



Link Worker (Prison)

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. 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:	Link Worker (Prison)
Reports to:	Service Manager (Prison)
Direct reports:	N/A
Start date:	TBC – subject to successful MOJ prison vetting
Salary:	£27,183 per annum
Working hours:	Full time – 35 hours per week
Contract:	Permanent
Location:	HMP Bronzefield, HMP Downview, and HMP Send
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

The primary purpose of this role is to work with women in custody, including on remand, preparing them for, and connecting them with vital community support services on, release.

Key Responsibility Areas

1. Provide high-quality, trauma-responsive advocacy support both in prison and the community, to women on remand in HMP Bronzefield, HMP Downview, and HMP Send.
2. Development and maintenance of professional relations in prison and the community.
3. Ensure clear, timely and effective communication and record keeping.
4. Proactively seek to develop your personal and professional practice and contribute to wider organisational development.
5. Contribute to building a feminist leadership culture and positive working environment for Women in Prison.

Duties and key responsibilities

1. **Provide high-quality, trauma-responsive advocacy support both in prison and the community, to women on remand in HMP Bronzefield, HMP Downview and HMP Send**
 - Take a co-produced approach to the design and delivery of interventions, involving women in the decision making over interventions, so that they are assisted to achieve their goals
 - Provide Through the Gate support to women leaving custody and returning to London and Southeast England, and telephone support to women returning to other areas of the country.
 - Liaise with other services working with women across the country, to signpost women returning to areas outside of London and Surrey to relevant support services and interventions
 - Undertake risk and needs assessments and develop and record individual support plans with women across the nine pathways to reoffending
 - Complete safeguarding referrals where appropriate and support women's safety through involving them in the safeguarding process



2. Development and maintenance of professional relations in prison and the community

- Build excellent relationships with prison officers and resettlement and reducing reoffending teams,
- Develop and utilise a variety of strategies to communicate effectively with women using our services, colleagues, external organisations, stakeholders and the general public
- Be responsible for establishing and maintaining professional relationships internally and with other relevant statutory and voluntary sector agencies
- Participate in the delivery of training for front-line professionals from community and statutory sector groups, in order to improve responses to women affected by the criminal justice system

3. Ensure clear, timely and effective communication and record keeping

- Accurately document all client interaction on Women in Prison's case management database relevant external systems
- Work in line with Women in Prison and prison policies and procedures
- Work in line with GDPR, maintaining confidential service-user records of interventions and contact details in line with Women in Prison's case management policy
- Support in the collation and production of reports as requested, including ensuring that appropriate recording, monitoring and evaluation of work is completed to set deadlines

4. Proactively seek to develop your personal and professional practice, and contribute to wider organisational development

- Contribute to a culture of innovation within the women's sector, ensuring that Women in Prison remains at the forefront of best practice within the sector
- Support Women in Prison's campaigns work through actively contributing to ongoing campaigns and ensuring that Women in Prison provides a platform for women's voices
- Attend and prepare for regular line management meetings, including annual appraisals
- Attend regular clinical supervision
- Take responsibility for self-care and managing vicarious trauma, promoting the importance of self-care both internally and externally



- Maintain and improve competencies through continuous professional development
5. **Contribute to building a feminist leadership culture and positive working environment for Women in Prison**
- Foster good working relationships within staff teams and build a fair and open culture.
 - Adhere to Women in Prison policies, values and approaches
 - Treat with confidentiality any personal, private or sensitive information about individual organisations, clients, staff and project data.
 - Be flexible and carry out other associated duties as may arise or develop in line with the broad remit of the position.
 - Abide by all organisational policies, codes of conduct and practices.
 - Support and promote inclusion, diversity and equality of opportunity in the workplace.

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.



Person Specification:

Skills and Experience:

- Experience working with vulnerable individuals who have a range of intersecting needs, including designing and delivering 1:1 and group interventions in a trauma-informed manner
- Skilled in engaging and motivating clients and working with a strengths-based approach
- Ability to 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.
- Effective communication skills both verbally and in writing with people of many different backgrounds and within a range of settings
- Ability to summarise information to identify key themes.
- IT skills at a level that supports report writing, email, internet and use of a database

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
- Understanding of equality, diversity and inclusion and a commitment to working in a way that promotes social justice and feminism
- Up to date understanding of safeguarding practice, policy and procedures
- Understanding of the impact that contact with the criminal justice system may have on women
- Understanding of the root causes of women's offending and the importance of women-specific provision
- Understanding of the impact of trauma and of how to work in a trauma-informed way
- Travel across South London and Surrey
- Interested and motivated to further own skills and knowledge

To Apply:

Apply [here](#)

Application is by way of application form 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: 9 September 2026

First interviews: TBC

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](#)