



**NOMS Bail Accommodation and Support Services  
Individuals on court bail who later received a prison or probation sentence**

### Summary

This analysis assessed the impact on re-offending of persons who received support provided by Bail Accommodation and Support Services (BASS) whilst they were on court bail and subsequently were convicted of either a prison or probation sentence. The one year proven re-offending rate<sup>1</sup> for 152 offenders who received support by BASS whilst on court bail, and subsequently were convicted with either a prison or probation sentence was 50%, compared with 48% for a matched control group of similar offenders. Statistical significance testing has shown that this difference is not significant<sup>2</sup>; suggesting that at this stage there is insufficient evidence to draw a conclusion about the impact support from BASS had on re-offending on those persons who were on court bail and subsequently were convicted of either a prison or probation sentence. However, the results of the analysis do not mean that the support provided failed to impact on re-offending.

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. Due to the nature of our underlying administrative data we have unfortunately been unable to statistically control for accommodation problems, mental health problems, education, or any other factors that may be associated with referrals to BASS. It should also be noted that we have been unable to statistically control for court bail status in the matched control group. This also means that the matched control group may contain offenders who were released on court bail before being convicted and those who were not. Those offenders in the control group who were eligible for court bail, but not BASS, would have resided in their own accommodation for the duration of their bail, or if they were not eligible for court bail they would have been remanded in custody. The control group against which re-offending rates for those who received support from BASS have been compared with will therefore include offenders both with and without the specific needs that BASS are seeking to address, and those who have, and have not been eligible for court bail. It is therefore important that the findings in this report are interpreted with care. Further detail about the caveats and limitations to this analysis can be found later in this document.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> The difference was non-significant,  $p = 0.57$ . Statistical significance testing is described on page 7 of this report.

**What you can say:** There is insufficient evidence at this stage to draw a conclusion about the impact of receiving support provided by BASS whilst on court bail, and subsequently being convicted of either a prison or probation sentence, on re-offending.

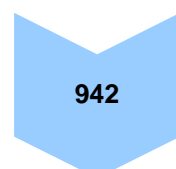
**What you cannot say:** This analysis shows that support provided by BASS increased proven re-offending by 2 percentage points, or by any other amount.

## Introduction

Bail Accommodation and Support Services provide support to those persons who have been referred to them by the probation trusts, courts and prisons across England and Wales. These persons would normally be living in the community on bail, Home Detention Curfew (HDC) or Intensive Alternative to Custody (IAC), but do not have a suitable address or are in need of some extra support during their Order or Licence. BASS provide either a support only service, or both accommodation and support, aiming to address the needs that are thought to drive offender behaviour. These are needs such as housing and education, as well as helping offenders comply with their Order and Licence conditions. This analysis relates to those offenders who received support provided by BASS since Stonham took over the contract in June 2010, were on bail and subsequently were convicted of either a prison or probation sentence.

## Processing the Data

It should be noted that due to the nature of this analysis a significant number of offenders were lost when processing the data as it was unclear whether or not these offenders were later convicted following their court bail. If an individual did not receive a subsequent conviction, then it will not be possible for us to identify the original offence in our underlying datasets. This reports looks at the effectiveness of NOMS Bail Accommodation and Support Services (BASS), for individuals who received the service from Stonham between June 2010 and December 2010. As this is very close to the end of 2010, the latest period for which we currently have re-offending data for, we will struggle to find subsequent convictions for the majority of individuals. Furthermore, a total of 243 of the original number of offenders that were sent to the Justice Data Lab did not finish their intervention until after 2010, a period for which re-offending data is not currently available.



Bail Accommodation and Support Services sent data to the Justice Data Lab for 942 offenders who received support from BASS whilst on court bail between 2010 and 2012.



243 of the original 942 offenders did not finish receiving their support until after 2010, a period for which re-offending data is not currently available. These 243 individuals were removed from the analysis at this point.



649

649 of the 699 offenders were matched to the Police National Computer, a match rate of 93%.



221

221 offenders received support from BASS and were subsequently convicted during 2010.

Some of the individuals that we were not able to match may not have been convicted for their bail offence and therefore a convicted offence would not exist in our underlying data. Some other individuals were not found due to their most recent proven offence being more than five months before or after the end of the support provided by BASS. A cut off point of five months has been used in order to ensure the relevant convicted offence for which the offender was on bail for was found during the analysis. This means that any observable difference in the one year proven re-offending rate would be more likely to be attributable to the work of BASS, rather than any other factors which may have had an effect. Other individuals will not have been found as they were convicted after 2010, a period of which re-offending data is not currently available.



153

153 of the 221 offenders had an identifiable prison or probation sentence following their court bail. Please refer to the separate Justice Data Lab Report detailing analysis on those individuals who received support from BASS whilst they were on court bail, and subsequently received a conditional discharge or fine.

## Creating a Matched Control Group



152

Of the 153 offender records for which re-offending data was available, 152 could be matched to offenders with similar characteristics, but who did not receive support from BASS. In total the matched control group consisted of 104,178 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.

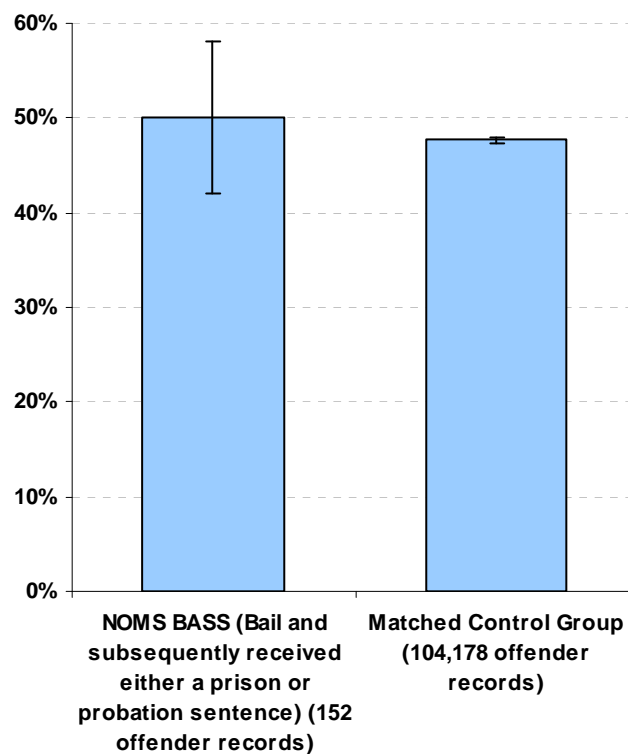
## Results

The one year proven re-offending rate for 152 offenders who received support from BASS whilst on court bail, and subsequently were convicted with either a prison or

probation sentence was 50%. This compares to 48% for a matched control group of similar offenders. This information is displayed in Figure 1 below.

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 the two groups is between -6 and 11 percentage points. However, because this difference crosses 0, we cannot be sure either way that receiving support from BASS led to a reduction or an increase in re-offending and thus cannot draw a firm conclusion about its impact. 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 received support from BASS whilst on court bail and were subsequently convicted with either a prison or probation sentence, and a matched control group*



The precision of this estimate could be improved if the size of the BASS support group used in the analysis was increased. It is recommended that the analysis is repeated on a larger sample when future years of information become available for the BASS contract delivered by Stonham.

## **Additional proven re-offending measures**

### **Frequency of re-offending**

The frequency of one year proven re-offending for 152 offenders who received support from BASS whilst on court bail, and subsequently were convicted with either a prison or probation sentence was 1.97 offences per individual, compared with 1.89 per individual in the matched control group. Statistical significance testing has shown that this difference in the re-offending rates is not statistically significant<sup>3</sup>.

This result is 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 below.

### **Caveats and Limitations**

The statistical methods used in this analysis are based on data collected for administrative purposes. 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 offender's 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. 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.

In this instance, it would have been particularly beneficial to be able to take account of various factors such as accommodation, mental health and education issues for both the group that BASS worked with, and the matched control group. 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 accommodation, mental health and education 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 should also be noted that we have been unable to statistically control for court bail status in the matched control group. This also means that the matched control group may contain offenders who were released on court bail before being convicted and those who were not. Those offenders in the control group who were eligible for court bail, but not BASS, would have resided in their own accommodation for the duration of their bail, or if they were not eligible for court bail they would have been remanded in custody. The control group against which re-offending rates for those who received support from BASS have been compared with will therefore include offenders both with and without the specific needs that BASS are seeking to address,

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<sup>3</sup> The p-value for this significance test was 0.74. Statistical significance testing is described on page 7 of this report.

and those who have, and have not been eligible for court bail. It is therefore important that the findings in this report are interpreted with care.

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 152 of the 942 offenders originally shared with the MoJ were in the final treatment group (although, further Data Lab reports detail analysis with other sentence types). 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 received support from BASS that were on court bail and subsequently were convicted of either a prison or probation sentence. 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.

Additionally, due to limitations in the underlying administrative data used for this analysis, it was not possible to statistically control for those persons who re-offended whilst on court bail before being convicted with a prison or probation sentence in the group that BASS worked with and the matched control group. This means that the conclusions drawn in this analysis are only applicable to individuals that BASS targeted whilst on bail and subsequently received a prison or probation sentence.

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 support from BASS, were on court bail followed by a conviction of either a

prison or probation sentence, 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](http://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
<b>Number in group</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>104,178</b>	
<b>Ethnicity</b>			
White	93%	93%	<b>0</b>
Other	7%	7%	<b>0</b>
<b>Nationality</b>			
UK Citizen	93%	93%	<b>0</b>
Foreign National	7%	7%	<b>0</b>
<b>Gender</b>			
Proportion that were male	84%	84%	<b>2</b>
<b>Age</b>			
Mean age at Index Offence	32	32	<b>0</b>
Mean age at first contact with CJS	20	21	<b>-2</b>
<b>Index Offence<sup>1</sup></b>			
Violent offences including robbery	54%	54%	<b>1</b>
Burglary	9%	9%	<b>-1</b>
Theft	23%	23%	<b>0</b>
Other <sup>2</sup>	14%	15%	<b>0</b>
<b>Criminal History<sup>3</sup></b>			
Mean Copas Rate	-0.853	-0.845	<b>-1</b>
Mean total previous offences	23	24	<b>-1</b>
Mean previous criminal convictions	11	11	<b>0</b>
Mean previous custodial sentences	3	3	<b>-1</b>
Mean previous court orders	3	3	<b>-1</b>
<b>Employment and Benefit History</b>			
In P45 employment (year prior to conviction)	28%	29%	<b>-1</b>
In P45 employment (month prior to conviction)	13%	13%	<b>0</b>
Claiming Out of Work Benefits (year prior to conviction) <sup>4</sup>	88%	87%	<b>1</b>
Claiming Job Seekers Allowance (year prior to conviction)	66%	66%	<b>0</b>
Claiming Incapacity Benefit (year prior to conviction)	42%	42%	<b>0</b>
Claiming Income Support (year prior to conviction)	16%	16%	<b>1</b>
<b>Notes:</b>			
<p>1 Index Offence is based on OGRS categories. Further details on make-up of categories available upon request.                  2 Other offences including fraud, forgery, motoring offences, criminal or malicious damage and drugs.                  3 All excluding Penalty Notices for Disorder. All prior to Index Offence.                  4 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).</p>			



All figures (except mean copas rate) are rounded to the nearest whole number, this may mean that percentages do not sum to 100%.
<b>Standardised Difference Key</b>
<b>Green - the two groups were well matched on this variable (-5% to 5%)</b>
<b>Amber - the two groups were reasonably matched on this variable (6% to 10% or -6% to -10%)</b>
<b>Red - the two groups were poorly matched on this variable (greater than 10% or less than -10%)</b>

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

## Contact Points

Press enquiries should be directed to the Ministry of Justice press office:

Tel: 020 3334 3555

Other enquiries about the analysis should be directed to:

### Justice Data Lab Team

Ministry of Justice

Justice Data Lab

Justice Statistical Analytical Services

7<sup>th</sup> Floor

102 Petty France

London

SW1H 9AJ

Tel: 0203 334 4396

E-mail: [Justice.DataLab@justice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Justice.DataLab@justice.gsi.gov.uk)

General enquiries about the statistical work of the Ministry of Justice can be e-mailed to: [statistics.enquiries@justice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:statistics.enquiries@justice.gsi.gov.uk)

General information about the official statistics system of the United Kingdom is available from [www.statistics.gov.uk](http://www.statistics.gov.uk)

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