

Turning Point NW-London: A replication randomised trial of police-led diversion in North West London

A variant RCT replicating Operation Turning Point (conducted by West Midlands Police in Birmingham, 2011-2014) in the London boroughs of Barnet, Brent and Harrow.

Key details

Status	Ongoing
Lead institution	University of Cambridge
Principal researcher(s)	Katie Harber Katie.Harber@met.police.uk
Police region	Eastern
Collaboration and partnership	Metropolitan Police Service.
Project start date	July 2018
Date due for completion	July 2024

Hypothesis

First time offenders not previously convicted at court, or repeat offenders with no more than three previous court convictions (in the last two years if aged 22 and above, or one year if 21 and under), whom police would otherwise caution or charge for prosecution, can be more effectively dealt with by police-led offender management than formal criminal justice processing, if subject to a condition of the certainty of prosecution in the event of reoffending or breaking an agreed 'contract' about their conduct.

Geographical area

London boroughs of Barnet, Brent and Harrow, covered by the North West Basic Command Unit (NW BCU) of the Metropolitan Police Service.

Target sample size

526.

Participants - inclusion criteria

Offenders eligible for caution or a charge that would not receive a custodial sentence, have no more than three previous court convictions in the last 2 years (aged 22 years and above) or 1 year (aged 21 years and below) and have not committed an excluded offence, for example, DA, hate crime, domestic burglary, weapons. No formal admission of guilt is required.

Interventions

Treatment subjects attend a criminogenic needs assessment with a police offender manager within 48-60 hours of being offered Turning Point. They must adhere to a four month tailored contract of conditions (restorative, rehabilitative and if necessary prohibitive) designed to make amends with victims and address root causes of offending.

For example

- apology letters
- financial compensation
- attendance at restorative justice (RJ) conference
- attendance at Victims Awareness Course
- attendance at drug, alcohol, mental health, anger management, employment and training support services
- volunteer work

Victims are consulted on contract content. Subjects are swiftly prosecuted for their original offence if they breach or reoffend but are not criminalised if they successfully complete their contract (that is, not charged or cautioned; recorded as Outcome 22 for HOCR). Control subjects are cautioned/charged as normal.

Study design

Two arm RCT. Randomisation of offenders comparing treatment to control. Random assignment stratified by three age cohorts (under 18s, 18-21, 22 and over).

Outcome measures

1. Reoffending – prevalence, frequency, time-to-failure and Cambridge Harm Index level of rearrests and reconvictions as compared between the treatment and control group, 6 months, 12 months and 24 months post randomisation. Sub-group analysis by age, gender, ethnicity, trigger offence type, first time or repeat offender.
2. Victim satisfaction – interview surveys with victims of offenders in both treatment and control groups.
3. Process analysis – detailed participant-observer case study reporting covering the RCT's implementation and contextual issues, including analysis of treatment integrity, fidelity and dosage.
4. Production of a 'How-to-do-it manual' for further replication or introduction as policy.