



Summary

This analysis assessed the impact on re-offending of an assessment / advice session with a housing advisor from Shelter with offenders who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. The one year proven re-offending rate¹ for 99 offenders who received advice from Shelter was 79%, compared with 70% for a matched control group of similar offenders. Statistical significance testing has shown that this difference in the re-offending rates is statistically significant²; meaning that we can be confident that there is a real difference in the re-offending rate for the group that Shelter worked with by between 0.4 and 18 percentage points.

However, it should be noted that it has only been possible to control for a limited amount of information about the offenders who are included within this analysis. While these include details of each offenders' previous criminal, benefit and employment history alongside more basic offender characteristics such as age, gender and ethnicity, it is possible that other important contextual information that may help explain the results has not been accounted for. In particular we have been unable to statistically control for accommodation or homelessness status in this analysis, or any other factors associated with resettlement following a custodial sentence. The control group against which re-offending rates for those using Shelter's advice service have been compared will therefore include offenders both with and without the specific accommodation needs that Shelter are seeking to address. Therefore, we cannot say with any certainty that it was the service delivered by Shelter that led to the observed difference in re-offending, and that the findings in this report should be interpreted with care. Further detail about the caveats and limitations to this analysis can be found later in this document.

What you can say: the one year proven re-offending rate for people whom Shelter worked with at HMP Leeds was 79%; this rate is higher than the matched control group by between 0.4 and 18 percentage points. It is possible that this could be explained by characteristics (in particular factors associated with homelessness or accommodation issues) of this cohort which are not reflected in the MoJ underlying data.

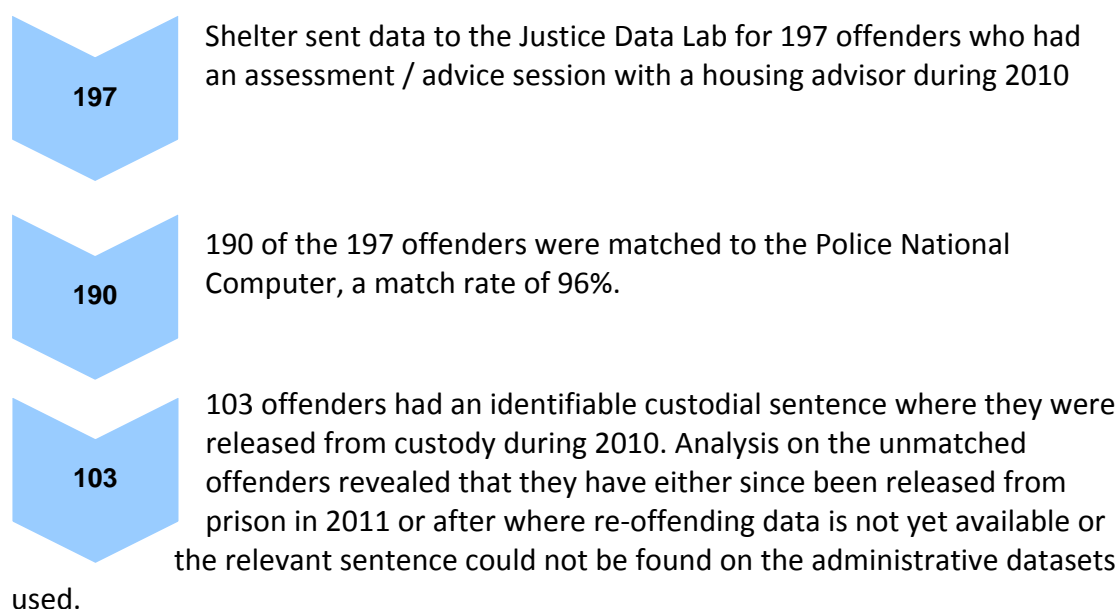
¹ The **one year proven re-offending rate** is defined as the proportion of offenders in a cohort who commit an offence in a one year follow-up period which was proven through receipt of a court conviction, caution, reprimand or warning during the one year follow-up or in a further six month waiting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

² The p-value for this significance test was 0.03. Statistical significance testing is described on page 5 of this report.

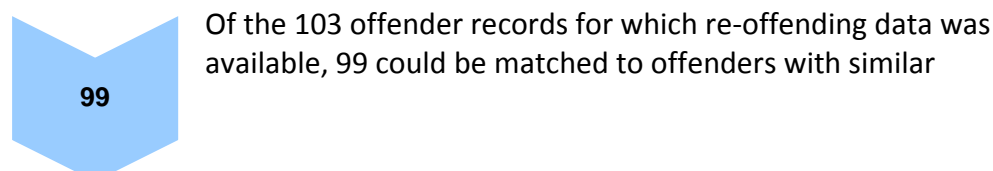
Introduction

Shelter is an organisation working with offenders to keep previous accommodation or to procure new accommodation upon release. Shelter's Prison Housing Advice Service in Yorkshire and Humberside provides information, advice, advocacy and support on all aspects of housing and housing related debt, including finding accommodation and securing existing homes or tenancies. The service is funded to work with offenders in custody and up to the point of release. Offenders can access the service through self referral or referral by an in-prison service, but does not target specific offenders. A face to face assessment is conducted which covers all aspects of an offenders housing situation and needs. Following the initial assessment the adviser will discuss with the client what their housing rights are and what options are available to them. From this initial appointment the adviser will carry out casework according to the clients wishes to resolve their housing issues/ concerns whether this is finding the client somewhere to go on release; dealing with housing related debts; securing an existing tenancy; mediating; or supporting the client to make a homeless applications or application to other housing/ support provider. An advisor sees a client face-to-face for approximately 20-30 minutes. There may be further meetings depending on the case. The total amount of time spent with a client is approximately two hours, but this varies per case. There is no capacity to work with offender past the point of release but clients are referred on to other services as appropriate to their needs. This analysis relates to offenders who received advice from Shelter during 2010.

Processing the Data



Creating a Matched Control Group



characteristics, but who did not receive a service from Shelter. In total the matched control group consisted of 41,001 offender records.

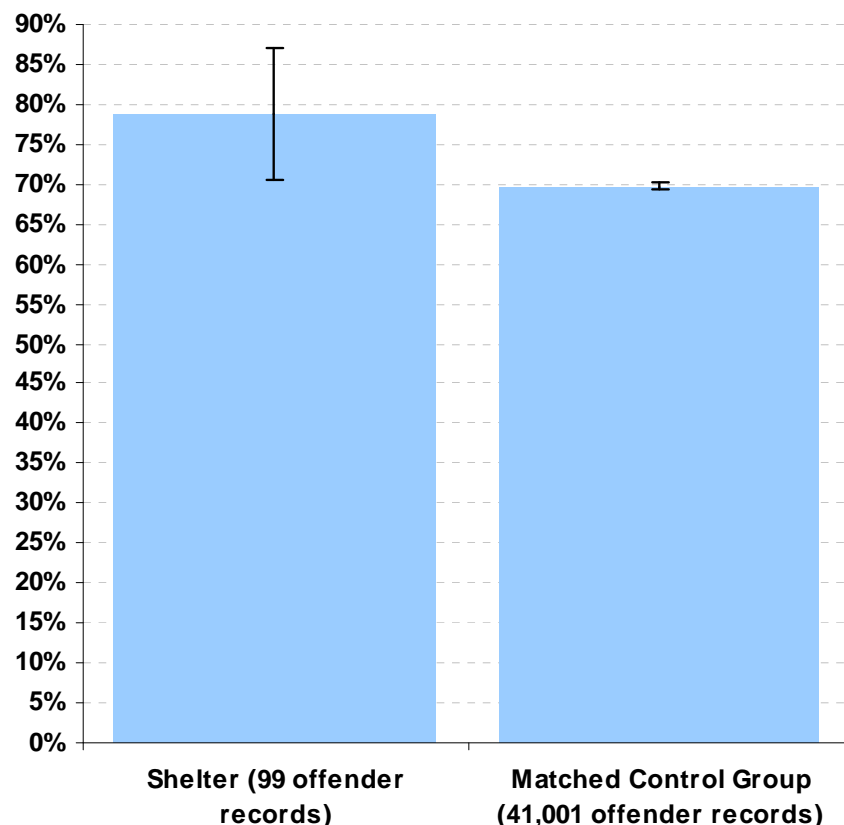
The Annex provides information on the similarity between the treatment and control groups. Further data on the matching process is available upon request.

Results

The one year proven re-offending rate for 99 offenders who had an assessment/advice session with a Housing Adviser was 79%. This compares to 70% for a matched control group of similar offenders. This information is displayed in Figure 1.

Figure 1 below presents the 95 per cent confidence intervals for the re-offending rates of both groups, i.e. the range in which we can be 95 per cent sure that the true re-offending rate for the groups lie. For this analysis we can be confident that the true difference in re-offending between two groups is between 0.4 and 18 percentage points. It is important to show confidence intervals because both the treatment and matched control groups are samples of larger populations; the re-offending rate is therefore an estimate for each population based on a sample, rather than the actual rate.

Figure 1: The best estimates for the one year proven re-offending rate for offenders who had an assessment/advice session with a Housing Adviser and a matched control group.



Caveats and Limitations

The statistical methods used in this analysis are based on data collected for administrative purposes. In this instance, it would have been particularly beneficial to be able to take account of accommodation issues or homelessness status for both the group that Shelter worked with, and the matched control group. This information is currently not available routinely to the Justice Data Lab. Whilst the success of the matching described in the Annex suggests that the individuals were well matched to the control group on key characteristics such as demographic and criminal history, individuals with homelessness or accommodation problems are known to have particular difficulties in breaking the cycle of re-offending. As this key information is missing from the underlying data used, the results of this analysis should be interpreted with particular care.

It is also possible that there are additional underlying characteristics about the individuals included in the analysis which were not captured by the data, for example attendance on other interventions targeted at offenders, that may have impacted re-offending behaviour.

Many organisations that work with offenders will look to target specific needs of individuals; for example improving housing, or employability. However, how the organisations select those individuals to work with could lead to selection bias, which can impact on the direction of the results. For example; individuals may 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 for these persons we would generally expect a better re-offending outcome as they are more motivated. Alternatively, some organisations might specifically target persons 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 for these persons we would generally expect a poorer re-offending outcome as they are not motivated. 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 accounted for in analyses.

Furthermore, only 99 of the 197 offenders originally shared with the MoJ were in the final treatment group. The section “Processing the Data” outlines key steps taken to obtain the final group used in the analysis. In many analyses, the creation of matched control group will mean that some individuals, who will usually have particular characteristics – for example a particular ethnicity, or have committed a certain type of offence, will need to be removed to ensure that the modelling will work. Steps will always be taken at this stage to preserve as many individuals as possible, but due to the intricacies of statistical modelling some attrition at this stage will often result. As such, the final treatment group may not be representative of all offenders who have received advice from Shelter. In all analyses from the Justice Data Lab, persons who have ever been convicted of sex offences will be removed, as these individuals are known to have very different patterns of re-offending.

The re-offending rates included in this analysis **should not** be compared to the national average, nor 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 persons who received an assessment / advice session from Shelter, and could be matched. 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 any differences in the observed re-offending rates are due to chance, or if the intervention is likely to have led to a real change in behaviour. The outcome of the statistical testing is a value between 0 and 1, called a 'p-value', indicating the certainty that a real difference in re-offending between the two groups has been observed. A value closer to 0 indicates that the difference in the observed re-offending rates is not merely due to chance. For example, a p-value of 0.01 suggests there is only a 1 per cent likelihood that any observed difference in re-offending has been caused by chance.

For the purposes of the analysis presented in this report, we have taken a p-value of up to 0.05 as indicative of a real difference in re-offending rates between the treatment and control groups.

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, this indicates that there is a real difference between the re-offending rates.

Annex

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

	Treatment Group	Matched Control Group	Standardised Difference
Number in group	99	41,001	
Ethnicity			
White	91%	91%	0
Black	6%	6%	0
Asian	3%	3%	0
Nationality			
UK Citizen	96%	96%	0
Foreign National	4%	4%	0
Gender			
Proportion that were male	100%	100%	0
Age			
Mean age at Index Offence	33	33	-1
Mean age at first contact with CJS	15	15	-1
Index Offence¹			
Violent offences including robbery	31%	31%	1
Burglary	14%	14%	1
Theft and handling	29%	29%	0
Fraud and Forgery	4%	4%	1
Motoring offences, including theft of and from Vehicles	8%	8%	-1
Drugs	7%	7%	0
Other	6%	6%	-1
Length of Custodial Sentence			
6 months or less	57%	57%	0
6 months to 12 months	10%	10%	0
12 months to 4 years	29%	29%	0
4 years to 10 years	4%	4%	0
Criminal History²			
Mean Copas Rate	-0.099	-0.096	-1
Mean total previous offences	68	68	-1
Mean previous criminal convictions	29	30	-2
Mean previous custodial sentences	11	11	-2
Mean previous court orders	7	7	1
Employment and Benefit History			
In P45 employment (year prior to conviction)	23%	23%	0
In P45 employment (month prior to conviction)	12%	12%	0
Claiming Out of Work Benefits (year prior to conviction) ³	88%	87%	2
Claiming Job Seekers Allowance (year prior to conviction)	64%	61%	6
Claiming Incapacity Benefit (year prior to conviction)	42%	42%	1
Claiming Income Support (year prior to conviction)	13%	13%	1
Notes:			

1 Index Offence is based on OGRS categories. Further details on make-up of categories available upon request.
2 All excluding Penalty Notices for Disorder. All prior to Index Offence.
3 Out of Work Benefits include people on Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA), Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), Incapacity Benefits (IB) and Income Support (IS) but it does not count people whose primary benefit is Carer's Allowance (CA).
All figures (except mean copas rate) are rounded to the nearest whole number, this may mean that percentages do not sum to 100%.
Standardised Difference Key
Green - the two groups were well matched on this variable (-5% to 5%)
Amber - the two groups were reasonably matched on this variable (6% to 10% or -6% to -10%)
Red - the two groups were poorly matched on this variable (greater than 10% or less than -10%)

Table 1 shows that the two groups were well matched on all variables found to have associations with receiving treatment and/or re-offending. Nearly all of the standardised mean differences are highlighted green because they were between -5% and 5%, indicating close matches on these characteristics.

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

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