



# Lincolnshire POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER

---

## SAFER TOGETHER

Deepdale Lane, Nettleham, Lincoln LN2 2LT  
Telephone (01522) 947192 Fax (01522) 558739  
E-Mail: [lincolnshire-pcc@lincs.pnn.police.uk](mailto:lincolnshire-pcc@lincs.pnn.police.uk) Website: [www.lincolnshire-pcc.gov.uk](http://www.lincolnshire-pcc.gov.uk)

**Our Ref:** 2021-1049 20210924 ET Robert Barlow re Lincolnshire Women's Strategy

By email to:

Robert Barlow

### **Lincolnshire Women's Strategy: Supporting Women and Girls at Risk of Entering the Criminal Justice System**

Dear CX Barlow

As your Police and Crime Commissioner and Co-Chair of the Safer Lincolnshire Partnership's Overview and Scrutiny Board, I am delighted to introduce the new [Lincolnshire Women's Strategy](#) and invite you to participate in the [Lincolnshire Concordat](#).

#### **Background**

The Safer Lincolnshire Partnership has developed a new [Lincolnshire Women's Strategy](#) to deliver the outcomes sought by the [Ministry of Justice's Female Offender Strategy 2018](#).

The Ministry of Justice has led on a [national Concordat on Women at risk of contact with the Criminal Justice System](#), which sets out how partners should work together at national and local levels to identify and respond to the needs of women. The national Concordat encourages partnerships at national and local level. It is not intended to replace current arrangements, where these are working well, but rather to build on them to improve existing support to women. Accordingly, the agreement in Lincolnshire is for the Safer Lincolnshire Partnership, under my leadership, to drive forward the Lincolnshire Women's Strategy to deliver better outcomes for women and girls.

Partners involved in the work so far have agreed that we should have a Lincolnshire Concordat to drive delivery of the Lincolnshire Women's strategy.

**The aim is for all services and agencies to unite to interrupt the pathways that currently lead women into the criminal justice system by delivering the services they need in ways they have told us works for them.**

We know this because the Lincolnshire Women's Strategy is based on what women, who had just left the criminal justice system, told us would have made a difference to their lives. The women's stories were

incredibly hard to listen to because of the avoidable pain that they, their families, and their friends had experienced. But it is thanks to their bravery in sharing these stories - alongside research - that helped us to identify the key themes that should be applied by all services.

#### **The main themes:**

- Behaviours had been shaped by isolation, family problems, debt, addiction, and untreated mental ill-health.
- Their traumatic experiences in childhood had resulted in coping strategies associated with crime, with disastrous outcomes for themselves and others.
- They experienced a lack of support, inadequate continuity of care and failure to adopt mental health and trauma informed approaches.
- Fractured or lost family relationships had heightened their need for support.

#### **The key messages are:**

- **The importance of support.**  
The women told us that they had only received positive support within the criminal justice system itself – they had simply been ignored by existing services.
- **Support was vital.**  
Support helped women build positive identities. This was not only mental health support, but also peer support, coaching, mentoring and kindness; activities which should be integrated within mental health services.
- **Services should be trauma informed** from day one.
- **The importance of third sector interventions.**  
The women's experiences told us that third sector interventions were preferred to mainstream service provision - reinforcing the lessons of much broader research.

#### **Services in Lincolnshire**

The Safer Lincolnshire Partnership is aware that women-specific services found in other areas - even those similar in geography and population - are absent in Lincolnshire, to the detriment of women and girls in the county. I want us to build capacity in working with women and girls. We must not let this needless suffering go on.

A recent report by Lankelly Chase, "[Gender Matters](#)" identified four needs that most significantly disadvantaged women, namely: homelessness, substance misuse, poor mental health, and violence and abuse. The report estimated that each year around 17,000 adults in England experienced all four of these needs, 70% of them women. Women who have had contact with the criminal justice system were much more likely to report experience of each of these primary needs than men - most notably being the victims of violence and abuse. It is wrong that women who have suffered such issues should end up in the criminal justice system, often for offences that were less serious than those for which they themselves had been victims.

The Lincolnshire Women's Strategy also recognises the shocking fact that peak female offending is at the age of 15 (peak male offending is at 23) and reflects my concern that teenage girls' mental health and other needs must be addressed urgently.

## **The Lincolnshire Concordat**

**I hope that you will be able to join with me in signing the Lincolnshire Concordat attached to your email.**

I must make clear that this is not a request for an empty gesture of support. Commitment to the Lincolnshire Concordat will mean changes to our organisations' business plans, strategic priorities, and budgetary allocations. For commissioners, it will require close examination of service thresholds and access that currently exclude women and girls as exhibiting too much complexity and thereby leaving the criminal justice system to do too little too late.

Please complete the Lincolnshire Concordat and return to me at [lincolnshire-pcc@lincs.pnn.police.uk](mailto:lincolnshire-pcc@lincs.pnn.police.uk)

The Lincolnshire Concordat webpage, complete with all signatories can be found at <https://lincolnshire-pcc.gov.uk/transparency/lincolnshire-womens-strategy/lincolnshire-concordat>

## **Taking the work forward**

The delivery of the Lincolnshire Women's Strategy is being led by SLP Reducing Offending Core Priority Group. Any service lead or commissioner not already a member of the Core Priority Group is welcome to attend. The national Concordat says, "We will produce a report a year after publication on how we have delivered on this commitment." This means that we will have to report progress on delivery in December this year. Your close personal involvement will be vital.

**Given the urgency, I should be grateful for a response to this letter by 19 October 2021.** And if it would be helpful for you to have support for any internal Board or other senior discussion then we should be pleased to provide this.

Yours sincerely



**Marc Jones**

Police and Crime Commissioner for Lincolnshire

