



Ministry  
of Justice

# Justice Data Lab: User Guidance

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## Using the Justice Data Lab: An Overview

### What is the Justice Data Lab?

The Justice Data Lab (JDL) is a team of analysts at the Ministry of Justice.

We provide group-level reoffending information to organisations who have worked with offenders and would like to understand the impact of their intervention.

We compare the reoffending outcomes of people who have received an intervention with those of a similar comparison group who did **not** take part, and estimate the impact of the intervention on reoffending.

### Who should use the Justice Data Lab?

Any organisation who has worked with offenders can contact the Justice Data Lab.

We have previously worked with:

- Charities
- Public sector organisations
- Private sector organisations
- Educational institutions

### How to access the service

1. Get in touch at [justice.datalab@justice.gov.uk](mailto:justice.datalab@justice.gov.uk). A member of the team will answer any initial questions, and give you an indication of timings for the analysis.
2. You will send data to the JDL team about the group of people who received the intervention, and some information about the intervention itself, using the [JDL Data Upload Template](#).
3. The Justice Data Lab team will run analyses to compare reoffending behaviour of this group with that of a matched comparison group, which we will select from the Police National Computer.
4. The results of the analysis are published on [GOV.UK](#) in a simple report.

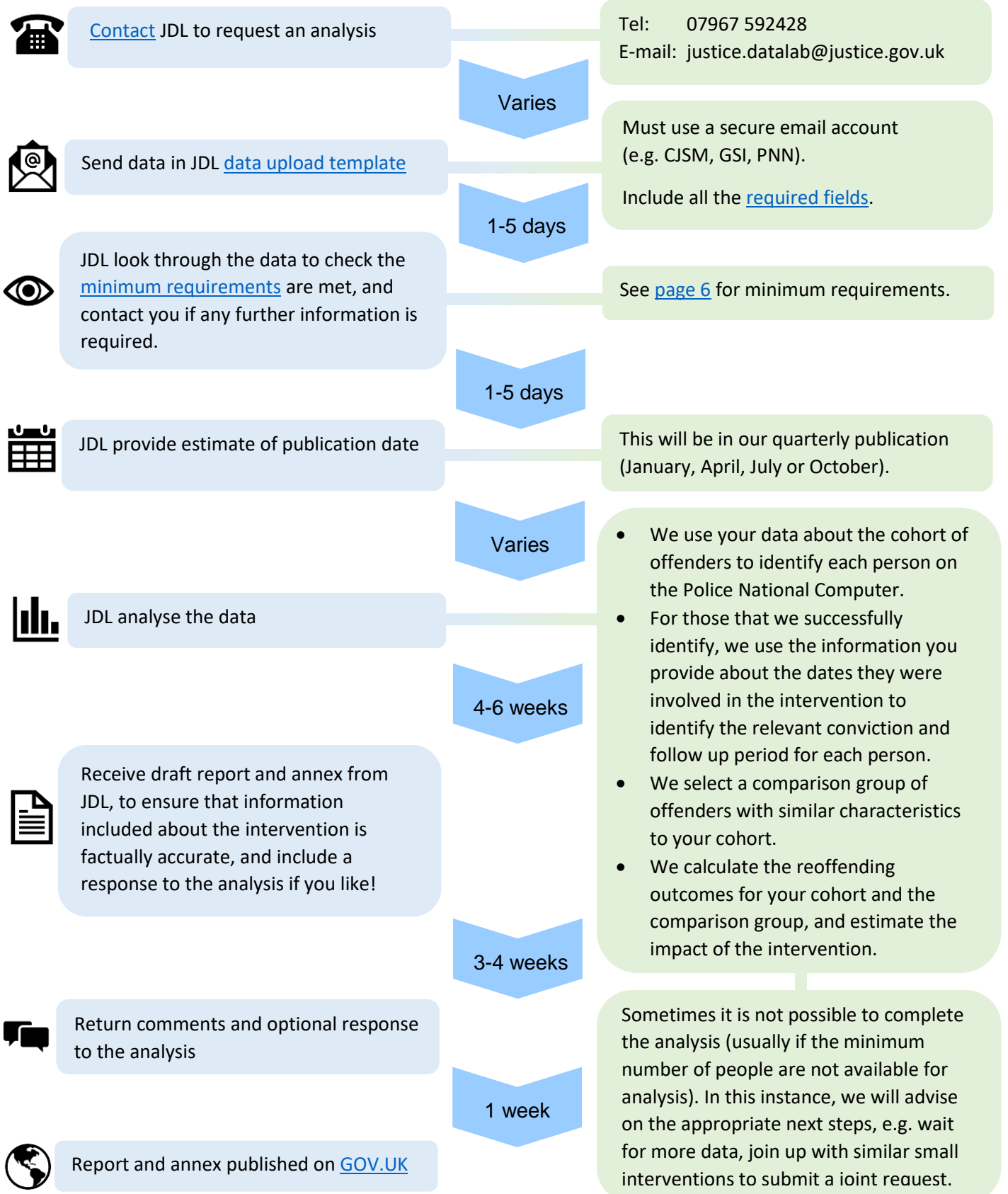
### Why do we do this?

It is vital for the Ministry of Justice to gather evidence about what works to reduce reoffending. However, it is often difficult for interventions to assess their own impact, because:

1. It is unlikely that organisations can track the reoffending outcomes for each person they have worked with.
2. Some may have access reoffending data for their cohort, but this alone does not demonstrate the impact of the intervention. A suitable benchmark, such as a comparison group, is required to estimate the difference in reoffending behaviour.

The Justice Data Lab can access **reoffending data** and have professional analysts to produce suitable **comparison groups**, addressing both of these common issues.

## How it works



## What you will get from us

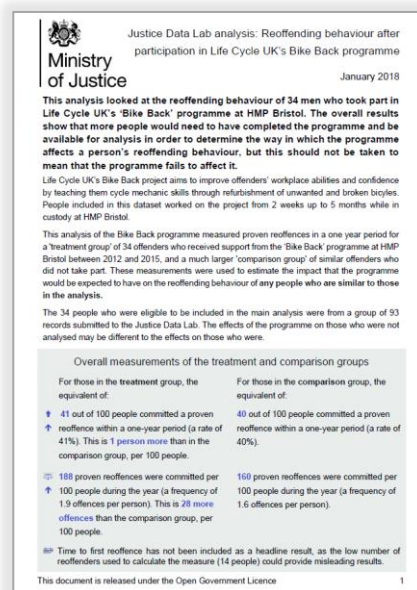
### JDL Report

The Justice Data Lab team will use the data you provide to estimate the impact of your intervention programme. A detailed explanation of the Justice Data Lab methodology can be found in the Methodology Paper:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/justice-data-lab>.

The results of this analysis will then be published as a short, simple report, which includes:

- Reoffending statistics for treatment and comparison groups (see below for more information about the **measures**).
- Estimated impact of the intervention
- Illustrated graphs
- Guidance for interpreting the results
- Description of the intervention
- Response from the customer (optional)
- Description of the ‘treatment group’ characteristics
- Success rates for matching the treatment group to the PNC and reoffending databases
- Matching quality of the treatment group to the comparison group



### Measures

All reports include comparisons of the 1-year proven **reoffending rate**, and the **frequency of reoffences**. For groups of a sufficient size, it may be possible to also include comparisons for the number of **days to the first reoffence**, the **court outcomes of reoffences**, and the number of reoffences that result in a **custodial sentence**.

### Annex

In addition to the report, the JDL will also publish an Annex, containing:

- group-level information about the characteristics of those who participated in the intervention (e.g. the mean age of the treatment group)
- the corresponding characteristics of the comparison group
- an indication of how well matched the treatment and comparison groups were on each characteristic.

These characteristics include, but are not limited to, demographics, criminal histories, employment histories and risks/needs of the treatment group (e.g. prevalence of substance misuse and accommodation status).

Examples of our recently published reports and annexes can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/justice-data-lab-pilot-statistics>

## What we need from you

You will submit information about the intervention, and about the people who received it, using the [JDL Data Upload Template](#). See below for some tips on providing the best data.

### ✓ Top Tips: DATA

#### 1. Include accurate data in the correct format

The JDL team need to identify the offenders you worked with on the Police National Computer. This requires good quality, complete data. This can be the difference between accepting and rejecting requests.

#### 2. Include all key data fields

People may have multiple convictions and we need to identify the one relevant to the intervention they received. If we can't, they cannot be analysed.

Essential	Desirable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Forename</li><li>• Surname</li><li>• Date of Birth</li><li>• Gender</li><li>• Dates*</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• PNC ID</li><li>• Prison Number</li><li>• Conviction date</li><li>• Intervention start and/or end date</li></ul>

\*Prison release date or probation start date are preferable, otherwise the date each person started/finished the intervention will be useful.

#### 3. Submit data for at least 60 individuals

The more people we can analyse, the better. Larger groups mean it is easier to detect any effect of the intervention programme on reoffending.

#### 4. Additional data for subgroup analyses

If you would like information about a subset of individuals, do you hold the information we will need? E.g. if you would like us to analyse a group of offenders who received the intervention in a particular location, please include the location for each person.

### ✓ Top Tips: INTERVENTION INFORMATION

The JDL team need to match the offenders you worked with to appropriate 'comparison' offenders. We need to understand a little about the intervention to do this well. Ensure you complete all three sections of the template:

#### 1. Intervention type

What approach did the intervention take? What was the aim of the intervention? How often did you work with the offenders? Where was the intervention delivered?

#### 2. Offenders

Does the intervention *target* offenders with specific needs (e.g. drug /alcohol issues, accommodation issues etc)? Do the offenders tend to have similar characteristics?

#### 3. Selection

How do offenders get selected/ referred to participate? Is there a list of criteria?

## Top Tips: LEGAL

### 1. **General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act (2018)**

Organisations are responsible for compliance with these data protection laws. Confirm your compliance in the Data Upload Template.

### 2. **Secure email account**

This includes, but is not limited to GSI, CJSM and PNN email addresses. You need this in order to send us person-level data securely, and to receive the official draft report before publication. See here to apply for a CJSM account:

[http://cjsm.justice.gov.uk/signup/how\\_to\\_apply.html](http://cjsm.justice.gov.uk/signup/how_to_apply.html)

## What **not** to send to the JDL

Due to limited information held by the Ministry of Justice on some groups, we may not be able to assess the impact of interventions that **focus** on:

- offenders under the age of 14
  - offenders with current or past sexual offences
  - terrorist/gang offences
  - people who have not been convicted of a crime (e.g. those who are identified as ‘at risk’ but have not committed an offence)
  - offenders who received the intervention more than 6 months after their release from prison/after the start of their probation (this would leave less than half of the 1-year proven reoffending window to demonstrate any impact of the intervention)
  - offenders who have been recently released from prison/started community sentences. Our reoffending databases are updated quarterly, so [contact us](#) to find out which prison release dates we can analyse.
- 
- **Do not provide any data about the offenders’ families or victims**
  - **Do not submit any data if you do not meet the legal requirements**
  - **Do not submit any data if you do not have a secure method of sending them.**

## Using Justice Data Lab Results

Using the JDL could help you understand the impact of your intervention, and could also help to demonstrate this to others (e.g. in bids for funding). It is therefore important to understand how JDL results can be used.

### Significant results

This indicates that **the reoffending behaviour of those in the treatment group is substantially different to that of the comparison group**, and is likely to be caused by the intervention. This could be an improvement in reoffending behaviour, or a deterioration. It is important to bear in mind that, whilst likely to be influenced by the intervention, a significant result could also occur if:

- There is a difference in the characteristics of those in the treatment and comparison groups that has not been controlled for in the JDL analysis, which also affects the likelihood of reoffending (this may happen if strict selection criteria are used when allowing people to participate in the intervention and cannot be replicated in MoJ databases).
- A very small proportion of the time, it is by coincidence that those in the treatment group, despite being similar to those in the comparison group, have different reoffending behaviours.

### Non-significant results

In this instance, **it is not possible to say for sure whether the intervention had any effect (either positive or negative) on the reoffending behaviour of its participants**. If the result is non-significant, this suggests that it is not possible to generate a precise estimate of reoffending behaviour that would enable us to draw such conclusions. This might happen because:

- There are not many people in the treatment group
- The intervention does have an impact on reoffending, but the effect is small and difficult to detect
- The intervention does not have an impact on reoffending

The results and confidence levels published in the report may suggest which of these is most likely, and may indicate the direction of the results (i.e. whether the reoffending rate was higher or lower than the comparison group). A larger treatment group would be required in order to more confidently determine the impact of the intervention.

### No results

It may not be possible to proceed with a JDL analysis. This is usually because a number of records submitted for analysis:

- did not meet the [minimum JDL requirements](#)
- could not be identified on the Police National Computer
- did not have a relevant conviction in the reoffending database
- did not have a suitable, well-matched comparison record.

Providing accurate and complete data helps to reduce these issues. In this instance, **the effect of the intervention cannot be determined**. The JDL can work with you to establish what can be done to enable a full JDL analysis (e.g. a rerun with a larger cohort).



## Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Is the JDL free to customers?

A. Yes. The JDL team is an established part of the Analytical Services Directorate within the Ministry of Justice.

Q. Can I use the JDL more than once?

A. Yes- we often have customers return to us with data from multiple sites they work across, or with data for cohorts of offenders they have worked with since their previous analysis.

Q. Can I submit a request if I already have a 'Payment by Results' contract?

A. In the Payment by Results contract, it will specify how this contract will be evaluated. The Justice Data Lab does not form an alternative mechanism to evaluate the reoffending outcomes of the offenders to which the contract relates. However, if the organisation works with other offenders who do not fall under the Payment by Results contract, then they are permitted to submit a request for these individuals.

Q. Why are some of the individuals I submitted not in the final analysis?

A. Our records may indicate that some people submitted did not meet the [minimum requirements](#) for a JDL analysis e.g. they may have previous sex offences. We remove these people from our analysis.

It is normal for others to fall out of the final analysis at a number of stages e.g. if they cannot be reliably identified on the PNC from the information provided, if the relevant conviction cannot be found in the reoffending data, if they were still in prison at our most recent data update, or haven't been released long enough to be captured in the data yet, or if they do not have an appropriate control match. **This can be minimised by ensuring good quality, complete data is submitted.**

Please see the Guide to Proven Reoffending Statistics, for more information about the reoffending data that the JDL uses. Page 26 explains about the match rates and why some offenders are not taken through to the reoffending data:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/702795/guide-to-proven-reoffending-statistics-apr18.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/702795/guide-to-proven-reoffending-statistics-apr18.pdf)

Q. Why can I not share the results of the report before it is published?

A. The JDL report is an Official Statistics publication. By working with the JDL, you are agreeing to adhere to the UK Statistics Authority [Code of Practice](#), which applies to all Official Statistics. In order to ensure trustworthiness of the report, the [orderly release](#) principle requires:

1. The release of official statistics should be pre-announced, giving a specific release date at least four weeks in advance where practicable.
2. Access to statistics before their public release should be limited to those involved in the production of the statistics and the preparation of the release, and for quality assurance and operational purposes.
3. The circulation of statistics in their final form ahead of their publication should be restricted to eligible recipients, in line with the rules and principles on pre-release access set out in legislation for the UK and devolved administrations. **No indication of the statistics should be made public and the statistics should not be given to any other party without prior permission for access.**

## Useful Links

- Justice Data Lab publications (including reports, annexes and dashboards).  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/justice-data-lab-pilot-statistics>
- Justice Data Lab data upload template  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/justice-data-lab>
- Justice Data Lab methodology paper  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/justice-data-lab>
- Justice Data Lab methodology review  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/justice-data-lab-statistics-october-2017--2>
- General Data Protection Regulation  
<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/>
- Data Protection Act (2018)  
<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/>
- UK Statistics Authority Code of Practice:  
<https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/code-of-practice/>
- Apply for a CJSM account:  
[http://cjsm.justice.gov.uk/signup/how\\_to\\_apply.html](http://cjsm.justice.gov.uk/signup/how_to_apply.html)

## Contacts

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[statistics.enquiries@justice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:statistics.enquiries@justice.gsi.gov.uk)

General information about the Official Statistics system of the United Kingdom:  
[www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/about-the-authority/uk-statistical-system](http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/about-the-authority/uk-statistical-system)

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