



Custody Aftercare and Resettlement Programmes

Toolkit technical report

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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’.

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Summary

This report provides a summary of the effects of aftercare and resettlement programmes on future arrests, convictions, and incarceration among young people, and whether any program, participant, or study characteristics are linked to stronger treatment effects. The review also contains evidence on barriers and facilitators to effective program implementation and intervention costs. This technical report is based on the systematic review and meta-analysis of Wong, Lee, and Beck (2024).

Young people experience many challenges during community reintegration, including barriers related to their education, employment, mental health, and social needs. Aftercare and resettlement approaches support individuals as they leave custody and re-enter their communities (Caputo, 2004). Generally, aftercare and resettlement programs include supervision as well as any service that is deemed to assist in the successful transition and reintegration of persons from custody to the community (Petersilia, 2004).

Aftercare and resettlement programmes can occur pre-, during, and post-release and generally provide multiple forms of support services to address youths' transitional needs. Examples of services include psychological support and treatment such as cognitive behavioural therapy or anger management, and substance use interventions. Other services may include connecting youth to resources regarding housing and accommodation or helping to coordinate foster care placements. Employment and education services often include job placements, vocational training, school supports, or a requirement for school attendance. Providing purposeful or constructive activities that help young people look towards their futures and direct their time towards non-criminal activities is a staple of the resettlement process. Additionally, programmes may aim to increase relational supports for young people who have offended, including mentorship and familial supports such as family conferencing or family group therapy. Some young people may access a wide array of services and supports as part of their resettlement strategy, while others participate in fewer services.

The review reports on evidence from 15 intervention impact studies providing 35 independent effect sizes. Studies were published between 1993 and 2021, and were primarily conducted in the United States, with three conducted in Western Europe.

Nineteen studies assessing the implementation of 18 programmes were also identified. These studies were published between 1998 and 2021, with six programmes implemented outside of the United States. In addition, seven studies providing cost data were identified; three programmes were implemented in North America, and three in the United Kingdom.

This systematic review finds that aftercare and resettlement interventions for young people do not produce consistent benefits or harms with respect to reoffending, showing a moderate positive impact on convictions, a very small desirable impact on arrests, and an increase in incarceration. Conviction outcome results are promising, but the effect is only moderate in size and unstable. Importantly, the number of studies in each of the three outcome groups was small, and the overall quality of evidence was hampered by a predominance of moderately strong research designs, small sample sizes, and a lack of peer-reviewed studies.

No programme characteristics were related to important differences in reoffending outcomes. When looked at as subgroups, interventions involving community-based service providers and programmes without probation officer involvement positively impacted conviction rates.

Several study and participant characteristics were related to stronger outcomes; studies rated as having a high degree of design bias produced a negative impact on arrest and incarceration, and studies using non-randomised designs, with larger sample sizes, and with primarily minority ethnic samples showed positive effects on conviction.

Thematic synthesis of the process evaluations revealed 15 themes related to the strengths and challenges of programme implementation. Aftercare programming often operates without seamless throughcare, which undermines the processes of rehabilitation and identity shifts towards prosocial attitudes. Poor communication, coordination, and data sharing between stakeholders is common and results in gaps in services and poor program fidelity. At times, sentencing and rehabilitation practices seem to work in opposition to aftercare processes; for example, short custodial sentences may not allow for proper transitional supports to be put in place. Dedicated and caring staff, structured communication across agencies, and planned long-term funding can mitigate some of these challenges. Efficient administrative practices should be adopted that minimise the duplication of paperwork and maximize information sharing across agencies.

The assessment of programme cost determined a lack of data within the literature, preventing any summative analysis. However, three dated UK evaluations shared programme costs from 2012, per child per year; North West Resettlement Consortium: £2,822; South West Resettlement Consortium: £2,799; and the Wessex Resettlement Consortium: £4,562 (or £3,863 without community mentors post-release).

Overall, current evidence is promising with respect to conviction outcomes but overall does not find that aftercare and resettlement interventions have a reliably positive impact on recidivism outcomes for young people. This may be related to various challenges and barriers faced during programme implementation. More rigorous research addressing various programme contexts, components, and populations is needed, as well as a greater focus on cost assessments.

Objective and approach

This report provides a summary of the effects of aftercare or resettlement programmes on future arrests, convictions, and incarceration among young people, and whether any programme, participant, or study characteristics are linked to stronger treatment effects. The review also contains evidence on barriers and facilitators to effective programme implementation and intervention costs.

This technical report is based on results from one systematic review and meta-analysis published by Wong, Lee, and Beck (2024).

Selection of the review for this technical report

To be eligible for use in this technical report a review had to consider the effects of aftercare or resettlement on offending in young people, and report the results of a meta-analysis.

There are three prior reviews meeting these criteria: James et al., 2013, Weaver and Campbell, 2015; and Bouchard & Wong, 2018. All relevant studies from those reviews are included in the review of Wong et al. (2024) which thus represents the most up-to-date assessment of the impact of aftercare programmes. Therefore this technical report is based on that review.

Inclusion criteria for studies in the review

The following inclusion and exclusion criteria were used by Wong et al. (2024) to identify quantitative impact studies for inclusion in the review:

- Rigorous or moderately rigorous research designs, including randomised controlled trials (RCTs) and quasi-experimental comparison group designs in which participant baseline variables (e.g., criminal history, age, sex) were examined for observable between-group differences. Eligible comparators were similar groups of youth who did not participate in an aftercare/resettlement programme or receive aftercare services.
- Eligible programme participants include children and young people who have served or are currently serving a custodial sentence, with an age range of 10-18 years. Studies were also eligible for inclusion if the participant age range exceeded 18 years (up to 21 years), provided that the average age of study participants was at or below 18.
- Eligible types of interventions include any aftercare or resettlement programme that takes place while the young person is in custody, during their transition to the community, or when

they have returned to the community. The overarching intervention objective should be to promote successful community reintegration or to reduce reoffending. Programme components may vary across interventions (e.g., intensive case management, housing support, education, counselling), and interventions were not required to contain any particular type of component so long as the intervention was framed as an aftercare or resettlement programme as opposed to, for example, a more general skills training programme or substance abuse recovery programme.

- Studies were restricted to those conducted in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, the United States, or a Western European country. This criterion was implemented to enhance the commensurability and practicality of the study findings, as social and political systems and approaches to criminal justice vary substantially across nations from different geopolitical regions.
- Studies were limited to research published after 1991 in order to focus on more contemporary approaches to aftercare and resettlement.

To identify studies focused on aftercare/resettlement program implementation, the following criteria were used:

- Studies included implementation assessments of an aftercare/resettlement intervention, without restriction on study research design, or requirement for quantitative outcomes of violence or crime.
- Both quantitative and qualitative research were included.
- Qualitative studies met the requirements of questions 1-2 on the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) qualitative research checklist (2018).

To identify cost-related studies, data were obtained if analyses on programme cost-benefit, cost-effectiveness, or cost-per-participant served were presented in any of the studies included for the impact or process evaluation studies.

Exclusion criteria for impact studies

The review did not include:

- Studies examining boot camp interventions, wilderness therapy interventions, and intensive supervision programs, as they represent very specific models that are dissimilar from more generalized aftercare programmes.
- Studies examining probation programmes that did not meet the definition of a resettlement approach (e.g., those that include only supervision without additional supports and resources).

- Studies using single group pretest-post-test designs.
- Studies using comparison group designs that were assessed as weak in baseline matching (i.e., with groups found inequivalent on important factors such as risk level and criminal history, or baseline group comparability was not provided).
- Studies of specialized programmes targeting participants based on their exceptional or unique characteristics; for example, those with serious mental health diagnoses. These types of participants were excluded as findings from such studies would not be generalizable to broader groups of young people participating in resettlement programs.
- Studies of programmes targeting very specific types of young people, such as specialised resettlement programmes for young people who have committed sexual offences.

Outcomes

For the review of impact evaluations, the primary outcomes included quantitative, individual-level measures of crime. Outcomes were categorized into subgroups including new arrest/criminal contact, new conviction, and new incarceration. Status offenses (e.g., truancy, traffic violations) and technical probation violations were excluded.

For the review of process evaluations, the primary outcomes included any qualitative or quantitative measures related to intervention implementation and process outcomes. For example, discussions of gaps in services, participant perceptions of barriers to programme engagement, practices regarding interagency collaboration and communication, resource allocation and casework feasibility, and participant engagement with services and resources. In addition, qualitative data that did not fit within the a priori outcomes categories were coded inductively, allowing other relevant outcomes to present themselves.

For the review of programme cost, outcomes included any information concerning intervention cost in relation to outcomes achieved, such as a cost-benefit analysis or cost-effectiveness analysis, or cost data such as annual programme cost in relation to number of clients served.

Description of interventions

Young custody-leavers are confronted with numerous obstacles throughout the resettlement process, including barriers related to their physical, psychological, educational, employment, and social needs – many of which are known to increase the risk of recidivism (Barrett et al., 2010; Fields & Abrams, 2010; Kubek et al., 2020; Mears & Travis, 2004).

Aftercare and resettlement programmes differ from traditional models of post-custodial supervision in two primary ways: 1) young people experience supervision as well as needs-based supports and services (traditional post-custodial supervision may or may not include services), and 2) young people typically participate in services while in custody, during the initial transition to the community, and for a supervised period post-release from custody (Petersilia, 2004; Weaver & Campbell, 2015).

While aftercare and resettlement programmes often seek to ensure continuity of care throughout the custodial, transition, and post-release periods, programs vary with respect to the specific components and services offered. In addition to supervision and frequent contacts between case workers and their clients, a common component is intensive case management; this component may include risk and needs assessments to appropriately match the adolescent to relevant supports and ensure that services continue throughout the transition and post-release supervision periods (Altschuler & Armstrong, 1998).

Resettlement services for children and young people who have offended may include psychological support and treatment, such as cognitive behavioural therapy (e.g., James et al., 2016) or anger management (e.g., Barton et al., 2008), as well as substance use interventions such as Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous group sessions (e.g., Bergseth & McDonald, 2007; Bouffard & Bergseth, 2008, Wright et al., 2012). Part of the facilitation process may include case workers accompanying the young person to their programming (e.g., Bergseth & McDonald, 2007). Other services may include connecting young people to resources regarding housing and accommodation, such as ensuring that they have a safe and stable environment to return to after release, or helping to coordinate foster care placements (e.g., Barton et al., 2008). Employment and education services are also common, including job placements, vocational training, school supports, or a requirement for school attendance (e.g., Barton et al., 2008; Bouffard & Bergseth, 2008; Wiebush, 1993). Providing purposeful or constructive activities that help young people look towards their futures and direct their time towards non-criminal activities is a staple of the resettlement process (Hazel, 2022; Wright et al., 2012). Additionally, programs may aim to increase relational supports for young people who have offended, including mentorship (e.g., Bergseth & McDonald, 2007; Bouffard & Bergseth, 2008) and

familial supports such as family conferencing (e.g., Wiebush, 1993) or family group therapy (e.g., Greenwood & Turner, 1993). Some young people may access a wide array of services and supports as part of their resettlement strategy, while others participate in fewer services.

Theory of change (presumed causal mechanisms)

Aftercare and resettlement programs were originally developed in response to the need for continued support post-custodial release. They are based on the theoretical underpinning that more supervision and resources will lead to improved outcomes and reduced recidivism. Specifically, programs seek to increase pro-social identities, opportunities, skillsets, and behaviours (Hazel et al., 2017; Hazel, 2022), while reducing antisocial influences, attitudes, and behaviours (Bouffard & Bergseth, 2008; Chung et al., 2007). See Annex 1 for a diagrammatic presentation of the theory of change.

Custodial phase

The pre-release stage of aftercare and resettlement programs provides young people in custody the opportunity to build a strong foundation of skills and behaviours necessary for easing the transition post-release. Research suggests that successful reintegration is more likely if release planning and intervention programming begin when the individual is admitted into custody, before the start of the transition (Bateman et al., 2013; Byrnes et al., 2002; Petersilia, 2004; Travis & Petersilia, 2001). In accordance with this principle, the case management component of the aftercare model should ideally commence at entry into custody and continue throughout the supervision period.

Important in the case management process is an element of co-creation. That is, by allowing young people to have some self-determination in their plans for the future, the development of a pro-social identity may be strengthened (Bateman & Hazel, 2018). Eligible young people will generally undergo risk, vulnerabilities, and needs assessments and engage in discussions surrounding their personal goals and motivations, which will inform their case planning with respect to level of supervision and the specific interventions provided while in custody.

These interventions typically focus on preparing custody-leavers to live pro-socially post-release, and may include psychological or behavioural interventions (e.g., cognitive behavioural therapy, anger management) or substance use treatment, mental and physical health services, education services, discharge planning such as identifying a safe living situation, and/or employment preparation and

training (e.g., Hampson & Tracey, 2016; James et al., 2013). Further, case planning engages informal networks of support before release, in order to provide young people with coordinated support throughout the entire re-entry process (Bateman & Hazel, 2018).

Transition phase

The immediate period of transition is a critical point in the overall reintegration process. Research suggests that re-offence is most likely to occur shortly after release, indicating the need for intensive and highly structured transition planning, and immediate access to matched services (Altschuler & Armstrong, 1998; Goodstein & Sontheimer, 1997; Griffin, 2004).

As such, resettlement models typically involve intensive case management and supervision immediately after release, with frequent contact between case managers and community correctional staff (Altschuler & Armstrong, 1998; Greenwood & Turner, 1993; Griffin, 2004; James et al., 2016). This can include check-in meetings, drug testing, family conferencing, and various mentorship activities (Bergseth & McDonald, 2007; Bouffard & Bergseth, 2008; Sontheimer & Goodstein, 1993; Wiebush, 1993). Agencies from all stages of the resettlement process are encouraged to attend meetings during this transitional phase, in order to provide coordinated and unified care which is unaffected by the spatial changes involved in release (Bateman & Hazel, 2018; Hampson & Tracey, 2016).

Post-release phase

After the initial transition to the community has occurred, young custody-leavers are generally required to maintain contact with their case manager to ensure continued supervision and service participation, including reassessment of needs as necessary (Altschuler & Armstrong, 1998; Griffin, 2004; James et al., 2013). The intensity of this care gradually decreases over time as the young person becomes more established within the community (Griffin, 2004).

To successfully implement this phase, it is critical that the resettlement team has established strong connections with community-based services and resources to ensure that young people receive the appropriate continuity of care to prevent any lapses or delays in service delivery and subsequent skill and behavioural regression (Altschuler & Armstrong, 2001; Mathur & Clark, 2014). The scope of the available services should be broad in an effort to meet the various needs of the adolescents and ensure

that services provided in the community parallel those provided in custody (Altschuler & Armstrong, 1998; Byrnes et al., 2002).

Evidence base

Descriptive overview

The search was applied to 26 electronic databases. Additional web sources were searched to identify relevant unpublished works not indexed in academic databases (e.g., technical reports, conference papers, and independent research projects). Other search methods included hand-searching the reference lists of existing review literature in the field, the reference lists of all studies meeting inclusion criteria, the curricula vitae of well-known researchers in the field, websites specifically affiliated with a resettlement program, and the tables of contents of 23 journals backdated to January 2021. The search resulted in 15 impact studies, representing 4,718 participants across 21 program sites, and 19 process studies.

Assessment of the strength of evidence

The included intervention studies consisted of four randomised control trial (RCT) designs (six program sites) and eleven non-randomised designs (15 program sites). The RCTs were assessed for risk of bias using the Revised Cochrane Risk of Bias tool for randomised trials (RoB-2; Higgins et al., 2019), and the non-randomized studies were assessed the Cochrane Risk of Bias in Non-randomized Studies of Interventions (ROBINS-I; Sterne et al., 2016). Based on these tools, the evaluations of 12 program sites were assessed as being low/moderate risk for bias, while 7 were deemed serious risk.

Qualitative implementation studies were assessed for quality and risk of bias using the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme qualitative study checklist (CASP, 2018). The present sample included 19 publications; 12 were rated as high quality, and the remaining seven were rated as moderate quality. No included studies were rated as low quality.

The analytic sample provided a wide range of information with respect to resettlement program characteristics; however, it included a narrow scope of studies with respect to certain characteristics. The included programs were almost exclusively implemented in the United States. Notable differences

across countries in terms of legal and justice systems, in addition to cultural and societal distinctions, suggest that program impacts may differ based on geographic location. Further, it is likely that “treatment as usual” groups (i.e., young people who do not receive an aftercare/resettlement intervention or enhanced resettlement services) are quite different across countries, states, or sites. Additionally, the included studies primarily assessed samples of males, with few female participants. Young females may have different experiences and different needs related to their justice system and subsequent reintegration journeys (Espinosa et al., 2013; Jones et al., 2014).

As well, the analyses are exclusively based on official data sources, which may inaccurately represent true rates of recidivism; future evaluations should consider alternative measures of recidivism. Relatedly, the review focuses solely on measures of recidivism as a measure of program success; other aspects of the resettlement experience may also indicate positive program impacts on factors such as self-esteem, identity, employment, education, life skills, emotion or behaviour management. Overall, the set of studies used for the intervention analysis was fairly small, particularly with respect to sample sizes for subgroup analyses and moderator analyses.

With respect to the process/implementation studies, most of the data were derived from staff and program administrators, with minimal input from participant perspectives. Program participants may have additional insights to offer as a result of their receipt of service experiences. Further, other than two studies which discussed language barriers when working with parents, studies generally did not report on barriers or strengths to program implementation as they related to different types of participants, such as minority ethnic young people, young people with immigrant status, or young people with specific mental or physical health needs.

A modified version of the AMSTAR2 critical appraisal tool was used to appraise the review that informs the current technical report. According to this tool, the reviews by Wong et al. (2024) was rated “high”. See Annex 7 for details.

Impact

Summary of impact measure

The review reports on evidence from 15 intervention impact studies representing 21 independent implementation sites providing 35 independent effect sizes (arrest (k = 14), conviction (k = 13), and

incarceration (k = 8)). Studies were published between 1993 and 2021, and were primarily conducted in the United States, with three conducted in Western Europe. With respect to program characteristics, the vast majority of interventions were implemented both pre- and post-release and were primarily handled by a case manager (95%).

Programs included additional involvement from other program staff (62%), community-based service providers (71%), probation officers (29%), and counsellors (10%; categories were not mutually exclusive). Specific program components included behavioural or emotional supports (76% of programs), academic supports (71%), vocational training (76%), life skills development (62%), housing assistance (48%), individual therapy (67%), group therapy (14%), family therapy or services (62%), mentoring (43%), substance use treatment (71%), and parental involvement (86%). See Annex 3 for an overview of the intervention studies.

The pooled analysis for the outcome of conviction included 13 effect sizes, with an odds ratio of 1.209 and 95% prediction interval of 1.00 to 1.462. This is equivalent to a 14% reduction in convictions. The effect was statistically significant ($t = 2.256$, $p = 0.044$). There is no heterogeneity ($I^2=0\%$). The conviction outcome was selected as the headline impact rating because it is the most appropriate measure of involvement of violence compared to arrests and has a greater number of studies than the custody outcome. The evidence rating is four, marked down due to the number of high-quality studies informing the impact estimate: four of the 13 studies are RCTs and 9 are QEDs¹. The review also demonstrates that the pooled finding on convictions was not robust; removing one of any of eight out of the 13 effect sizes was sufficient to reduce the aggregate effect to a non-statistically significant level.

Results of smaller groups of studies with outcomes measured at commensurate time intervals also indicated a non-robust treatment effect; for example, the pooled analysis using only the 10 studies measuring outcomes at 12 months was not statistically significant. Overall, results of the sensitivity testing suggest that the aggregate impact of resettlement programs on conviction is acutely sensitive to the addition or removal of individual studies.

¹ The YEF Toolkit methodology is being updated to include a measure of the quality of the primary studies informing the impact estimate. The highest evidence security of rating of five will be applied where impact estimates are based on at least five high quality randomised controlled trials. The updated Toolkit Guide will be published in December 2024. If you have any questions about this, email: Laura.Knight@youthendowmentfund.org.uk.

The meta-analysis for the set of 14 sites examining the outcome of arrest resulted in a small reduction in arrests, with an odds ratio of 1.043. This result is not statistically significant ($t = 0.335$, $p = 0.743$) and the prediction interval is 0.527 to 2.075. By assuming that 25% of the control group are subject to arrest, we constructed a 2x2 table for the effect of the intervention on arrests: there would be 24.2 arrests in the treatment group. This is equivalent to a 3.2 percent reduction in arrests $[(24.2-25)/25 \times 100]$. See Annex 2 for details of this calculation.

There is moderate heterogeneity ($I^2=46\%$). This finding suggests that aftercare programs have a low impact on arrest rates for participants relative to comparison group subjects. The finding was robust to remove-one-study sensitivity analysis, as well as examinations of different time points of outcome measurements; in other words, none of these analyses resulted in a substantive change to the original finding of no treatment impact on the outcome of arrest. The evidence rating for arrests is five, because it is based on 14 study sites, and it included five RCTs and nine QEDs.

The pooled outcome from eight studies examining the effect of aftercare and resettlement interventions on incarceration resulted in an odds ratio of 0.806. The result was not statistically significant. There is low heterogeneity ($I^2=27\%$). This is equivalent to an increase in incarceration of 11%. Sensitivity analyses indicated that this finding was robust. The overall evidence rating is three, because it is based on eight study sites, half were RCTs, and half were QEDs.

Table 1 provides an overview of the mean effect sizes for recidivism outcomes. See Annex 2 for a description of the conversion of effect sizes to percentage changes.

Table 1. Mean effect sizes for recidivism outcomes from Wong et al. (2024)

	Odds ratio (p5% CI) Cohen’s d	No. of studies (effect estimates – these represent independent study sites)	I^2	% change	Evidence rating
Arrests	1.044 (0.527, 2.075) d = 0.021	n=10 (k=14)	45.9	-3.2%	5
Convictions*	1.209 (1.010, 1.448)	n=10 (k=13)	0	-13.6%	4

	d = 0.105				
Incarceration	0.806	n=5	26.8	+11%	3
	(0.454-1.433)	(k=8)			
	d = -0.119				

Note: OR = odds ratio (greater than 1 = desirable effect).; d = Cohen's d, CI = 95% confidence intervals for the mean ES; *p* = the statistical significance of the mean ES, * = headline impact estimate.

Moderators

Fourteen moderator variables were examined, including study characteristics (e.g., research design, risk of bias score), sample characteristics (race and gender), intervention characteristics (e.g., program included a housing component, individual therapy), and program delivery (e.g., probation officer, community service provider).

No program characteristics were related to important differences in reoffending outcomes. When looked at as subgroups, interventions involving community-based service providers and programs without probation officer involvement positively affected youth conviction rates.

Several study and participant characteristics were related to stronger outcomes; studies rated as having a high degree of design bias produced a negative impact on arrest and incarceration, and studies using non-randomized designs, with larger sample sizes, and with primarily ethnic minority samples showed positive effects on conviction.

Conviction outcome results are promising, but the effect is small and unstable. Importantly, the number of studies in each of the three outcome groups was small, and the overall quality of evidence was hampered by a predominance of moderately strong research designs, small sample sizes, and a lack of peer-reviewed studies.

See Table 2 for a summary of moderator findings.

Table 2. Summary of moderator analyses

Moderator	Arrest	Conviction	Incarceration
Study characteristics			
Peer review	n/a	No peer review: LOR = 0.194, p = 0.053 Peer reviewed: LOR = 0.180, p = 0.267 Q _B = 0.01, p = 0.942	n/a
Research design	n/a	Non-RCT: LOR = 0.227, p = 0.018* RCT: LOR = 0.047, p = 0.804 Q _B = 0.73, p = 0.394	Non-RCT: LOR = -0.170, p = 0.171 RCT: LOR = -0.229, p = 0.255 Q _B = 0.06, p = 0.803
Bias score	Low bias: LOR = 0.175, p = 0.054 High bias: LOR = -0.360, p = 0.036* Q _B = 7.60, p = 0.006**	Low bias: LOR = 0.161, p = 0.102 High bias: LOR = 0.276, p = 0.106 Q _B = 0.34, p = 0.559	Low bias: LOR = -0.081, p = 0.497 High bias: LOR = -0.541, p = 0.014* Q _B = 3.33, p = 0.068
Tx group sample size	<75: LOR = 0.131, p = 0.360 75+: LOR = 0.024, p = 0.804 Q _B = 0.38, p = 0.537	<75: LOR = -0.080, p = 0.740 75+: LOR = 0.229, p = 0.012* Q _B = 1.45, p = 0.229	<75: LOR = -0.381, p = 0.129 75+: LOR = -0.144, p = 0.215 Q _B = 0.73, p = 0.392
Sample characteristics			
Sample ethnicity	White/mix: LOR = -0.106, p = 0.545 Minority: LOR = 0.101, p = 0.262 Q _B = 1.11, p = 0.293	White/mix: LOR = 0.081, p = 0.517 Minority: LOR = 0.284, p = 0.015* Q _B = 1.40, p = 0.236	White/mix: LOR = -0.263, p = 0.076 Minority: LOR = -0.106, p = 0.479 Q _B = 0.55, p = 0.458
Sample gender	Mix gender: LOR = 0.089, p = 0.369 All male: LOR = -0.003, p = 0.984 Q _B = 0.29, p = 0.591	Mix gender: LOR = 0.183, p = 0.149 All male: LOR = 0.196, p = 0.090 Q _B = 0.01, p = 0.941	Mix gender: LOR = -0.054, p = 0.706 All male: LOR = -0.345, p = 0.028* Q _B = 1.89, p = 0.169
Program components			
Life skills	No: LOR = -0.083, p = 0.474 Yes: LOR = 0.088, p = 0.520 Q _B = 0.91, p = 0.341	n/a	n/a
Housing	No: LOR = -0.052, p = 0.625 Yes: LOR = 0.206, p = 0.094 Q _B = 2.52, p = 0.112	No: LOR = 0.122, p = 0.374 Yes: LOR = 0.217, p = 0.079 Q _B = 0.26, p = 0.610	No: LOR = -0.229, p = 0.255 Yes: LOR = -0.170, p = 0.171 Q _B = 0.06, p = 0.803
Individual therapy	No: LOR = -0.268, p = 0.234 Yes: LOR = 0.035, p = 0.719	No: LOR = -0.153, p = 0.528 Yes: LOR = 0.199, p = 0.088	n/a

	Q _B = 1.52, p = 0.217	Q _B = 1.71, p = 0.191	
Group therapy	n/a	No: LOR = 0.186, p = 0.241 Yes: LOR = 0.050, p = 0.803 Q _B = 0.29, p = 0.591	n/a
Family therapy	No: LOR = 0.043, p = 0.727 Yes: LOR = 0.069, p = 0.515 Q _B = 0.03, p = 0.869	n/a	n/a
Mentoring	No: LOR = 0.242, p = 0.134 Yes: LOR = -0.120, p = 0.255 Q _B = 3.52, p = 0.060	No: LOR = 0.117, p = 0.456 Yes: LOR = 0.160, p = 0.430 Q _B = 0.03, p = 0.867	n/a
Subs use treat	No: LOR = 0.098, p = 0.424 LOR = 0.028, p = 0.796 Q _B = 0.19, p = 0.665	n/a	n/a
Program delivery			
Probation officers	No: LOR = -0.016, p = 0.860 Yes: LOR = 0.289, p = 0.076 Q _B = 2.66, p = 0.103	No: LOR = 0.212, p = 0.022* Yes: LOR = 0.069, p = 0.749 Q _B = 0.36, p = 0.546	n/a
Program staff	No: LOR = 0.127, p = 0.267 Yes: LOR = -0.009, p = 0.938 Q _B = 0.72, p = 0.397	n/a	n/a
Community service providers	No: LOR = 0.006, p = 0.963 Yes: LOR = 0.091, p = 0.376 Q _B = 0.27, p = 0.605	No: LOR = 0.075, p = 0.633 Yes: LOR = 0.237, p = 0.019* Q _B = 0.74, p = 0.389	n/a

*p < .05, **p < .01

Implementation

The systematic search resulted in a total of 19 publications which provided process evaluations of 18 aftercare programs in 27 program sites. These studies were published between 1998 and 2021, with six programs implemented outside of the United States. Data were commonly collected through surveys and interviews with participants or program staff, observations and field notes, focus groups, and/or case records. See Annex 4 for an overview of the implementation studies.

Thematic synthesis revealed 15 themes related to the strengths/challenges of program implementation. Aftercare programming often operates without seamless throughcare, which undermines the processes of rehabilitation and identity shifts towards prosocial attitudes. Poor communication, coordination, and data sharing between stakeholders is common and results in gaps in services and poor program fidelity. At times, sentencing and correctional practices seem to work in opposition to aftercare processes; for example, short custodial sentences may not allow for proper transitional supports to be put in place. Dedicated and caring staff, structured communication across agencies, and planned long-term funding can mitigate some of these challenges. Efficient administrative practices should be adopted that minimize the duplication of paperwork and maximize information sharing across agencies.

Eight themes relevant to aftercare as a whole were uncovered within five domains: funding and program continuance, staffing and organization-level findings, program fidelity, casework feasibility, and parents and families.

In the pre-release stage, two themes emerged within two domains: contacts in custodial facilities, and working with custodial staff and institutions.

Findings for the intensive transition stage were synthesized into two themes across two domains: service provision during release from custodial facilities, and community partnerships.

Last, at the post-release stage, two themes emerged: follow-up and long-term engagement, and relationships with justice personnel in the community.

See Annex 6 for an overview of the 15 themes.

Cost analysis

A total of seven studies (eight program sites) were found to report on cost assessment data. Three programs were implemented in North America, three in the United Kingdom and one in Canada. The type of assessment conducted (e.g., cost-effectiveness assessment, comparison of the cost of aftercare versus no aftercare/previous treatment, etc.), and the amount of detail and information reported varied considerably across the 7 studies, precluding any meaningful synthesis. See Annex 5 for an overview of the seven studies.

For example, Bergseth and McDonald (2007) compared program costs and impacts for both treatment and comparison group youth to various justice system cost estimates to determine whether the program resulted in overall cost savings. Findings noted that youth who participated in the program had fewer justice system contacts and days in restrictive custody than comparison youth, resulting in reductions in system processing costs. Estimates also determined that program costs (\$4,415 per youth) were fully recovered by approximately two years post release, with further system processing cost reductions (\$7,600 in reduced processing costs were noted at three years post release).

Similarly, Hazel et al. (2012) and Wright et al. (2012) also conducted detailed cost assessment analyses, in which program costs were compared to estimated costs of offending post program participation. Both studies also assessed costs related to reduced likelihood of homelessness and not in education, employment, or training. Overall, Hazel et al. (2012) reported savings of over £9,000 per person, per year, primarily due to a reduction in offending. Wright et al. (2012) reported lesser impacts of the program on participant behaviours, leading to lesser cost savings. Though some savings were found (approximately £1,959 per person over a year), the savings did not outweigh the program cost per person. The evaluations show cost per child per year; North West Resettlement Consortium: £2,822 (Hazel et al. 2012); and South West Resettlement Consortium: £2,799 (Wright et al, 2012). In a similar third evaluation in the UK in 2012, the Wessex Resettlement Consortium identified a cost of £4,562 per child per year (or £3,863 without community mentors post-release).

What do we need to know? What don't we know?

Overall, current evidence is promising with respect to conviction outcomes but overall does not find that aftercare or resettlement interventions have a reliably positive impact on recidivism outcomes for

young people. This may be related to various challenges and barriers faced during program implementation. More rigorous research addressing various program contexts, components, and populations is needed, as well as a greater focus on cost assessments.

More specifically, no significant treatment effects were found for studies assessing the outcome of arrest or incarceration. Studies examining the outcome of conviction resulted in a positive, significant pooled effect size but the effect was contingent on the inclusion or exclusion of any one of eight studies.

With respect to study, sample, program component, and treatment delivery as potential moderators of intervention impact, no meaningful pattern of results across outcomes was found. For the arrest outcome, studies rated as having serious bias concerns were related to a negative, statistically significant effect (LOR = -0.360, $z = -2.099$, $p < .05$), while studies rated as low bias were related to a positive, nonsignificant effect. The between-group Q-statistic was significant ($Q_B = 7.60$, $p < .01$), indicating that study bias is an important moderator of treatment impact.

For the conviction outcome, none of the between group heterogeneity statistics were significant, which suggests that none of the variables are important moderators of treatment impact. Subgroup analyses did suggest that several study and sample characteristics were found to have differential subgroup impacts, with positive, significant treatment effects found for studies using a non-randomised design, studies with sample sizes of 75 or more participants, and studies using primarily minority ethnic samples. In addition, programs that were delivered (at least in part) by community service providers were found to have a significant effect, while those delivered without probation officers were related to a positive effect.

For the outcome of incarceration, no significant between group heterogeneity statistics were uncovered. Subgroup analyses found that studies rated as having serious bias were related to a statistically significant, negative effect, as were interventions delivered to all male samples.

The qualitative synthesis of process data resulted in 15 themes related to resettlement program implementation. Challenges to implementation were presented in included studies much more frequently, resulting in findings that speak more to the failures of aftercare programs than to their successes. Overall, findings suggest that resettlement programs often suffer from poor communication, coordination, data sharing, and role definition across agencies, leading to a lack of

throughcare and ineffective programming. For example, poor communication between custodial staff, aftercare workers/case managers, and community supervision staff meant that youth were less able to prepare for their release, engage in appropriate rehabilitation programming, gain security in the community, and stay motivated to lead pro-social lives. Aftercare/resettlement programs can aim to reduce these issues by ensuring that relationships between youth and transition teams are consistent (i.e., minimizing changes to team members), developed throughout the entire resettlement process (i.e., starting at the beginning of a sentence and lasting through the post-release phase), and formed on principles of trust and empathy. Further, gaps in services were exacerbated by poor coordination between aftercare/resettlement staff, community partners, parents and families, and justice personnel (in custody and in the community). By increasing data sharing, meetings, and administrative support, these gaps in service may be reduced.

The systematic search revealed very few studies addressing the issue of cost effectiveness in relation to youth aftercare programs. The few studies that were deemed relevant and eligible for inclusion had high heterogeneity with respect to the extent and type of assessment conducted, and the amount of information and detail provided. This precluded any formal analysis and indicates a gap in the existing literature. The lack of existing cost assessment studies may be due to the challenges associated with conducting a full cost-effectiveness assessment of these types of programs. Youth aftercare/resettlement programs often involve many different services, organizations, and partnerships, with varying frequencies and levels of service usage, in addition to varying program administration costs (Cowell et al., 2010; Cowell et al., 2013). As well, the costs associated with youth crime can be difficult to estimate due to varying contributing factors, and it is challenging to estimate costs for incidents which have not happened or account for crimes that go undetected by the justice system (Cary et al., 2013). It is often difficult to obtain accurate measures for the numerous cost factors due to the volume and complexity of program and system operations; many cost effectiveness assessments may also occur as an add-on or afterthought to an impact evaluation, meaning relevant data often are not collected at the outset (Cowell et al., 2010).

Implications for practice

Current evidence suggests no notable effects of youth aftercare or resettlement interventions on outcomes of recidivism. The current data do not provide insight regarding the importance of specific intervention components (e.g., housing, individual therapy); the exceptions were that programs involving the provision of services from community-based providers, and those *not* involving probation

officers, resulted in reduced rates of re-convictions. The lack of consistent pattern of results with respect to both overall treatment effects and moderators of treatment impact lead to a lack of notable recommendations for practice with respect to program design and best components. Based on the many challenges uncovered in the analysis of implementation studies, it is not surprising that aftercare or resettlement programs fail to demonstrate strong evidence of effectiveness. Greater emphasis on internal youth processes, such as motivation to change and improved self-esteem, the development of relationships between transition teams and youth, as well as enhanced coordination and cooperation across agencies, and attention to social and environmental service needs of the youth (e.g., housing, employment/income support, food security), is vital for future practice.

Implications for research

Results of the current study indicate that additional work is needed for a more thorough understanding of the impact of youth aftercare and resettlement programs on recidivism. This is particularly true with respect to locations outside of the U.S. and for female populations; research in these areas is lacking and the field would benefit from additional insight. Relatedly, increased research focusing on specific program components or approaches would provide greater information regarding what is important for program success. Existing aftercare/resettlement programs take a variety of approaches and utilize varying formats and services, which results in considerable levels of heterogeneity in pooled analyses. Greater evaluation research in the field will allow for a larger sample size and the ability to pool programs based on approach, format, or component and provide a more detailed level of understanding.

Future research should also consider the implementation process, as few evaluations included process evaluations. Understanding the strengths and challenges encountered during program implementation and the extent of implementation fidelity is necessary for a greater understanding of program impacts, and why or why not a program is successful. Additional research might include quantitative analyses of the frequency of contacts and services received; it may be that program success is moderated by the intensity of services received by participants. Last, future evaluation studies, whether they focus on impact or implementation, should aim to include data on program cost. Resources for reentry and rehabilitative services are often limited and must be allocated fairly and efficiently. Understanding if associated program costs are proportionate to achieved outcomes (and potential savings) would be beneficial for program administrators and policymakers.

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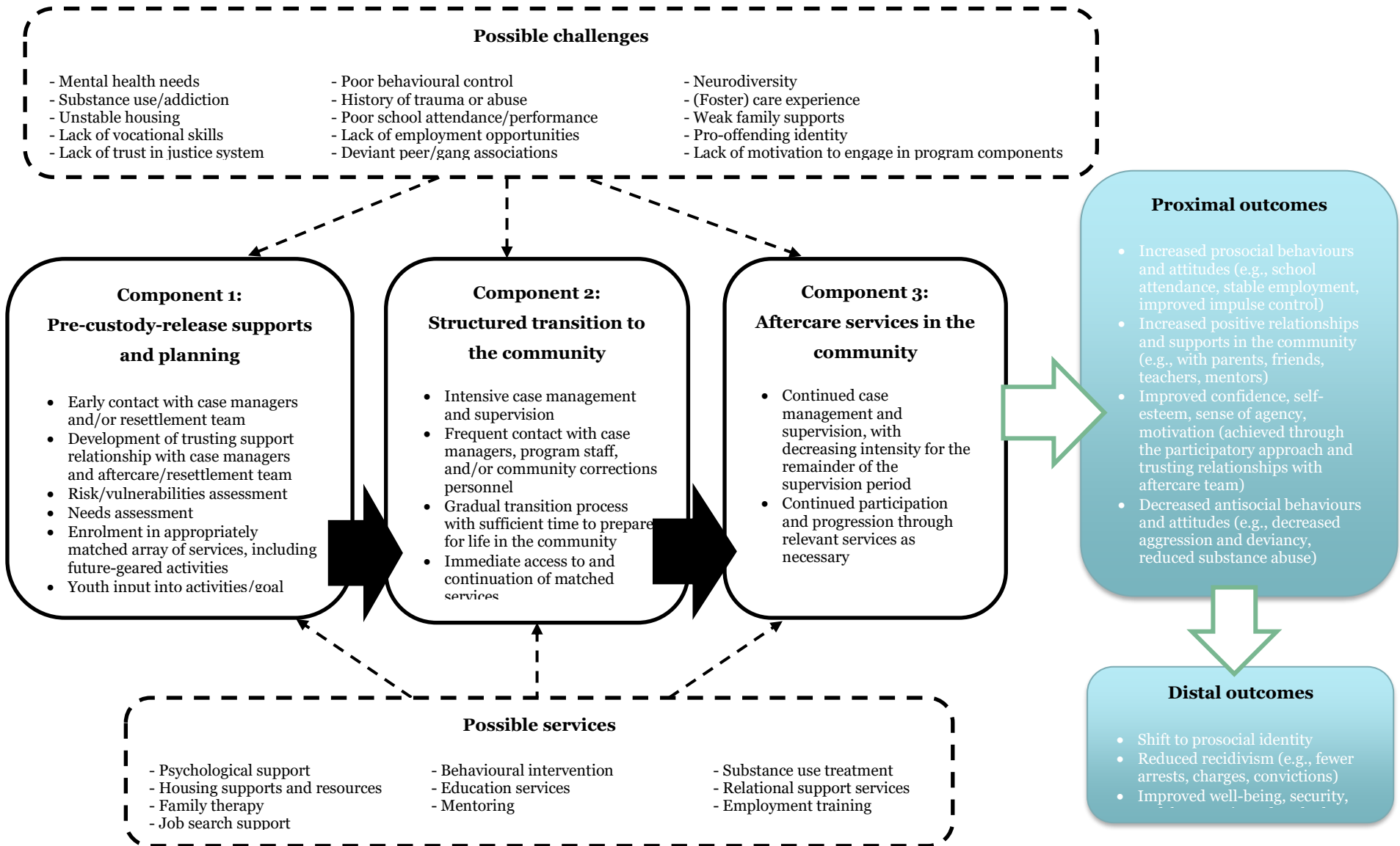
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Annex 1. Youth aftercare/resettlement theory of change



Annex 2: Effect size calculations

Data from each individual study were standardized so that results across studies could be meaningfully pooled. Effect size calculation was dependent on the type of data presented in each individual study. More specifically, the following two types of effect sizes calculations were used:

For studies that presented dichotomous outcome measures (e.g., in the form of percentages or raw numbers representing how many participants were rearrested at least once), effect sizes were computed as odds ratios. The odds referred to the odds of recidivism (e.g., arrest, conviction, or incarceration) compared to no recidivism for an individual who participated in an aftercare/resettlement intervention relative to the odds of recidivism for an individual in the control group (Lipsey & Wilson, 2001). Specifically:

$$OR = \frac{ad}{bc} = \frac{P_a P_d}{P_b P_c} = \frac{P_a \div P_b}{P_c \div P_d} = \frac{P_a(1-p_c)}{P_c(1-p_a)}$$

where a , b , c , and d correspond to the raw frequencies of those who recidivated and those who did not for each group. For example, a refers to the number of youth in the treatment group who were arrested, d refers to the number of youth in the treatment group who were not arrested, b refers to the number of youth in the comparison group who were arrested, and c refers to the number of youth in the comparison group who were not arrested. The superscript P refers to the proportion in the relative cell (a , b , c , d) and lower-case p refers to the proportion of persons in its relative group (a or c) who experienced a positive outcome (reduction in recidivism) (Lipsey & Wilson, 2001).

As odds ratios are not normally distributed, all odds ratios were log transformed to log odds ratios (LORs). LORs are centred around a value of zero, with zero indicating that recidivism is equally likely to occur in both groups. Data were coded (or reverse-coded) such that an LOR below 0 indicates that the outcomes favour the control group (with the treatment group being more likely to reoffend), and a value above 0 indicates that the aftercare/resettlement intervention has a beneficial impact on the treatment group (a lower rate of recidivism).

The standard error of the LOR was calculated as:

$$SE_{LOR} = \sqrt{\left[\left(\frac{1}{a} \right) + \left(\frac{1}{c} \right) + \left(\frac{1}{b} \right) + \left(\frac{1}{d} \right) \right]}$$

For studies that presented means and standard deviations for both groups at post-test, the basic standardized mean difference was calculated as the mean of the treatment group (M_T) minus the mean of the control group (M_C) divided by the pooled standard deviation (SD_{pooled}):

$$Cohen's\ d = \frac{M_T - M_C}{SD_{pooled}}$$

Where the pooled standard deviation was calculated by:

$$SD_{pooled} = \sqrt{\frac{(n_T - 1)SD_T^2 + (n_C - 1)SD_C^2}{(n_T - 1) + (n_C - 1)}}$$

In which SD_T^2 is the standard deviation of the treatment group and SD_C^2 is the standard deviation of the control group.

The standard error of d was calculated by:

$$SE_d = \sqrt{\frac{n_T + n_C}{n_T n_C} + \frac{d^2}{2(n_T + n_C)}}$$

To be compatible with the effect sizes based on dichotomous data, all standardized mean difference effect sizes were converted to log odds ratios using the Cox logit method ($LOR = d * 1.65$).

Conversion to percentage changes

We here show the calculation based on the results and assumptions given in the text. We assume 200 observations, evenly divided between treatment and control groups. That means there are 100 recorded observations in the control group and 100 recorded observations the treatment group. Assuming that 15% of individuals in the control group are arrested, the mean effect sizes reported by Wong et al. (2024) can be easily transformed to a percentage reduction in violence.

If the odds ratio for conviction is $OR = 1.21$ (Wong et al., 2024), then using the table below and the formula for an OR, we can estimate the value of X. The odds ratio is estimated as: $A * D / B * C$, where A is the number of participants that were not convicted in the treatment group, B is the number of participants who were convicted in the treatment group, C is the number of participants that were not

convicted in the control group, and D is the number of participants that were convicted in the control group. Therefore, the value of X is 21.6.

	No Conviction	Conviction	Total
Treatment	100-x	X	100
Control	75	25	100

Therefore, the relative reduction in convictions is $(21.6 - 25.0)/25 = -13.6\%$.

The prevalence of convictions is likely to vary between evaluations and across individuals. Furthermore, it can be influenced by a number of different factors such as the type of behaviour, the type of report (i.e., self-reported or official records of convictions), or the time frame in which behaviours occurred (i.e., the past 3 months or lifetime prevalence). If we were to adjust our assumption that 25% of the control group were, the relative reduction in the intervention group is not greatly affected.

For example, if we assume that just 10% of the control group were convicted, the 2x2 table would be as follows for and the value of X is 8.42. Therefore, the relative reduction is 15.8% (i.e., $(8.42 - 10)/10$).

	No conviction	Conviction	Total
Treatment	100-x	X	100
Control	90	10	100

Similarly, if we assume that 50% of the control group are convicted, the value of X is 45.27 and the relative reduction is 9.5%. Given the difference in the assumed prevalence of the conviction rate, the percentage relative reduction does not vary in a similar fashion.

Annex 3: Intervention study characteristics

Author (date)	Program site	Program name	Pub. Type	Research Design	Treatment Sample (baseline)	Comparison Sample (baseline)	Age range (Mean)	Sample gender	Post-test timing	Outcomes
Abrams et al. (2008)	Midwest USA	Transitional Living Program (TLP)	Journal article	Quasi-experiment with weakly matched comparison group	Youth released from a correctional facility after completing the TLP (n = 46)	Offenders released from a correctional facility who did not participate in the TLP (n = 15)	15.9 ^b	All male	12 months	Conviction
Barton et al. (2008)	Alaska, USA	Boys and Girls Clubs of America Targeted Re-Entry	Report	Quasi-experiment with matched comparison group	Youth released from a custodial facility who participated in the program (n = 84)	Retrospective group drawn from years prior to introduction of systematic transition programming (n = 64)	13-19 (17.3)	Majority male	12 months	Arrest and Conviction
	Arkansas, USA	Boys and Girls Clubs of America Targeted Re-Entry	Report	Quasi-experiment with matched comparison group	Youth released from a custodial facility who participated in the program (n = 83)	Contemporary matched group of those not participating in program (n = 89)	12-19 (16.2)	Majority male	12 months	Conviction
	Wisconsin, USA	Boys and Girls Clubs of America Targeted Re-Entry	Report	Quasi-experiment with matched comparison group	Youth released from a custodial facility who participated in the program (n = 81)	Contemporary matched group of those not participating in the program (n = 50)	14-20(16.7)	All male	12 months	Arrest and Conviction
Bouffard & Bergseth (2008)	Clay County, USA	Clay County Reentry Services Project (RSP)	Journal article	Quasi-experiment with weakly matched comparison group	Youth returning from 3+ weeks of custodial placement (n = 63)	Youth in a neighboring county returning from 3+ weeks of placement on probation without re-entry services (n = 49)	11-19 (16.5)	Majority male	6 months	Arrest

Calleja (2016)	Wayne County, USA	Wayne County Second Chance Reentry Program	Journal article	Quasi-experiment with weakly matched comparison group	Youth placed in residential facilities (n = 117)	Youth receiving 6 months of treatment-as-usual aftercare (n = 156)	13-18 (15.9)	All male	24 months	Conviction
Cillo (2001)	Westchester County, USA	Westchester County Aftercare Program	Thesis/dissertation	Randomized Controlled Trial	Youth returning to non-foster care homes after incarceration at Jenny Clarkson Residential Adolescent Facility (n = 50)	Adolescents returning home on traditional probation (n = 50)	11-17 (15.2)	Majority male	3 months	Arrest
Greenwood et al. (1993)	Detroit, USA	The Skillman Aftercare Experiment	Report	Randomized Controlled Trial	Male offenders returning home after a placement in a residential correctional program (n = 50)	Male youth on regular forms of post-release care (n = 49)	17.0 ^b	All male	12 months	Conviction
Hawkins et al. (2009)	Colorado, Florida, Kansas, South Carolina ^a	The Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative	Report	Quasi-experiment with matched comparison group	SVORI youth released into the community after custodial placement (n = 152)	Youth released into the community after residential placements who received treatment-as-usual (n = 185)	17.0 ^b	All male	15 months	Incarceration
Hazel et al. (2012)	North West England	North West Resettlement Consortium	Report	Quasi-experiment with matched comparison group	Youth with a detention and training order sentence who received the "enhanced offer" (n = 168)	Youth with a detention and training order sentence, released from custody in the year previous to the cohort receiving the enhanced offer (n = 104)	15-17 (16.4)	All male	3 months	Conviction
Iutovich et al. (1998)	Allegheny, USA	Abraxas Non-Residential Care	Report	Quasi-experiment with weakly matched comparison group	Youth released to the Abraxas NRC program post-residential placement (n = 72)	Youth released from residential placement receiving aftercare services directly through the Probation Department (n = 58)	17.0 ^b	Majority male	12, 18 months	Arrest and Incarceration

	Philadelphia, USA	Philadelphia Opportunities Industrialization Center	Report	Quasi-experiment with weakly matched comparison group	Youth released to the OIC-YAPP program post residential- placement (n = 87)	Youth released from residential placement receiving aftercare services directly through the Probation Department (n = 85)	17.0 ^b	All male	12, 18 months	Arrest and Incarceration
Lieberman et al. (2021)	Oklahoma, USA	Second Chance Act Reentry program	Report	Quasi-experiment with matched comparison group	Youth returning home after at least a 6-month stay in custody (n = 153)	Historical cohort sample of youth returning home after release (n = 111)	12-19 (16.3)	Majority male	12 months	Conviction
	Virginia, USA	Second Chance Act Reentry program	Report	Quasi-experiment with matched comparison group	Youth returning home after at least a 6-month stay in custody (n = 217)	Youth returning home after at least 6 months confinement and not enrolled in program (n = 286)	13-19.9 (16.6)	Majority male	12 months	Arrest, Conviction, and Incarceration
Sontheimer & Goodstein (1993)	Philadelphia, USA	Intensive Aftercare Probation Program	Journal article	Randomized Controlled Trial	High risk males released from the Bensalem Youth Development Center and randomly assigned to the program (n = 44)	High risk males released from the Bensalem Youth Development Center and randomly assigned to receive standard probation (n = 46)	17.2 ^b	All male	3 months	Arrest
Stafford & Glassner (2012)	Texas, USA	Children's Aftercare Reentry Experience	Report	Quasi-experiment with weakly matched comparison group	Youth enrolled in CARE within 90 days of release from a residential facility (n = 317)	Youth parolees released from a residential facility between July 2007 and December 2009 (n = 533)	16.5 ^b	Majority male	12 months	Arrest
Vogel et al. (2014)	Sweden	Coherent chain of Care	Journal article	Quasi-experiment with matched comparison group	Youth released from 2+ weeks in care in eligible municipalities (n = 156)	Youth released from 2+ weeks in care in eligible municipalities not assigned to the program (n = 335)	11-21 ^c	Majority male	24 months	Conviction and Incarceration

Wiebush et al. (2005)	Colorado, USA	Intensive Aftercare Program	Report	Randomized Controlled Trial	High-risk males released from state custody (n = 82)	High-risk males released from state custody and not assigned to the program (n = 68)	Not reported	All male	12 months	Arrest, Conviction, and Incarceration
	Nevada, USA	Intensive Aftercare Program	Report	Randomized Controlled Trial	High-risk males released from state custody (n = 120)	High-risk males released from state custody and not assigned to the program (n = 127)	Not reported	All male	12 months	Arrest, Conviction, and Incarceration
	Virginia, USA	Intensive Parole Program	Report	Randomized Controlled Trial	High-risk males released from state custody (n = 74)	High-risk males released from state custody and not assigned to the program (n = 44)	Not reported	All male	12 months	Arrest, Conviction, and Incarceration
Wright et al. (2012)	South West England	South West Resettlement Consortium	Report	Quasi-experiment with matched comparison group	Youth who received the "enhanced offer" and were released during the 19-month period from September 2010 to March 2012 (n = 82)	Youth released from custody in the year previous to the cohort receiving the enhanced offer (n = 58)	14-17 (16.2)	Majority male	3 months	Arrest

^a Participants were pooled across program sites; individual sites were not separated for analyses presented.

^b Age range not reported

^c Mean age not reported

Annex 4. Implementation study characteristics

Author(s), year	Program name	Implementation site (if applicable)	Sample	Data sources
Abrams et al. (2008)	Transitional Living Program (TLP)	United States	10 youth participants, 5 TLP staff	Qualitative interviews
Barton et al. (2008)	The Boys and Girls Clubs of America (BGCA) Targeted Re-Entry (TR)	Alabama	Program staff, correctional facility personnel, members of partnering organizations. Ns not reported.	Qualitative interviews, program materials, program case records
		Alaska	Program staff, correctional facility personnel, members of partnering organizations. Ns not reported.	Qualitative interviews, program materials, program case records
		Arkansas	Program staff, correctional facility personnel, members of partnering organizations. Ns not reported.	Qualitative interviews, program materials, program case records
		Wisconsin	Program staff, correctional facility personnel, members of partnering organizations. Ns not reported.	Qualitative interviews, program materials, program case records
Citizens' Committee for Children of New York (2000)	Juvenile Services Aftercare Program	New York	8 aftercare workers	Qualitative interviews, questionnaires
Dum & Fader (2013)	Powelton Aftercare Program	Pennsylvania	25 aftercare workers	Qualitative interviews, observations
Flynn et al. (2003)	Network Aftercare System	Alabama	5 program administrators (interviews), focus group sample size not reported	Qualitative interviews, program case records, focus groups, observations
Hazel & Hampson (2015)	Resettlement Broker Project	North Wales	11 young people, 3 parents, 2 policymakers, 11 practitioners	Qualitative interviews, questionnaires, focus groups
Hazel et al. (2008)	RESET Programme	United Kingdom	63 stakeholders, including front-line workers and their managers, local and strategic-level stakeholders, 28 young people, 4 parents	Qualitative interviews, program materials, focus groups, observations

Hazel et al. (2012)	North West Resettlement Consortium	North West England	Young people, stakeholders. Ns not reported.	Qualitative interviews, questionnaires
Ipsos MORI (2012)	London Youth Reducing Reoffending Programme (Daedalus)	United Kingdom	23 young people, 26 policy stakeholders, 2 discussion groups of case managers, 6 Youth Offending Team workers, 5 family interviews	Qualitative interviews, program case records, questionnaires, focus groups, observations
Iutovich & Pratt (1998)	Pennsylvania Intensive Aftercare Programs	Allegheny	Not reported	Qualitative interviews, program materials, program case records, questionnaires
		Philadelphia	Not reported	Qualitative interviews, program materials, program case records, questionnaires
Jain et al. (2018)	Juvenile Reentry Program	California	25 case managers (focus group), 15 key stakeholders (interviews), 75 survey respondents	Qualitative interviews, program materials, questionnaires focus groups, observations
Lieberman et al. (2021)	Second Chance Act (SCA) reentry program	California	Parents, program administrators, community partners. Sample sizes not reported.	Qualitative interviews, focus groups, observations
		Oklahoma	128 youth; Sample sizes for parents, program administrators, and community partners not reported.	Qualitative interviews, focus groups, observations
		Texas	Parents, program administrators, community partners. Sample sizes not reported.	Qualitative interviews, focus groups, observations
		Virginia	127 youth; Sample sizes for parents, program administrators, and community partners not reported.	Qualitative interviews, focus groups, observations
Lindquist et al. (2014); McKay et al. (2014)	Tribal Juvenile Detention and Reentry Green Demonstration ("Green Reentry") programs	Three tribes: the Rosebud Sioux Tribe, the Hualapai Indian Tribe, and the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians Tribe. Findings	77 staff and stakeholders, 56 youth, 41 parents (individual interviews), 32 elders, 17 parents (focus groups)	Qualitative interviews, questionnaires, focus groups, observations

		presented together.		
Miller & MacGillivray (2002)	Youth Offender Demonstration projects	United States	Participants, case managers, community partners. Sample sizes not reported.	Qualitative interviews, program materials, observations
Sinclair et al. (2021)	Model Demonstration Project	United States	8 youth, 4 transition specialists	Qualitative interviews
Vogel et al. (2014)	The Leaving Care Project	Sweden	9 case managers	Qualitative interviews, questionnaires
Wiebush et al. (2005)	Intensive Aftercare Program (IAP)	Colorado	IAP coordinators, program staff, technical assistance providers. Sample sizes not reported. 67 treatment group youth and 51 control group youth.	Qualitative interviews, program materials, program case records, observations
		Nevada	IAP coordinators, program staff, technical assistance providers. Sample sizes not reported. 100 treatment group youth and 120 control group youth.	Qualitative interviews, program materials, program case records, observations
		Virginia	IAP coordinators, program staff, technical assistance providers. Sample sizes not reported. 63 treatment group youth and 34 control group youth.	Qualitative interviews, program materials, program case records, observations
Wright et al. (2012)	South West Resettlement Consortium	South West England	Young people. Stakeholders. Ns not reported.	Qualitative interviews, questionnaires

Annex 5. Cost assessment study characteristics

Author (year)	Program name	Location	Publication type	Assessment reported
Beausoleil et al. (2017)	Redemption Reintegration Services (RRS)	Canada	Journal article	Compared cost of service usage between treatment and comparison groups
Bergseth & McDonald (2007)	Reentry Services Project (RSP)	USA	Journal article	Cost-benefit analysis comparing program impact to costs related to justice system processing across treatment and comparison group youth
Cowell et al. (2010)	Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative (SVORI)	USA	Report	Cost-benefit analysis assessing costs of pre-release services
Greenwood (1993)	The Skillman Aftercare Experiment	USA	Report	Compared costs of providing aftercare services via treatment program with standard aftercare services
Hazel et al. (2012)	North West Resettlement Consortium	United Kingdom	Report	Cost-benefit analysis assessing costs related to reoffending, housing, and education of program youth
Renshaw (2007)	RESET	United Kingdom	Journal article	Provided estimated costs and savings with associated estimates in reduced offending
Wright et al. (2012)	South West Resettlement Consortium	United Kingdom	Report	Cost-benefit analysis assessing costs related to reoffending, housing, and education of program youth

Annex 6. Sensitivity analysis of qualitative synthesis findings

Domain	Notes	Themes/Findings
Overall findings		
Funding and program continuance	Evidence supporting this theme is well balanced, with data from multiple high-quality studies and numerous implementation sites.	Theme 1: A lack of long-term funding often results in program termination or poor service delivery.
Staffing and organization-level findings	Almost every program included in the implementation synthesis contributed findings relevant to staffing and program organization. Though many studies described challenges, positive experiences were also well-documented.	Theme 2: Aftercare/resettlement programs experience high levels of staff turnover due to a lack of attractive job features. Theme 3: Poor leadership and organizational functioning often compromise aftercare /resettlement program delivery. Theme 4: Staff and leadership often show high levels of care and dedication in their work.
Program fidelity	While theme 5 is strong in terms of both the quality of studies, the frequency of high-quality studies, and the thickness of data, theme 6 is less robust. Adjustments were made to temper the takeaway of theme 6.	Theme 5: Program fidelity is often hampered by weak or poorly communicated program theory, aims, and operation. Theme 6: Administrative duties are not always aligned with direct service delivery, which can hamper program fidelity.
Caseload feasibility	Data were relatively non-descriptive and lacked thickness, often simply mentioning existing caseloads with little discussion of whether they were manageable or not. Analysis did not indicate generalizable findings relating to program ability to maintain caseload feasibility.	Theme 7: Caseload feasibility is variable across aftercare/resettlement programs; however, where caseloads are high, program fidelity may be diminished.
Parents and families	The quality ratings of studies contributing to this theme were almost split; however, in all studies contributing findings to this theme data were thick and relevant to overall conclusions.	Theme 8: A high degree of parent involvement is needed for successful program implementation.
Pre-release stage		

Contacts in custodial facilities	Though this theme is supported by high quality studies and data from numerous implementation sites, there were few studies that discussed contacts in the custodial phase of aftercare, making it difficult to conclude whether aftercare programs are generally successful in pre-release contact levels. The theme statement was appropriately tempered.	Theme 9: Minimal contact between aftercare/resettlement workers and youth in custodial facilities compromises the ability to develop strong support relationships.
Short sentences	This theme is well balanced; evidence is mostly from studies of high quality.	Theme 10: Sentence lengths are often short, leaving very little time for transition planning, preparation activities, or securing post-release supports.
Working with custodial staff and institutions	This theme is very robust: most supporting studies are of high quality, and findings were thick and found in numerous implementation sites.	Theme 11: A lack of communication between custodial staff and aftercare/resettlement workers creates challenges in transition processes and gaps in service.
Intensive transition		
Service provision during release from custodial facilities	Study quality is mostly high in this theme, and thick descriptions were available across many studies.	Theme 12: Aftercare/resettlement programs often fail to ensure youth arrive in the community with immediate supports.
Community partnerships	Most studies were of high quality, and multiple implementation sites provided data towards this theme.	Theme 13: Poor relationships with community organizations and a lack of pre-specified services negatively impacts service access.
Post-release stage		
Follow-up and long-term engagement	This theme is robust and multifaceted (the lack of service provision was supported by two separate findings). Contributions of studies were balanced, and the removal of moderate quality studies did not alter conclusions.	Theme 14: Service provision is lacking after the intensive transition stage.
Relationships with justice personnel in the community	The studies of moderate quality that were included in this theme provide the most descriptive findings about the relationship between parole officers and aftercare staff;	Theme 15: Power imbalances and resentment sometimes lead to inefficient relationships between community-based criminal justice workers and aftercare/resettlement staff.

	however, removing these studies would not alter the conclusion that these relationships experienced problems.	
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*(H) = high quality study, (M) = moderate quality study

Annex 7 – AMSTAR Quality Rating

Modified AMSTAR criteria		Scoring guide	Wong et al. (2024)
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
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
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
4	Did the review authors perform data extraction in duplicate?	Score yes if double coding	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
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
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

8	Did the review authors report any potential sources of conflict of interest, including any funding they received for conducting the review?	Yes if authors report funding and mention any conflict of interest	Yes
	Overall		High



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