



This analysis looked at the re-offending behaviour of 61 adult men who engaged with Switchback’s rehabilitation programme, beginning in prison and continuing after release. Overall the analysis shows that, in order to determine the way in which the programme affects the re-offending behaviour of participants, more people would need to be included, but this should not be taken to mean that the programme fails to affect it.

Switchback is a London-based programme that works with offenders towards the end of their sentence and upon release from prison. Switchback aims to support young adult men to stick to their commitment to live life differently after release.

This analysis of the Switchback rehabilitation programme measured proven re-offences in a one-year period for a 'treatment group' of 61 offenders who took part in the programme and for a much larger 'comparison group' of similar offenders who did not take part. These measurements were used to estimate the impact that the programme would be expected to have on the re-offending behaviour of any people who are similar to those in the analysis.

The 61 people who were eligible to be included in the main analysis were from a group of 86 records submitted to the Justice Data Lab. The effects of the programme on those who were not analysed may be different to the effects on those who were.

Overall measurements of the treatment and comparison groups

For any **100** typical people in the **treatment** group:

↑ 33 people committed a proven re-offence
↓ within a one-year period (a rate of 33%),
2 people fewer than in the comparison group.

⚖ 79 proven re-offences were committed by
↓ these 100 people during the year (a frequency of 0.8 offences per person),
1 fewer than the comparison group.

📅 Time to first re-offence has not been included as a headline result due to low numbers of re-offenders, which could potentially provide misleading results.


For any **100** typical people in the **comparison** group:


35 people committed a proven re-offence within a one-year period (a rate of 35%).

80 proven re-offences were committed by these 100 people during the year (a frequency of 0.8 offences per person).

Overall estimates of the impact of the intervention

For any **100** typical people who would receive the intervention, compared with any **100** similar people who would not receive it:

 The number of people who would commit a proven re-offence during one year after release could be **lower by as many as 14 people or higher by as many as 10 people**. It is estimated that a treatment group of around 11,100 people would need to be analysed in order to determine the direction of this difference.

 The number of proven re-offences committed during the year could be **lower by as many as 53 offences, or higher by as many as 51 offences**. Similarly, more people would need to be analysed in order to determine the direction of this difference.

What you can say about the one-year re-offending rate:

✓ "This analysis provides additional evidence that, for every 100 participants, the Switchback programme may decrease the number of proven re-offenders during a one-year period by as many as 14 people or increase it by as many as 10 people."

What you cannot say about the one-year re-offending rate:

✗ "This analysis shows that engagement in the Switchback programme increases/decreases/has no impact on the proven one year reoffending rate."

What you can say about the one-year re-offending frequency:

✓ "This analysis provides additional evidence that, for every 100 participants, the Switchback programme may decrease the number of proven re-offences during a one-year period by as many as 53 offences or increase the number by as many as 51 offences."

What you cannot say about the one-year re-offending frequency:

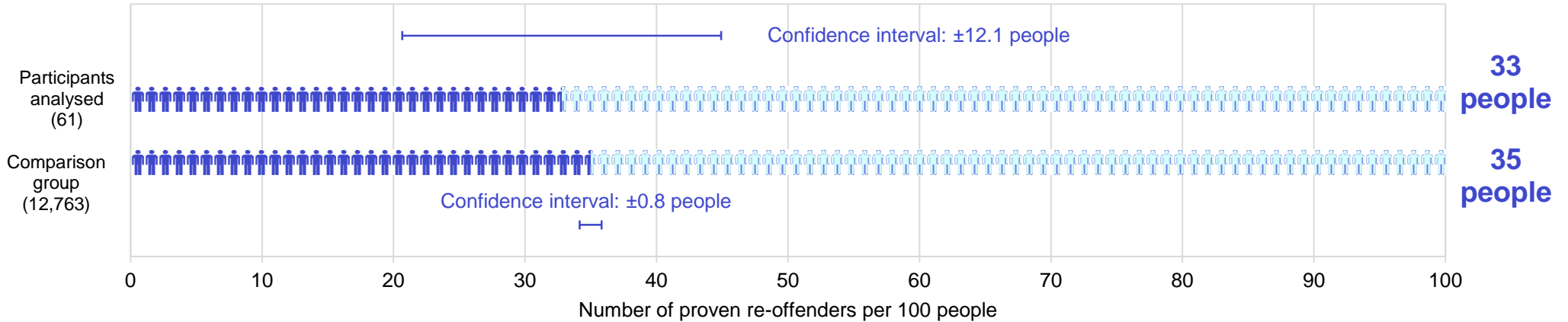
✗ "This analysis shows that the Switchback programme increases/decreases/has no effect on the one-year proven re-offending frequency of its participants."

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One-year proven reoffending rate after participation in the Switchback programme

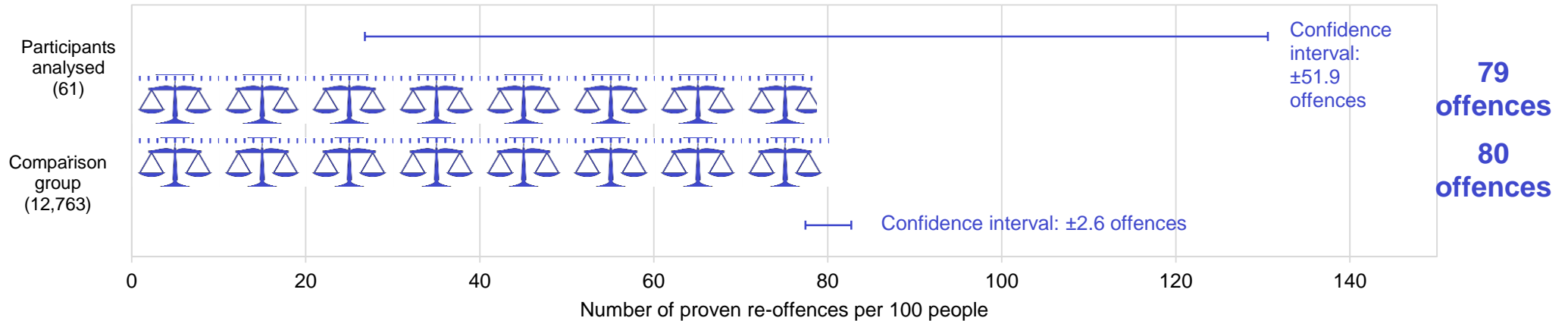
■ At least one proven re-offence committed in a one-year period □ No proven re-offences committed in a one-year period



Non-significant difference between groups

One-year proven re-offending frequency after participation in Switchback programme

■ Proven re-offence committed in a one-year period



Non-significant difference between groups

Switchback programme: in their own words

“The Switchback programme primarily seeks to work with young adult males (“Trainees”) who are committed to living their life differently on release from prison, as to how they were living before conviction. Switchback staff take on small caseloads of trainees and build unconditional, long-term and motivational relationships which enable them to encourage and challenge trainees to make their life more stable as they move through the prison gate. They provide a consistent anchor amongst all the organisations and people that Trainees encounter, and support each trainee to address challenges and issues across the ten Switchback Pathways (accommodation, drugs & alcohol, health, independent living skills, attitude & behaviour, interaction with the criminal justice system, finance, relationships & family, education & training and employability).

For the cohort analysed, there were certain eligibility criteria which all Switchback Trainees had to fulfil, namely they were male, aged 18 to 24, were not sex offenders or prolific and priority offenders, they did not have outstanding immigration issues or court cases, and were being released back to London. Switchback then worked with prisons to identify potential trainees, who would then meet with a member of the Switchback staff to ensure they were suitable for the programme.

Switchback focuses on those who are keen to live life differently on release and the length of time that intensive support is provided depends very much on each individual’s needs, although will generally last a minimum of three months. The average length of time we maintain contact with a trainee is 20 months.

There are three stages of the Switchback programme:

1. Prison: Prisoners choose to take part. During their last three months inside, Switchback visits regularly and they start planning for the Trainee's release. A member of staff links up with people connected to Trainees and becomes a constant and reliable anchor amongst the different organisations that Trainees encounter.
2. Training: Trainees start one of our partner training cafés in London as soon as they are released. Working in the kitchen or front-of-house, they receive professional training. The same member of staff they worked with in prison helps them to learn how to make the right choices and get the help they need. Emphasis is placed on exposing Trainees to new experiences - anything from camping in Devon to visiting a counsellor for the first time.
3. Work: We then work closely with a wide range of employers and arrange visits, work placements, mock interviews and job applications. Our support does not end once Trainees have taken the major step into work. We continue to focus on building stability in other areas of their lives to help ensure employment is rewarding and sustained.”

Switchback's response to the Justice Data Lab analysis

“Switchback welcomed the opportunity provided by Justice Data Lab to present our data for analysis and to be transparent about the effectiveness of the work we are doing. This fits with our principle of authenticity and openness.

We are committed to understanding the statistical effectiveness of our work and this was our third attempt to submit data as our sample size had previously been too small.

However even now, with 86 trainee names submitted, the findings have been inconclusive with no discernible statistical significance. It's worth mentioning that nearly 30% of these were excluded, 13 of which could not be matched to an appropriate prison sentence. However, as we met these men in custody there must be some limitations with the data available.

Continually evolving our practice, we will look forward to submitting data that reflects our current model, with the hope of positive and insightful results from higher numbers of trainees and better matching.

In the meantime, we will continue to carry out further analyses in-house to constantly improve the outcomes for our trainees.”

The results in detail

Three analyses were conducted in total. Each analysis controlled for offender demographics, recent employment and benefit status, criminal history. In addition, the complex analyses controlled for the following risks and needs: accommodation status, education, employment history, relationships, drug and alcohol use, thinking and behaviour, and emotional wellbeing.

Complex analysis

1. **National analysis:** treatment group compared with a comparison group from England and Wales, matched on offender demographics, recent employment and benefit status, criminal history and individual risks and needs.

Standard analyses

2. **National analysis:** treatment group compared with a comparison group from England and Wales, matched on offender demographics recent employment and benefit status and criminal history only
3. **Regional analysis:** treatment group compared with a comparison group from the London region, matched on offender demographics, recent employment and benefit status and criminal history only

The headline results in this report refer to the **national complex analysis**

Size of treatment and comparison groups for re-offending rate and frequency analyses provided below (the 'time to first re-offence' analyses focus on those who re-offend only):

Analyses		Controlled for region	Controlled for risks and needs	Treatment Group Size	Comparison Group Size
Complex	National		X	61	12,763
Standard	National			60	19,032
	Regional	X		60	6,534

In each analysis, the **three headline measures** of one-year re-offending were analysed (see results in [Tables 1-3](#)):

1. One-year re-offending rate
2. Frequency of re-offences
3. Time to first re-offence.

There were no statistically significant results across any of the measures.

Further measures regarding the severity of re-offending and of re-offences resulting in custody have not been included in this report. This is because the numbers within each category were too small to make reliable estimates for these measures.

Tables 1-3 show the results of the three measures of reoffending, for the complex and standard analyses.

Rates are expressed as percentages and frequencies expressed per person. The average time to first re-offence includes reoffenders only.

Table 1: Number of participants in the Switchback programme who committed a proven re-offence in a one-year period, compared with comparison groups

Analysis	Number in treatment group	Number in control group	One-year proven re-offending rate				p-value
			Treatment group rate (%)	Control group rate (%)	Estimated difference (% points)	Significant difference?	
Complex							
National	61	12,763	32.8	35.0	-14 to +10	No	0.72
Standard							
National	60	19,032	31.7	35.8	-16 to +8	No	0.49
Regional	60	6,534	33.3	35.5	-14 to +10	No	0.73

Table 2: Number of proven re-offences committed in a one-year period by participants in the Switchback programme, compared with comparison groups

Analysis	Number in treatment group	Number in control group	One-year proven re-offending frequency (offences per person)				p-value
			Treatment group frequency	Control group frequency	Estimated difference	Significant difference?	
Complex							
National	61	12,763	0.8	0.8	-0.5 to +0.5	No	0.96
Standard							
National	60	19,032	0.8	0.9	-0.6 to +0.4	No	0.71
Regional	60	6,534	0.8	0.8	-0.6 to +0.5	No	0.89

Table 3: Average time to first proven re-offence in a one-year period for participants in the Switchback programme who committed a proven re-offence, compared with comparison groups.

The time to first re-offence between participants and the comparison group is based on a group of only 20 participants. A larger group of re-offenders (usually a minimum of 30) would be required to calculate a meaningful estimate of the time to first re-offence, and to more confidently determine any effect of the Switchback programme on this measure.

Analysis	Number in treatment group	Number in control group	Average time to first proven re-offence within a one-year period, for re-offenders only (days)				p-value
			Treatment group time	Control group time	Estimated difference	Significant difference?	
Complex							
National	20	4,477	147.8	161.3	-58 to +31	No	0.53
Standard							
National	19	6,562	141.4	163.0	-66 to +23	No	0.32
Regional	20	2,562	147.8	161.0	-57 to +31	No	0.54

Profile of the treatment group

The Switchback programme was delivered in prison during the last three months of their prison sentence and continued following release into the community. For the data submitted by Switchback to the Justice Data Lab, the largest proportion were from HMP Rochester, with other Trainees coming from HMPs Isis, Aylesbury, Chelmsford, Feltham, Hollesley Bay, Huntercombe, Littlehey, and Portland and Wayland. All Switchback Trainees are released back to London.

The 61 people in the national complex treatment group were between 18 and 28 years old at the beginning of their one-year re-offending period, with an average age of 20 years. 100% of them were male, at least 13% were white, at least 52% were black and at least 95% were UK nationals. By comparison, 20 who could not be included in the analysis (for whom sufficient demographic information was available) were 100% male, at least 20% white, at least 60% black and at least 80% UK nationals.

All those included in the analysis had received custodial sentences, 5% received a sentence of less than one year, 82% for between one and four years and the remaining 13% had a sentence of between four and ten years.

Information on individual risks and needs was available for 46 people in the national complex treatment group (75%) recorded near to the time of their original conviction. Among these people, it is estimated that:

- 72% were unemployed at the time of conviction or will be unemployed upon release;
- 63% had some/significant problems with work skills;
- 43% had some/significant problems with attitude towards employment.

Matching the treatment and comparison groups

Each of the three analyses (three included in this report and one which was not included) matched a comparison group to the relevant treatment group. A summary of the matching quality is as follows:

- Most variables in the **national complex** model were well matched, with a small number of variables being reasonably well matched, such as psychological problems, weekly drug use and psychological problems.
- The **national standard** model was well matched on most variables, with the exception of a criminal history variable that were reasonably well matched. In addition, the proportion of offenders claiming job seekers allowance one year prior to conviction was reasonably well matched, however this variable was not statistically significant in predicting reoffending behaviour.
- All variables included in the **regional standard** model were well matched. In addition, employment rate one year prior to conviction was reasonably well matched and the proportion of offenders claiming incapacity benefit or income support a year prior to conviction was poorly matched, however, neither of these variables were statistically significant in predicting re-offending behaviour in the regional standard model.
- The **regional complex** model was less well matched than the national. While the majority of variables were either well matched or reasonably well matched, a number were poorly matched. As such, the regional complex analysis has not been included in this report and the national complex results should be referred to.

Further details of group characteristics and matching quality, including risks and needs recorded by the Offender Assessment System (OASys), can be found in the Excel annex accompanying this report.

This report is also supplemented by a general annex, which answers frequently asked questions about Justice Data Lab analyses and explains the caveats associated with them.

Numbers of people in the treatment and comparison groups

86 records were submitted for analysis by Switchback

86

2 people (2%) were excluded from the treatment group as they could not be identified on the Police National Computer (PNC)

84

21 people (24%) were excluded because they did not have a record in the re-offending database that corresponded to their participation on the Switchback programme

63

2 people (2%) were removed to meet the necessary age conditions (age 18 or over when released from prison and age 10 or over when first entering the criminal justice system)

61

1 person (1%) was excluded from the national and regional standard analyses because they could not be matched to any suitable individuals in the comparison groups

National complex treatment group

(Comparison group: 12,763 records)

61

National standard treatment group

(Comparison group: 19,032 records)

60

Regional standard treatment group

(Comparison group: 6,534 records)

60

Contact points

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