals to prison based services and specialist community-based services. (See annex A).Probation Service to signpost to financial services and not provide financial advice | Where staff previously delivering this service as part of the ETTG service supply chain but have been allocated to the Probation Service under role assignment, the RPD can decide that these staff can deliver the service. Ensure that everyone leaving prison has identification and a bank account and that those who cannot claim benefits on line get the opportunity from their day of release to access DWP telephone service. **Prison based services such as DWP and prisoner bank account programme will continue** |
| Referrals to prison and community-based services will continue, however those services offered by the CRS will be procured via the new digital system. | Referrals to community-based services will be made by the Community Probation Practitioner / COM using the `Refer and Monitor` digital system to CRS. Note: Probation immediate resettlement and pre release planning staff can make a CRS referral in consultation with the Community Probation Practitioner / COM and in line with Sentence Planning, |
| Supporting Community Probation Practitioners / COM will continue, including liaison to determine progress in pre release planning activity and risk issues  | Work closely with COM / Community Probation Practitioner to agree activities in sentence plan, including advising of progress/ issues. Resettlement support will also be provided by specialist organisations based in the community where individuals are released to. Prisons continue to provide core service such as:* Education,
* Health services which include mental health and substance misuse services, work
* Family and significant other services supporting maintaining family relationships.
 |
| Safeguarding will continue in line with existing processes  | No changes to current processes |

**Resettlement Activities, Day 1 - Basic Custody Tool, process**

BCST 2 pre-release planning is completed during the last 12 weeks of custody for medium and low risk persons

BCST 2 completed within 5 working days of receiving a completed part 1

Offer of immediate needs support provided to non-sentenced persons, but voluntary take up

*Remains the same*

BCST 1 completed in 72hrs

*Remains the same*

Liaison with COM to agree pre-release work

Pre-release activities

Pre-release assessment completed for high risk releases and MAPPA process by COM

*NB – not applicable for Wales*

1. **Resettlement Approach from June 26th 2021**

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| **Journey to end state model:** |
| **Indicative timeframe** | **Resettlement approach activity** |
| Day 1 onwardsAnticipated to be in place in all regions by Summer 2022April 2022April 2022Summer 2022 | Regional Probation Directors will have a commissioning role for new Commissioned Rehabilitation Services and contract management of existing contractsA short sentence function in all NPS regions will focus on those serving short prison sentences to improve outcomes including sustaining existing services and fast tracking into new services. Increased contact by Community Probation Practitioners / COM to lead on assessing and planning for release to support building a relationship and successful transition back into the communityOMiC pre-release processes enhanced moving to a handover process starting at 7 ½ months for all individuals serving a determinate sentence with an allocated Prison Offender ManagerA new digital tool to assess risk and needs removing the current Basic Custody Screening Tool process based on the principle of asking questions once at the right time.  |

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| **The end state model** |
| OMiC – levelled up service | * Removes the distinction between NPS and CRC cases in practice.
* The hand over from Prison Offender Manager (POM) to Community Offender Manager (COM) for standard determinate prisoners will move to 7 ½ months pre-release. The POM will continue to support the COM / Community Probation Practitioner post-handover with 2 additional meetings taking place pre-release in addition to the hand over meeting.
* As OMiC case management becomes embedded, POMs will be working with people in prison throughout their sentence to support progression including delivering one to one work. They will work with the Community Probation Practitioner / COM pre-release to support risk management activities and a good handover of information. They will complete sentence planning with an updated review prior to handover to capture progress in prison including any services accessed.
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| Short Sentence Function | Although there have been some early adopters, the short sentence function in the majority of Probation Service Regions will be post day 1. **The aim is to provide a responsive service to those serving a short prison sentence to continue to support existing services and fast track into new services based upon need**. The function will provide the following: * A focused package of support and monitoring including strong engagement.
* A multi-agency approach in partnership with local services including those providing Commissioned Rehabilitation Services, to provide a total package which aims to reduce reoffending in community and break a cycle of multiple short sentences.
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| Digital System | A new digital risk and needs tool will eventually replace the current BCST processes. This aims to reduce duplication with other assessments and the number of times the same questions are asked of people in prison. Day 1 there will be no change to the current BCST process which continues. The only difference will be to pre-release activity for those assessed as high risk |

1. **An overview of Commissioned Rehabilitative Services from June 26 2021**

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| **Resettlement and CRS** |
| * Accommodation and Mentoring Commissioned Rehabilitative Services will be available pre and post-release. For pre-release activity the referral for mentoring must be made under the Social Inclusion category.
* Employment Training and Education and other Personal Well-Being Commissioned Rehabilitative Services will be available post-release. They can be included within a pre-release referral for accommodation or social inclusion but the service to meet these neds will only be delivered once the person is back in the community.
* Refer and Monitor, a new digital service, is in place for referrals to the Commissioned Rehabilitative Services and to record all activity undertaken.
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| **What’s Changing** | **What’s Not changing** |
| Commissioned Rehabilitative Services will be established in all areas except Greater Manchester (where co-commissioned services will have a later start date)Contracts will be in place for delivery of the following specific services or cohorts:* Accommodation (at a regional level, except Wales where it is at PCC level)
* Employment, Training and Education (at a regional level)
* Personal Wellbeing (at a PCC level).
1. Social Inclusion
2. Lifestyle and Associates
3. Family & Significant others
4. Emotional Well-Being.
* Women’s Services (at PCC level).
* Services for Young Adults (in Wales only and at Wales PCC level).

In Greater Manchester, services will be co-commissioned services with Greater Manchester Combined Authority. In London, co-commissioned women’s services with the Mayor’s Office for Policing and Crime will be in placeThere are timescales in relation to the first appointment being offered and the completion of a Service User Action Plan which will be shared with the Probation Practitioner and will include planned activity and outcomes sought. | Existing statutory and VCSE services will continue to deliver work related to finance, benefits and debt as well as dependency and recovery |

***For further details on CRS provision see CRS section on the Welcome Hub*** [Commissioned Rehabilitative Services – Welcome Hub (hmppsintranet.org.uk)](https://welcome-hub.hmppsintranet.org.uk/our-new-probation-service/our-new-operating-model/commissioned-rehabilitative-services/)

1. **How the Resettlement approach works in Prisons**

In order to successfully achieve the new approach, prisons will need to work closely with probation immediate resettlement needs and pre release staff (previous ETTG staff) and probation practitioners in the community to ensure efficient and effective processes are in place to access people quickly, no matter which prisons they are located, including, geographical location (local area, out of area), in a resettlement prison or a non-resettlement prison

No change

Continue to refer to Probation Service pre release staff

OMiC key worker roles continue unchanged

No Change

Handover reports provided to COMs and Probation Service pre release staff

Continuation of current OMiC processes

*Fig 1 Overview of the resettlement approach*

The handover report from Prison Offender Manager and Probation Practitioner / Community Offender Manager for low and medium risk cases will be shared with immediate resettlement needs and pre release staff.

Some early adopter regions will move to a short-sentence function, creating a fast-tracked route to ensure this cohort have access to services in a timely manner.

The aim is to provide a responsive service to those serving a short prison sentence to continue to support existing services and fast track into new services based upon need.

The function will provide the following:

* A focused package of support and monitoring including strong engagement.
* A multi-agency approach in partnership with local services including those providing Commissioned Rehabilitation Services, to provide a total package which aims to reduce reoffending in community and break a cycle of multiple short sentences.

All those leaving prison will receive a resettlement pack, so they have the information they need about their release planning options and what is expected of them on release.

The full resettlement approach is dependent upon an increase in Probation staff and will not be implemented until they are in place. Implementation will be aligned with recovery and the Exceptional Delivery Model which is currently in operation. As resources are in place, the following change will take place.

* The positive joint work with Community Probation Practitioner / COM will continue and be enhanced. Over time, as more Probation Service Community Probation Practitioners are recruited, the enhanced pre-release role of the probation service will be implemented. This provides one person leading on pre-release activity working with Prison Offender Managers (POM).
* In the interim, Probation Service immediate resettlement needs and pre-release staff based in resettlement prisons will continue to assess resettlement need and formulate/deliver a pre release plan using BCST 2. In order to ensure risk and decisions are aligned, communication with COM / Community Probation Practitioner is crucial. With the implementation of the Case Management phase of OMiC, there is a clear communication process between prisons and community.
* From 26th June 2021, Probation Service immediate resettlement needs and pre-release staff will remain in the prisons for a minimum of 3 months. Regional Probation Directors will assign locations to colleagues within sentence management.
* Until Probation can recruit additional staff to align the pre release approach OMiC end state staffing levels, Probation Service immediate resettlement needs and pre-release staff in prisons will have a continuing role to play in ensuring that COMs / Community Probation Practitioner are kept informed of a person`s progress in prison.
* The current processes for Probation Service including timings of allocations will continue.
* Caseloads will remain the same until staff who moved into the Probation Service from CRCs have completed training to update skills to manage a combined caseload.
* Probation Service staff will continue to complete preparation for the release of MAPPA cases. The duplication in the system will be removed as Community Probation Practitioners / COMs become increasingly responsible for pre-release activities, working with people in prison whose sentence they will be responsible for managing post release.

Probation Service staff and OMUs can access updated process maps in Equip which provide clarity over roles and responsibilities. Community probation practitioners will continue to lead on safeguarding and risk management

At present there is variation in what activity COMs complete pre-release and also the point at which they are allocated to a person in prison. Over time as Probation Service processes are unified, all people in prison will be allocated a Community Probation Practitioner within 2 days of sentence if 10 months or less to serve at sentence, or at the point of handover from Prison Offender Manager to Probation. COMs lead on risk management on licence and must be involved in decisions for accommodation, employment and other services provided in the community

**Annex A, Roles and Responsibilities**

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| **Pathway** | **Day 1 Activity (to be completed)** | **Completed by** |
| BCST 1 | Completed on all people within 72hrs from initial prison custody | Prison staff |
| BCST 2 Immediate resettlement needs identificationBCST 2 Pre-release planning | Completed for everyone (including High Risk and Remand cases) for Immediate resettlement needs identificationRequired to be completed 12 weeks prior to release for all Medium and Low Risk persons.HR persons will not require a BCST 2 pre-release completed as this will form OASYs sentence planning | Probation Service Immediate Resettlement Needs and Pre release Planning staff  |
| Pre-release assessment and planning | On all high risk people in prison | Community Probation Practitioner (COM) |
| Non-convicted cohort | Continue to offer a BCST 2 immediate needs review. Note: this is a voluntary service and only completed if the person requires support. | Probation Service Immediate Resettlement Needs and Pre release Planning staff |
| Accommodation | **During BCST 2 immediate needs review**;* Identify and discuss housing needs
* Confirm housing status and need
* Refer to CRS Accommodation providers to give up or maintain tenancies at start of sentence when required.

**Pre-release activity.** * Contact Community Probation Practitioner (COM) to advise of need and in consultation make a referral using the Refer and Monitor book system (Probation Service prison pre-release staff  *can make a referral using the Refer and Monitor system,* ***only*** *after consultation with a person Community Probation Practitioner (COM) and in alignment with sentence management. Risk information will be required from Community Probation Practioners to complete the referral.*

Accommodation service will be available pre-release and post-release using the Commissioned Rehabilitative Service, **Refer and Monitor digital system.** | Probation Service Immediate Resettlement Needs and Pre release Planning staff |
| Finance, Benefits and Debt (See annex A for support matrix and sample letter templates) | A delivery matrix is provided for information. The matrix provides examples of finance, benefits and debt issues identified during the immediate resettlement needs assessment stage (BCST 2) and the pre-release period. It also provides additional information, including sample letters to complete on behalf of a person to specific addressees:**Pre-release activity.** Continue to deliver same service as pre unification. Regional Probation Directors are responsible for commissioning Finance, Benefits and Debt services.  | Probation Service Immediate Resettlement Needs and Pre release Planning staff |

**Annex B, Finance, Benefits and Debt support informaiton**



**Universal Credit Helpline** (further information)

Telephone: 0800 328 5644
Textphone: 0800 328 1344
[Relay UK](https://www.relayuk.bt.com/) (if you cannot hear or speak on the phone): 18001 then 0800 328 5644
[Video relay service](https://dwpuc.signvideo.net/) for British Sign Language (BSL) users - [check you can use this service](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Osx7FFxFpNY)
Welsh language: 0800 328 1744
Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm



**Finance, Benefits & Debt, Sample Letters:**

      

**Annex C, Day 1 Accountabilities information**

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| **Pathway** | **Day 1 Activity (to be completed)** |
| ETE | **During BCST 2 immediate needs review**;* Identify and provide bespoke advice on employment (and education and employment related training) options available within the prisons and in the community, and offer advice on impact of benefits
* Refer to Prison education team
* Refer to DWP working in the prison

**Pre-release activity** - Contact COM / Community Probation Practitioner to advise of need and in consultation make a referral using the Refer and Monitor. Probation Service prison pre-release (Previous eTTG staff) *can make a referral using the Refer and Monitor system,* ***only*** *after consultation with a Community Probation Practitioner (COM) and in alignment with sentence management plans. ETE CRS can only commence following release, if the Referral does not also include Accommodation and / or Social Inclusion, the Referral should be made no earlier than 5 days prior to release.*  |
| Personal Wellbeing:* Social Inclusion
* Lifestyle and Associates
* Family and Significant others
* Emotional Wellbeing
 | **During BCST 2 immediate needs review**;* Identify and record Personal Wellbeing needs
* Provide bespoke advice on PSH options and service in custody
* Notify prisons health care providers of the person`s needs.

**Pre-release activity -** Contact COM / Community Probation Practitioner to advise of need and in consultation make a referral using the Refer and Monitor system. Probation Service prison pre-release (Previous eTTG staff) *can make a referral using the Find and book system,* ***only*** *after consultation with a Community Probation Practitioner / COM and in alignment with sentence management. Lifestyle and Associates, Family and Significant Others and Emotional Wellbeing CRS can only commence following release, if the Referral does not also include Accommodation and / or Social Inclusion, the Referral should be made no earlier than 5 days prior to release.*  |
| Womens Services | **During BCST 2 immediate needs review.*** Identify holistic needs
* Notify required support serviced in prisons of the need.

**Post-release and Pre-release activity** - Contact COM to advise of need and in consultation make a referral using the Find and book system. Probation Service prison pre-release (Previous eTTG staff) *can make a referral using the Find and book system,* ***only*** *after consultation with a Community Probation Practitioner / COM and in alignment with sentence management. Most of the Women’s CRS can only commence following release, if the Referral does not also include Accommodation and / or Social Inclusion, the Referral should be made no earlier than 5 days prior to release.*  |
| Services for Young Adults | **During BCST 2 immediate needs review.*** Identify holistic needs
* Notify required support serviced in prisons of the need.

**Post-release and Pre-release activity** - Contact COM to advise of need and in consultation make a referral using the Find and book system. Probation Service prison pre-release (Previous eTTG staff) *can make a referral using the Find and book system,* ***only*** *after consultation with a Community Probation Practitioner (COM) and in alignment with sentence management. If the Referral does not also include Accommodation and / or Social Inclusion, the Referral should be made no earlier than 5 days prior to release.*  |

1. Commissioned Rehabilitative Services through the Dynamic Framework will be established in all areas except Greater Manchester and or women`s service in London. In Greater Manchester, services will be co-commissioned services with Greater Manchester Combined Authority. In London, co-commissioned women’s services with the Mayor`s Office for Police and Crime will be in place. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)