

Along with her team and her board, Claire Hubberstey CEO of **One Small Thing** knows what needs to change to give women who have offended a chance to succeed in life. One Small Thing plays a vital role in showing what good looks like in this sector.

One Small Thing (OST) has a mission to make the criminal justice system better able to respond to women and children whose lives have been touched by trauma.

One Small Thing has worked for a number of years across the justice system advocating for a more compassionate and trauma-informed approach. They believe community-based provision should be available to women as an alternative to custody, including accommodation, specialist support services, work opportunities, education and training. These are all vital elements in enabling women to take control of their lives and reduce the trauma of a custodial sentence. This is why SASC partnered with One Small Thing by providing a loan. SASC's capital made it possible for OST to develop a new purpose-built residential community in Hampshire called Hope Street to house women and their children; and to purchase additional properties for use as safe move-on accommodation.

Claire has commissioned an independent evaluation of One Small Thing's services, with a view to scaling its approach. She wants to offer a blueprint to other organisations in the sector and, with the support of commissioners across the UK, see the model replicated.

Claire believes two of the biggest issues One Small Thing's model looks to address come from there being no alternative to prison for women, even for those convicted of minor offences. For many women there is simply no judicial alternative that allows them to remain in their homes and serve a community sentence. Often, they are imprisoned ostensibly for their own safety, due to an abusive partner or unsafe surroundings, rather than because of the severity of their offense. The second issue is how a woman's imprisonment results in her children being placed in care.

Unnecessary imprisonment, separation and the breakdown of the family can cause long term damage to the mental health and wellbeing of women and their children. The generational impact cannot be underestimated. The

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children often become less able to regulate their emotions, and experience difficulties at school, which in turn impacts their prospects in life. The disadvantage is not confined to the families who are directly involved. It also adds to the general pressure on social care, schools and the justice system.

Claire has seen first-hand how this can be avoided. Offering supported accommodation and community services changes the lives of women who might otherwise have faced prison. It gives them a chance to break the cycle of re-offending and retain custody of their children. At the most basic level, demonstrating skills such as the ability to sustain a tenancy, make regular bill payments and maintain a home goes a long way. It means a woman can get a recommendation from a landlord, enabling her to secure further accommodation; but will also contribute enormously to her sense of self-belief.

Claire stressed how carefully she and her board went about choosing their funding partner. What made SASC stand out was the effort we made to understand OST and our

responsiveness. Another key factor was SASC's risk-sharing approach to property ownership, and the freedom we gave OST to choose the right properties for its clients.

Claire felt the investment process helped to change the way One Small Thing's management look at the charity's finances. Instead of the traditional lens of charitable funding, they now look at their contracts, costs and wider funding in a more commercial way. She also felt SASC's investment committee (IC) showed a deep knowledge of OST and while the process was rigorous it was also constructive.

Claire believes One Small Thing's partnership with SASC could play a key role in supporting the expansion of OST's model. Far from being just a pilot, OST's Hope Street project and its model of supported move-on accommodation will be part of a five-year longitudinal impact study. The ambition is to help OST to better understand the impact of the OST model and to share this with other providers. Ideally, it will also encourage commissioners to adopt more holistic, trauma informed, and compassionate services to help women and their children escape the consequences of imprisonment and inadequate social support. We are delighted to partner with Claire and be involved in One Small Thing's transformative work.

Claire Hubberstey
CEO, One Small Thing

