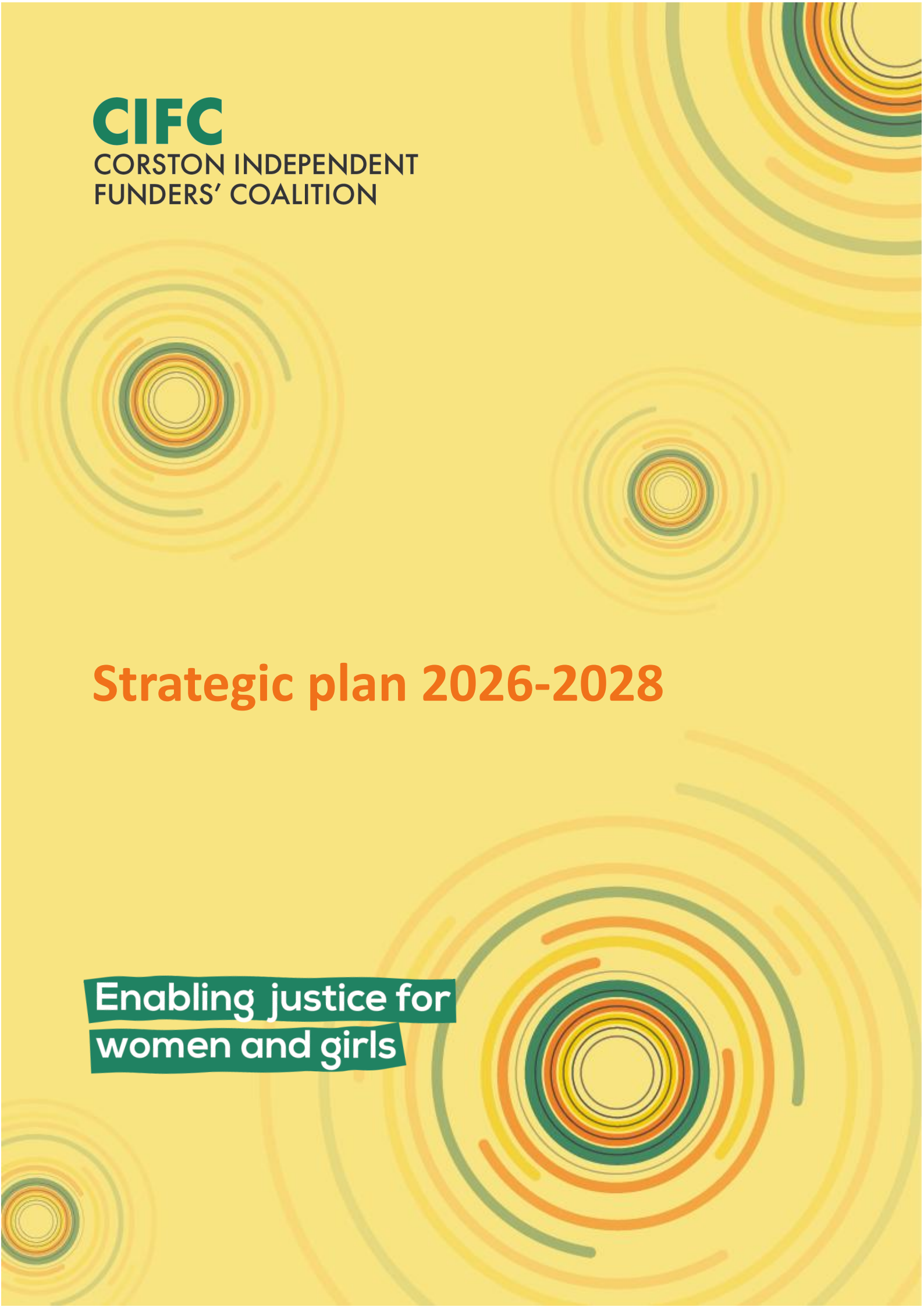




CIFC

CORSTON INDEPENDENT
FUNDERS' COALITION

Strategic plan 2026-2028

**Enabling justice for
women and girls**

INTRODUCTION

The Corston Independent Funders' Coalition (CIFC or the coalition) was set up because of and is driven by the vision and principles of the 2007 Corston Report. This seminal report by Baroness Corston advocated for a radical rethink in how women both involved in or at-risk of involvement in the justice system are treated and called for the provision of holistic, gender and trauma informed community-based services to support them.

Nearly 20 years on, much has been achieved and there is still much to do. The CIFC - currently a coalition of 11 members and seven friends - remains committed to working with third sector organisations and statutory bodies to realise the Corston vision. CIFC has expanded this vision to include work with justice involved or at-risk girls.

The coalition has had various iterations since its formation in 2008 and in 2024 adopted a revised Statement of Purpose which it used to guide a redevelopment phase. This strategic document is designed to give a focus to the next stage of its work and will be reviewed annually. It builds on and responds to the coalition's vision, mission, and ways of working (set out in our Statement of Purpose), the learning of the development phase, the interests and capabilities of the current membership, and the external context.

ABOUT CIFC

MEMBERSHIP

CIFC is a funder only coalition open to membership by funders who can evidence an overarching focus on social justice, alongside impactful grant making in women's and/or girls' justice, women's and/or girls' rights and/or work designed to address women's and/or girls' complex and/or multiple unmet needs, and who are willing to sign up to the coalition's Statement of Purpose.

The role of Friend is for funders where collaboration with CIFC members is mutually beneficial, but who are not able to take on full membership. This may be because of their organisational structure or remit, and/or because justice-impacted or at-risk women and girls form only a small part of their overall funding portfolio.

CIFC is governed by a Steering Group of the membership and convened by a part-time Coalition Development Manager. Since July 2026 the coalition has been hosted by Rosa - the UK Fund for Women and Girls.

Members

The Allen Lane Foundation, Barrow Cadbury Trust, The Bromley Trust, Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, Firebird Collective, Henry Smith Foundation, Porticus, Rosa Fund, The Hilden Charitable Fund, The JABBS Foundation for Women and Girls, Liz Hogarth (Independent), Triangle Trust 1949 Fund

Friends

A B Charitable Trust, The Bishop Radford Trust, City Bridge Foundation, National Lottery Community Fund, The Robertson Trust, The Kurt and Magda Stern Foundation, Treebeard Trust

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:

Vision

A world where women and girls experience justice, fairness, safety, and equitable treatment within a justice system which values their rights and needs.

Mission

Enabling women's and girls' access to justice through supporting and amplifying both women and girl-centred, holistic, and trauma-responsive approaches to healing and rehabilitation alongside organisations and initiatives that work upstream to challenge the root causes and system failures that drive the criminalisation of women and girls.

WAYS OF WORKING:

Through being in a community of practice we work together in four main ways to increase the quality and scale of our contribution and impact:

- Funding together both by investing in initiatives led by other members, as well as co-funding specific pieces of work identified as key to the objectives of the coalition.
- Amplifying each other's work through connecting our relevant initiatives and funding programmes and promoting them to other funders, practitioners, and policy makers.
- Sharing expertise and learning with each other to increase the quality of our collective and individual work, including improving our grant making practices.
- Advocating together and alongside organisations supporting women and girls to secure improvements to statutory funding and to local and national legislation, policy, and practice.

CIFC is made up of a diverse group of funders. Some focus exclusively on criminal justice impacted women and girls, most do not, and in addition bring expertise on other issues including women's and girls' rights, migration, human rights, criminal justice reform more broadly, family support, and family justice. Members also have a range of governance procedures and a range of priorities for how they invest their money. As such, the coalition has adopted a systems stewardship approach to how it does its work. Systems stewardship focuses on how actors in a system experiment, learn, and change together so as to enable healthy systems with the best chance of delivering the desired outcomes.

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS

The coalition has identified four strategic focus areas for the next phase of its work with focus area 1 being a foundational one:

FOCUS AREA 1: GROW THE COALITION AND STRENGTHEN ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SECTOR

FOCUS AREA 2: SUPPORT WOMEN'S CENTRES/SPECIALIST SERVICES TO REALISE THEIR POTENTIAL

FOCUS AREA 3: SUPPORT A STEP CHANGE IN PROVISION FOR GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN

FOCUS AREA 4: SUPPORT A DECREASE IN THE NUMBER OF WOMEN AND GIRLS IN PRISON/SECURE SETTINGS AND THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM OVERALL

Many CIFC members and friends have programmes focused on and/or are part of funder collaborations dedicated to early intervention work - for example addressing school exclusion, or early help for families. CIFC recognises the contribution these initiatives make towards achieving its overall mission, and in particular to achieving strategic focus area 4. Where relevant and feasible, the coalition will seek to work in partnership with these collaborations.

Across all the CIFC's work there will be attention to:

- the women and girls most at risk of harm
- levers to systemic change
- the capacity, safety, and wellbeing of the sector
- the importance of centring lived experience expertise and of communities of practice
- the substantial ongoing shifts in the legislative, policy, and funding landscape

FOCUS AREA 1: GROW THE COALITION AND STRENGTHEN ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SECTOR

Focus area 1 is a foundational one. It underpins the work and effectiveness of the other strategic areas and is a key means by which new work can emerge.

The core work of the coalition - relationship building, knowledge sharing, networking including with other funders and funder networks, and advocating within our own organisations and networks - is at the heart of a systems stewardship approach. It helps develop the conditions by which members and friends can make best use of collective relationships, insights, and resources to achieve shared goals. The next phase of our work, alongside continuing this internal work and growing the coalition, will have a focus on increasing partnership working with the sector.

We aim to do this by:

- Piloting a simple listening and learning survey to provide a mechanism for organisations to let us know about their work and, if they wish, their strategic thinking 20 years on from the Corston Report.
- More consistent communication about the work of our members and friends, CIFCs strategic focus areas, funded work, and events.
- Creating more opportunities for knowledge sharing and learning between CIFC, the sector, and other stakeholders and funders as relevant.
- Growing the coalition and/or our links with other relevant funders and funder collaborations - with particular consideration to funders operating in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland.

FOCUS AREAS 2,3 AND 4

CIFC is not a pooled fund, nor does it have plans to become one. The main way it funds is through members' and friends' individual funding programmes, and therefore its work under Focus areas 2,3 and 4 is shaped by the funding of individual members and friends. In line with its ways of working - by enabling, where appropriate, opportunities for co-funding of this work, sharing of the learning from it, linking or aligning it better with the programmes of other members and friends, as well as using its influence with decision makers - the coalition aims to increase its contribution and impact. In addition to this, and informed by thinking and ideas from the sector, occasionally CIFC members and friends will come together to co-fund specific initiatives they consider key to realising their vision and mission.

FOCUS AREA 2: SUPPORT WOMEN'S CENTRES/SPECIALIST SERVICES TO REALISE THEIR POTENTIAL

The CIFC first came together in 2008 to expand and strengthen a national network of women's centres in recognition that holistic, gender and trauma informed services are fundamental to women's healing, rehabilitation, and thriving. Nearly 20 years on and at a point of significant change in national policy, women's centres and specialist services are once again seen as central to driving positive change for women. CIFC wants to do what it can to enable them to operate as fully and as effectively as possible and to be at the heart of provision within a whole systems approach.

Some of the key programmes of work, areas, and organisations coalition members fund/cofund under this focus area include:

- **Women's Risk Needs Assessment (WRNA) Expansion Programme** - initiated by the JABBS Foundation for Women and Girls and since 2025 co-funded by the Henry Smith Foundation, this work brings together women's centres and the University of Birmingham and aims to evidence the effectiveness of women's centres as community-based alternatives to custody using the most validated, gender-informed and trauma-responsive assessment tool to date for women in the justice system - the WRNA.¹

¹ <https://jabbswomenandgirls.org.uk/projects/womens-risk-needs-assessment-wrna-expansion-programme/>

- **Core and project costs for women centres and specialist services operating to support rehabilitation in the community as well as release from custody and resettlement, and to drive systemic change** - this support is a particular focus for Allen Lane Foundation, Hilden Charitable Fund, Porticus, and Henry Smith Foundation. Allen Lane Foundation² funds smaller organisations beyond Greater London which make a lasting difference to people's lives. Hilden Charitable Fund³ supports organisations working to maintain family bonds and enable successful resettlement. Porticus⁴ has a focus on systemic change for accommodation pathways and self-employment for women after custody so they are well set up to support themselves. Henry Smith Foundation⁵ is focused on fortifying specialist services so they can demonstrate the key role they play in enabling community sentencing and support.
- **Co-funding of National Women's Justice Coalition (NWJC)** - During its formation and since its establishment in 2021, CIFC members have collaborated to co-fund NWJC. As a national feminist coalition of women's organisations working with women and girls in contact with the criminal justice system, particularly those operating community-based women's centres and culturally responsive specialist services, NWJC is a key infrastructure body and a powerful national voice on policy and good practice for women affected by the criminal justice system.

FOCUS AREA 3: SUPPORT A STEP CHANGE IN PROVISION FOR GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN

Girls and young women - the latter as a distinct cohort of women - within or at-risk of involvement in the justice system, were outside the scope of the Corston Report. Their needs as children and young people are distinct and there is an increasing body of evidence and practice about how best to support them. There is also a growing commitment from government to recognising their specific gendered needs and CIFC wants to play its part in enabling systems and support which meet them.

Some of the key programmes of work, areas, and organisations coalition members fund under this focus area:

- **Multi-year project funding for organisations supporting work with young women and girls who are either already in contact with the criminal justice system or are at a high risk of involvement with it** - Recognising a significant gap in provision for these organisations, Triangle Trust has made a four-year commitment (2024-28) to this work and also provides capacity building support.⁶

² <https://allenlane.org.uk/offenders-and-ex-offenders/>

³ <https://hildencharitablefund.org/uk-funding/>

⁴ <https://www.porticus.com/what-we-do/society/criminal-justice/>

⁵ Forthcoming 2027

⁶ <https://www.triangletrust.org.uk/>

- **Reimaging Justice for Young Adults** - since 2000, Barrow Cadbury Trust (BCT) has convened and funded the Transition to Adulthood Alliance⁷ which makes the case to policy makers, practitioners, and sentencers for a distinct approach for young adults (18 - 25 year-olds) in the justice system. A key priority for this work for 2025 onwards is articulating what radical reform for total transformation looks like with a specific pathway for girls and young women.⁸

FOCUS AREA 4: SUPPORT A DECREASE IN THE NUMBER OF WOMEN AND GIRLS IN PRISON/SECURE SETTINGS AND THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM OVERALL

The CIFC believes that women and girls in the justice system need holistic, gender and trauma informed support and services. However, members understand the broader context within which this work sits - namely, how women and girls with unmet needs are failed by systems that perpetuate cycles of trauma and harm. And that this injustice and harm is magnified for Black, racially minoritised, and migrant women and girls. A key focus of CIFC's work will therefore always be how women and girls' involvement in the justice system can be prevented.

Some of the key programmes of work, areas, and organisations coalition members and friends fund under this focus area:

- **Advocacy, influencing, and community of practice work to decrease the criminalisation of women and girls and to enable systemic change in how they are treated by the justice system** - A significant proportion of individual coalition member resources are allocated to this. For example - The Bromley Trust⁹ provides unrestricted funding to specialist organisations working to bring about a more humane and effective UK prison system that supports people's rehabilitation. Esmée Fairbairn Foundation¹⁰ funds work to enable policy, practice, and the law to better meet the needs of women experiencing multiple challenges and discrimination, to reduce the negative impacts of the criminal justice system on women and their families, and so that fewer young people, particularly those with SEND and/or experiencing racial inequity, are in contact with the youth justice system, or excluded from school. Rosa's¹¹ various funding programmes fund women-led organisations to build a more equal and inclusive society, supporting campaigning and influencing work that enables women and girls to use their voice to achieve change, and providing organisational development funding specifically for organisations addressing male violence against women and girls and Black and minoritised-led women's and girls' organisations.
- **Ending Remand for Women Collective** - seed funded and incubated by The Firebird Collective this programme brings together seven leading national women's justice

⁷ <https://t2a.org.uk/>

⁸ <https://t2a.org.uk/2025/07/25/looking-forward-acting-now-shaping-the-future-of-justice-for-young-adults/>

⁹ <https://www.thebromleytrust.org.uk/prison-reform/>

¹⁰ <https://esmeefairbairn.org.uk/apply-for-a-grant/funding-priorities/#fairer-future>

¹¹ <https://rosauk.org/our-programmes/>

organisations and women with lived experience of remand to end the unjust and unsafe imprisonment of women whilst awaiting trial or sentencing. Through the CIFC, this programme is co-funded by AB Charitable Trust and Esmée Fairbairn Foundation.¹²

- **Transforming Community Justice for Women project** - funded by The JABBS Foundation for Women and Girls this work supports the promotion and embedding of effective community-based interventions for women, including evidence-based problem-solving approaches and strengthened diversion and early intervention practice.¹³

THE BROMLEY TRUST
HUMAN RIGHTS | PRISON REFORM

HENRY SMITH
FOUNDATION

PORTICUS



The Hilden
Charitable
Fund



ROSA
THE UK FUND FOR
WOMEN AND GIRLS



The Triangle Trust
1949 Fund

¹² <https://www.funderscollaborativehub.org.uk/collaborations/ending-remand-for-women-before-trial-or-sentencing-in-the-uk>

¹³ <https://jabbswomenandgirls.org.uk/projects/transforming-community-justice-for-women/>