

‘London Reducing Reoffending Programme’ Evaluation: Executive Summary

**ICF GHK with Sheffield Hallam University and Manchester Metropolitan
University**

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Executive Summary

The 'London Reducing Reoffending Programme' (LRRP) was an innovative Payment by Results (PbR) programme that aimed to reduce youth reoffending in London. It was co-ordinated by the London Criminal Justice Partnership (LCJP)¹ and funded by the London Development Agency (LDA),² using match-funding from the European Social Fund (ESF). It began in April 2010 and ended in March 2012. ICF GHK led a partnership with Sheffield Hallam University (SHU) and Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) that was commissioned by LCJP in September 2011 to evaluate LRRP.

The Evaluation of the London Reducing Reoffending Programme (LRRP)

The evaluation involved extensive qualitative fieldwork with stakeholders from across the programme, including young offenders themselves. In total 185 interviews were conducted including 93 with young offenders participating in the programme. A proven re-offending study was conducted to explore whether a cohort of young people supported by LRRP had a conviction recorded in the twelve months since joining the programme. It compares the twelve months before the cohort of young people joined the programme with the twelve months after they joined, whether or not these participants were in custody or in the community at the time of registration. 'DIESEL'³ is the database developed for performance management of the ESF programme by the LDA and provides information about the young people engaged by LRRP; Police National Computer (PNC) data provides data about the number and type of convictions recorded for those young people.

The cohort of young people for this study is all of those registered with LRRP from the inception of the programme in April 2010 to the end of October 2010. This is so a period of twelve months, plus six months for any convictions to be processed within the criminal justice system, can be analysed. This is the standard approach to the period of time to consider in studies of re-conviction carried out by the MoJ and Home Office. But we have not been able to take account of when any participants were released from custody when we know they served a custodial sentence, due to limitations of the data available to the evaluation. This is an important caveat in the analysis that means it does not meet the other elements of what would be expected in a standard approach. Although the analysis provides the strongest approach possible with the available data, in addition to the caveat relating to missing custody release data the approach also means that no young offenders who engaged with LRRP from October 2010 – and as the programme matured – are included. To include all programme participants would require an analysis beginning in 2014 (to enable the twelve plus six months for all). Thus there are two very important caveats to consider when drawing conclusions from the analysis.

There is also no counterfactual or comparison group for the evaluation. This is because LRRP was pan-London in approach and therefore there was not geographical targeting to enable within London comparisons to be identified. It was not feasible to seek the engagement of areas outside of London within the resources available to the evaluation (with time and commitment required from other authorities) and the initial timescale for analysis and reporting.

The evaluation also includes: the analysis of DIESEL data; a self-assessment survey; and data from the assessment tools used with young offenders (ASSET for those aged up to 17 years and OASys for those aged 18 years and over). These latter two elements are not included in this summary due to low numbers of cases.

The evaluation was structured using a programme theory, or 'theory of change' approach. It was peer reviewed by academic experts.

The London Reducing Reoffending Programme (LRRP)

LRRP consisted of three strands ('specifications'), each targeting a different group of young offenders aged 15-19 years. The specifications each aimed to provide holistic, personalised and responsive

¹ LCJP bring together agencies from across London to coordinate criminal justice services.

² In April 2012 the LDA ceased to operate and key functions were transferred to the Greater London Authority (GLA).

³ Direct Input Entry System ESF LDA

resettlement support to young offenders as they came to the end of community or custodial sentences. Resettlement Brokers assessed, action-planned and supported young people to engage with a range of services towards and into sustained education, training and employment (ETE). The model of resettlement provision was developed from an evidence base that highlights how supporting young offenders into ETE reduces their reoffending. A single worker providing holistic support is shown to be an effective model in supporting young offenders into ETE.

Each specification targeted a different group of young offenders.

ESF Prospectus Specification	Target group
2	Young male offenders aged 15-19 serving custodial sentences (later amended to include those serving community sentences).
3	Young female offenders serving custodial sentences (later amended to include those serving community sentences).
4	Male and female young offenders aged 18 and 19 under the supervision of London Probation and those who had completed community sentences of less than 12 months and who are not receiving any support.

Payment by Results

A 'Payment by Results' (PbR) approach structured the LRRP. Specifications were delivered by lead providers working in partnership with others. Two of the specifications were designed to be split between two lead providers. One specification had a sole provider. Three providers (Catch 22, Nacro, St. Giles) came from the voluntary and community sector (VCS), one was a statutory agency (London Probation Trust) and one came from the private sector (Serco). St Giles withdrew from their contract shortly after the evaluation began. The LCJP developed a governance structure for the programme on behalf of the LDA.

Achievement	Definition	Percentage of payment
Contract signing	To contribute to set-up costs	10%
Starts	Payment for each young person entering specification support	15%
Progression	Young people taking part in positive activities and skills-based provision (outputs)	25%
Entries	Young people entering education, training or employment (outputs)	20%
Outcomes	Young people entering sustained – defined as being continual for six months ⁴ – education, training or employment	30%

Following the initial commissioning, each provider was given an opportunity to re-profile their contracted outputs and outcomes, taking into account delays in finalising and signing contracts following the general election of May 2010. After contracts had been awarded, revisions to the profiles and delivery models were also required due to changes in sentencing practice that meant that there were fewer young offenders being placed in custody and more being given community sentences ('community orders'). In response to the lower numbers in custody, targeting was broadened to enable providers to recruit more young offenders serving community orders and under YOT supervision. As two specifications were split between different providers, different geographies were identified for each to supplement the division of YOIs between them. Targeting young offenders in both settings brought challenges.

⁴ This did not have to be with a single placement. 'Continual' was defined as for 20 of 26 weeks at the tracking date six months after entry to ETE.

The Support Pathway

Across all specifications the pathway to ETE outcomes that the Resettlement Broker role supported was:

- **Start** – following referral from a YOT, London Probation or within the YOI an initial meeting introduced the specification and support available. Participation was voluntary. If the young person wanted to engage, an assessment was undertaken and an action plan agreed.
- **Positive activities** – the young people were supported to access community-based positive activities. These were sometimes leisure based but most often had a low level skills or learning element. They were tailored to the young person's interests and their action plan. In custody, a course was provided to engage and provide skills for the young person.
- **Skills development** – in parallel, each young person then attended skills development training, culminating in the award of a formal, recognised qualification. The training was either a full Skills for Life qualification at pre-entry or entry level; or a non-accredited course of 30 hours focused on preparation for training or employment and culminating in a certificate from the provider.
- **Entry into education, training or employment** – young people were provided with range of Resettlement Broker support to enter ETE. Specification 4 (working with 18-19 year olds) was designed to support employment only.
- **Sustained education, training or employment** – young people were then supported to sustain their education, training or employment for six months. 'Sustained' was defined as continuous for 20 of 26 weeks. So if a placement came to an end or broke down, the young person was supported into another opportunity.

Outputs and Outcomes

- **Starts** – all providers exceeded their targets for initial engagement. They were not paid for starts above their target but increased numbers increased their chances of achieving outcomes (and the higher payments associated with them). More than a half of all individuals were drawn from black and minority ethnic (BME) groups. In total, 2389 young people were recruited, against a target of 2223.
- **Positive Activities** – providers' performance in achieving positive activity outputs ranged from 50%-78%. Overall, 61% of all starts achieved this.
- **Skills Development** – providers' performance ranged from 40%-73%. Overall, 53% of all starts achieved this.
- **Education and Training** – providers' performance ranged from 12% to 17% of all starts entering ETE; of these 23%-58% of entries were sustained as outcomes. Overall, 15% of starts achieved entry and of these more than 50% were sustained for six months. Education and Training was only a target for those of compulsory education age and the programme prioritised employment. The lowest rates were achieved for young female offenders, who were reported to face particularly complex barriers to engagement.
- **Employment** – providers' performance ranged from 11%-33%, with a total of 16% of starts to the programme overall and 33% of these sustained for six months.

When considering the proportions of starts who achieved entry to and sustained ETE it should be noted that these proportions were expected in the design of LRRP, with targets for each stage of the progression pathway reflecting the expected difficulties in successfully supporting this challenging group of young people along each stage and into sustained ETE. Targets for sustained ETE were around a fifth of the targets for starts, apart from Specification 3 following revisions in light of early delivery challenges. Rates for entry almost achieved targets. Lower numbers achieved sustained ETE, although these have improved since the evaluation ended.⁵ Nonetheless, the job-entry rates achieved by the programme compare favourably with comparative data for young people leaving custody.

⁵ Following the completion of the evaluation and analysis further data has been provided by LDA and this shows that conversion rates from entries to sustained have changed to: Catch 22, 21%; Nacro, 86%; Serco, 15%, LPT, 55%. This suggests that as the programme matured providers were placing and supporting young people more effectively. Nacro and Serco both had their contracts extended and achieved higher outputs and outcomes, which are noted in the report.

Proven Re-offending Analysis

There are important caveats that must be borne in mind when considering the findings of this analysis (outlined above and discussed in full in the report).

The analysis shows that across the cohort of 518 young people, 217 re-offended in the 12 months after registration with LRRP. **This gives a statistically significant re-offending rate of 41.9%.** This represents a statistically significant percentage reduction in offending of 41.2%. There was also **a statistically significant reduction in the number of offences committed of more than 50%.** There was a statistically significant re-offending rate of 50.8% for those serving community sentences and 70.9% for those serving custodial sentences. The analysis also shows **a statistically significant relationship between the achievement of ETE outcomes and the likelihood of being reconvicted after starting the programme.**

There are a range of different sources that offer broad comparison with the results of the proven re-offending analysis presented here. These sources take account of custody release data, which is not available for this evaluation, and have much higher numbers in their cohorts making the results much more robust.

The latest published proven re-offending rate from the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) for young people (aged 17 and under; LRRP supported 19 years and under) released from custody from July 2010 to June 2011 is 72.7%. For Youth Community Penalties and Youth Rehabilitation Orders who re-offend it is 65.9%.⁶ Although the LRRP analysis compares favourably with these rates, the differences are small for custodial settings.

Themes of Effective Practice

“Without [Resettlement Broker] I probably would have messed up a long time ago.”

- **Resettlement Brokers** – the role of the Resettlement Broker was central to LRRP’s design. There were two elements: they supported young offenders during and after their sentence towards sustained ETE outcomes; and they liaised with local partners to gain referrals and broker packages of support. In practice, Resettlement Brokers fulfilled a demanding and multi-faceted role, requiring a range of skills and a flexible, responsive approach. They were central to the achievement of all outputs and outcomes.
- **Positive Activities** – positive activities were more likely to be completed if they were tailored to the needs of the young person and clearly linked to their individual action plan and thus engaging and relevant. Nonetheless, a great deal of support can be required to ensure that it is both accessed and completed.
- **Skills Development** – the most popular courses were reported to be those that were directly related to employment. Important aspects of effective provision were its informal, engaging nature which was often described as being in contrast to previous education or training experiences and perceptions of these.
- **Employer Engagement** – was essential to securing employment opportunities for the young people participating in LRRP. It was time consuming and required dedicated roles and resources for consistent success. The engagement identified opportunities and promoted the cohort of young people as motivated and supported to succeed.
- **Supporting Education Training and Employment** – a high level of support was provided to young people to enable them to apply for and secure employment. The Resettlement Broker model ensured that bespoke, responsive and often intensive practical and emotional support was provided. Sustained education and training was supported in the same way
- **Partnership Working** – effective partnership working was key to delivery of LRRP outputs and outcomes. All of the providers had worked to establish partnerships as part of their tender for their specification and the model they devised. There were difficulties establishing and maintaining some partnerships. In part this was related to the need to negotiate or amend partnerships at short notice. Partnership working was required amongst the providers and the governance

⁶ Ministry of Justice (2013) *Proven Re-offending Statistics Quarterly Bulletin, July 2010 to June 2011, England and Wales*, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/192631/proven-reoffending-jul-10-jun-11.pdf, Table 18b

provided, particularly once LCJP had put additional structures in place, supported and facilitated this.

- **Payment by Results** - The PbR model for LRRP was challenging and complex. It provided a great deal of learning for all involved. Despite initial difficulties, providers and strategic stakeholders were positive it. The exception was St Giles who withdrew from their contracts. Expectations around payment linked to PbR were not met for some partners and they were also less positive.

All of the providers welcomed the flexibility afforded to them in how targets were met. There were two areas of concern for them. First, the targets proved to be extremely challenging for delivery due to the data that was used to develop the specifications. Second, the interim output payments and demands in achieving 'sustained' outcomes lead some providers to consider that they were insufficiently rewarded for the work required to support young people.

The PbR focused providers on achieving the defined outcomes and for LDA it ensured that only strong performance was rewarded. The use of PbR was innovative and all stakeholders worked hard to make the programme a success and to learn together from the experience of the programme.

Conclusions

- Providers successfully recruited young offenders to the programme and most achieved outputs including ETE entry that were broadly in line with targets set in expectation of performance.
- Providers were less successful in meeting targets for sustained ETE. Nonetheless, the job entry rates achieved compare favourably with those achieved by mainstream provision and benchmarks for sustained employment are not available.
- A proven re-offending analysis was undertaken. It has important caveats that mean caution must be used in interpreting the results. It suggests that LRRP was successful in reducing reoffending.
- The reconviction analysis demonstrates that the achievement of ETE was an important factor in reducing reoffending across the programme.
- The evaluation also included an estimation of the economic impact of the programme. This indicates that significant savings have been provided to the public purse and the programme provided value for money.
- The programme provided strategic learning about the importance of joint and coordinated work in London to support young offenders.

Recommendations

- The Resettlement Broker model should be central to supporting young offenders towards and into ETE and provide on-going support to sustain outcomes. This model of provision prevents re-offending and is cost effective.
- When providing a Resettlement Broker model of support, caseloads should be carefully managed and extra aspects of brokers' roles limited so that other necessary elements, such as partnership development and job brokerage do not limit the capacity for supporting young offenders.
- The GLA and other agencies should consider how coordinated packages of support can be provided that are appropriate to individuals' needs.
- In designing PbR for reduced reoffending, a wide range of partners must be consulted in design, so that the challenges of young offenders' progression pathways are sufficiently recognised within the model of payments for outputs and outcomes.
- In designing PbR the pathway towards final outcomes should be carefully considered so that it recognises the work required to achieve them without removing incentives and rewarding outputs over outcomes.
- When commissioning using PbR, sufficient resources must be dedicated to contract and performance management. There is a great deal of work in the early stages, especially when PbR is new to commissioners and/or providers. But there is also on-going work to manage and audit the process.

PbR is an effective tool for managing performance and driving a focus on outcomes. Because of this, there can be underspend. Considerations of how to reinvest underspend from budgets should be included from the beginning of PbR design. If the contract fails then outcomes will not be delivered, with the potential for unmet need.

