



Hope Street: Media Statement

Concern about women and their children in the justice system, has inspired charity, One Small Thing, to seek to establish its first, in what is hoped will be a series of residential, trauma informed, community services for women - to be known as Hope Street. The planning for its pioneering Hope Street Hub in Southampton was granted today, 24 September 2020. It will be a new, purpose-built environment, designed with women and children at its heart.

Hope Street aims to provide rehabilitative services in a holistic environment which is conducive to healing trauma as well as sustaining long term positive change. It supports the thinking behind the 2018 Female Offender Strategy launched by then Justice Secretary David Gauke, which has a strong focus on community-based solutions.

The number of women sent to prison is disproportionately high for minor offences: only one in five women will have committed a violent offence compared to one in three in the general prison population.

Most women in prison have experienced trauma in their lives: seven in ten have suffered domestic violence and over half have experienced emotional, physical or sexual abuse during childhood. 67% of women in prison reported that they had a mental health problem, and many are unemployed and homeless.

Hope Street has been designed for women and with women and is the culmination of significant research and consultation. At its heart is the Hope Street Hub - a calming and inspiring environment filled with natural light, greenery and flowers to promote wellbeing, healing and recovery as well as enjoyable shared experiences.

The Hope Street Hub will combine residential facilities with therapy and training rooms, an onsite café which will be open to the public and a range of activities providing practical skills that support the charity's aim to be environmentally sustainable. Community and social integration are key components behind Hope Street's ethos with many of the classes expected to be open to the local community.

Women will be able to complete their unpaid work requirements and gain valuable skills and qualifications that will strengthen their chances of securing sustainable employment when they return to independent living. The cafe will also offer valuable volunteering and employment opportunities for local people.

Hope Street will promote children's health and wellbeing and provide services and facilities to support their development. The offer of a safe residential option where families can be supported will offer the courts more appropriate sentencing options and contribute towards breaking the cycle of intergenerational trauma and vulnerability.

The cost for developing the site, excluding its acquisition, is anticipated to be in the region of £3-4m. Once opened, the site will provide employment for up to 50 people, working both at the Hope Street Hub and in and around the community as part of its vital outreach work. It is anticipated that the Hope Street Hub will be completed in early 2022.

END

24 September 2020

one small thing

Notes to editor

About One Small Thing

Hope Street is being developed by the charity One Small Thing, which strives for positive change in the justice system by implementing small changes in a big way.

The charity promotes compassion, understanding, respect, justice and equality working with partners to humanise the justice system and is committed to changing the way women are treated within the justice system, pioneering this first purpose built, county-wide residential network specifically designed for women and known as **Hope Street**

Women in the justice system¹:

- 82% of women currently being sent to prison in England and Wales have not committed serious or violent offences – compared to 67% for men
- 60% of women receiving short prison sentences are mothers
- An estimated 17,240 children are affected by maternal imprisonment each year
- In 2018, of the 7,745 women either sentenced or remanded to prison 3,262 were recorded as being of no fixed abode on arrival in prison - up 71% from 1,909 in 2015
- Nearly two in five women (38%) left prison without settled accommodation
- Around one in five women (19%) were homeless
- One in 20 women (5%) were sleeping rough on release in 2018–19

Of the 877 women arrested in Hampshire between 1st November 2018 and 31st October 2019, 33% were from Southampton. Women from Southampton who receive a custodial sentence are sent out of area, often more than 60 miles away from their home, making it very difficult for their families to visit them. It therefore makes sense to prioritise Southampton as the preferred location for the first Hope Street Hub because it has the greatest need.

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One Small Thing: <https://onesmallthing.org.uk/hopestreet>

Hope Street Brochure: <https://bit.ly/HopeStreetBrochure>

Q and A: <https://bit.ly/HopeStreetQandA>

¹ [Prison Reform Trust, Bromley Briefings Summer 2019](#)