



# Pre-Court Diversion

## Toolkit technical report

Hannah Gaffney, David P. Farrington and Howard White

June 2021

*This report is produced in collaboration with staff from the Campbell Collaboration Secretariat. It is a derivative product, which summarises information from Campbell systematic reviews, and other reviews, to support evidence-informed decision making’.*

### **Abstract/Plain Language summary**

Diversion can occur at several points in the criminal justice system: pre-charge, post-charge, or in court, through alternate forms of sentencing. The current technical report is concerned with 'pre-charge' diversion, i.e., pre-court diversion.

Pre-charge diversion may be without any additional intervention (caution, reprimand or warning only) or with an intervention which may be reparative, restorative, rehabilitative or restrictive. In the United States there are formal diversion programmes to which a youth may be referred. In England and Wales youth may be referred to the Youth Liaison and Diversion Service which connects them to existing agencies.

Pre-court diversion programmes are targeted rather than universal prevention. Specific youth are targeted for participation in a pre-court diversion programme, namely those who have committed an offence and come into contact with the criminal justice system. Moreover, the intervention itself is targeted and individualised for each child.

This technical report is mainly based on three systematic reviews: Petrosino et al. (2019); Wilson et al (2018); Wilson and Hoge (2013); and one evaluation of the pilot of the Youth Liaison and Diversion Service in England (Haines et al., 2012).

Diversion programmes may work by (1) avoiding labelling, (2) avoiding association with anti-social peers, (3) reintegrative shaming, which holds youth to account for their actions whilst avoiding stigmatizing them so they reintegrate into the community; and (4) connection to services which address problems the child is facing which may have led to criminal behaviour.

Overall, pre-court diversion programmes are effective in reducing reoffending, compared to formal processing. The observed effect size of 0.144 corresponds to a decrease in reoffending of approximately 13%. The evidence rating is 4.

Wilson et al. (2018) found that overall, diversion was associated with lower reoffending rates than court processing. Wilson and Hoge (2013) similarly report that diversion was more effective in reducing youth reoffending than formal court processing. Petrosino et al. (2019) found that diversion programmes reduced the prevalence, severity, and frequency of official offending, as well as self-reported reoffending.

Wilson and Hoge (2013) found a larger reduction in reoffending for: (1) diversion implemented pre-charge compared to post-charge, (2) younger youth (aged 12-14), (3) evaluations that included mostly White participants; (4) evaluations that included mostly male participants. However, a large portion of evaluations were conducted in the US, and moderator analyses found that US evaluations were associated with greater effectiveness overall. Wilson et al. (2018) found no difference in reoffending between caution only and caution combined with either referral to services or restorative justice.

Qualitative data from the YJLD evaluation highlight the complex vulnerabilities faced by youth referred to the scheme (Haines et al., 2012). Young people reported having had contact with a “panoply of professional agencies” (Haines et al., 2012, p. 17) but some reported feeling let down or disappointed with their experiences and showed some resentment towards intervention attempts. All of the professional staff who were interviewed in the evaluation referred to the “importance and value of diversion” but stated that communication and collaboration across different agencies was a stark barrier to successful and swift implementation.

Diversion without intervention (caution or no further action) is cost-effective since it leads to less subsequent offending and costs less than any of the alternatives. However, it is typically used for less serious offences by first-time offenders, and so results may not generalize to repeat offenders or more serious offences.

### **Objective and approach**

The objective of this technical report is to review the evidence on the effectiveness of pre-court diversion as a prevention strategy for youth reoffending.

Diversion can occur at several points in the criminal justice system: pre-charge, post-charge, or in court, through alternate forms of sentencing. The current technical report is concerned with 'pre-charge' diversion, i.e., pre-court diversion. Pre-charge diversion may be without any additional intervention (caution, reprimand, warning, or no further action) or with an intervention which may be training or counselling-oriented. In the United States there are formal diversion programmes to which a youth may be referred. In England and Wales a number of out of court disposal options are available, and youth may be referred to the Liaison and Diversion service which connects them to existing agencies.

Pre-court diversion involves programmes or initiatives designed to keep children and young people out of the criminal justice system without issuing a criminal charge or formally processing them through the courts. The aim of pre-court diversion is to 'save youth from a life of crime'. The impact of pre-court diversion on rates of reoffending amongst youth will be assessed in comparison to rates of reoffending amongst youth who are processed by the courts.

This technical report is mainly based on three systematic reviews: Petrosino et al. (2019); Wilson et al (2018); Wilson and Hoge (2013).

Petrosino et al. (2019) conducted a meta-analysis of studies that compared the effectiveness of formal processing of juveniles with juveniles who were diverted from the courts (with or without additional intervention). The outcome of interest was the rate of reoffending.

Wilson and Hoge (2013) published a meta-analysis of studies that compared the rate of reoffending by youth who were referred to a diversion programme with reoffending by youth who were 'traditionally processed'. This review also conducted a comparative analysis of the different types of diversion, e.g., cautions versus referral to treatment or structured intervention programmes.

Wilson et al. (2018) conducted a systematic review and meta-analysis of 'pre-charge diversion of youth'. The authors state that this refers to police-led diversion, meaning that diversion strategies, such as cautions, are implemented by the police in lieu of processing a formal charge or referring a juvenile to court for processing. The primary outcome was delinquency, and specifically delinquent behaviours that occur after a youth has been, or has not been, diverted from formal charges by the police.

The following inclusion and exclusion criteria were used to inform the selection of systematic reviews.

#### *Inclusion criteria*

To be included in this report a systematic review must:

- Review diversion programmes implemented with children, or those under the age of 18 years old, in the youth justice system.
- Review the impact of pre-court diversion programmes, where diversion strategies are put in place *before* a youth is charged and/or formally processed by the courts.
- Report quantitative outcomes of youth reoffending measured using self-report measurement instruments or official records.

#### *Exclusion criteria*

Reviews were excluded for the following reasons:

- The review was concerned with post-charge or post-trial diversion, for example, by issuing community sentences, restorative justice practices or alternative courts such as teen court.
- The review was concerned with adult offenders, or with both young and adult offenders but with results not reportedly separately for young offenders.

#### **Outcomes**

The current technical report is concerned with outcomes of youth reoffending, namely offences committed after an index offence and interaction with the criminal justice system.

Petrosino et al. (2019) reported effect sizes for four domains of youth recidivism: prevalence, incidence, severity and self-reported offending. The prevalence of reoffending refers to the number of juveniles who committed further offences following the index offence (i.e., the first offence for which a young person comes into contact with the criminal justice system) and the incidence of reoffending refers to the mean number of offences per juvenile. The severity of reoffending referred to whether the seriousness of crimes increased or decreased after the formal processing or diversion programme. Finally, Petrosino et al. (2019) reported reoffending as measured by self-report data from participating juveniles.

### **Description of interventions**

As mentioned, diversion occurs at many different points in the criminal justice system, but the current report focuses on the pre-court stage. This may take place before or after arrest, but before a youth has been formally charged with an offence (Wilson et al., 2018).

Wilson and Hoge (2013) point out that key features of diversion programmes include the type of programme and the referral process. For examples, cautions or ‘warning programmes’ aim to divert the youth from the system with no further action, though in England and Wales a finding of guilt is recorded when a caution is issued.<sup>1</sup> In contrast, formal diversion programmes involve participation in a specific intervention programme or surveillance of the youths’ conduct (Wilson & Hoge, 2013). Diversion after a caution may require an admission of guilt, and so proceed directly to sentencing if the child fails to attend the diversion programme. Pre-court diversion, such as caution after initial contact with the police, is deemed to be ‘true diversion’, as the involvement of the criminal justice system is minimised, though there may be engagement with other services including Youth Offending Teams in England and Wales (Wilson & Hoge, 2013).

Petrosino et al. (2019) compared juvenile offenders who had been formally processed with youth who had simply been diverted from the courts (i.e., ‘diversion alone’) and youth who

---

<sup>1</sup> No offense is recorded if no further action is taken or community resolution is used, though the latter is recorded in the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

had been diverted from the courts but participated in some other type of service or intervention (i.e., 'diversion with services'). These services can include a variety of stakeholders from many criminal justice and external organisations. For example, Wilson and Hoge (2013) point out that youth diversion intervention programmes involved services such as: community service referrals, restitution, restorative justice, and justice conferences. The majority of diversion programmes that provide additional intervention involve an aspect of counselling, skill-building (e.g., CBT, employment training), or other specific intervention routes (e.g., child advocacy or crisis intervention; Wilson & Hoge, 2013).

### *Targeted or Universal*

Pre-court diversion programmes are targeted and are not typically considered 'universal' prevention. Specific youth are targeted for participation in a pre-court diversion programme, namely those who have committed an offence and come into contact with the criminal justice system. Moreover, the intervention itself is targeted and individualised for each juvenile. Wilson and Hoge (2013) argue that a risk/need/responsivity model is needed in relation to pre-court diversion programmes. The risk domain of this model refers to the concept that the intensity of the intervention should reflect the individual youth's risk, so that intensive interventions are implemented with high-risk youth and low intensity interventions are implemented with low-risk youth. The need and responsivity domains of this model indicate that the intervention must address the criminogenic and non-criminogenic needs of the youth, respectively. In other words, the intervention must address the risk factors directly related to the offence (e.g., delinquent peers, low self-control, anger management) and those factors indirectly related to the offence (e.g., academic achievement, school attachment).

### *Implementing personnel*

Pre-court diversion programmes can be implemented by a number of different personnel and this is greatly influenced by when diversion is applied during the process. Cautions, for example, are implemented by police personnel and typically in community settings following identification that a youth has committed an offence. Wilson et al. (2018) state that, at a *minimum*, the youth, their parents and the police would be involved in the implementation of a caution. However, other individuals from external services may be involved. For example,

if restorative justice is attached to the caution, the victim and affected parties and a mediator would be involved. If a youth is diverted and mandated to participate in an intervention programme, this may involve a number of different services and providers.

In England, the Liaison and Diversion Service has been rolled out over the country over the last 10-12 years (see Box 1 for further details). The service employs dedicated L&D staff, often located in or near police stations, who can access information on the child's history, e.g. with mental health services, to provide this information to the police and courts. Staff screen children referred to them and L&D support workers follow up on these service connections. Youth Offending Teams work with children who come into contact with the justice system in England and Wales. YOTs may support triage programmes which seek to divert children from the courts (see Box 2 for further details). Police officers are also involved in diversion, including deciding to take no action or community resolutions (see Box 2).

## **Box 1 Liaison and Diversion Services in England**

### *Overview*

‘Liaison and Diversion (L&D) services identify people who have mental health, learning disability, substance misuse or other vulnerabilities when they first come into contact with the criminal justice system as suspects, defendants or offenders.

The service can then support people through the early stages of criminal system pathway, refer them for appropriate health or social care or enable them to be diverted away from the criminal justice system into a more appropriate setting, if required.’ NHS England Liaison and Diversion Services website

Potential cases for L&D may be identified by a wide range of people. They are then screened and assessed by an L&D practitioner who can refer the person to health or social care services, and work with police, Crown Prosecution Service and courts to determine how best to handle the case.

### *History*

Several L&D schemes were established in police stations in the 1990s following establishment of the first L&D scheme in 1989. Some areas had services, others did not, and there was great variability in the nature and quality of the services offered.

Following the Bradley Review in 2009, the government committed to the development of a standard, national L&D model for both adults and young people. Between 2011 and 2013 the Department of Health was supported by the Offender Health Collaborative to develop a national L&D service.

- The National Model for L&D is commissioned by NHS England and has the following key features:
- Services are available 24/7 for both adults and young people, covered by operating hours and out-of-hours arrangement based on local needs and the views of stakeholders
- Available at all points along the justice pathway for youth such as police custody and courts
- Have the capacity to cover a wide range of health issues and vulnerabilities with links to local services

## **Box 2 Out of Court Disposal in England and Wales**

The Youth Justice Board lists four out of court disposals:

- No further action;
- Community Resolution (CR) which resolves a minor offence through informal agreement between the parties involved
- Youth Caution (YC)
- Youth Conditional Caution (YCC): a caution with one or more conditions attached. If children do not keep to the conditions they could be prosecuted for the original offence.

Since 2009, triage schemes were introduced, most usually operated by Youth Offending Teams working in police custody suites. Triage operated in three tiers, with tier one for non-serious first-time offenders. To be eligible, the youth had to admit the offence, write a letter of apology, and

### **Theory of change/presumed causal mechanisms**

The presumed causal mechanism in pre-court diversion can be explained through different theoretical frameworks. For example, diversion is thought to prevent the undesirable labelling effect associated with formal processing of juvenile delinquents (Farrington & Murray, 2014).

Labelling theory posits that, by formally processing and charging a youth with a criminal offence the system labels that youth as 'delinquent' or 'criminal' and this label greatly impacts their future interactions with the system and relationships with others. In time, youth come to see themselves as delinquents, and this worsens their offending behaviours. This labelling could result in economic, educational, psychological, and social impacts throughout the lifespan of that individual (Petrosino et al., 2019). Through labelling a youth as delinquent or criminal, the system may create "an expectation of continued antisocial behaviour" (Wilson & Hoge, 2013, p. 498). Therefore, the presumed causal mechanism of change in pre-court diversion programmes is to avoid this labelling effect and prevent reoffending. However, this effect may not operate if youth are referred to diversion programmes which are exclusively

for diverted youth, since labelling may still occur since they are in ‘a programme for delinquents’.

Alternatively, differential association theory (Cressey, 1952; Sutherland, 1974) suggests that, by formally processing a youth in the criminal justice system, this increases the likelihood that the youth will continue to offend. This relationship is mediated by exposure to antisocial peers and a social learning process, and the theory suggests that antisocial behaviour and attitudes are reinforced by allowing a youth to enter the traditional criminal justice system (Wilson & Hoge, 2013). A youth may “learn the values, attitudes, and techniques of criminal behaviour through the interaction with delinquent peers” (Wilson et al., 2018, p. 10). Thus, the presumed causal mechanism of change in pre-court diversion programmes is to reduce and prevent this likely criminogenic effect. Again, the effect may be lessened if the youth associates with other youth who have committed offences in diversion programmes.

Wilson et al. (2018) also highlight the role of reintegrative shaming in diversion programmes in which the youth recognizes that what they have done is wrong. Reintegrative shaming is a means of intervention that focuses on forgiveness and non-stigmatisation in order to successfully reintegrate a youth into the community, which mostly occur if the programme has a restorative justice component (Zhang, 2011). The presumed causal mechanism of change in diversion programmes thus relates to the reduction of stigmatisation resulting from the young persons’ offending behaviour and the prevention of reoffending by providing a method of desistance.

Finally, diversion programmes may connect youth to services which help to tackle the underlying problems which led to the offending.

## **Evidence base**

### *Descriptive overview*

Petrosino et al. (2019) published a meta-analysis of 29 experimental studies that used random, or quasi-random, assignment of 7,304 juvenile offenders to one of three possible conditions: (1) formal processing; (2) pre-court diversion alone; or (3) pre-court diversion with

services. Studies were published between 1973 and 2008, with the majority being published in the USA ( $n = 27$ ) or not published in peer-reviewed journals or books ( $n = 18$ ). The two studies that were conducted outside the USA were undertaken in Australia. The mean age of participants was 14.7 years old. On average, samples were primarily White (mean percentage across 19 studies = 61%) and male (mean percentage across 22 studies = 74.2%). The majority of experiments were categorised as involving samples with high severity offending (34.8%,  $n = 8$ ) or low severity offending (39.1%,  $n = 9$ ). Only three studies included samples categorised as moderate severity (13%), and information about offending severity was missing for nine studies. The majority of experiments included juveniles who had committed 'general' offences (82.2%,  $n = 23$ ), compared to specific types of offences (e.g., violent offences, sexual offences, or theft).

Wilson et al. (2018) included 19 studies and estimated effect sizes for 31 comparisons of diverted youth and formally processed youth. Studies were published between 1979 and 2015. They were conducted mostly in the USA ( $n = 11$ ), but Wilson et al. (2018) included two evaluations conducted in the United Kingdom that were conducted between 2009 and 2011. Participants were aged between 10 and 17 years old and no mean age is reported. The authors note that the samples were predominantly male, and that the ethnicity of participants was not "well reported". Of the 31 estimated effect sizes, 13 compared traditional cautions with formal processing and 14 compared cautions with referral to services and formal processing. Four effect sizes were estimated for police restorative cautions in comparison to formal processing of young offenders.

Wilson and Hoge (2013) identified 45 studies published between 1972 and 2010 that compared the effectiveness of 73 diversion programmes in comparison to formal processing of young offenders. In total, these studies included 14,573 diverted youth and 18,840 youth who were formally processed by the criminal justice system. The latter serve as the comparison group in Wilson and Hoge's (2013) review. The average age of participants was 14.72 years old and the majority were White ( $n = 26$ ) and male ( $n = 54$ ). Youth included in the review were also most likely to have committed a property-related index offence ( $n = 29$ ).

Diversion programmes were categorised as caution programmes ( $n = 13$ ) or intervention programmes ( $n = 60$ ). Caution programmes were largely implemented by the police (85%) and all were implemented pre-charge. The present technical report is concerned with prevention and pre-court diversion and so will focus on the results for caution programmes included in Wilson and Hoge's (2013) review. Findings for diversion programmes with treatment are also included, but these are not reported separately for pre-charge, post-charge or court issued. This review notes that youth were more often referred to diversion intervention programmes post-charge ( $n = 41$ ) and were referred to diversion intervention programmes by police ( $n = 24$ ), judges ( $n = 12$ ), probation officers ( $n = 6$ ), court intake officers ( $n = 5$ ), law professionals ( $n = 4$ ), and others, such as researchers ( $n = 7$ ).

#### *Assessment of the evidence rating*

We have confidence that, at the time of writing, the reviews by Wilson et al. (2018), Wilson and Hoge (2013), and Petrosino et al. (2019) represent the best available evidence on the effectiveness of pre-court diversion programmes.

Two independent coders used a modified version of the AMSTAR2 critical appraisal tool was used to appraise the reviews by Wilson et al. (2018), Wilson and Hoge (2013) and Petrosino et al. (2019). According to this tool, the review by Wilson et al. (2018) was rated as 'high', and both Wilson and Hoge (2013) and Petrosino et al. (2019) were rated as 'low'. The results of this assessment are summarised in Annex 3.

All three of the reviews adequately specified the research questions and the inclusion/exclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria included components relating to the population, intervention, comparison group and outcome of interest. All three of the reviews included evaluations with juveniles who had not yet been formally processed by the justice system but had committed (or were suspected of committing) an index offence. Petrosino et al. (2019) and Wilson et al. (2018) restricted studies to those conducted with juveniles up to the age of 17. Restrictions on outcomes relating to reoffending were also set by each of the reviews.

Wilson et al. (2018) state that a review protocol was registered prior to publication and highlight the ways in which the published report deviates from the protocol. Justifiable reasons for these deviations are provided. Neither Petrosino et al. (2019) nor Wilson and Hoge (2013) refer to a review protocol.

Petrosino et al. (2019) only included studies that involved random or quasi-random (e.g., alternate) assignment to experimental conditions and do not provide justification for excluding other methodological designs. Wilson and Hoge (2013) did not set restrictions on randomisation, but the included studies had to involve an experimental group that were diverted and an appropriate control group. Wilson et al. (2018) included randomised controlled trials with random or quasi-random assignment to conditions and also several quasi-experimental evaluations. However, quasi-experimental evaluations had to include some form of matching or statistical control for pre-existing differences (e.g., propensity score matching).

Each review reported a comprehensive literature search strategy including a number of different databases, designated keywords and search strategies. Wilson et al. (2018) provide a detailed overview of each database search completed for the review and an extensive list of various combinations of keywords used. None of the reviews restricted inclusion criteria to only peer-reviewed publications or reports published in English. Petrosino et al. (2019) state that they made a concentrated effort to identify non-English publications through international professional networks, but no such evaluations were retrieved.

Wilson and Hoge (2013) report the inter-rater reliability coefficient for a subset ( $n = 8$ ) of evaluations. Wilson et al. (2018) outline the details of collaboration between the three authors when retrieving and coding included evaluations. Petrosino et al. (2019) do not provide inter-rater reliability or information about double coding, but do include a detailed description of the decision-making process when coding data from primary evaluations.

Only Wilson et al. (2018) conducted an appropriate risk of bias assessment. Risk of bias was assessed against five criteria: (1) selection (were there meaningful differences between

groups at baseline?), (2) overall attrition; (3) differential attrition; (4) measurement (did the measure used create a risk of bias?); and (5) outcome reporting bias. Wilson et al. (2018) analysed the impact of risk of bias on effect sizes, and found no meaningful relationship overall.

Petrosino et al. (2019) report funding sources from the Norwegian Knowledge Centre for the Health Sciences and an unnamed U.S. organisation but do not declare any conflict of interest. Wilson et al. (2018) state that the review was funded by the Jacobs Foundation and declare no conflict of interest. Wilson and Hoge (2013) do not include reference to any funding received.

Each of the reviews conducted a meta-analysis and reported detailed information on the synthesis and estimation of weighted effect sizes and adequately reported the heterogeneity between primary effects. Each of the meta-analyses reported separate weighted effect sizes for independent outcomes and assessed multiple moderators as possible explanations for heterogeneity between primary effect sizes.

Wilson et al. (2018) report a direct estimate of diversion programmes on reoffending outcomes based on 31 evaluations. The evidence rating is 4, marked down for significant heterogeneity. This is the estimate we use for the headline metric for the impact of diversion programmes on reoffending.

Peterosino et al. (2019) reported a direct estimate of diversion programmes on the prevalence of reoffending outcomes based on 15 evaluations. Heterogeneity was not reported, but examination of the forest plot suggests high heterogeneity between primary effect sizes. The evidence rating for prevalence is 3. The evidence ratings for incidence, severity and self-reported reoffending are all 3.

Wilson and Hoge (2013) report a direct estimate on reoffending outcomes based on 73 evaluations of all diversion programmes ( $I^2 = 80\%$ ) and 13 evaluations for cautions ( $I^2 = 93\%$ ). The evidence rating is 3.

## Impact

### *Summary impact measure*

Overall, pre-court diversion strategies are effective across numerous outcome domains. The collective weighted mean effect sizes for evaluations of pre-court diversion are reported in Table 1, which shows weighted mean odds ratios for all diversion programmes. An odds ratio of less than 1 indicates that youth in the diverted group were less likely to reoffend. Our headline metric for the impact on reoffending is derived from the Wilson et al. (2018) review.

Table 1

### *Mean effect sizes for reoffending*

| Review   | ES                            | CI         | <i>p</i> | % reduction in reoffending | Evidence rating |
|--|-------------------------------|------------|----------|----------------------------|-----------------|
| Wilson & Hoge (2013); all diversion programmes | OR = 0.57<br><i>d</i> = 0.31  | 0.51, 0.64 | < .05    | 27%                        | 3               |
| Wilson & Hoge (2013); cautions                 | OR = 0.52<br><i>d</i> = 0.361 | 0.40, 0.66 | < .05    | 32%                        | 3               |
| Wilson et al. (2018)                           | OR = 0.77<br><i>d</i> = 0.144 | 0.63, 0.95 | < .05    | 13%                        | 4               |

*Note:* ES = the weighted mean effect size under the random effects model; CI = 95% confidence intervals for the mean ES; *p* = the statistical significance of the mean ES; *p* values are two-tailed; OR = odds ratio, *d* = Cohen's *d*; ns = not significant; OR < 1 indicate a desirable impact of the intervention, i.e. a reduction in reoffending. OR > 1 indicate an undesirable impact and OR = 1 indicates a null effect.

Assuming equal allocation to experimental and control conditions, and a reoffending rate of 50% in the control condition (i.e., formal processing), Wilson et al. (2018) report that an odds ratio of 0.77 relates to a reoffending rate of 44% for diverted youth. The exact figure is 43.5, corresponding to a relative decrease in reoffending of 13%. This transformation is explained in further detail in Annex 1.

Petrosino et al. (2019) reported multiple effect sizes for the impact of diversion programmes on the prevalence, incidence, severity and measures of self-reported reoffending. These effect sizes are summarised in Table 2. The equation  $\ln(\text{OR}) = d / 0.5513$  (Lipsey & Wilson, 2001, p. 202) was used to transform Cohen’s *d* effect sizes to odds ratios.

Table 2

*Mean effect sizes for several domains of reoffending from Petrosino et al. (2019) review*

| Review                                 | ES                            | CI           | <i>p</i> | % reduction in reoffending | Evidence rating |
|--|-------------------------------|--------------|----------|----------------------------|-----------------|
| Petrosino et al. (2019); prevalence    | <i>d</i> = -0.10<br>OR = 0.83 | -0.22, 0.03  | ns       | 9%                         | 3               |
| Petrosino et al. (2019); incidence     | <i>d</i> = -0.23<br>OR = 0.66 | -0.38, -0.07 | .004     | 20%                        | 3               |
| Petrosino et al. (2019); severity      | <i>d</i> = -0.13<br>OR = 0.79 | -0.32, 0.04  | ns       | 12%                        | 3               |
| Petrosino et al. (2019); self-reported | <i>d</i> = -0.19<br>OR = 0.71 | -0.47, 0.09  | ns       | 17%                        | 3               |

Assuming equal allocation to experimental and control conditions and a reoffending rate of 50% in the formal processing condition, the *d* values reported by Petrosino et al. (2019) can be translated into reductions in reoffending of 9% (prevalence), 20% (incidence), 12% (severity), and 17% (self-reported delinquency).

It is plausible to assume a 50% overall reoffending rate; for example, in England and Wales, 37% of juvenile offenders in the period October to December 2018 had proven (recorded)

reoffending only one year later (Ministry of Justice, 2020). It would be expected that their reoffending rate would soon reach 50% within another two years or so.

Further information on how these effect sizes were transformed to percentage reductions in reoffending and how the relative reduction may change depending on our assumptions about the prevalence of reoffending is provided in Annex 1.

### *Diversion versus formal processing*

Wilson et al. (2018) found that, overall, diversion was associated with greater reductions in reoffending rates. This suggests that, in comparison to formal processing, diversion is a preferable prevention strategy to reduce future offending.

Wilson and Hoge (2013) similarly report that diversion was more effective in reducing youth reoffending than formal court processing. Diversion programmes significantly reduced the likelihood that youth would reoffend in comparison to formal processing.

Petrosino et al. (2019) found that overall, pre-court diversion was associated with lower rates of reoffending than formal processing. There were 27 comparisons of the prevalence of reoffending between juveniles who were formally processed by the system and juveniles who were diverted, and 15 of these showed a desirable effect of diversion.

The mean effect size for this comparison suggests that diversion was associated with greater reductions in the prevalence of reoffending, although not statistically significantly so (SMD = 0.10, SE = .066,  $p = .149$ ). Seven comparisons of the incidence of reoffending suggested that diversion was significantly associated with a decrease in the mean number of offences following the initial offence (SMD = 0.23, SE = .079,  $p = .004$ ).

Petrosino et al. (2019) also found that, when juveniles were diverted from formal court proceedings and they did reoffend, these offences were on average less serious than the initial offence (SMD = 0.13, SE = .093,  $p = .148$ ). Furthermore, there was a desirable

relationship between diversion and self-reported outcomes for juvenile offenders (SMD = 0.19, SE = .142,  $p = .182$ ).

### *Types of diversion*

Wilson and Hoge (2013) found that caution programmes were significantly effective in reducing reoffending. Furthermore, diversion intervention programmes (not exclusively pre-court/pre-charge) were also effective in reducing reoffending (OR = 0.58, 95% CI 0.50 – 0.68).

Petrosino et al. (2019)<sup>2</sup> also found that diversion programmes with services (i.e., “doing something”) was associated with a greater reduction in reoffending ( $d = 0.16$ ,  $n = 13$ ) than pursuing formal court proceeding for juveniles. However, diversion alone (i.e., “doing nothing”) was associated with only a marginally greater reduction in reoffending than formal processing ( $d = 0.04$ ,  $n = 14$ ).

### *Moderators and mediators*

The meta-analyses that inform the current technical report also included various analyses to examine reasons for differences in primary effect sizes among evaluations of diversion programmes. Overall, the results suggest that programmes that were associated with greater reductions in reoffending were implemented pre-charge, with youth aged 12 – 14 years old. Most evaluations were implemented with predominantly male samples, and diversion programmes appear to be more effective when implemented with predominantly White participants. However, a large proportion of the evaluations were conducted in the US, and moderator analyses found that US evaluations were associated with greater effectiveness overall.

Wilson and Hoge (2013) compared the effectiveness of diversion programmes to formal processing of young offenders in relation to a number of moderators but do not report the statistical significance of mean effect sizes. In relation to diversion programmes, those that

---

<sup>2</sup> Petrosino et al. (2019) reported mean effect sizes for formal processing (treatment) compared to diversion and diversion with services (control). For the purpose of the current technical report, the effect sizes are inverted to compare diversion (treatment) with formal processing (control).

were implemented pre-charge were associated with larger reductions in reoffending (OR = 0.52, 95% CI 0.44 – 0.62) than diversion programmes implemented post-charge (OR = 0.62, 95% CI 0.52 – 0.75).

Diversion programmes implemented with younger youth (aged 12-14; OR = 0.59, 95% CI 0.49 – 0.72) were associated with greater reductions in reoffending than programmes involving older participants (aged 15 – 17 years old; OR = 0.71, 95% CI 0.54 – 0.93). The mean effect sizes for diversion intervention programmes based on the gender of participants were similar, even though only 4 of the 60 evaluations included a majority of female participants. Evaluations that included mostly White participants were associated with greater reductions in reoffending ( $n = 26$ ; OR = 0.58, 95% CI 0.46 – 0.72) than evaluations that included mostly African American (Black) participants ( $n = 15$ ; OR = 0.71, 95% CI 0.50 – 1.01). Interestingly, the mean effect size for programmes with mostly Black participants was not statistically significant. This suggests that there might be a racial disparity in these programmes and that more research is needed to understand ‘what works’ with Black youth.

Wilson et al. (2018) compared police-led diversion according to the type of diversion programmes used. Programmes were categorised as either: (1) caution only; (2) diversion with referral to services; (3) diversion with restorative justice; and (4) other form of police-led diversion. Moderator analyses using meta-regression models found that there was no statistically significant difference between the effectiveness of caution only and diversion with referral to services ( $t = 1.41, p = .18$ ) or between caution only and diversion with restorative justice ( $t = 0.08, p = .939$ ). Wilson et al. (2018) also compared the effect sizes of US studies and non-US studies, by combining the results from included evaluations conducted in Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom. No statistical difference was identified, although the mean effect size for US studies (OR = 0.76) was marginally larger than the mean effect size for non-US studies (OR = 0.85).

No moderator analysis was reported for the type of offense and no study includes violent crime as an outcome rather than general delinquency.

## **Implementation and Cost Analysis: Findings from UK/Ireland**

### *Findings from the Evaluation of the Youth Justice Liaison and Diversion (YJLD) Pilot Scheme (Haines, 2012)*

Most of the evaluations included in the systematic reviews were US-based, but Wilson et al. (2018) included one evaluation of a pre-court diversion programme in the United Kingdom (i.e., Haines et al., 2012). Overall, the report suggests that pre-court diversion is a cost-effective intervention.

Haines et al. (2012) reported an evaluation of the Youth Justice Liaison and Diversion (YJLD) scheme in England and Wales. The scheme was piloted in six areas of England between December 2008 and March 2012. There were several objectives of the scheme, but most relevant to the current report was the aim to divert young people from the Youth Justice System and refer them to individualised combinations of health and social care. Young people could also be diverted to different paths within the Youth Justice System that met their health and well-being needs more appropriately. During the scheme 1,027 youths were referred with an average age of 14.7 years old (SD = 1.7 years, range 10 – 17 years old). Participants were predominantly male (71%) and identified as ‘White British/European’ (67%). Haines et al. (2012) reported that 80% of participants were identified as having specific vulnerabilities, including but not limited to social, behavioural, and psychological problems.

In the ‘Reconviction study’, Haines et al. (2012) reported on the effectiveness of the scheme in relation to the frequency and timing of reoffending. Youth in the experimental (YJLD) cohort ( $n = 234$ ) were compared to a non-randomised sample of young people in YOT areas ( $n = 201$ ). The results suggested that there was no statistically significant difference in the frequency of reoffending between youth who participated in the YJLD scheme and the control group. Haines et al. (2012) outline a number of interesting results that, whilst not statistically significant, are indicative of a desirable effect of the YJLD scheme (see their pp. 14-15). For example, young people in Lewisham and Peterborough were less likely to reoffend than the corresponding control groups and, among those who did reoffend, there was a significantly longer period of time between the index offence and the subsequent offending.

In the evaluation of the YJLD scheme, young people reported having had contact with a “panoply of professional agencies” (Haines et al., 2012, p. 17) but some reported feeling let down or disappointed with their experiences and showed some resentment towards intervention attempts. All of the professional staff who were interviewed in the evaluation referred to the “importance and value of diversion” but stated that communication and collaboration across different agencies was a stark barrier to successful and swift implementation.

#### *Other evaluations of out of court disposals*

In addition to Haines et al. (2012), we identified eight further process evaluations of out of court disposals in England and Wales. These studies are summarized in Annex 2.<sup>3</sup>

Common themes which occur in these evaluations are:

- Pre-existing partnerships between the police and YOTs help schemes work successfully.
- The presence of YOT or L&D workers in the custody suite is generally seen as helpful, allowing cases to be picked up immediately. One study mentioned that it may be preferable to be near but not co-located so as to be seen as separate from the police.
- Having access to data from other services – such as an offender’s mental health history – helps when deciding how to deal with a case. Early evaluations commented that the data was not always very comprehensive, but more recent evaluations comment positively on data availability.
- Police officers, especially in the earlier evaluations, are found to be insufficiently informed about out of court disposal, such as triage tier 1. Hence, they perform inadequately in explaining the process to both the offender and the victim. This

---

<sup>3</sup> Several of the studies also report estimates of the impact on reoffending. These estimates are made either on a before versus after basis, or with a comparison group where there is very likely selection bias. Whilst a more in-depth review of these studies may be worthwhile, several of the studies themselves comment on the lack of rigorous evaluation.

problem is not mentioned in more recent studies which comment on effective collaboration between police and YOTs – although information sharing still sometimes falls short.

- Where engagement is voluntary – as with referrals from outside the police, or for Youth Cautions rather than Youth Conditional Cautions – then a significant proportion of those who are referred do not engage.
- Having a police officer involved in the restorative component can increase the victim’s confidence in the process; otherwise OOCs may be seen as a soft option by both victims and offenders.
- There should be clear guidance and procedures for YOTs, some of whom use inadequate assessment tools. Two studies mentioned that the YOTs find the AssetPlus framework unhelpful.
- Connection to services is useful. Having support workers for L&D who follow through on the connections can help ensure that they happen.
- People often believe that out of court disposal means that their record will be clean. But this is not the case.

### *Costs*

The cost-effectiveness of diversion with intervention depends on the relative effectiveness of diversion compared with formal processing and the costs associated with it. Haines et al. (2012) have an extensive discussion of this issue, calculating the benefits of averted crime, assigning different costs to each type of crime. The report points out that involvement with the YJLD saved time on each case for Youth Offending Teams but increased it for police and other services. Data from seven sites yield a very large range of estimated incremental costs – from £90 to £1,103 – as a result of referral to the service. These have to be set against the average cost to the state of a career criminal of £80,000. Therefore, if diversion causes at least 1 in 100 youth to be diverted from a life of crime, then it is likely to be cost-effective.

### **What do we need to know? What don’t we know?**

The evidence base relates mostly to the United States. More studies are needed in the United Kingdom.

There have been several attempts to evaluate out of court disposal in England and Wales. Some of these studies abandon the attempt, whereas others estimate the impact using imperfect comparison groups. So, the need for rigorous evaluation is recognized (see Box 3). Given the current move to referring youth to services through the Youth Liaison and Diversion Service, it would be most helpful to develop evidence-based guidelines as to when a caution is sufficient

At the same time, the youth who are identified as most needing referral may well be those who are least willing to engage with services. Research on ways to increase engagement – such as using peer workers and family involvement – would be useful.

Finally, more extensive cost-benefit analyses are required.

**Box 3 Excerpt from Parliamentary Justice Committee report ‘Children and Young People in Custody’**

We recognise the important role that out-of-court disposals, both formal and informal, play in diverting children from formal criminal justice processes and consider them an integral part of the youth justice system. We note that data collection on the effectiveness of such schemes is patchy at best, particularly for informal, non-statutory diversion schemes, which make up around 40% of all out-of-court disposals. Although data is collected on formal out-of-court disposals, we have an incomplete picture of how many children are diverted from entering the criminal justice system.

We recommend that the Ministry of Justice and Youth Justice Board work together to start collecting data centrally on non-statutory, informal diversion schemes, including (but not limited to) data on how many complete a diversion scheme, the impact on reoffending, health outcomes and education outcomes.

We agree with the Chief Inspector of Probation’s recommendation that a national evaluation of the impact and effectiveness of out-of-court disposals be carried out. We recommend that the Ministry of Justice commission such an evaluation, which should consider the impact and effectiveness of formal and informal out-of-court disposals.

Source: <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5801/cmselect/cmjust/306/30607.htm>

## References

- Cressey, D. R. (1952). Application and verification of the differential association theory. *Journal of Criminal Law, Criminology, and Police Science*, 43, 43 – 52.
- Farrington, D. P., & Murray, J. (Eds.) (2014). *Labelling Theory: Empirical Tests*. New Brunswick, N.J.:Transaction.
- Haines, A., Goldson, B., Haycox, A., Houten, R., Lane, S., McGuire, J., Nathan, T., Perkins, E., Richards, S., & Whittington, R. (2012). *Evaluation of the Youth Justice Liaison and Diversion (YJLD) Pilot Scheme: Final Report*. University of Liverpool.
- Petrosino, A., Petrosino, C., Guckenburg, S., Terrell, J., Fronius, T. A., & Choo, K. (2019). The effects of juvenile system processing on subsequent delinquency outcomes. In D. P. Farrington, L. Kazemian, & A. R., Piquero (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Developmental and Life-course Criminology* (pp. 553 – 575). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Sutherland, E. H. (1974). *Criminology* (9<sup>th</sup> edition). Philadelphia: Lippincott.
- Wilson, D. B., Brennan, I., & Olaghere, A. (2018). Police-initiated diversion for youth to prevent future delinquent behavior: A systematic review. *Campbell Systematic Reviews*, 2018: 5. <https://doi.org/10.4073/csr.2018.5>
- Wilson, H. A., & Hoge, R. D. (2013). The effect of youth diversion programs on recidivism. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 40(5), 497 – 518. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0093854812451089>
- List of process evaluations*
- Birbeck (2012) *Assessing young people in police custody: An examination of the operation of Triage schemes*. Institute for Criminal Policy Research Birkbeck, University of London.
- Disley, E., Taylor, C., Kruithof K., and Winpenny, E. (2016) *Evaluation of the Offender Liaison and Diversion Trial Schemes*. RAND Europe.
- HM Inspectorate of Probation and HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (2018) *Out-of-court disposal work in youth offending teams*
- Forde, R. (2013) *A qualitative analysis of young people's experiences of triage as a restorative disposal in youth justice*, University of Gloucestershire Masters thesis.
- Ministry of Justice (2020). *Proven Reoffending Statistics Quarterly Bulletin, October 2018 to December 2018*. London: Ministry of Justice.

- Moore, S., Sellen, J., Crompton, K., and Hallinberg, B. (2012) *A Brief Evaluation of Cardiff Triage*. Violence & Society Research Group, Cardiff University
- Soppitt, S., and Irving, A. (2011) *An Evaluation into the Effectiveness of the Early Diversion Intervention 'Triage' as a Mechanism for Tackling Youth Offending in Newcastle Upon Tyne*. Northumbria University.
- Tyrrell, K., Bond, E., Manning, M., and Dogaru, C. (2017) *Diversion, Prevention and Youth Justice: a model of integrated decision making An evaluation of the Suffolk Youth Offending Service Diversion Programme*.

### Annex 1: Effect size calculation

This annex shows the calculation based on the results and assumptions given in the text. We assume 200 youth, evenly divided between treatment and comparison groups. This means that there are 100 youth in the control group and 100 youth in the treatment group. Assuming that 50% of youth in the formal processing group (i.e., control) reoffend, the mean effect sizes for all three reviews can be easily transformed to a percentage reduction in reoffending.

If the odds ratio for the effect on reoffending is 0.77 (i.e., Wilson et al., 2018) then using the table below and the formula for estimating an odds ratio, we can estimate the value of X.

The OR is estimated as:  $A*D/B*C$ , where A is the number of individuals in the control group who do not reoffend, B is the number of individuals in the control group who do reoffend, C is the number of individuals in the treatment group who do not reoffend, and D is the number of individuals in the treatment group who do reoffend. Therefore, the value of X is 43.5 in the case of Wilson et al. (2018).

|           | Don't    |          |       |
|-----------|----------|----------|-------|
|           | reoffend | Reoffend | Total |
| Control   | 50       | 50       | 100   |
| Treatment | 100-X    | X        | 100   |

Therefore, the relative reduction in reoffending is  $[(50-43.5)/50]*100 = 13\%$ . In relation to the remaining reviews that inform this technical report, the relative reductions in reoffending are summarised in Table 3.

Wilson and Hoge (2013) report that the average rate of reoffending was actually 40% in their analyses, and so the prevalence of reoffending may vary depending on several factors, including definition, measurement, follow-up time period, etc. If we were to adjust our assumption that 50% of the control group reoffended, the relative reduction in the intervention group is not greatly affected.

For example, if we assume that 40% of the control group reoffend, the 2x2 table would be as follows and the value of X is 33.92 (for OR = 0.77 for Wilson et al., 2018). Therefore, the relative reduction is 15.2% (i.e.,  $[40-33.92]/40 \times 100$ ).

|           | Don't reoffend |    | Reoffend | Total |
|-----------|----------------|----|----------|-------|
| Control   | 60             | 40 |          | 100   |
| Treatment | 100-X          | X  |          | 100   |

If we assume that 60% of the control group reoffend, OR = 0.77 would mean that the value of X is 53.6 and the relative reduction is 11.7%.

Table 3

*Variation of the relative reduction in reoffending depending on different assumptions.*

|                    | Wilson & Hoge (2013); all diversion programmes<br>OR = 0.57 | Wilson & Hoge (2013); cautions<br>OR = 0.52 | Wilson et al. (2018)<br>OR = 0.77 |
|--------------------|---|---|-----------------------------------|
| Assumed prevalence | Relative reduction  |   |                                   |
| 40%                | 31.2%   | 35.6%                                       | 15.2%                             |
| 50%                | 27.4%   | 31.6%                                       | 13%                               |
| 60%                | 23.2%   | 27%   | 11.7%                             |

| <b>Annex 2: Overview of process evaluations</b> |                                       |   |   |                      |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|---|----------------------|
|   | Intervention                          | Success factors   | Issues  | Young people's views |
| Birbeck 2012                                    | Case studies of triage in seven areas | Supporting factors included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• having a local police champion for the intervention;</li> <li>• promoting potential benefits to police through training and literature;</li> <li>• pre-existing partnership working between police and the Youth Offending Service and/or local services; and</li> <li>• Triage workers having a presence in the custody suite</li> </ul> | <p>Large variation in cases nos. explained by (i) level of implementation success; (ii) whether the Triage worker was based in the custody suite or dependent on police referral; and (iii) universal versus targeted inclusion criteria.</p> <p>Barriers included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• poor communication between custody staff and Triage workers, reducing appropriate referrals to the schemes;</li> <li>• low police awareness about Triage and its aims;</li> <li>• high turnover of police custody staff, resulting in the constant re-</li> </ul> </p> |                      |

|                    |  |   |   |   |
|--------------------|--|---|---|---|
|                    |  |   | building of working relationships; and • the introduction of community resolution acting to reduce the number of young people being referred to the schemes.  |   |
| Disley et al. 2016 | National Model for L&D in ten trial sites in England | L&D adopted within two years:<br>L&D staff operating across the justice pathway<br>Staff in police custody could access to data from other services<br>Greater coverage of courts and police stations<br>L&D used for screening<br>Police and courts had information not previously available: generally found useful (reporting template helped) | 36% declined contact (though only 6% in cases where needs identified)<br>Around 1/3 already have contact with services<br>Multiple referral routes but voluntary attendance was challenging, partly as required policy officers being aware of L&D scheme<br>L&D good relationship with police, but possibly good to have | Limited information provided and not clear if they are youth. |

|            |  |   |  |  |
|------------|--|---|--|--|
|            |  | <p>L&amp;D staff and support workers played useful role in connecting people with services (including advocacy role), as well as informal mentoring</p> <p>Relationships already developed by YOTs helped L&amp;D links to services</p> <p>But not all services fully operating in all areas</p>  | <p>separate location so not seen as part of police</p> |  |
| Forde 2012 | <p>Triage in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan</p> <p>(Qualitative analysis of interviews with youth participants)</p> | <p>Therapeutic: , I was expecting it to like ‘Look you’ve done this, that and other, why did you do it?’ But it weren’t, it’s like ‘What happened? Why did it happen?’ It was more like... talking about it and not him telling you what you done..</p> <p>Motivation: :I didn’t have a choice, I either went to Triage, or I’d have to go to Court, so I’d obviously prefer to do this than go to Court</p> <p>Barriers: meeting times, nervous about procedure, overwhelmed, fear of getting ‘re-locked up’ if admit to wrong doing.</p> <p>Facilitator: : it was a good job we meet up in a café, instead of in a police station... cos I probably wouldn’t have been able to do it. I’ve been there once, I don’t really want go there again.</p> |  |  |

|  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
|  |  | <p>Procedural justice: Ye, I definitely think, umm what I went through was obviously... not serve a punishment, but like I had to go through it in order to learn stuff, so Triage was a big help [to] learn from 18 it and I felt comfortable doing it, and whatever they told me to do, I'd go along with it.. so I'd learn a lot more</p> <p>Positive outcomes: since I got locked up and been to Triage I've been able to speak more to my parents and my brother and sister and that so... it is a lot better</p> <p>Reflection on incident: I felt really better, cos it was like the one I'd done it (shoplifting) from, so when I was going in apologising it made me feel a bit better, like I'd never do it again</p> <p>"I thought it was fair I had to write a letter of apology, but I wasn't sorry<br/> what you're doing to another person is going to affect them and it's going to scar them, even for the littlest thing you do, you don't know how it's going to affect them and to be honest if I was them, and they said something nasty to me, or they did something horrible to me that would scar me, that would really affect me quite a lot and I don't want to do that to them</p> <p>Moving forward: : I thought it was just going to be months and months about what I've been doing, like what I'd done... but it's not, it's like deal with that and once they think you can move on then they move you on</p> <p>Now [I'm] with Triage it's given me something to keep going at like goals and before I just wouldn't want to do anything, but now I want to get up and get a job and go to college</p> |
|--|--|---|

|                    |                          |   |  |  |
|--------------------|--------------------------|---|--|--|
|                    |                          | I feel that I can actually be myself now... cos the old *** was an absolute waste of space, so I'm relieved to have got rid of that cos there was one crowd I was hanging around with and I'm glad that I've met Triage cos it's stopped me, I've looked back and realised they're going to be a waste of space   |  |  |
| Haines et al. 2012 | Six pilot sites for YJLD | <p>Of 1,027 offered access 30% engaged directly and 27% YJLD workers liaised with services on their behalf</p> <p>Over 3,000 actions taken showing successful engagement with services</p> <p>Successful screening using variety of screening tools</p> <p>For youth who engaged average no of direct contacts 2.2 (range is 0 to 22), resulting in documented successful referrals to a number of agencies</p> | <p>26% did not engage, reflecting voluntary nature and difficulty of engaging hard to reach young people</p> <p>Only two of the six schemes systematically affected diversion from justice system</p> <p>Scheme had difficulty accessing young people at the point of arrest</p> | <p>Many of the children and young people report having had contact with, and/or receiving services from a panoply of professional agencies. Some report positive benefit from such interventions, several articulated disappointment and feelings of having been 'let down' and some even perceived intervention from professional agencies as an antagonistic presence.</p> |

|   |   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|---|--|
| <p>HM<br/>Inspectorate of<br/>Probation and<br/>HM<br/>Inspectorate of<br/>Constabulary<br/>and Fire &amp;<br/>Rescue<br/>Services 2018</p> | <p>National<br/>inspection of out<br/>of court disposal<br/>work in Youth<br/>Offending Teams</p> | <p>Clear leadership of out-of-court disposals in local partnerships. Commitment to out-of-court disposal work by the police was always good. Operational police staff clearly understood the expectations on them for out-of-court disposals.</p> <p>Most local out-of-court disposal schemes exceeded the minimum requirements of the statutory and recommended national framework</p> | <p>The processes leading up to decisions were often unclear. Assessment and planning were not always of the quality needed and did not always adequately reflect the voice of the child. YOTs were not always using suitable assessment tools.</p> <p>The majority found the guidance on the YJB approved Asset Plus assessment and planning framework confusing and unhelpful.</p> <p>The engagement of young people in interventions varied considerably. YOTs that focused on meeting children and assessing them in advance of the disposal</p> |  |
|---|---|---|---|--|

|              |  |  |  |  |
|--------------|--|--|--|--|
|              |  |  | <p>decision achieved much greater engagement.</p> <p>There was little consistent monitoring of the quality and effectiveness of out-of-court disposal work locally.</p> <p>We found many children and practitioners unaware that the details of any outof-court disposal – especially CRs, which are not recorded on the PNC – can be disclosed on an enhanced DBS check under certain conditions.</p> |  |
| Manning 2015 | Enhanced triage pilot in Suffolk (two tier approach) | <p>Wide stakeholder support, save police time</p> <p>YOS welcome involvement and greater focus on causes of crime</p> <p>Increase in restorative justice</p> | <p>Difficult for YOS workers to maintain contact</p> <p>Connections not always made to services as expected.</p>   | “the explanation by the police of what was going to happen wasn’t very good but they were nice, very nice” |

|  |  |   |   |  |
|--|--|---|---|--|
|  |  | <p>Positive perception of police officer role in SYOS</p> <p>Offenders and parents welcome more holistic approach</p> | <p>Insufficient explanations as to how the process works (especially by police rather than YOS)</p> <p>Triage meant to be voluntary but not presented that way</p> <p>Police don't feel trained (even if they were)</p> | <p>After the interview the officer said” I may get a caution or spend some time with the youth offending man...a week later I got a call about midday and I had to go and see a lady from the youth offending and she told me I was going to be with xxxxx”</p> <p>“they tried to help me with my anger”</p> <p>I've learned a lot of things on it, it's not all about getting angry and things, there are other ways to sort it out”</p> <p>“We heard from the youth offending and they said that you either get a caution for it</p> |
|--|--|---|---|--|

|                        |  |   |   |   |
|------------------------|--|---|---|---|
|                        |  |   |   | or you could do the voluntary 12 week course with the youth offending team (emphasis on voluntary) but if you didn't do the voluntary 12 week course, you got the caution, so it's not voluntary is it? |
| Moore et al. 2012      | Cardiff Triage Project<br>Delivered by private company operating in Cardiff Police Station | Being placed in police station gives opportunity to intervene at point of arrest<br><br>Police freed from paperwork | Lack of secure funding<br><br>Lack of police awareness of triage approach   |   |
| Soppit and Irving 2012 | Triage: early diversion intervention for   | Workbooks help structure the interaction and response of young people (but more tailored versions would be helpful) | Seen as soft option by young people and the police<br><br>Lack of awareness of triage amongst police and public. Triage | Young people generally responded well to the reflective aspect of triage, reporting feeling 'bad',  |

|  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|
|  | <p>first time entrants into the criminal justice system in Newcastle</p> |  | <p>option not explained by police to youth in custody as it is meant to be. Resulted in resistance to restorative justice component, which is inconsistently emphasized</p> <p>Triage delivered within 48 hours of offence – but 50% at least one month before intervention so not fresh in their mind</p> <p>Connection to services not part of triage even though about 1/3 estimated to need it</p> <p>Contrary to policy, the offense IS recorded</p> <p>Victims dissatisfied but maybe as police don't explain triage</p> | <p>‘stupid’ and ‘ashamed’ of what they had done). The majority of young people tended to express remorse for their offences; reported that they had ‘learned their lessons.</p> <p>A number of young people had ambitions to join the army or police in the future and were concerned that having a police/criminal record would affect their chances of realising these aspirations.</p> <p>They felt that their appointment was useful as they were informed about the impacts which having a criminal record will have on</p> |
|--|--|--|--|--|

|                           |                                       |  |   |   |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|---|---|
|                           |                                       |  | <p>properly – only 25% accept the apology letter</p> <p>‘Total view’ database gave limited information on youth’s history</p> | <p>the opportunities available to them in the future.</p>   |
| <p>Tyrell et al. 2017</p> | <p>Diversion Programme in Suffolk</p> | <p>Victims mostly satisfied</p> <p>Police and YOS both thought work together well</p> <p>No impact police workload but increased for YOS</p> | <p>Around 18% of referrals did not engage or declined</p> <p>Police not kept updated on progress of cases</p>                 | <p>“They [police] explained to me that it was an option, that it was the best thing for me, they advised me to be on it, and I didn’t feel like I didn’t have a choice, I felt like I have a choice but it was the right thing to do.”</p> <p>“I think without this, I don’t know where we would be with [YP], because we were actually at a point where we</p> |

|  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  | <p>were considering having [YP] removed, because we just couldn't handle him. None of the family could handle that and that was where we were at, so it was very desperate. I don't think without [YOS practitioner] and that programme we'd be where we are now, well I don't know where we'd be, it was getting bad to worse if you like.”</p> <p>“It's made me, I don't know, like I'm more open to that kind of stuff and open-minded, like before I wouldn't think about things. It was a wake-up call and made me realise how it's</p> |
|--|--|--|--|--|

|  |  |  |  |   |
|--|--|--|--|---|
|  |  |  |  | affecting me and the relationships around me, and that. It was really helpful.” |
|--|--|--|--|---|

Annex 3: AMSTAR Quality Rating

| Modified AMSTAR item |   | Scoring guide   | Diversions  |                |                    |
|----------------------|---|---|-------------|----------------|--------------------|
|                      |   |   | Wilson 2018 | Petrosino 2019 | Wilson & Hoge 2013 |
| 1                    | Did the research questions and inclusion criteria for the review include the components of the PICOS? | To score ‘Yes’ appraisers should be confident that the 5 elements of PICO are described somewhere in the report                   | Yes         | Yes            | Yes                |
| 2                    | Did the review authors use a comprehensive literature search strategy?                                | At least two bibliographic databases should be searched (partial yes) plus at least one of website searches or snowballing (yes). | Yes         | Yes            | Yes                |
| 3                    | Did the review authors perform study selection in duplicate?  | Score yes if double screening or single screening with independent check on at least 5-10%  | Yes         | No             | No                 |
| 4                    | Did the review authors perform data extraction in duplicate?  | Score yes if double coding  | Yes         | No             | Yes                |
| 5                    | Did the review authors describe the included studies in adequate detail?                              | Score yes if a tabular or narrative summary of included studies is provided.  | Yes         | Yes            | No                 |

|   |  |   |                 |                |               |
|---|--|---|-----------------|----------------|---------------|
| 6 | Did the review authors use a satisfactory technique for assessing the risk of bias (RoB) in individual studies that were included in the review?           | Score yes if there is any discussion of any source of bias such as attrition, and including publication bias. | Yes             | No             | No            |
| 7 | Did the review authors provide a satisfactory explanation for, and discussion of, any heterogeneity observed in the results of the review?                 | Yes if the authors report heterogeneity statistic. Partial yes if there is some discussion of heterogeneity.  | Yes             | No             | Yes           |
| 8 | Did the review authors report any potential sources of conflict of interest, including any funding they received for conducting the review?<br><br>Overall | Yes if authors report funding and mention any conflict of interest  | Yes<br><br>High | Yes<br><br>Low | No<br><br>Low |



[www.youthendowmentfund.org.uk](http://www.youthendowmentfund.org.uk)

The Youth Endowment Fund Charitable Trust

Registered Charity Number: 1185413