Ministry of Justice

Summary

This report is the first in a two-part study into the impact of reoffending for people who were in contact with the Community Interest Company GOALS UK.

The initial group used in this analysis was comprised of a small cohort of people who either registered with GOALS or had a light-touch intervention. The provider, GOALS UK, has since done some further exploration and is currently putting together data including an increased number of people, the majority of whom will have completed the GOALS course, unlike this initial cohort. The analysis of the second study will be completed in early 2016 and will thus enable a more rounded comparison on the impact of the programme by comparing this group and those who have undergone more intensive GOALS work with relevant control groups.

The one-year proven re-offending rate[1] for 82[2] offenders who registered with, or received short-term support from, GOALS UK was 37%, compared with 34% for a national matched control group of similar offenders from England and Wales. Testing has shown that this difference is not statistically significant[3], suggesting that at this stage there is insufficient evidence to draw any conclusions about the impact of light-touch support from GOALS UK on the re-offending rate of its cohort. However, the results of the analysis do not mean that GOALS UK failed to impact on re-offending behaviour, and a second analysis will investigate the impact on those who receive longer-term support from GOALS UK for one of their focused programmes.

As this particular study focused on people in the London area, a regional analysis was also performed with similar results shown. The one-year proven re-offending rate[1] for 81[4] offenders who registered with, or received short-term support from, GOALS UK was 36%, compared to 34% for a matched control group of similar offenders from the London area. As with the national analysis, testing has shown that this difference is not statistically significant[5].

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[1] The **one-year proven re-offending rate** is defined as the proportion of offenders in a cohort who commit an offence during a one-year follow-up period, where the offence was proven through receipt of a court conviction, caution, reprimand or warning during the follow-up or during a further six-month waiting period. The one-year follow-up period begins when an offender leaves custody, starts their court sentence or receives their caution.

[2] 82 individuals were matched from a cohort of 321 individuals whose details were sent to the Justice Data Lab, as described on page 4 of this report.

[3] The p-value for the one-year proven re-offending rate is 0.57 in the national analysis. Statistical significance testing is described on page 11 of this report.

[4] 81 individuals were matched in the regional analysis, with 1 individual from the national analysis remaining unmatched because they were not recorded as being from the London area.

[5] The p-value for the one-year proven re-offending rate is 0.81 in the regional analysis.

What you can say: There is insufficient evidence at this stage to draw any conclusions about the impact of registering with, or receiving short-term support from, GOALS UK on the one-year proven re-offending rate.

What you cannot say: This analysis shows that registering with, or receiving short-term support from, GOALS UK increased the one-year proven re-offending rate of its participants by 3 percentage points, or by any other amount.

Introduction

GOALS UK is a Community Interest Company and social enterprise aiming to help individuals and organisations to achieve successful outcomes, faster, through innovative and highly motivational engagement training programmes. GOALS UK tackles the issues of dependency, learned helplessness and low self-esteem. By identifying and overcoming these barriers to employment, the GOALS Programme acts as a positive catalyst to speed up the process of change in people's lives.

GOALS is a work-focused system that challenges the way people think, feel and behave. The organisation believes that mindset and attitude are the single most important factors in moving people into positive and sustainable outcomes, and they generally work with hard-to-help groups. The GOALS Programme's core aspects are:-
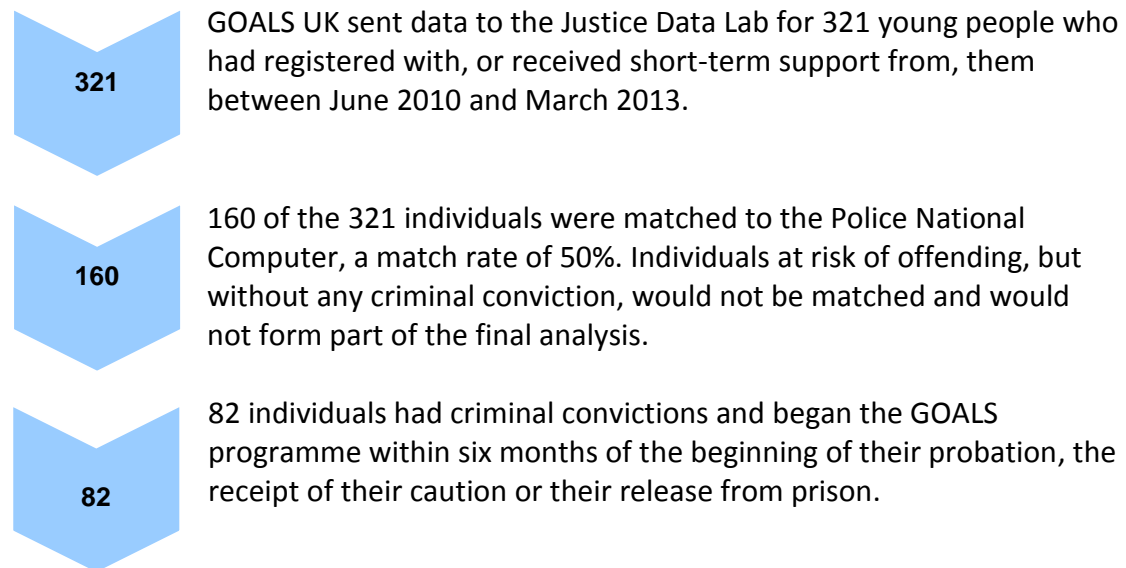
- Sincere engagement, building deep trust and respect with all customers with accurate diagnosis and segmentation.
- Changing perceptions to transform customers' attitudes, ensuring that they leave the programme with a self-motivated, engaged and progressive focused mindset.
- Pragmatic support where needed, alongside empowering customers to overcome complex individual barriers. Challenging former thoughts, feelings and behaviours including a 'poverty of aspiration', through developing a deep rapport and working partnership with customers to resolve obstacles, both perceived and real.
- Working seamlessly with providers as well as up-skilling staff and accrediting Advisors to run GOALS in-house to ensure value for money, sustainability and scalability.
- Empowering customers to take personal responsibility for their lives and decisions. This helps customers to plan and make active, positive and sustainable steps out of unemployment/underemployment and dependency.

This analysis is the first of a two-part study, looking at the impact on young people of registering with, or receiving short-term support from, GOALS UK. The second part (to be published in early 2016) will assess the impact of longer-term participation in, and completion of, the 'GOALS for Young People' programme.

Selection criteria for accessing support for young people from GOALS UK included being London-based, between 13 and 19 years old, and not in education, employment or training, or at risk of entering that category. As long as they met the eligibility requirements, individuals had the option to self-refer, or to be referred by friends or by groups such as youth offending teams, youth services and local authorities.

As this is an analysis of re-offending, it can only investigate the impact of the treatment on young people with a previous history of offending (see Appendix A). There was no specified length of time between receiving a sentence and registering with or entering the programme, except inasmuch as the intervention took place in the community, and so those who were sentenced to custody would only be able to take part once they had been released.

Processing the data

321   GOALS UK sent data to the Justice Data Lab for 321 young people who had registered with, or received short-term support from, them between June 2010 and March 2013.

160   160 of the 321 individuals were matched to the Police National Computer, a match rate of 50%. Individuals at risk of offending, but without any criminal conviction, would not be matched and would not form part of the final analysis.

82   82 individuals had criminal convictions and began the GOALS programme within six months of the beginning of their probation, the receipt of their caution or their release from prison.
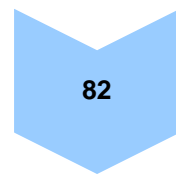
Analysis of these individuals revealed the following:
- The 321 individuals were drawn from 323 submitted records. The 2 excluded records were duplicates.
- There were 161 individuals who could not be matched to the Police National Computer.
- Sentences could not be found on the administrative datasets for 5 individuals.
- There were 68 individuals who could not be included in the analysis because they had not registered with GOALS UK within six months of the start of their probation, the receipt of their caution or their release from prison. This meant that the remainder of the one-year follow-up period was too short to reliably measure the impact of the intervention for these individuals.
- There were 3 individuals who were not included in the analysis for modelling reasons.
- There were 2 individuals who could not be included in the analysis as they had previously committed one or more sexual offences.

The 73 individuals for whom re-offence data was available, but who could not be included in the final analysis, have similar age and offence characteristics to the final matched treatment group. However, they contain a lower proportion of ethnically white people – 22% compared with 38% in the treatment group – and a slightly lower proportion of males – 67% compared with 76% in the treatment group. They also have a higher proportion of sentences that were cautions and discharges and a correspondingly lower proportion of sentences that were community orders or youth supervision orders when compared to the treatment group. As such, the treatment group may not be fully representative of all offenders who registered with, or received short-term support from, GOALS UK.

Creating matched treatment and control groups

82

All of the 82 individuals who for whom re-offending data was available were successfully matched to offenders who had similar characteristics but who did not register with GOALS UK. In total, the national matched control group consisted of 191,729 records.

In the regional analysis, 81 members of the treatment group were matched, while the remaining 1 member was not matched because they were recorded as being from outside the London area. The regional matched control group consisted of a total of 24,266 records.

Annex B provides information on the similarity between the treatment and control groups. Further data on the matching process is available upon request.

Results

The one-year proven re-offending rate[1] for 82[2] offenders who registered with, or received short-term support from, GOALS UK was 37%. This compares to 34% for a national matched control group of 191,729 similar offender records from England and Wales (see Figure 1).

Similar results are shown in the regional analysis, with the one-year proven re-offending rate[1] for 81[4] offenders who registered with, or received short-term support from, GOALS UK was 36%, compared to 34% for a regional matched control group of 24,266 similar offender records from the London area (See Figure 2).

Figures 1 and 2 also present the 95% confidence intervals for the re-offending rate of each group, showing the ranges in which the true re-offending rates are likely to lie. For the analyses, the confidence intervals suggest that the true difference in re-offending between the treatment and control groups is:
- between an 8 percentage point reduction and a 14 percentage point increase for the national analysis.
- between a 9 percentage point reduction and an 11 percentage point increase for the regional analysis.

Therefore we do not have significant evidence to demonstrate that registering with, or receiving short-term support from, GOALS UK led to a reduction or an increase in re-offending by the treatment group and, as such, cannot draw a firm conclusion about its impact. The confidence intervals illustrate the fact that both the treatment and control groups are samples of larger populations, and so the re-offending rates are estimates of the true values.

Figure 1: The best estimates for the one-year proven re-offending rate for offenders registering with, or receiving short-term support from, GOALS UK, and for a national matched control group of offenders from England and Wales.
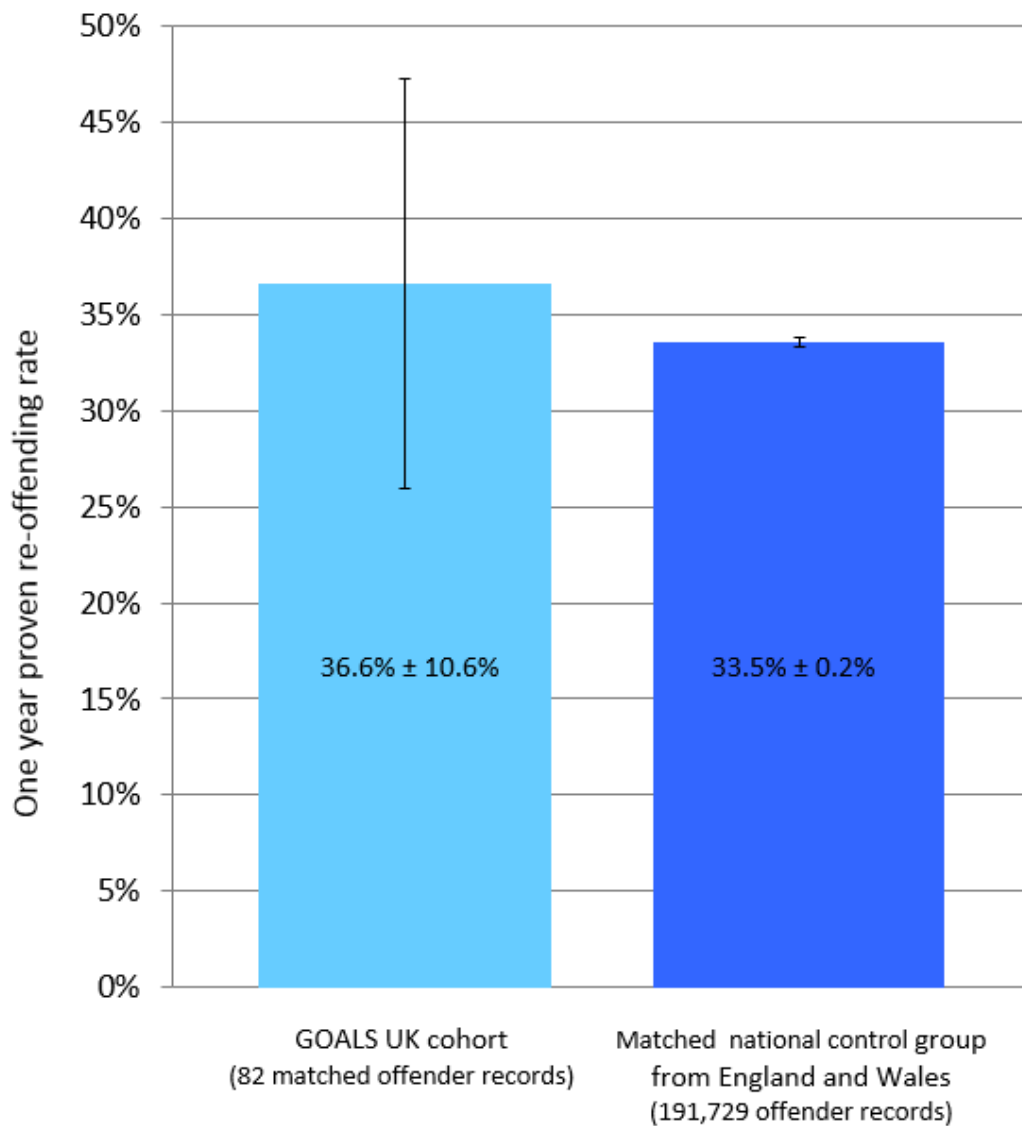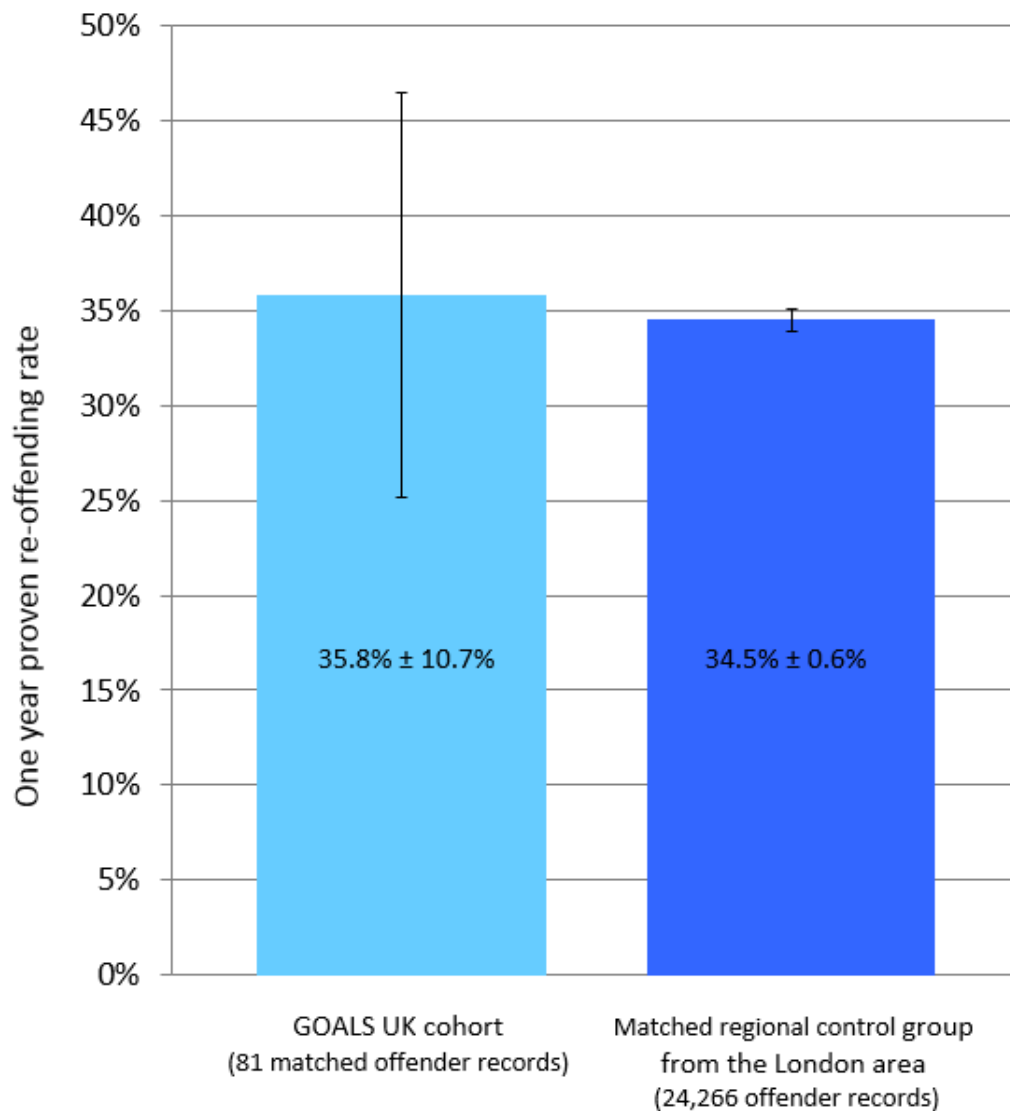
Figure 2: The best estimates for the one-year proven re-offending rate for offenders registering with, or receiving short-term support from, GOALS UK, and for a regional matched control group from the London area.

In these comparisons the confidence interval of the treatment group is wide, which is expected because the size of the treatment group is small. It is recommended that the analysis is repeated on a larger sample in order to increase the precision of the results[6].

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[6] If the measured difference in the one-year re-offending rate is correct for the national analysis, there is a 95% chance that this difference would become statistically significant if the treatment group contained at least 3,327 individuals.

Additional proven re-offending measures

Frequency of one-year proven re-offending

In the national analysis, the frequency of one-year proven re-offending[7] for 82[2] offenders in the treatment group who registered with, or received short-term support from, GOALS UK was 0.90 offences per individual, compared with 0.81 offences per record in the national matched control group of offenders from England and Wales. Testing has shown that this difference in the re-offending frequencies is not statistically significant[8].

Results were similar in the regional analysis, with the frequency of one-year proven re-offending[7] for 81[4] offenders in the treatment group who registered with, or received short-term support from, GOALS UK being 0.88 offences per individual, compared with 0.83 offences per record in the regional matched control group of offenders from the London area. As with the national analysis, this difference in the re-offending frequencies is not statistically significant[9].

Time to first re-offence within a year

In the national analysis, the average time to the first re-offence for the 30 individuals in the treatment group who registered with, or received short-term support from, GOALS UK, and who re-offended within a one-year follow-up period, was 186 days. This compares to 191 days for the 62,115 records with re-offences in a one-year follow-up period from the national matched control group of offenders from England and Wales. Testing has shown that this difference in the time to first re-offence within a year is not statistically significant[10].

Similarly, this measure did not show a statistically significant result in the regional analysis[11]. The average time to the first re-offence for the 29 individuals in the treatment group who registered with, or received short-term support from, GOALS UK, and who re-offended within a one-year follow-up period, was 185 days. This compares to 192 days for the 9,725 records with re-offences in a one-year follow-up period from the regional matched control group of offenders from the London area.

Both of the above results are in line with the findings around the indicator of one-year proven re-offending, the subject of this report. The same caveats and limitations apply to these findings, which are described in Appendix A.

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[7] The **frequency of one-year proven re-offending** is defined as the number of re-offences that were committed during a one-year follow-up period and that were proven through receipt of a court conviction, caution, reprimand or warning during the follow-up or during a further six-month waiting period. The one-year follow-up period begins when an offender leaves custody, starts their court sentence or receives their caution.

[8] The p-value for the frequency of one-year proven re-offending is 0.59 in the national analysis. Statistical significance testing is described on page 11 of this report.

[9] The p-value for the frequency of one-year proven re-offending is 0.79 in the regional analysis.

[10] The p-value for the time to first re-offence is 0.67 in the national analysis.

[11] The p-value for the time to first re-offence is 0.62 in the regional analysis.

Measures of severity of re-offending/ re-offending resulting in custody

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.

Appendix A

Caveats and limitations

The statistical matching used in this analysis is based on data collected for administrative purposes, and it has only been possible to control for a limited amount of information about the offenders within the treatment and control groups. While these include details of each offender's previous criminal history, alongside more basic offender characteristics such as age, gender and ethnicity, it is possible that other important contextual information that may help to explain the results has not been accounted for. For example, we do not know whether individuals have participated in other treatment programmes that may have affected their re-offending behaviour.

Many organisations that work with offenders will target specific needs of individuals, such as housing or employability. However, the processes used to select those individuals could lead to selection bias, which can impact on the results. Individuals may, for example, self-select into a service because they are highly motivated to address one or more of their needs. This would result in a positive selection bias, meaning that these people would generally be expected to have a better re-offending outcome than a randomly selected sample. Alternatively, some organisations might specifically target those who are known to have more complex needs and whose attitudes to addressing their needs are more challenging. This would result in a negative selection bias, meaning that these individuals would generally be expected to have a poorer re-offending outcome than a randomly selected sample, because they are not motivated to address their needs. However, factors which would lead to selection bias in either direction are not represented in our underlying data, and cannot be reflected in our modelling. This means that all results should be interpreted with care, as selection bias cannot be fully accounted for in analyses.

Furthermore, only 82 of the 321 individuals whose details were given to the Justice Data Lab featured in the matched treatment group (see 'Processing the data' section). In particular, people with no criminal convictions can receive support from GOALS UK, but these people cannot appear in either the treatment or control groups for the analysis because they have no re-offending history. As such, the final groups may not be representative of all people who attended the programme, and the results of the analysis can only be applied to young offenders. In addition, people who have ever been convicted of a sexual offence are removed from all analyses by the Justice Data Lab, as the re-offending patterns of these individuals are known to be very different from those of other offenders.

The re-offending rates included in this analysis **should not** be compared with the national average, the regional average within London, nor with any other reports or publications which include re-offending rates – including those assessing the impact of other interventions. The re-offending rates included in this report are specific to the characteristics of those people who registered with, or received short-term

support from, GOALS UK, and who could be matched to a control group. Any other comparison would not be comparing like for like.

For a full description of the methodology, including the matching process, see www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/justice-data-lab/justice-data-lab-methodology.pdf.

Assessing statistical significance

This analysis uses statistical testing to assess whether a measured difference in re-offending behaviour can reasonably be attributed to chance, or whether the intervention is likely to have led to a real change in behaviour. The outcome of each statistical test is a 'p-value', which is between 0 and 1, indicating the level of confidence that a real difference in re-offending between the two groups has been observed. The smaller the p-value, the less likely it is that chance is the explanation for the measured difference.

If the p-value is less than, or equal to, 0.05, the result is regarded as 'significant' because chance appears to be an unlikely explanation. The measured difference is then attributable either to the treatment intervention or to some other difference between the treatment and control groups (see 'caveats and limitations' above). The confidence intervals in the figure are helpful in judging whether something is significant at the 0.05 level. If the confidence intervals for the two groups do not overlap, it indicates that there is significant evidence of a real difference between their re-offending rates.

Annex B

Table 1: Characteristics of offenders in the treatment and national control groups

Variable	Treatment group	Matched control group	Standardised difference (%)
Number of individuals in group	**82**	**191,729**	
Ethnicity			
White	38%	36%	3
Black	41%	42%	-1
Asian, other and unknown	21%	22%	-3
Nationality			
UK Citizen	67%	67%	1
Foreign national	6%	6%	0
Unknown	27%	27%	-1
Gender			
Proportion who are female	24%	25%	-1
Proportion who are male	76%	75%	1
Age			
Mean age at index offence	17	17	0
Mean age at first contact with criminal justice system	14	15	-3
Index offence[1]			
Violent offences	26%	26%	0
Robbery	20%	21%	-2
Public disorder and riot	7%	7%	0
Burglary, theft and handling	20%	19%	2
Theft of vehicles, other motoring offences and criminal damage	10%	10%	0
Drugs offences, including possession, production and supply	12%	12%	0
Absconding, bail offences and other offences	6%	6%	1
Sentence type			
Cautions, discharges and other sentences	22%	22%	0
Fines	6%	6%	1
Youth referral orders	28%	30%	-3
Community orders and youth rehabilitation orders	35%	34%	3
Custodial sentences of up to 4 years	9%	9%	0
Criminal history[2]			
Mean Copas rate[3]	-1.37	-1.41	6
Mean total previous offences	5	4	5
Mean previous criminal convictions[4]	2	2	5
Mean previous custodial sentences	0	0	1
Mean previous court orders	2	2	6
Employment and benefit history			
In P45 employment (year prior to conviction)	22%	22%	0
In P45 employment (month prior to conviction)	12%	12%	0
Claiming out-of-work benefits (year prior to conviction)[5]	12%	12%	0
Claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (year prior to conviction)	5%	6%	-4

Claiming Incapacity Benefit and/or Income Support (year prior to conviction)	10%	9%	**2**
Notes:			

[1] The index offence type is based on the Offender Group Reconviction Scale (OGRS). Further details on the make-up of categories is available upon request.

[2] This includes all proven offences committed prior to the index offence, except those receiving a penalty notice for disorder.

[3] The Copas rate controls for the rate at which an offender has built up convictions throughout their criminal career. The higher the rate, the more convictions an offender has in a given amount of time.

[4] A single conviction can relate to multiple offences.

[5] The category of out-of-work benefits includes people on Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA), Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), Incapacity Benefit (IB) and Income Support (IS), but excludes those whose primary benefit is Carer's Allowance (CA).

All figures, except mean Copas rate, are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Standardised difference key:

Green – the two groups are well matched on this variable (-5% to 5%)

Amber – the two groups are reasonably matched on this variable (6% to 10% or -6% to -10%)

Red – the two groups are poorly matched on this variable (greater than 10% or less than -10%)

Table 2: Characteristics of offenders in the treatment and regional control groups

Variable	Treatment group	Matched control group	Standardised difference (%)
Number of individuals in group	**81**	**24,266**	
Ethnicity			
White	38%	38%	0
Black	41%	41%	-1
Asian, other and unknown	21%	21%	1
Nationality			
UK Citizen	67%	68%	-2
Foreign national	6%	6%	0
Unknown	27%	26%	3
Gender			
Proportion who are female	25%	27%	-5
Proportion who are male	75%	73%	5
Age			
Mean age at index offence	17	17	-6
Mean age at first contact with criminal justice system	14	14	-1
Index offence[1]			
Violent offences	26%	28%	-4
Robbery	20%	21%	-4
Public disorder and riot	7%	7%	2
Burglary, theft and handling	20%	18%	4
Theft of vehicles, other motoring offences and criminal damage	9%	8%	1
Drugs offences, including possession, production and supply	12%	12%	1
Absconding, bail offences and other offences	6%	6%	2
Sentence type			
Cautions, discharges and other sentences	22%	20%	4
Fines	6%	6%	-1
Youth referral orders	28%	29%	-1
Community orders and youth rehabilitation orders	35%	35%	-2
Custodial sentences of up to 4 years	9%	9%	0
Criminal history[2]			
Mean Copas rate[3]	-1.37	-1.39	2
Mean total previous offences	5	5	1
Mean previous criminal convictions[4]	2	2	3
Mean previous custodial sentences	0	0	-2
Mean previous court orders	2	2	3
Employment and benefit history			
In P45 employment (year prior to conviction)	22%	25%	-6
In P45 employment (month prior to conviction)	12%	15%	-7
Claiming out-of-work benefits (year prior to conviction)[5]	12%	13%	-1
Claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (year prior to conviction)	5%	6%	-3
Claiming Incapacity Benefit and/or Income Support (year prior to conviction)	10%	9%	3

Notes:			
[1] The index offence type is based on the Offender Group Reconviction Scale (OGRS). Further details on the make-up of categories is available upon request.			
[2] This includes all proven offences committed prior to the index offence, except those receiving a penalty notice for disorder.			
[3] The Copas rate controls for the rate at which an offender has built up convictions throughout their criminal career. The higher the rate, the more convictions an offender has in a given amount of time.			
[4] A single conviction can relate to multiple offences.			
[5] The category of out-of-work benefits includes people on Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA), Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), Incapacity Benefit (IB) and Income Support (IS), but excludes those whose primary benefit is Carer's Allowance (CA).			
All figures, except mean Copas rate, are rounded to the nearest whole number.			
Standardised difference key:			
Green – the two groups are well matched on this variable (-5% to 5%)			
Amber – the two groups are reasonably matched on this variable (6% to 10% or -6% to -10%)			
Red – the two groups are poorly matched on this variable (greater than 10% or less than -10%)			

The quality of matching between the treatment and control groups is assessed using the standardised differences for all variables that are included in the matching process. Tables 1 and 2 show that the standardised differences for most key variables are between -5% and 5%, indicating that the two groups are well matched on the majority of characteristics that were found to have associations with receiving treatment and/or with re-offending. Those variables for which the standardised differences are highlighted in amber show a reasonable match between the treatment and control groups, indicating slight dissimilarities between the groups on these characteristics.

Annex C

Glossary of terms

95% confidence intervals
If the measured value for a re-offending measure were equal to the true mean, 95% of repeat analyses would give a value that is within the measured 95% confidence intervals.

Copas rate
The Copas rate controls for the rate at which an offender has built up convictions throughout their criminal career. The higher the rate, the more convictions an offender has in a given amount of time.

Custodial sentence
A sentence that requires an individual to serve time in custody as a result of a conviction for one or more offences.

Follow-up period
This refers to the time period for which re-offending is measured from the index date.

Frequency of one-year proven re-offending
The number of re-offences committed in a one-year follow-up period which were proven through receipt of a court conviction, caution, reprimand or warning during the follow-up or in a further six month waiting period. The one-year follow-up period begins when an offender leaves custody, starts their court sentence, or from receipt of their caution.

Index date
The date from which proven re-offences are measured. This is defined as the date of prison discharge for custodial sentences, the date of court conviction for non-custodial sentences, the date of receipt for a caution, reprimand or final warning or the date of a positive drug test.

Index offence
The offence of which an individual has been convicted, which leads to a sentence and an index date.

Matched control group
The matched control group contains all individuals who have available re-offence records, who are eligible for analysis, who did not receive the treatment intervention and who could be matched to at least one member of the matched treatment group.

Matched treatment group
The matched treatment group contains all individuals who have available re-offence records, who are eligible for analysis, who received the treatment intervention and who could be matched to at least one member of the matched control group.

One-year proven re-offending rate
The proportion of offenders in a cohort who commit an offence in a one-year follow-up period, where the offence was proven through receipt of a court conviction, caution, reprimand or warning during the one-year follow-up or in a further six month waiting period.

p-value
A value, between 0 and 1, that indicates the likelihood that a real difference in re-offending between the treatment and control groups has been observed. A p-value that is less than, or equal to, 0.05 is a significant piece of evidence in support of the idea that the treatment intervention is effective in changing re-offending behaviour – provided the two groups are well matched. Statistical significance testing is described on page 11 of this report.

Re-offence
An offence committed following conviction of the index offence which was proven through receipt of a court conviction, caution, reprimand or warning. The first re-offence refers to the first offence committed after conviction for the index offence.

Severity
The Ministry of Justice and the Home Office have developed a severity classification system to identify three tiers of offences, with tier 1 offences being the most serious and tier 3 offences being the least serious. Annex A of the 'Measurements and definitions' document, which accompanies proven re-offending quarterly statistics, gives the latest classification for tier 1 and tier 2 offences – please see the following link:
www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/368435/proven-reoffending-definitions-measurement-oct13.pdf

Standardised difference
The standardised differences shown in Annex B measure the differences between the treatment and control groups in terms of the variation within each group. Each standardised difference represents the quality of the matching between the two groups for a single variable, with a smaller difference representing a better match.

Time to re-offending
Time to re-offending is defined as the average number of days between the index date and the date of the first re-offence within a one-year follow-up period. This measure is only calculated for individuals who re-offended during the one-year follow-up period.

Treatment intervention

The programme whose impact on re-offending is being analysed.

True mean
The true mean for a re-offending measure is the mean value that would be obtained from many repeat analyses. It is the 'real value' of the re-offending measure for large populations of people with the characteristics of the matched treatment and control groups. The measured value for a re-offending measure is the best available estimate of the true mean.

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General information about the official statistics system of the United Kingdom is available from www.statistics.gov.uk