



Advocate (Bridges to Health)

Recruitment Pack

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Welcome from CEO

Dear Applicant,

Women in Prison is the only national charity focused on women in the criminal justice sector, we are women-led and know the importance of ensuring we have a clear gendered approach in all that we do. Our influencing potential and campaigning voice are substantial. We are currently in our 40th year of supporting women impacted by the criminal justice system. We work with women who are at risk of, or being, harmed by the systems that are meant to protect us.

At Women in Prison we are passionate, ambitious and grounded in the reality of women's lives. We are proud of our roots as a feminist grassroots organisation, and we have grown from strength to strength since the 1980s, delivering services to women and campaigning for change. We exist to support women facing multiple marginalisation and exclusion, who have been let down, and their rights denied. We believe that prison doesn't work and we want to see an end to the harmful imprisonment of women in England and Wales.

Our staff are essential to us continuing this work. As a deeply values-led organisation, our co-produced vision, purpose and values ground and guide us as we continue to deliver on our strategy and build on the great work we do.

We know we want to build more coproduction; deeper support to women who are disproportionately affected by the system through an intersectional lens; greater connection between the women we support and the influencing we do; an increased focus on alternatives to the system and a stronger focus on preventing women being caught up in the system.

If you are excited by our purpose, and the breadth of what this role could offer to you, we would love to hear from you.

I look forward to meeting you.



Sonya Ruparel, Chief Executive



Women in Prison – Our Story

Our **Vision** is of a society which no longer accepts the structural inequalities that lead women and girls into contact with the criminal justice system.

Women in Prison (WIP) was born out of the anger that our founder – Chris Tchaikovsky – felt about what she experienced and saw when imprisoned in HMP Holloway in the 1980s.

During Chris's time in prison, a woman died after setting fire to her own cell. Chris saw that the specific needs of women in prison and the damaging effect prison sentences were having on women scarcely figured in public or political discourse. So, in 1983, alongside international criminologist Pat Carlen, Chris founded Women in Prison. They pushed hard to expose the scandal of women's imprisonment and campaigned for change.

Our founders wanted to increase awareness of the lives behind the women in our prisons, and the impact of poverty and abuse on women's lives. In Chris's own words:

“Taking the most hurt people out of society and punishing them in order to teach them how to live within society is, at best, futile. Whatever else a prisoner knows, she knows everything there is to know about punishment because that is exactly what she has grown up with. Whether it is childhood sexual abuse, indifference, neglect; punishment is most familiar to her.”

In the early 1990s, the organisation was able to expand its remit beyond campaigning to deliver direct support to women affected by the criminal justice system. WIP's initial focus on prison in-reach services was then expanded to support women in the community following their release. Chris, sadly, passed away in 2002. Despite the loss of our visionary founder, Women in Prison works to carry on Chris's legacy.

Today, WIP is a national charity dedicated to making a difference to the lives of women affected by the criminal justice system. We campaign for a new system of justice; one that addresses the root causes of offending (including homelessness, domestic abuse, harmful substance use, mental ill health and experiences of poverty and trauma).

Our Women's Centres in Manchester and London and the services we provide in communities and prisons deliver trauma-informed, holistic, women-centred support to enable those whom we work with to address the complex challenges they face.

Our Mission is to persuade decision-makers to radically reduce the women's prison population, by demonstrating how a focus on human rights, social justice, health and investment in specialist community support services, including Women's Centres, enables women to move forward with their lives. We do this by:

1. Leading inspiring, impactful campaigns to challenge the current system that propose alternatives to criminalisation, and to radically reduce the number of women in prison



2. Delivering high quality, trauma-informed programmes for women, in communities and prisons, which focus on supporting women to address the systems that have led to their offending, and supporting them to claim their rights
3. Offering a platform for women's voices which builds women's confidence and self-belief, strengthening an understanding of their rights and responsibilities, and provides opportunities to speak 'truth to power' to bring about real change.

WIP's extensive experience and history of frontline work gives power and legitimacy to our campaigns, constantly increasing our influence with policymakers and building public support.

We do not underestimate the challenges ahead, with an increasingly hostile external environment and funders shifting priorities – we know we must be single minded in our focus on impact with women who are disproportionately impacted by a harmful system. Supporting women in their communities to have their voice heard, taking a clear trauma-informed approach, and coproducing our programming and influencing work with women will enable stronger communities that will drive change and end the harm of prison.

For more information

Visit our [website](#) to learn more about our work and impact.

Download our latest [Annual Report](#) and our strategy here: [Our Strategy - Women in Prison](#)



Application and Recruitment

Applying for the position

Depending on the role, we may ask you to complete an application form **or** submit your CV and cover letter. This will be clearly stated on the job advert as well as on the recruitment pack.

Be positive and specify your own responsibilities rather than those of your team. Remember we're interested in what you did and the outcome. We can only shortlist you based on the information you provide.

- Submitting an Application Form

Please complete the application form clearly and in full. The personal statement should be no more than 2000 words, clearly demonstrating how your skills, knowledge and experience relate to the Person Specification and competencies required for the post. Give examples of your work (paid, voluntary or life experience).

- Submitting CV or Cover Letter

Please submit your CV and cover letter (no more than 2 pages of A4) to the application portal. The cover letter should clearly demonstrate how your skills, knowledge and experience relate to the Person Specification and competencies required for the post. Give examples of your work (paid, voluntary or life experience).

Equalities Monitoring

WIP is committed to building and valuing diverse teams and aims to provide a working environment that promotes equality of opportunity and is free from unfair and unlawful discrimination. As part of this process, we monitor recruitment to help us understand who we are reaching, reduce inequalities and continually inform our policies and practices. Completing the equalities monitoring form is voluntary however we do encourage you to do it. The information you provide will be used for statistical purposes only, it is confidential and will not be shared with the recruitment panel.

Shortlisting

After the closing date, all applications will be reviewed by a shortlisting panel to determine how each applicants' skills, knowledge and experience relates to the competencies required for the post (as outlined in the Person Specification and Job Description). Applicants who meet the role criteria will be invited for interview. We will only consider information enclosed in the application form when shortlisting. If you require reasonable adjustments, please contact our HR team on Recruitment@wipuk.org.

Interviews

As part of the interview process you will be asked to complete an exercise before the interview. You will then meet with a panel of three people who will ask you questions relevant to the role. During the interview, you will have the opportunity to ask the panel questions about WIP, the role and the terms and conditions of service.



Feedback

Unsuccessful applicants will be informed of the outcome of their interview in writing with an offer to provide feedback. If requested feedback supported by relevant examples from the interview will be provided.



Terms and Conditions

Job title:	Advocate (Bridges to Health)
Reports to:	Project Manager (Bridges to Health and Substance Misuse TTG)
Direct reports:	N/A
Start Date:	TBC once vetting has been cleared
Salary:	24,938.40 pro rata per annum (inclusive of £3,990 Southeast weighting) 31,173 FTE
Working hours:	part time - 28 hours across 4 days per week
Contract:	Permanent
Location:	HMP Downview, Sutton Ln, Sutton SM2 5PD. <i>It's expected that your working week will include time spent working in prison, time spent delivering community work across London and the South East, plus some working from home.</i>
Annual leave:	30 days plus bank holidays for full time pro-rata. In addition, the office closes for 3 days between Christmas and New Year.
Pension scheme:	WIP provides an auto enrolment pension scheme with 5% contributions from the employer and 3% from the employee

Job Purpose

Women in Prison's Advocates deliver high-quality, trauma-informed, independent advocacy for women in communities and in prisons, which focuses on early intervention, and holistic provision as part of a 'whole system' multi-agency response that looks to address the root causes of women's offending.

The primary purpose of this role is to provide in-depth, ongoing support to a caseload of women who have been referred for support by prison staff, predominately the Mental Health In-Reach Teams and Primary Care Teams.

Key Responsibility Areas

1. Provide high-quality, trauma-responsive advocacy and support to women in contact with the criminal justice system – both in prison and in the community.
2. Maintain case management systems to ensure accurate and timely data recording.
3. Develop effective relationships with key stakeholders such as statutory and voluntary sector agencies.

Duties and key responsibilities

- 1. Provide high-quality trauma-responsive advocacy and support to women in contact with the criminal justice system.**
 - Design, coordinate and deliver one to one interventions to women three months prior to their release from prison and for three months in the community, assisting them to achieve their goals.
 - Provide a trauma-responsive approach, developing risk and needs assessments and safety plans with women reflecting their individual situation and support needs.
 - Ensure that interventions are responsive to and meet the needs of women from diverse and minoritised communities.
 - Involve women in the design and delivery of interventions, ensuring that they are at the heart of the work at all times.
 - Deliver effective support to women by taking a proactive approach to your personal and professional development, including engaging in relevant internal meetings/forums, attending internal and external training opportunities, engaging in clinical and management supervision and practicing self-care and work boundaries.



- You may be required to develop and deliver workshops around health and wellbeing themes to women based in the prison.
- 2. Maintain case management systems to ensure accurate and timely data recording.**
- Accurately document all client and professional interactions on both Women in Prison's case management database and the NHS's System One, working in line with Women in Prison and the NHS's case management policies at all times.
 - Work in line with Data Protection legislation.
- 3. Develop effective relationships with key stakeholders such as statutory and voluntary sector agencies.**
- Take a collaborative multi-agency approach to supporting women whilst representing the core values of Women in Prison at all times, including representing and supporting women at multi-agency meetings and advocating for their statutory rights.
 - Be responsible for establishing and maintaining professional relationships and effective communication with mental health and healthcare teams, prison colleagues and other relevant statutory and voluntary sector agencies.
 - Promote a culture of understanding women's needs and the root causes of women's offending.
 - Ensure that relevant partners are aware of the range of services offered by Women in Prison.



Person Specification:

Skills and Experience

- Understanding of trauma-informed approaches.
- Good knowledge of the issues faced by women affected by the criminal justice system.
- Good understanding of the impact of complex trauma and intersectionality on women's needs, behaviour, health and outcomes.
- Understanding of the root causes of women's offending and the importance of women-specific provision.
- The ability to engage and motivate clients working with a strengths-based approach.
- Dealing with agencies that provide support around benefits, homelessness and housing, mental health, physical health, offending and substance misuse.
- Problem-solve difficult situations and deal with them calmly and effectively.
- Self-motivated with confidence to work alone but can also work co-operatively and flexibly as part of a team.
- Ability to prioritise and manage own time and workload.
- Effective communication skills verbally and in writing with people of many different backgrounds and within a range of settings.
- IT skills at a level that supports report writing, email, Outlook calendar, Teams/Zoom, internet, use of a databases and meticulous case recording in a timely manner inline with WIP's policies.
- Ability to manage multiple demands while ensuring timely completion of case reports.
- Up to date understanding of safeguarding practice, policy and procedures.

Personal Attributes and other requirements

- Commitment to the core values and ethos of Women in Prison, including social justice and feminism.
- Commitment to anti-discriminatory practice and equal opportunities and an ability to apply awareness of diversity issues to all areas of work.
- You will spend around 50% of your week at HMP Send (Ripley Rd, Ripley, Woking GU23 7LJ) and the rest of your week travelling around London and the South East of England to outreach appointments and partnership offices.
- Level 1 Prison Vetting is desirable but not essential.

Notes

This post is subject to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (Exceptions Order) 1975. Due to the nature of our work it will be necessary for an enhanced disclosure to be made to the Disclosure and Barring Service for details of any previous criminal convictions which are not protected under the Act.

The job description does not form part of your contract of employment and can be amended from time to time as the needs of the organisation require.



To Apply:

Apply [here](#)

Application is by way of CV with cover letter that should set out your motivations for applying and how your work experience to date meets the scope of the responsibilities. As a general guide, your Supporting Statement should be around two sides of A4.

Closing date: 3rd August 2026
First interviews: 17th August 2026

To recruit the most appropriate candidate, a number of pre-employment due diligence checks will be undertaken in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018. These checks will help determine the character and suitability of the individual to carry out this particular role.

Accessibility

If you require reasonable adjustments at any stage of the recruitment process, including accessing a copy of the recruitment pack in large print or an alternative format, please contact recruitment@wipuk.org

We are happy to invest in developing the right person, so you are welcome to apply even if your professional experience does not fully meet the job description or person specification.

We particularly encourage applications from Black, Asian and minoritised women, and women who have personal experience of the criminal justice system.

In line with legal requirements and the nature of our work, this role:

- Is restricted to women only as a genuine occupational requirement
- Requires the right to work in the UK
- Is subject to an Enhanced and Adult Barred List DBS check.
- Is subject to HM Prison and Probation Service vetting ('Enhanced Level 1' or 'Standard Plus'). The job offer will only be confirmed once vetting has been passed.
- Requires that the post holder is not [automatically disqualified](#) by (or can obtain a waiver from) the Charity Commission



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Our Principle Commitments

WIP is committed to building and valuing diverse teams and taking positive action to promote equality and challenge unfair and unlawful discrimination. We recognise that women may experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination based on their sex and additional, real or perceived, characteristics including age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion, sexual orientation, social-economic background, immigration status, caring responsibilities, spent convictions or trade union membership.

WIP works to tackle discrimination and the structural inequalities women experience. We are committed to embedding diversity and inclusion in all areas of our work, including recruitment, and aim to reflect the diversity and excellence of the women that we work with. We actively encourage applications from women from a variety of backgrounds, and with a range of skills and experiences. We are particularly interested to hear from Black, Asian and minoritised women and women who have lived experience of the criminal justice system.

Policy on the Recruitment of Women with Lived Experience of the Criminal Justice System

Women in Prison actively encourages and supports the employment of women with lived experience of the criminal justice system. We believe that women's own experiences drive the Charity forward through understanding, solidarity and passion for change.

Job Advertisements and the Application Process

We do not ask for disclosure of criminal records during the application process, to ensure that women with lived experience of the criminal justice system are assessed on their merit, without risk of discrimination and are not asked to disclose sensitive personal information unnecessarily.

If a [Disclosure and Barring Service \(DBS\) check](#) is required for a role, this will be stated clearly in the job advert, including the level of DBS.

Levels of DBS Checks

Basic DBS checks contain details of unspent convictions. Standard and Enhanced DBS checks contain details of unspent and spent (unless filtered) convictions and cautions (including reprimands and warnings). Enhanced DBS checks may also include other information held by police forces deemed relevant to the role or check for inclusion on the Children's or Adults' Barring List.

Job Offers and the Induction Process

We will only ask for a DBS check at the point of job offer.

Disclosures will be treated confidentially and only stored where necessary, in line with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) guidelines. Access will be restricted to limited Senior Management or HR representatives as needed to assess suitability for the role.



A criminal record will not arbitrarily bar women from employment with us. We discuss disclosures with applicants (in person, or via phone or video call), to allow them to explain the background in their own words. We consider the relevance to the role, including the type and seriousness of an offence, how much time has passed and whether the individual's circumstances have changed. If they have restrictions on the work they are able to do, we consider whether we are able to make reasonable adjustments to facilitate their employment.

The Charity Commission does however have its own [automatic disqualification](#) rules on who can hold senior positions within a charity, which apply to our Trustee, CEO and Director of Finance and Resources positions. Although it is possible to apply for a waiver.

Women in Prison does not have a blanket ban on any criminal records and will always approach disclosures fairly and on an individual basis. We seek to balance supporting women with lived experience into employment, alongside safeguarding our current employees, service users and the organisation.

Vetting

Some roles will require enhanced pre-employment Ministry of Justice vetting in addition to standard pre-employment checks. Where this applies, the requirement will be clearly stated within the recruitment pack.

Please note that employment cannot commence until all required vetting and pre-employment checks have been successfully completed and formal clearance has been received. Vetting timelines can vary depending on the level of clearance required.

For more information on the recruitment of staff with lived experience: [Lived Experience.pdf](#)