

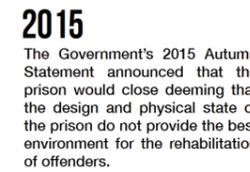
# RECLAIMING HOLLOWAY

# HIDDEN COSTS OF FEMALE INCARCERATION IN LONDON

## CLOSURE OF HOLLOWAY PRISON

In the autumn of 2015, then Chancellor Exchequer George Osborne, announced the closure of HMP Holloway, the largest women's prison in Western Europe and the only women's prison in London. Female prisoners received a slip of paper under the door notifying them of the impending closure. Less than a year later, the prisoners were moved out of Holloway and the historic prison Holloway was decommissioned.

What happens on the Holloway site could set an important precedent for future inner city prisons that may also close in London, for prison reform, and the balance between the economic realities and social duties of the government. The ministry of justice included the disposition of the Holloway site as part of its larger Prison Estate Transformation Programme. The announced a plan to invest £1.3 billion to "modernise the prison estate and support rehabilitation." This includes closing older prisons "no longer fit for purpose" and creating 9 new prisons.



**525** women were held in Holloway prison on any given day just before it closed in 2016.



**50%** experienced and witnessed domestic abuse as a child

**1 in 5** women homeless before they go to prison.

**1,891** women came into the prison during the year prior to its closure.

**1 in 3** women in prison have spent time in local authority care.

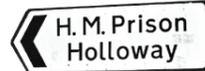
**1 in 4** women had contact with mental health services in the year before imprisonment.

**1 in 2** women in prison report emotional, physical or sexual abuse during childhood.

## TIMELINE

**1971-1985**

Completely rebuilt between on the same site.



**2016**

The last prisoners left in summer.



**MAY 2017**

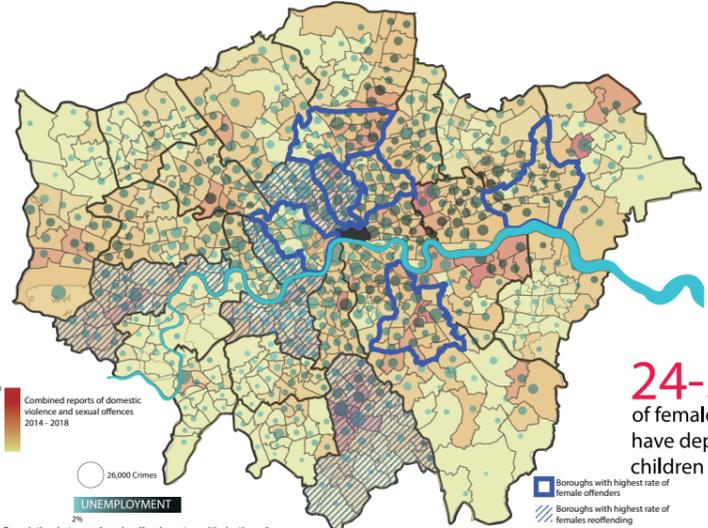
Feminist group Sisters Uncut have occupied the prison to demand the government fund domestic violence services.



Image 2: Timeline Holloway Prison

The MoJ has argued that the sell of the land would allow for the provision of better conditions for female prisoners, primarily services which would make life in prison as close as possible to normal life to facilitate reintegration. However the movement of female prisoners to the periphery raises concerns in regards to how normal this life can be. The proposed court hearings through skype, the distance to existing independent services which were located to the holloway and family may accomplish the complete opposite and fail to account for hidden costs.

Through a human centred characterization of the female population in Holloway, drawing from secondary resources, as well as socio-spatial analysis of the relocation of female prisoners to peripheral prisons we aim to prove that the existing system is failing to address the specific needs of women and an alternative approach which takes into account these hidden costs could not only benefit women in the system but all women in general, their families and the communities they belong to.



**24-31%** of female offenders have dependant children

The MoJ's main reasons for closing down Holloway and potentially closing down other inner-city prisons boils down to two reasons -- reducing costs and improving rehabilitation. Wanting to investigate this claim we started by trying to understand the particularities of female offenders which have been found to be very different from male offenders.

to rates of offending and reoffending, Islington women are in the top 6. The most common predictors for incarceration for women at Holloway were access to employment opportunities and housing, with 1 in 5 women reporting being homeless and 4 out of 5 being unemployed just prior to offence and custody.

Women have a low rate of violent offenses, tend to commit crimes of poverty, about 40% related to theft. Women are substantially more likely to commit crime in the same borough where they live (64% compared to 17% for males). When it comes

Most female offenders have been victims of gender-based violence, 1 in 4 of have accessed mental health services and 1 in 3 have spent time under council care one year prior to the offense.

## THE HIDDEN COSTS OF INCARCERATION

Because one of the main reasons for closing and relocating the prison was economic, we wanted to get a good idea of just how much money is costs to run the criminal justice system as it is.

Identified two large costs:

The overall costs of incarcerating women

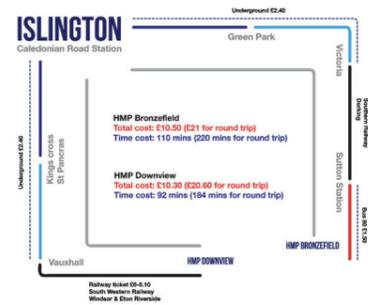
2017-2018, cost **£47,258.00** to incarcerate one woman in the UK per year

Second cost of looking after children when mothers are imprisoned:

In Islington in 2015-16, cost about **£34,000** per year per child



Aside from these, there are several hidden costs associated with the relocation of Holloway prisoners and incarceration in general. Social service centres providing care to women in Holloway Prison before it closed have found their connections either strained or severed.



Costs nearly £20 more family members to visit prisoners at HMP Downview and Bronzefield. Children of incarcerated women more likely to become NEET, develop substance abuse issues and become incarcerated themselves.



These are just some of the costs without taking into account the costs of maintenance and security of an empty prison, and the risk of increased recidivism.

## AN ALTERNATIVE FOR HOLLOWAY

From the profile of women in prison and costs mentioned above we estimated that for Islington, the MoJ spends \$4.9 million/year incarcerating women, and the local authority itself spends about \$525K caring for the children of incarcerated women.

**NEARLY £5.5 MILLION** spent on incarcerating women in Islington

An alternative to provide a one stop shop, where women who are at-risk of offending or have interacted with CJS can go to address the root causes of committing a crime has a strong economically and social justification.

A review of women centres in Brighton, Manchester network of women's centres, and similar strategies and facilities in Glasgow and Worcester found they were more successful at reducing reoffending rates than incarceration and had costs reduced to as little as £500 per woman per year. Savings that are shared across the entire system, from local authorities, to the MoJ, health services, and the police.

In London MOPAC is starting to test diversion programs for women in police districts which have

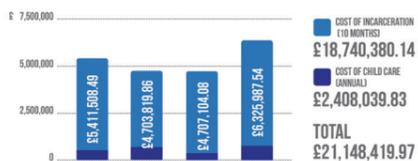
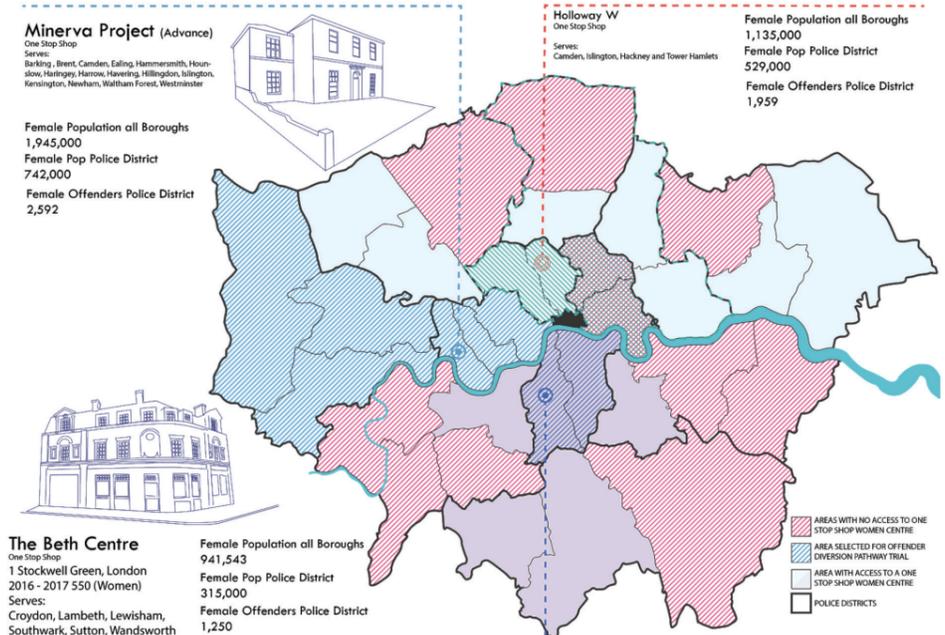


Image 6: Estimated expenditure by GLA (Islington and Neighbours)

adequate access to women's centres like Minerva Project and Beth Centre. But coverage is still limited. These spaces provide Counselling, Education, health, child care, Art and Crafts classes, Support Groups, Fitness centres, massage therapy, Assistance and Legal Advice on matters such as housing, employment, affordable housing, greenspace.

Looking at this list, it's evident that the needs addressed for women at risk are not so distant from the needs of general community. We are now trying to understand what such a building would look like and how to design it in such that a way that it is integrated into the Holloway site and the community.



**Minerva Project (Advance)**  
One Stop Shop  
Serves: Barking, Brent, Camden, Ealing, Hammersmith, Hounslow, Harrogate, Harrow, Havering, Hillingdon, Islington, Kensington, Newham, Waltham Forest, Westminster

Female Population all Boroughs: 1,945,000  
Female Pop Police District: 742,000  
Female Offenders Police District: 2,592

**The Beth Centre**  
One Stop Shop  
1 Stockwell Green, London 2016 - 2017 550 (Women)  
Serves: Croydon, Lambeth, Lewisham, Southwark, Sutton, Wandsworth

Female Population all Boroughs: 941,543  
Female Pop Police District: 315,000  
Female Offenders Police District: 1,250

Image 7: Proposal for Holloway as a women's centre of an expanded network of care provision.