

Day reporting centres

Day reporting centres (DRCs) are based in the community and offer rehabilitation programmes to offenders with custodial sentences.

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Effect scale	Quality of evidence				
	Effect Impact on crime	Mechanism How it works	Moderator Where it works	Implementation How to do it	Economic cost What it costs
 Mixed findings	 Very strong	 Low	No information	 Low	 Low

Focus of the intervention

Day reporting centres (DRCs) are community-based facilities that offer rehabilitation and transitional programmes to offenders with custodial sentences. Those assigned to DRCs are allowed to live in their own home and are required to attend the DRCs for daily supervision and programme purposes. Having entered a DRC, participants may be required to attend drug testing or educational and vocational programmes based on their individual needs. Absences are only permitted to attend education or for employment-seeking activities such as job interviews.

DRCs can be implemented as a community-based diversion from prison or as a form of early release when offenders serve the remainder of their sentence in their communities. DRCs differ from other community-based sanctions such as halfway houses, because those assigned to DRCs are allowed to return to their own homes at night. By requiring offenders' attendance, DRCs offer higher rates of supervision compared to traditional parole or probation supervisory conditions.

This narrative is based on one meta-analytic review (covering nine studies) which examined the effect of DRCs in reducing reoffending. The review drew evidence from multiple outcome measures, including arrests, incarcerations, convictions, or a combination of all three. The nine primary studies were based on evidence from the USA where DRCs are commonly used.

Effect – how effective is it?

There is some evidence that DRCs have either increased or reduced crime, but overall they have not had a statistically significant effect on crime.

The review found that DRCs had no overall impact on reoffending by individuals with custodial sentences compared to those who went through conventional means of supervision. Seven primary studies showed statistically significant results favouring DRCs (offenders attending DRCs reoffended less than those on traditional supervisory schemes). However, three studies reported statistically significant results favouring those on traditional supervisory schemes.

Additional analysis suggested that DRCs had statistically significant effects in reducing reoffending when they were implemented as a community-based diversion from prison or as an alternative to prison, as opposed to a form of early release. Similarly, DRCs also had a statistically significant effect on reducing reoffending when reoffending was measured through convictions.

Moderator analyses conducted in the review found non-peer-reviewed studies (for example, technical reports or dissertations) were more likely to report statistically significant reductions in reoffending compared to peer-reviewed studies. Likewise, studies conducted before 2003 also reported more statistically significant reductions in reoffending compared to those published after 2003.

How strong is the evidence?

The review was sufficiently systematic that most forms of bias that could influence the study conclusions can be ruled out.

The evidence is taken from a systematic review which demonstrated a high-quality design in terms of assessing potential publication biases, the reliability among coders, and the influence of study designs of primary studies.

Mechanism – how does it work?

DRCs are assumed to reduce crime by helping offenders address their individual needs and supporting them with the challenges of re-entering the community. Community-based sanctions such as those contained in DRCs can address these barriers by bridging the gap between custody and community living to maximise successful reintegration and, consequently, prevent reoffending.

However, information was not available from the primary studies to test whether these mechanisms were responsible for the outcome patterns observed.

Moderators – in which contexts does it work best?

The review did not examine under what conditions or for what population groups the intervention might work best.

Implementation – what can be said about implementing this initiative?

Offenders assigned to DRCs live in their own home and report to the DRCs daily for supervision and programme participation. Offenders' whereabouts are also closely monitored, and absences from the DRC are permitted to attend education or for employment-seeking activities such as job interviews.

During the day while at the DRC, participants may be required to attend drug testing and a variety of programmes.

Programming may include

- educational and vocational training
- job placement services
- alcohol and drug abuse education and treatment
- individual or group counselling
- life-skills training

They might also be subject to several supervision phases in which the level of supervision gradually decreases (for example, daily reporting may be reduced to reporting every other day or three times a week).

DRCs do not have a centralised oversight, and can be publicly or privately operated. This variability creates challenges in maintaining consistency and accountability across programmes.

Economic considerations – how much might it cost?

Whilst the review did not undertake an economic analysis, some mention of costs was reported in one primary study not included in the meta-analysis. The study reported that the per-participant cost of DRCs in Washington State was cheaper than conventional supervision models. The benefit to cost ratio was estimated to be £1.50 for potential cost-savings benefit to the criminal justice system.

However, it was recognised that as DRCs become available, and as judges increase the number and types of conditions imposed (drug testing, curfews), the more detection there will be of supervisory condition breaches. This in turn, may contribute to greater costs to the criminal justice system.

General considerations

- There is no information about the effectiveness of DRCs, or whether they operate, outside the USA.
- Without an analysis about the moderators (for example, participants' characteristics, programme duration) it is not possible to know under which circumstances DRCs might be more effective.
- The evidence used in this review came from a small number of studies that varied in their design and methods. More research is needed to understand the effectiveness of DRCs in reducing reoffending.

Summary

Day reporting centres (DRCs) are community-based sanctions that provide supervision while simultaneously assisting with rehabilitation and reintegration to offenders with custodial sentences.

The evidence showed that, overall, DRCs do not differ from traditional supervision options in terms of reducing reoffending. However, DRCs used as a community-based diversion from prison or as an alternative to prison, as opposed to a form of early release, have statistically significant effects in reducing crime.

This review also showed that when reoffending is measured as convictions, DRCs also have a statistically significant effect on reducing reoffending.

Reviews

Review

Reference

- Wong, J. S., Bouchard, J., Lee, C., & Gushue, K. (2019) 'Examining the effects of day reporting centers on recidivism: A meta-analysis', *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, 58(3), 240-260.

Summary prepared by

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