

Cost-benefit analysis of Women's Centres

Research Brief

Women's Centres provide gender-specific support under one roof to address the root causes of offending. Many provide access to specialist advocacy, advice and support on housing, harmful substance use, mental and physical health, employment, debt, domestic abuse and family and parenting issues. This can be through in-house specialist staff and through partnerships with other agencies.

The lack of long-term, sustainable funding has created considerable challenges for Women's Centres. It prevents them from being able to strategically plan for the long-term, and in some cases, it has threatened their ability to meet the needs of the women they work with and has put some at risk of closure.

Alma Economics was commissioned by Women in Prison (WIP) to explore the socio-economic value that Women's Centres generate and compare it with their cost. Based on best available evidence in the literature and discussions with staff from Women's Centres, we developed a logic model that sets out the mechanisms through which investment in the Centres can generate medium and longer-term outcomes for women, their children and society. We also carried out a Cost Benefit Analysis to quantify economic benefits and monetise gains in welfare for women receiving support from a hypothetical Centre (created using data from Women's Centres).

Our research suggests that benefits generated by the Centres outweigh costs across different funding scenarios reflecting the current level of resources available to the Centres, as well as the level of funding required to support all women in need at a local level.

A Women's Centre receiving a £1m investment in a given year can help over 650 women enjoy improved outcomes in key areas, including employment, mental health, domestic violence, offending, homelessness and housing, parenting, drug and alcohol dependency, wellbeing, confidence and self-esteem. These improvements generate £2.75m in savings for public services and gains in welfare for women and their children. The public authorities for which cost savings will be generated are the following: Local Authorities (47% of total cost savings), the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), including Courts/Legal Aid, Probation, Prisons, Other Criminal Justice System (CJS) (17%), the National Health Service (NHS) (15%), Police (10%), Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) (9%), and HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) (2%).



Independent research by Alma Economics
Commissioned by Women in Prison (WIP)

About the authors



Alma Economics combines unparalleled analytical expertise with the ability to communicate complex ideas clearly.

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About the commissioning organisation



Women in Prison (WIP) is a national charity that delivers support for women affected by the criminal justice system in prisons, in the community and through its Women's Centres.

www.womeninprison.org.uk