Every two years the Ministry of Justice provides statistics on women in the criminal justice system (CJS). These reports compare data on female and male involvement in the CJS in relation to victims, police activity, offender characteristics, offence analysis, offender management, as defendants and as practitioners. This review will summarise some of the findings that are likely to be of particular interest to probation practitioners.

Overall, in 2012/2013 women accounted for 15% of arrests, represented 5% of the prison population and 15% of those under community supervision.

Theft was the offence most likely to bring both men and women into the CJS. Shoplifting accounted for nearly half of all indictable convictions for women and just under a quarter of indictable convictions for males.

Community sentences were the most common sentence for females for indictable offences, whereas men were more likely to be sentenced to custody. Different disposal profiles of men and women can be attributed to women generally having committed less serious offences and having fewer previous convictions. One third of women coming before the court had no previous convictions compared with one fifth of males.

The data shows that PSRs on women were more likely to propose Suspended Sentence Orders (SSOs) and Community Orders (COs) than those on men. The highest concordance rate between PSR proposal and actual sentence for both men and women was for immediate custody. The concordance rate for SSO proposals was 53% for women and 62% for men.

Women on COs generally had fewer requirements attached than men though were less likely to have only one requirement. Supervision and unpaid work were the most common requirements for both genders. Specified activity requirements as a proportion of all requirements have doubled from 9% in 2010 to 18% in 2013 for women. Two thirds of community orders were terminated successfully. Higher proportions of women than men successfully completed both COs and SSOs.

83% of accredited programme starts in 2013/14 for women were on general offending behaviour programmes. Community-based accredited programme starts and completions fell by 67% and 62% respectively for women. This was sharper than the decrease for males which was 37% and 38%.

Higher proportions of men report being victims of violence but women are twice as likely as men to experience intimate partner violence and seven times more likely to have reported being a victim of sexual assault. Over half of female homicide victims were killed by a partner or ex-partner.

The Probation Service has the highest proportion of female staff (72%). At senior levels in the criminal justice agencies women were less well represented than men with the exception of the Probation Service and the CPS. However the number of women in senior positions in these agencies was still lower than the overall proportion of female staff.

Ministry of Justice (2014) *Statistics on women in the criminal justice system 2013: A Ministry of Justice publication under Section 95 of the Criminal Justice Act 1991*. Available to download at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/women-and-the-criminal-justice-system--2>

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