



Senior Advocate (Housing)

Recruitment Pack

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Welcome from CEO

Women in Prison is the main 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. For over 40 years we have worked to end the harm caused to women and their families by imprisonment and criminalisation.

Every day, women are swept into the criminal justice system because of poverty, trauma and abuse. Approximately 100,000 women with complex needs are arrested each year, and 21,000 women are currently on probation. Most have experienced domestic abuse, coercive control, homelessness, mental ill-health and/or racism.

More than **3,400 women are in prison**, the vast majority for non-violent offences linked to survival: shoplifting food, toiletries or children's items; defending themselves or their children; or being coerced into carrying drugs or committing fraud. Even short prison sentences can lead to women losing their homes, jobs and children. After release, women face unstable housing or homelessness, deepening poverty, stigma, trauma and social exclusion.

We know that prison is not the answer – nor is it a safe place for women.

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 support over 2,000 women every year in prisons and the community – in addition we reach every woman in prison with [Still I Rise](#), our magazine created by and for women in prison.

Our strength lies in combining influencing and service delivery, where women's lived experience drives the policy changes we seek and delivers the services required to meet real need.

1. **We work in Prisons:** We currently work directly in four women's prisons providing trauma-informed, gender-specific support including one-to-one casework, crisis support, group programmes and pre-release preparation. We help women plan for safety, stability and reintegration, and our through-the-gate support ensures continuity back in the community.
2. **We work in the community:** Our women's centres in London and Manchester, along with nine community hubs offer safe, non-judgemental spaces where women can access all the support they need in one place. Each woman is assigned one of our staff members (an advocate) who builds trust, carries out in-depth assessments and helps women address the root causes of criminalisation: domestic abuse, homelessness, mental ill health, poverty and racism.

Women join peer groups, build community and help shape the programmes they take part in. Our wraparound approach to support diverts women away from the criminal justice system and towards safety, stability and empowerment.

3. **We use data, evidence and lived experience to drive systemic change:** We prioritise co-production with women with lived experience, their feedback guides our strategic direction in both service delivery and policy work. We gather insights from every woman we support and use this evidence to influence national policy, public understanding and criminal justice practice.



Our committed and passionate 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 to achieve greater impact.

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

I look forward to meeting you.



Sonya Ruparel, Chief Executive

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:	Senior Advocate (Housing)
Reports to:	Housing Lead
Direct reports:	Housing Advocate
Start date:	ASAP
Salary:	£28,244.80 pro-rata (£35,306 FTE inclusive of £3,990 London weighting)
Working hours:	Part Time – 28 hours per week across 4 days
Contract:	Fixed-term until March 2029
Location:	1 day per week working from home, three days in the South West London Women's Hubs or other appropriate venues.
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 Senior Housing Advocate will lead the delivery of housing support to women affected by the criminal justice system, homelessness and housing insecurity.

The role will provide housing advice and advocacy to women, while also supporting Housing Advocates with complex cases and day-to-day advice. The postholder will build relationships with housing, criminal justice and other services to help women access and keep safe and suitable accommodation.

The role will also help develop the Future Foundations housing programme, including housing surgeries, referral pathways and new ways of working. The Senior Housing Advocate will use learning from the service and women's experiences to help improve housing support and influence wider services.

Key Responsibility Areas

- Lead the delivery of high-quality housing support to women affected by the criminal justice system.
- Build and maintain relationships with housing, criminal justice and other services to improve access to safe and suitable accommodation for women.
- Provide advice, support and guidance to Housing Advocates and other colleagues, particularly around complex housing cases.
- Support the development and delivery of the Future Foundations housing programme, including housing surgeries, outreach and referral pathways.
- Use learning from the service and women's experiences to improve how housing support is delivered and help address wider barriers to housing.

1) To lead and provide oversight of the delivery housing support to women affected by the criminal justice system

- Provide housing advice, advocacy and casework to women who are homeless, at risk of homelessness or experiencing housing difficulties.
- Work with each woman to understand their housing situation, identify risks and agree clear and realistic next steps.
- Support women to understand their housing rights and options, and advocate with councils, housing providers and other services on their behalf.
- Ensure support is respectful, led by the woman and responsive to her individual circumstances, experiences and needs.



- Ensure women from different backgrounds and communities can access support and are treated with dignity and respect.
- Support Housing Advocates with complex cases and help make sure women receive consistent and high-quality housing advice and advocacy.
- Ensure casework is recorded accurately and securely on the relevant systems, in line with Women in Prison's policies and data protection requirements.
- Record relevant information about outcomes and learning to support monitoring, reporting and improvement of the service.

2) To support the development of the Future Foundations housing programme

- Work with colleagues and partners to identify barriers that make it difficult for women to access housing support and find practical ways to address them.
- Help plan and deliver housing surgeries and outreach activity in places where women can access them easily.
- Contribute to the development of new approaches and interventions that respond to women's housing needs and support the programme to achieve its agreed outcomes and targets.
- Work collaboratively with the Programme Housing Lead and wider Women in Prison teams to ensure learning from direct service delivery informs programme development and organisational learning.

3) To develop and maintain effective relationships with key stakeholders and partners:

- Develop and maintain strong working relationships with local authorities, housing providers, probation, prisons, courts, voluntary sector organisations and other relevant partners to improve outcomes for women.
- Represent Women in Prison at relevant partnership meetings, forums and multi-agency meetings, ensuring the housing needs and experiences of women affected by the criminal justice system are effectively represented.

4) To provide senior housing expertise, leadership and support to colleagues:

- Provide day-to-day guidance, advice and support to Housing Advocates and wider colleagues on complex housing issues, legislation, casework and advocacy approaches.
- Support colleagues to develop their knowledge and confidence in housing legislation, homelessness pathways and effective housing advocacy through advice, case discussions, training and information-sharing.
- Contribute to a culture of reflective practice, learning and continuous improvement within the housing team.



5) To contribute to Women in Prison's wider influencing and systems change work:

- Support opportunities for women with lived experience to share their experiences and contribute to influencing, consultation and decision-making processes where appropriate.
- Maintain up-to-date knowledge of relevant housing legislation, policy and practice and developments affecting women impacted by the criminal justice system.
- Attend relevant training, meetings, forums and conferences to maintain professional knowledge and contribute to partnership and influencing activity.

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:

- At least 2 years' experience providing housing advice, advocacy or support, or equivalent knowledge and experience.
- Experience of supporting women who are homeless, at risk of homelessness or experiencing housing problems, including women affected by the criminal justice system.
- Experience of managing complex situations and working with councils, housing providers and other services to find solutions.
- Experience of building positive working relationships with other organisations and helping people access the right support.
- Experience of supporting, mentoring or guiding colleagues and sharing your knowledge with others.
- Experience of delivering housing surgeries, workshops, training, presentations or similar activities.
- Strong knowledge of housing and homelessness law, policy and services, and the barriers women can face when trying to find or keep a safe home.
- Understanding of safeguarding practice, policy and procedures.
- Commitment to Women in Prison's values and to treating women with dignity, respect and without discrimination.
- Ability to work independently and as part of a team, manage different priorities, use your initiative and contribute to improving the service.

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: 14 October 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.
- 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](#)