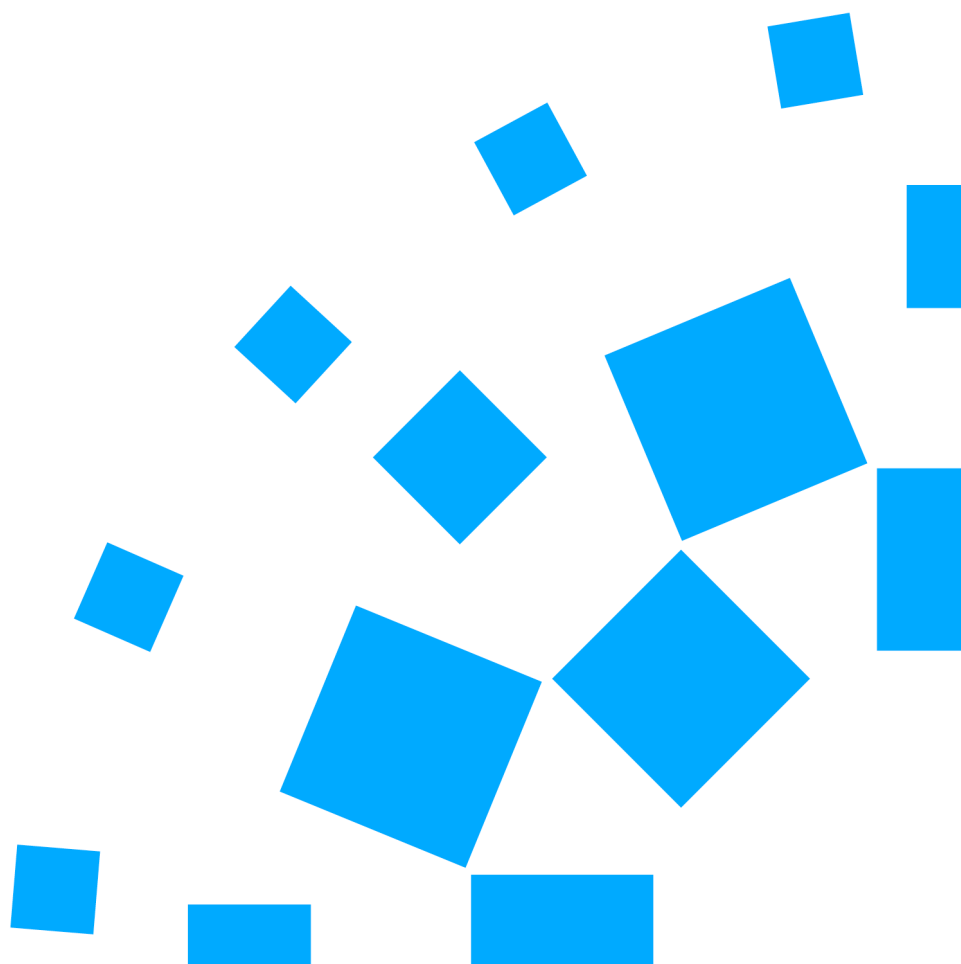


Vulnerability and Violent Crime Programme

Evaluation of DIVERT

Full technical report

July 2021



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1. Executive summary

1.1. Introduction

1.1.1. Background

A substantial body of evidence suggests that young adults (aged 18-25) involved in crime require tailored support to desist from offending and exit the criminal justice system (Police Foundation, 2018; National Offender Management Service, 2015). Despite this, support provision for young adults is often lacking, and wider statutory support is often inadequate to meet their needs.

DIVERT was developed to address the gap in statutory support for young adults, focusing on those aged 18-25 who come into police custody. DIVERT aims to prevent young adults from reoffending or returning to custody in the future, by diverting them away from crime and into education, training or employment (ETE), or towards wider support. The programme is delivered in six custody suite locations: Brixton, Croydon, Lewisham, Stoke Newington, Tower Hamlets and Wood Green.

Using police custody as a ‘teachable moment’,¹ the programme employs custody intervention coaches (CICs), who engage the young adult in an initial Information and Guidance (IAG) meeting to develop an action plan for next steps upon leaving police custody. CICs then provide ongoing engagement and mentoring with the young adults on their caseload, and connect them to a network of referral partners in the community. Young adults can also refer themselves to DIVERT or can be referred to a CIC by custody staff and officers.

This summary sets out the findings of the qualitative process and quantitative impact evaluation commissioned by the College of Policing as part of the Vulnerability and Violent Crime Programme (VVCP) to explore the setup, delivery and impacts of DIVERT. The findings have implications for the delivery of DIVERT and the rollout or expansion of any future programmes.

¹ A teachable moment is described as a time when a person may be most willing to listen and engage, providing an opportunity for intervention to support changes in offending behaviour (see HM Government, 2018).

1.1.2. Methods

A scoping stage developed a logic model for DIVERT, based on which a mixed-method evaluation was proposed. This included process, impact and cost analysis strands.

The process evaluation comprised in-depth interviews with:

- the DIVERT leadership team
- CICs
- strategic staff from the organisations providing CICs
- referral partners
- young adults taking part in the intervention

The interviews explored:

- experiences of setting up and delivering DIVERT across custody suites in London
- the perceived impacts of the programme on staff, eligible participants and local communities
- views on the sustainability and replicability of the programme

Key facilitators and barriers to the setup and delivery of the intervention have been identified, to inform ongoing delivery and its potential future expansion to additional custody suites across England and Wales.

The impact evaluation used existing police data and DIVERT management information to implement a quasi-experimental design. This approach involved the creation of a counterfactual group for DIVERT participants. This enabled a comparison between the impact on DIVERT participants against what would have happened in the absence of the intervention.

Lastly, cost data was collected from intervention leads. This was used to estimate the average cost per participant, averaged over three years to account for higher costs associated with programme setup and rollout.

1.1.3. Key findings

Table 1.1: Summary of the key findings presented under the EMMIE framework.

Evaluation element	Findings
Effect	<p>Quantitative analysis suggested the following.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Re-arrests six months after the initial interview with a CIC were higher for DIVERT participants relative to the matched control group (OR 1.52, 95% CI [1.05; 2.21]). Re-arrests 12 months after the initial interview with a CIC were no different for DIVERT relative to the matched control group (OR 1.19, 95% CI [0.80; 1.78]). <p>While the analysis model has reduced the overall selection bias, the intervention group was still more likely to have committed ‘moderately severe’ offences relative to the matched control group.² However, while propensity score matching (PSM) may reduce selection bias, it is unlikely to fully eliminate it. For example, the model cannot account for subjective decision making by CICs. CICs may pick more difficult or challenging cases, and this was not captured in the available quantitative data. Additionally, the analysis model could not account for variations in the intensity of support provided by the programme.</p> <p>It may take longer than 12 months before the impact of DIVERT on re-arrests can be measured. As indicated by the logic model, several interim outcomes, such as change in attitudes and behaviour, must be achieved before reoffending behaviour can be expected to change.</p>

² This was defined using a cumulative score for the severity of each prior offence, using the Office for National Statistics (ONS) Crime Severity Scores. Further information on the derivation of this variable is available in section 5.4.1 of this document.

Mechanism	<p>The qualitative evidence identified features of the programme that underpinned successful outcomes for young adults (such as recognising the need to change their behaviour, and engaging in education and employment opportunities).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The IAG meetings between CICs and young adults in police custody helped young adults recognise the need for change in their lifestyle or behaviour. ▪ The consistency of the CIC in the young adult's life, as well as their mentorship and perseverance, helped to build young adults' confidence, self-esteem and motivation to engage with employment opportunities.
Moderators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The estimated impact of the intervention varies between custody suites. Re-arrests after 12 months were lower in Brixton relative to the matched control group (OR: 0.37, 95% CI [0.15; 0.99]). Brixton had the greatest number of cases (42% of cases in the PSM analysis), as it had been operating the longest. As a result, the CICs in Brixton were more experienced in identifying appropriate support for individuals. There was also a wider variety of support available to DIVERT participants in Brixton, relative to newer custody suites. ▪ The intervention was no more effective than 'business as usual' in the remaining five custody suites.
Implementation	<p>The qualitative data suggested that factors influencing the programme's success centred on the CIC's role, with other key factors including the following.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Collaboration between the leadership team, the CICs, the organisations providing CICs and referral partners in the community.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The flexible and adaptable nature of DIVERT, which allowed referral pathways and the support provided by referral partners to respond to the young adults' needs and preferences. ▪ CICs and the leadership team building relationships with police and custody staff and officers, which encouraged support for the programme and referrals to CICs when they were not in the custody suite.
Economic cost	<p>Based on the number of individuals accepted into the DIVERT cohort (n=698),³ the estimated cost per participant is £576.</p> <p>Some concerns were raised over the sustainability of the programme without additional funding going forward.</p>

1.2. Conclusions and implications

DIVERT has been providing support for young adults in police custody from late 2016, expanding to a total of six custody suites in 2018. During that time, 1,034 young adults have participated in DIVERT, from having an initial conversation with a CIC to being referred on to training, employment and other support opportunities.

Programme participants felt that DIVERT had helped them to desist or reduce their offending behaviour. This view was also shared among DIVERT staff. Other reported impacts on young adults included improved psychosocial wellbeing and increased motivation to access ETE opportunities and other support. Participants reported that success was underpinned by the consistency, persistence and flexibility of support that the CICs provided. This was facilitated by the collaborative working style between CICs and intervention leads, and by communication more widely with staff and partners. Furthermore, DIVERT was perceived to have started a culture shift in custody suites and changed custody staff and officers' perceptions of young adults. Changes in attitudes were supported by DIVERT success stories.

³ Number of cases from the 12-month period from 2 October 2018 to 1 October 2019.

The impact estimates should be interpreted with caution. While the analysis model reduced the overall selection bias for a wide range of covariates, the group who engaged with DIVERT were still more likely to have previously committed ‘moderately severe’ offences in the past, relative to the matched control group. It may be that individuals in this treatment group were more likely to be arrested again, as they potentially represent a more challenging cohort of individuals. In addition, the model cannot account for the variation in processes used by CICs to identify appropriate individuals to approach. The impact estimates are therefore still subject to some bias. In addition, they can only be generalised to DIVERT participants approached up to May 2019, as those approached after May were not included in the analysis.

The impact estimates indicate that DIVERT participants were more likely than the control group to be re-arrested within six months of the initial CIC interview, though no difference was found after 12 months. There are several possible explanations for these findings. While the intervention may not have been effective, it is possible that the model did not fully eliminate selection bias, as discussed above. In particular, this analysis cannot control for CICs subjectively picking which individuals to approach. As the intervention group may be at higher risk of reoffending relative to the control group, regardless of their participation in DIVERT, this may make a negative impact more likely. The impact estimate is also assessed on an intention-to-treat basis, measuring the effect on all individuals regardless of whether they engaged with the intervention after the IAG meeting (see 5.4.3).

DIVERT participants may also have been more likely to be known by police, which may have increased the likelihood that they would be arrested. As this likelihood cannot be recorded in the data, it cannot be controlled for in the analysis.

In addition, the intervention’s logic model articulates that DIVERT’s short-term outcomes include changing participants’ understanding of the consequences of crime, improving perceptions of the police, and helping young adults take up education and employment opportunities. Until these outcomes are achieved, it may not be possible to observe changes in offending behaviour.

Re-arrests are distinctly different to proven reoffending or conviction. The analysis also does not estimate impacts based on the severity of offences being committed. If

young adults are re-arrested for less serious offences, this may indicate a positive direction of travel.

The evaluation also finds that the impact of DIVERT varies between custody suites. In Brixton, DIVERT participants were less likely to be re-arrested over the following 12 months compared to the matched control group. This is perhaps unsurprising, as DIVERT has been running longest in Brixton. The CICs are therefore more experienced in identifying appropriate support for individuals, the custody staff and officers are more familiar with the intervention, and the custody suite has a greater variety of support options for DIVERT participants relative to the other suites. The analysis cannot distinguish whether these differences are associated with different suites or with the CICs themselves.

2. Contents

1. Executive summary	4
1.1. Introduction	4
1.2. Conclusions and implications.....	8
2. Contents	11
3. Background	13
3.1. Context and rationale.....	14
3.2. Logic model	18
3.3. Aims and objectives	20
3.4. Phase 1: Scoping study	22
3.5. Phase 2: Mainstage evaluation	23
3.6. Matching DIVERT participants to non-treated individuals	38
3.7. Estimating effects of the intervention	41
3.8. Cost analysis	43
4. Findings	44
4.1. Setup and implementation	45
4.2. Delivery.....	56
4.3. Perceived impacts.....	75
4.4. Impact evaluation.....	84
4.5. Sustainability and cost	95
5. Discussion.....	97
5.1. Key implications from the process evaluation	97
5.2. Impact.....	99
5.3. Costs.....	101
5.4. Limitations of the data.....	101
6. Conclusions	102
6.1. Key considerations for DIVERT delivery and wider rollout.....	104
6.2. Future evaluation	107
7. References	108
8. Appendix A – Qualitative fieldwork materials and data analysis.....	111
8.1. Topic guides	111
8.2. Qualitative data analysis	115

9. Appendix B – Impact evaluation sample characteristics	117
10. Appendix C – Covariate balance table for logistic propensity score model 122	
11. Appendix D – Distribution of propensity scores	131
12. Appendix E – Referral pathways	144
13. Appendix F – Impact evaluation regression tables.....	152

3. Background

In 2016, the Justice Select Committee recognised the need for a distinct approach across the criminal justice system (CJS) for young adults aged 18-25 years, who are perceived to have different criminogenic needs⁴ to older adults and to children (Barrow Cadbury Trust and Transition to Adulthood Alliance, 2016). Evidence suggests that young adults are less likely to offend or reoffend as they get older. However, there is limited evidence on the factors supporting young adults from desisting or reducing their offending behaviour. In 2015, what was then the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) suggested a range of approaches that were likely to be effective with this group, including:

- structured programmes to enhance thinking skills and emotional regulation, including cognitive skills and anger management
- activities that build independence, positive identity, self-sufficiency and responsibility
- programmes designed to strengthen family bonds
- training to help find employment

These approaches could be facilitated by probation and offender managers working with at-risk individuals to set goals, solve problems and have meaningful conversations that emphasise future planning.

HM Government's Serious Violence Strategy (2018) highlights evidence of the need for interventions that help to prevent young people from committing serious violence through 'teachable moments'.⁵ These programmes should focus on building resilience, self-confidence and the ability to engage positively with society. Research from the Police Foundation (2018) suggests that support for young adults and less punitive, more tailored approaches to policing were helpful in supporting desistance. It is in this context that DIVERT has been developed.

⁴ Criminogenic needs are broadly defined as issues, risk factors, characteristics and/or problems that relate to a person's likelihood of criminal behaviour or reoffending:

nccdglobal.org/sites/default/files/criminogenic_needs.pdf

⁵ A teachable moment is broadly described as a time when a person may be most willing to listen and engage, providing an opportunity for intervention to support changes in offending behaviour (see the Serious Violence Strategy (HM Government, 2018)).

DIVERT is a programme that targets those aged 18-25 who are detained in police custody and are not currently in education, training or employment (ETE). DIVERT aims to prevent these young adults from reoffending or returning to police custody by redirecting them into ETE or wider support, depending on their individual preferences and needs. Using police custody as a teachable moment, the programme employs trained custody intervention coaches (CICs). CICs engage the young adult in an Information and Guidance (IAG) meeting, where they work together to develop an action plan for steps after they leave police custody. This action plan reflects individual preferences and circumstances, for example, accommodation support for young adults experiencing homelessness or securing a place on a construction course to gain employment.

This report presents findings from an evaluation of DIVERT across six custody suite locations in London: Brixton (in Lambeth), Bethnal Green (in Tower Hamlets), Croydon, Lewisham, Stoke Newington (in Hackney) and Wood Green (in Haringey). The research methods used, which are described in detail below, provide a breadth of insight into how DIVERT has been implemented and adapted across sites, what impact it has had on the young adults who received the intervention, and the costs associated with delivering it.

3.1. Context and rationale

Over the course of 2014-2015⁶, operational policing staff highlighted the need for a programme across South London to assist in tackling serious violent crime and drug offences. This included members of the current DIVERT leadership team.

The Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) crime statistics for the financial year 2018/19 highlighted that the annual rate of violent crimes across all boroughs delivering DIVERT was over 7,500, rising to over 9,000 in Croydon, compared to an average of just over 6,500 offences across London.⁷ Across London in 2018/19, there were 215,700 violent offences and 37,905 drugs offences.⁸

⁶ Calendar years rather than financial year.

⁷ MPS FY 2018-2019 Crime Statistics. Available at: met.police.uk/sd/stats-and-data/met/year-end-crime-statistics

⁸ MPS FY 2018-2019 Crime Statistics.

While the above figures illustrate the scale of violent crime and drug offences, wider evidence highlights challenges in providing young adults with the support they need to exit criminal justice pathways and improve their life outcomes. The proportion of young people not in ETE remains high, at 11.1% of those aged 16-24 in the UK (Office for National Statistics (ONS), 2020). Additionally, while support services for vulnerable under-18s are stretched, statutory services – including mental health, education, social care, housing, benefits and youth offending – reduce or cease altogether for those aged 18 years or older. This leaves a significant gap in the support provided for vulnerable young adults involved in the CJS (House of Commons Justice Committee, 2018; Johnson and others, 2009).

In this context, interventions that support desistance are perceived to be critical. The literature suggests that desistance can be supported by the following factors (NOMS, 2015; Ministry of Justice, 2013):

- engagement with ETE
- positive family, peer and romantic relationships
- abstinence from drug and alcohol use
- developing prosocial attitudes
- developing a sense of agency

The DIVERT programme was designed to address these factors directly, using custody as a teachable moment for crime prevention.

3.1.1. The intervention

In spring 2015, DIVERT was implemented within the MPS at Brixton Police Station. The aim was to address a gap in statutory provision for young adults between the ages of 18 and 25 that came into police custody. The scheme expanded into Tower Hamlets and Stoke Newington in 2017, and Croydon, Lewisham and Wood Green in 2018.⁹

⁹ More recently, DIVERT is being expanded in custody suites outside of London, for example, Reading and Lancashire.

DIVERT leadership highlighted the need for a programme to assist in tackling serious violent crimes and drugs offences:

‘In each of the areas that DIVERT works out of – Wood Green, Bethnal Green, Stoke Newington, Lewisham, Brixton and Croydon – they’re all areas that have got real need around reducing serious violence and addressing some real vulnerability around trafficking, county lines. For us, the demographic of people coming into custody are people that tend to be involved in drugs, so violence, possession of drugs, possession of weapons [...] It’s critical to be in those key custody suites.’

– DIVERT leadership

DIVERT is run through a charity called the New Era Foundation, on behalf of the MPS. The DIVERT programme lead is based within the MPS, while the rest of the leadership team are based within the New Era Foundation. Through the New Era Foundation, DIVERT received funding from the Early Intervention Youth Fund (via the Home Office) until March 2020.

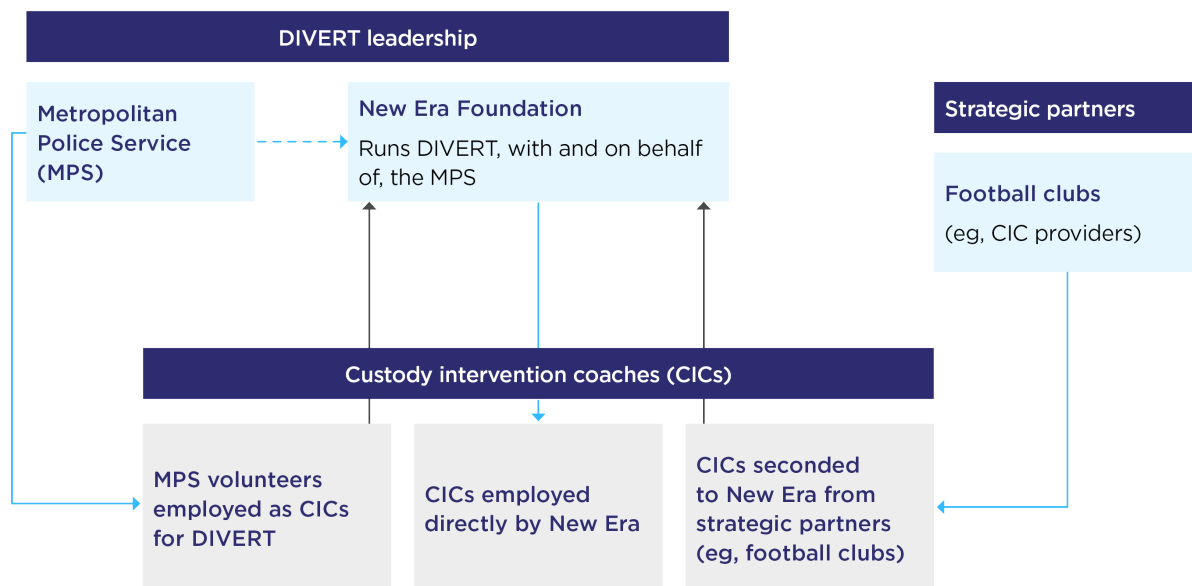
In each custody suite location, the intervention is delivered by CICs, who are funded in one of three ways:

- employed directly by the New Era Foundation
- MPS volunteers (special constables) assigned to work as a CIC
- seconded to DIVERT but employed by partner football clubs, Millwall and Crystal Palace

DIVERT is supported by the Football Association and is currently working in partnership with Millwall Community Trust and Palace for Life, who second employees to the programme. Football clubs were approached as partners because of their likely appeal to the main demographic that DIVERT is aimed at, as well as their potential to engage young adults in custody. In addition, involving football clubs enabled use of their community programmes and networks around ETE opportunities.

Most CICs work within a single custody suite location, with one CIC covering both Tower Hamlets and Stoke Newington and two CICs working in Croydon.

Figure 3.1: DIVERT governance structure.



Young adults are referred to DIVERT in three ways: identified by CICs in the custody suites, identified by custody staff and officers who then refer them on to a CIC, or self-referral to the programme. Eligible young adults are 18-25 years old and not in ETE. In addition, they must not be on a serious offence charge,¹⁰ not be deemed high-risk by custody staff and officers, and not require an appropriate adult (see 5.2.1). Within the custody suites, CICs organise initial IAG meetings with eligible young adults to speak to them about their life and their future. During this discussion, the CICs work with each young adult to develop an action plan of next steps for them to move into ETE upon leaving the custody suite. In some cases, this plan could focus on developing a young adult's 'soft' skills (eg, communication skills), organising secure accommodation or acquiring personal ID before considering ETE. CICs then provide ongoing mentoring to the young adults on their caseload, identifying local opportunities for support and engagement through referral partners. Referral partners offer a range of services. Some offer funded education or training opportunities across a variety of sectors, which include – but are not limited to – construction and engineering, arts and music, security, sports, hospitality and recruitment. Others provide health and welfare services for young adults, including

¹⁰ Arson, (attempted) murder or sexual assault.

help with mental health, drug and alcohol misuse, benefits advice and accommodation. See Appendix E for a list of referral pathways.

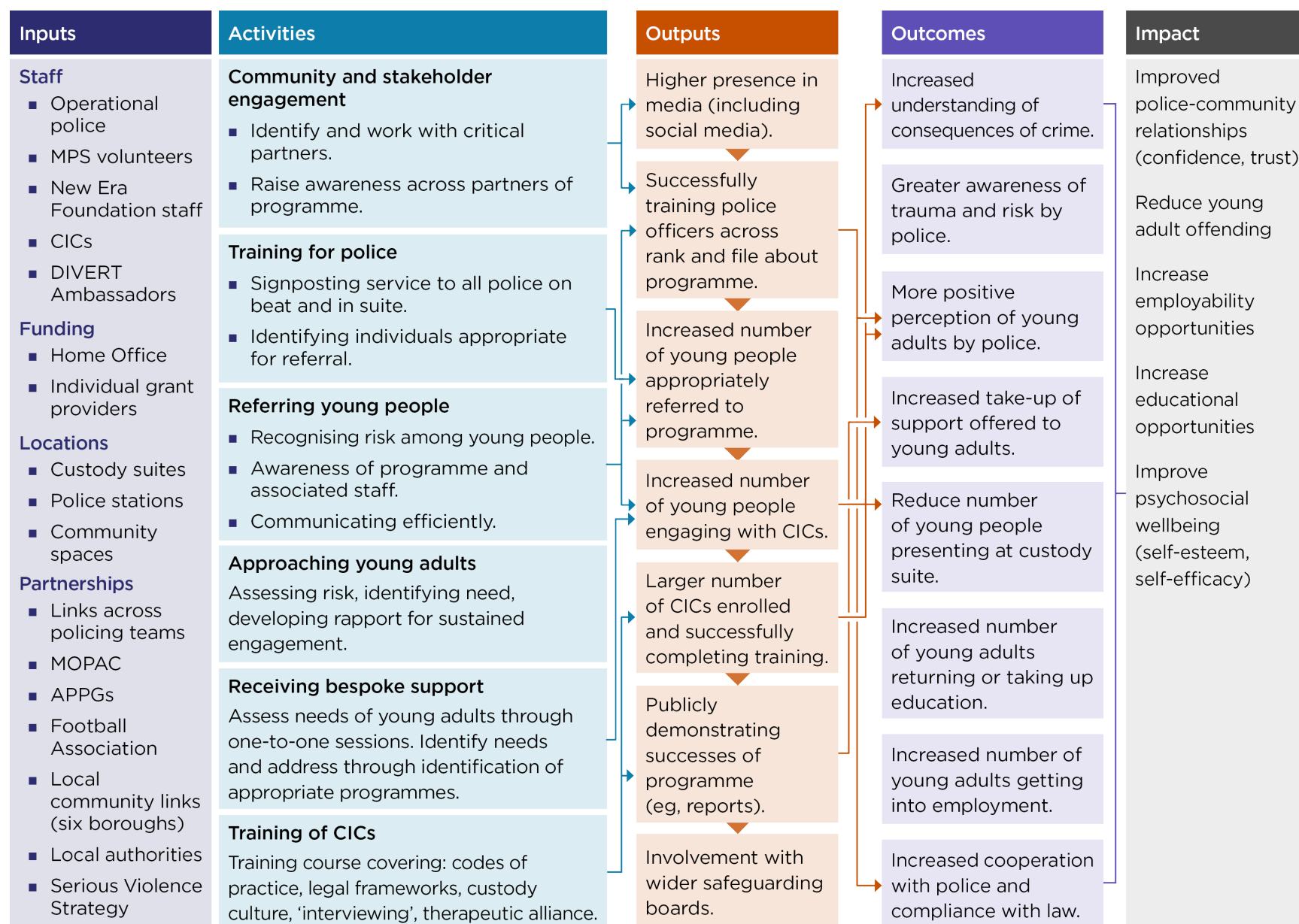
Engagement with DIVERT was not restricted to young adults moving from custody suites back into the community. Young adults serving custodial sentences could also engage once released. However, the severity of certain offences could exclude people from DIVERT. For example, it is likely that someone who has committed a serious sexual offence would be unable to attend most training courses and would have limited employment opportunities, and so CICs will not prioritise engagement with these individuals (see 4.2 for more details).

3.2. Logic model

Logic models are tools that help map the relationship between the resources, activities and outputs in a programme, as well as the expected outcomes and impacts of the intervention.

The logic model for DIVERT is set out in Figure 3.2. It is based on discussions with DIVERT leadership, team members and associated partners, as well as a review of project documentation. The logic model methodology is provided in Chapter 4.

Figure 3.2 DIVERT logic model



DIVERT leadership, team members and associated partners identified four long-term impacts of the intervention.

- **Improved police–community relationships** by working in a supportive and non-punitive way, and by building trust and confidence.
- **Reductions in young adult offending** by diverting young adults away from custody and into support opportunities.
- **Increased employability and educational opportunities.** DIVERT aims to help young adults reach their full potential and desist from crime, by providing alternative opportunities for ETE. This may include training schemes, apprenticeships, or any other form of skill acquisition or development.
- **Improved psychosocial wellbeing.** DIVERT aims to assist young adults with building confidence, competence and self-esteem in both their personal lives and career aspirations.

3.3. Aims and objectives

The National Centre for Social Research (NatCen) was commissioned by the College of Policing to scope, design and deliver an independent evaluation of DIVERT. This evaluation forms part of a programme of work evaluating interventions tackling violence, as part of the Vulnerability and Violent Crime Programme (VVCP).

The findings from the evaluation draw conclusions across the following domains of the EMMIE framework.¹¹

- **Effect** – whether the intervention had a causal impact on specified outcomes.
- **Mechanism** – what it was about the intervention that could explain any effect.
- **Moderators** – the circumstances and contexts in which the intervention was likely (or unlikely) to work.

¹¹ EMMIE is an evidence appraisal framework. It was developed by academics at University College London. One aim is to help practitioners and decision-makers interpret evidence easily and quickly. EMMIE rates evidence against five dimensions: effect, mechanism, moderators, implementation and economic cost. More information is available at: [whatworks.college.police.uk/toolkit/Pages/About the CRT.aspx](https://whatworks.college.police.uk/toolkit/Pages/About%20the%20CRT.aspx)

- **Implementation** – the conditions that should be considered when implementing the intervention.
- **Economic cost** – costs associated with the intervention, both direct and indirect, and whether there was any evidence of cost benefit.

The evaluation used a qualitative process evaluation, quantitative impact evaluation and cost analysis to identify whether DIVERT was an effective intervention, and to contribute to an evidence base for knowledge sharing across police forces in England and Wales.

3.3.1. Research questions

The aim of the process evaluation was to understand barriers and enablers encountered in, and across, the custody suites during the setup and implementation of DIVERT, and to explore views on the sustainability, replicability and future evolution of the programme.

Table 4.1: Process evaluation research questions.

Question number	Research question
RQ1	What factors affected programme setup across or within sites?
RQ2	What were the key barriers and facilitators to implementation and delivery of DIVERT across or within sites?
RQ3	What were the perceived impacts of DIVERT on: young adults, CICs and other criminal justice practitioners, and local communities?
RQ4	What changes to the intervention are needed to make DIVERT effective and sustainable across and within sites?
RQ5	What are the potential barriers and facilitators to upscaling DIVERT to cover custody suites across England and Wales?

The evaluation also aimed to quantitatively measure the impact of DIVERT. These research questions seek to understand the impact of the intervention on re-arrest six and 12 months after the initial interview with a CIC. In addition, the quantitative strand also aims to estimate the total annual cost of DIVERT and the cost per participant.

Table 4.2: Quantitative impact and cost research questions.

Question number	Research question
RQ1	How does participation in DIVERT impact on the probability of an individual returning to custody?
RQ2	What is the effect of DIVERT on re-arrests for specific offences? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Drug offences ▪ Violent offences ▪ Weapons offences
RQ3	Does the probability of returning to custody change across custody suites for those engaged with DIVERT?
RQ4	What is the total annual cost of DIVERT?
RQ5	What is the per participant cost of DIVERT?

3.4. Phase 1: Scoping study

The scoping study looked to develop a robust and feasible evaluation design that would capture evidence on DIVERT's effectiveness, using process, impact and cost analysis approaches.

To do this, the research team conducted a desk review of programme documentation and facilitated a workshop with leadership and delivery partners,

academic advisors¹² and College of Policing representatives. Findings informed the development of a programme logic model, which captured the inner workings of the intervention. This then provided the framework for the evaluation design, which was iteratively developed and agreed with the College of Policing.

3.5. Phase 2: Mainstage evaluation

Phase 2 comprised:

- a qualitative process evaluation
- a quantitative quasi-experimental design, allowing us to estimate the impact of DIVERT on young adults receiving the intervention
- cost analysis to assess the programme's sustainability

The methodology for each strand is described below.

3.5.1. Process evaluation

The process evaluation was based on in-depth interviews with the programme delivery team, associated partners and young adults across custody suite locations. Purposive sampling was used to ensure that a range of individuals involved in programme delivery were captured. Participant groups included the following.

- **DIVERT leadership team** – intervention leads from the MPS (overall programme lead) and the New Era Foundation (the area leads).
- **CICs** – delivering DIVERT in each of the six custody suite locations.
- **Strategic partners** – including senior managers of football clubs providing CICs to DIVERT, and trustees of the New Era Foundation supporting delivery.
- **Custody staff and officers** – including custody inspectors, sergeants and dedicated detention officers (DDOs).
- **Referral partners** – organisations providing funded education, training and/or support opportunities in the community that young adults are referred to.

¹² The College of Policing appointed three academic advisors to support the VVCP. Advisors undertook a range of activities, including visiting interventions, acting as critical friends to the College of Policing and independent evaluators, and providing feedback and peer review throughout programme delivery.

- **Young adults** – receiving support through DIVERT.

3.5.1.1. Sampling and recruitment of staff

A designated member of the DIVERT leadership team provided the research team with contact details of staff members across participant groups who had consented to be contacted by NatCen. Prior to contacting any participants, a DIVERT lead was briefed by the NatCen team about the evaluation and the data-sharing process. The DIVERT lead was provided with an information leaflet about taking part, which they were asked to share with potential participants.

Staff recruitment was monitored to ensure diversity in custody suite locations and role (eg, inspectors, sergeants and DDOs). The sampling approach was adjusted during fieldwork in two ways. First, there were fewer CICs still working in the role than anticipated at the outset (there were six CICs rather than eight), so the quota was revised to reflect this. Second, emerging findings from early interviews suggested the need to capture a range of experiences across staff roles and in different locations. Given the reduced CIC quota, two additional interviews with a police officer and a custody staff member were included. In total, 22 staff interviews were undertaken across staff groups and custody suite locations.

A breakdown of interviews by participant group is shown in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Number of staff participants per participant group.

Staff group	Number of interviews completed	Sample characteristics (location, role)
DIVERT leadership team	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Programme lead ▪ Area leads
CICs	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Across six police custody locations
Strategic partners	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Trustees of New Era Foundation

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Football clubs providing CICs to DIVERT
Custody police staff and officers	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Across six police custody locations Across roles (custody inspectors, sergeants and DDOs)
Referral partners	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ETE providers in different sectors (for example, security)

3.5.1.2. Sampling and recruitment of young adults

The research team liaised with CICs from each custody suite to approach the young adults they were working with, or had previously worked with, for the purpose of taking part in an interview. Each CIC was briefed about the evaluation and the research process, including arrangements for securing participants' consent.¹³

During recruitment, CICs provided young adults with information about the purpose and nature of the evaluation. With consent, CICs also passed young adults' contact details to the research team. The research team tried to speak to harder-to-reach programme participants, such as young adults who had negative experiences of DIVERT, young women and those who had self-referred, with the aim of ensuring that a range of experiences and views were captured. However, this was not always possible.

Following initial interviews with young adults, signed or verbal consent to re-contact them was sought for follow-up interviews. Those who agreed were re-contacted by the research team or by their CIC approximately two months later to see whether they would still be willing to take part in a second interview, to explore any short-term impact of DIVERT.

¹³ Gatekeepers had to get the consent of potential participants before passing their contact details to the NatCen research team. The details of participants were transferred securely, either via the Criminal Justice Secure Mail service or by phone.

Recruiting young adults to participate in the evaluation was challenging. In total, nine initial interviews and four follow-up interviews were completed with young adults. The research team were not able to recruit young adults from all custody suites (see Chapter 6 for limitations). Follow-up interviews explored lifestyle changes following their ongoing engagement with DIVERT, as well as any change in their views about what impacts the intervention may be having on them.

Table 4.4: Interviews achieved with young adults.

Interview type	Number of interviews completed	Sample characteristics
Initial interview	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Across three custody suite locations All male participants Three self-referrals, six from custody suites
Follow-up interview	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Across two custody suite locations All male participants One self-referral, three from custody suites

3.5.1.3. Interview conduct and analysis

Fieldwork took place between September 2019 and February 2020. Separate topic guides were developed for data collection with different participant groups. These were used to ensure a consistent approach across encounters, while allowing the research team a degree of flexibility. The research team used open and non-leading phrasing to ensure that they responded appropriately to participants' accounts. More information on the topic guides and an overview of key themes covered is included in Appendix A.

With participants' permission, the interviews were recorded on encrypted digital recorders and transcribed verbatim. Transcripts were analysed using the Framework approach (Ritchie and others, 2013), a systematic case- and theme-based approach to qualitative data management that was developed by NatCen (see Appendix A).

Verbatim interview quotations are used throughout this report to illustrate themes and findings where appropriate.

The findings in this report show the range and diversity of views and experiences among those interviewed. However, as this is qualitative research, the prevalence of views and experiences cannot be estimated.

3.5.1.4. Limitations of the data

A range of staff interviews across roles and all six custody locations were achieved (n=22). These interviews captured both positive and negative experiences of setting up and/or delivering DIVERT. Limitations included the following.

- Staff involved in the delivery of DIVERT were largely supportive and personally invested in the success of the intervention. As a result, some individuals did not feel that they had any negative experiences.
- It is possible that staff with positive experiences of delivering or supporting DIVERT may have been more willing to take part in the research than those who may have come across challenges.
- Interviews were completed with custody staff and officers in different roles and across custody suites. However, conducting additional interviews with inspectors, sergeants and DDOs in each custody location would have enabled greater insight into any differences by role and/or location.
- Interviews were completed with three referral partners. Referral partner interviews with a wider range of sectors (for example, security, health and fitness, substance misuse) and in all custody suite locations may have revealed differences in support provided by area, as well as any particular successes or barriers in each sector.

The main methodological challenge for this strand of the evaluation involved the recruitment of young adults and ensuring diverse characteristics of those who took part. As such, young adults' perspectives presented here may not be representative of all those involved in DIVERT. The specific challenges encountered include the following.

- **Difficulty encouraging young adults to take part:** This was dependent on the young adult's level of engagement with their CIC. If there had been limited

interaction, they may not have felt inclined to take time to discuss their experiences. The research team were not able to offer a 'thank you' payment to young adults, which may have discouraged some.

- **Selection bias:** Young adults willing to take part in the interviews may have been those most engaged with the programme and making most progress. To reduce this bias, gatekeepers made a concerted effort to recruit individuals with varied opinions and experiences. Three of the nine interviews with young adults were with individuals who self-referred to DIVERT.
- **Concerns around confidentiality and anonymity:** The research team reassured participants about confidentiality and anonymity in information leaflets and at the start of their interview. However, using their CIC contact as a gatekeeper may have resulted in some young adults feeling concerned about giving feedback and about the extent of the anonymity offered.
- **Availability:** While young adults were given the option to have the interview at a time that suited them, some that were in training or employment did not want to participate in the research because they were committed to these activities (which might be indicative of positive outcomes in itself).
- **Changing circumstances:** In some cases, potential participants had lost contact with CICs or had been remanded to custody, so were unable to speak to the research team. In one example, the potential participant lost contact with his CIC as he was at low risk of reoffending and there was no need for further support in the community.

A number of strategies were employed by the research team to increase the number of young adults able to take part in the research, including the following.

- Using a mobile phone to contact young adults by text (if potential participants had provided their mobile numbers) for greater accessibility and flexibility.
- Flexibility in interview timings, including before or after standard working hours.
- Being prepared to conduct on-the-spot interviews as necessary.
- Giving support to CICs, if needed, to explain the purposes and aims of the interview with young adults in a clear and accessible way.

Additionally, rather than focusing on achieving interviews in all six custody locations, the decision was made to speak to any young adults who were willing to take part in an interview. This meant that there were more interviews carried out in some locations than others. Given that most young adults engaging with DIVERT were male, it was also decided to relax the aim of needing to speak with at least two female participants. Therefore, a convenience sampling approach¹⁴ was applied, and initial sampling quotas were discounted.

As a result, young adult participants were male, recruited from three custody suites, and largely had positive views of DIVERT. Despite this, participants had differing experiences of DIVERT, accessed a range of referral pathways and included three self-referrals. They provided useful insight into the facilitators and barriers to DIVERT delivery and its perceived impacts.

3.5.2. Impact evaluation

To estimate the causal impact of DIVERT on its participants, a counterfactual evaluation was conducted. This compared observed outcomes with what would have happened in the absence of the intervention.

The most appropriate design for the evaluation was propensity score matching¹⁵ (PSM). Each programme participant was matched to a young adult who had been arrested, taken to the same custody suites, and presented with similar characteristics but were not involved with DIVERT. These characteristics include socio-demographics, such as age, gender, ethnicity, arrest history and risks identified by the police, such as issues with alcohol use, substance misuse or self-harm. This enabled calculation of the difference between the observed situation of programme participants and a hypothetical situation in which the intervention was absent.

The primary outcome for the analysis was re-arrests, six and 12 months after the initial CIC approach. While the original intention was to use conviction data from the

¹⁴ Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling method reliant on selecting population members who are conveniently available to participate in study (Ritchie and others, 2014).

¹⁵ A technique for matching individuals with similar observed characteristics that are associated with being selected for an intervention.

Police National Computer (PNC), this was not feasible within the evaluation timetable. The outcomes data is also sourced solely from the MPS, meaning that arrests by other forces, including the British Transport Police, have not been included in the analysis.

This design followed recommendations from Cook and others (2008) for obtaining credible estimates of an intervention's effect. Using PSM for this evaluation had several strengths.

- All variables used to compare and balance treatment and control groups were taken from the time of arrest (baseline).
- The control group was obtained from the same custody suites and during the same quarter of the year as programme participants.¹⁶
- The sample size of matched programme participants provided sufficient statistical power to detect a moderate change in the outcome (eight percentage points or more).¹⁷
- Custody records and risk assessments recorded during arrests provided statistically significant predictors¹⁸ of being selected into DIVERT.
- The PSM was conducted before outcome data was provided to the research team. This prevented the PSM model from being manipulated to ensure favourable results.

However, there were also several limitations to the PSM implementation.

- There were unobserved characteristics associated with selection into DIVERT. For example, if an inspector, sergeant or CIC perceived a young adult to be high-risk (for instance, due to their behaviour in custody or because they were visibly suffering from a decline in mental health), they were excluded from DIVERT. The decision to include a young adult was also subject to a degree of subjectivity, as

¹⁶ This approach was used to minimise unobserved differences between areas and over time.

¹⁷ Power calculations estimated in Stata 16. The power calculations are based on several assumptions: a type-one error rate of 0.05, a type-two error rate of 0.20, intervention group of 531 individuals, control group of 531 individuals, 30% chance of re-arrest within six months within the control group.

¹⁸ Men, those with a moderate to high prior offending score, and UK nationals were more likely to be selected for the intervention, while White British people, students and those in employment were less likely to be selected.

each CIC applied their own judgment on who to include. This included practical considerations, such as capacity to take the person onto the programme. These subjective criteria could not be measured quantitatively and therefore the PSM may not have been able to fully eliminate selection bias.

- The counterfactual was constructed from individuals within the same custody suites as programme participants. Therefore, some individuals in the control group may have been approached to take part in DIVERT but either declined or were identified as unsuitable. This would mean that there was a further risk of selection bias, as the research team could not measure individuals' motivation to take part in a programme.¹⁹
- The sample of programme participants in the PSM analysis was a subsample of all DIVERT participants. Approximately 23% of cases in the DIVERT case management data could not be linked to custody records. Cases could not be linked because the case did not have a corresponding custody record with the same custody record number, the custody record number supplied was in the wrong format (likely due to typographic error), or the custody record number was missing entirely.
- A further three cases were also excluded as they were not on common support (ie, there were no suitably similar individuals in the control group to be matched).

These factors limited the generalisability of the findings. Figure 4.1 illustrates the full data flow.

3.5.2.1. Data sources

The evaluation used data from three different sources:

- **DIVERT management data:** A compilation of spreadsheets where CICs record information on a case-by-case basis. It contains the 'custody record number' for most, but not all, cases.

¹⁹ The original design aimed to neutralise this risk by selecting cases from other custody suites in London. However, this was ruled out because of challenges in accessing the data required to isolate differences between custody suites.

- **Custody records data:** Police complete a two-page custody record containing personal information and characteristics about each individual brought into custody. Each record had a custody record number and was linked to a PNC ID.
- **Risk assessment data:** A three-page risk assessment form is completed when an individual is brought into custody. Two of these pages are completed by the individual in custody and the third one is completed by the custody officer. This risk assessment records the status of the individual (for example, injuries, medical conditions, alcohol or drug use in the last 24 hours), self-reported addictions²⁰ and details of the arrest (for example, use of incapacitant or force, taken straight to custody). Data can be matched to custody records using unique custody record numbers. A small number²¹ of cases in custody records could not be matched to their risk assessments.

This report refers to various groups, which relate to specific samples within the available data sources. These definitions are outlined in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Sample definitions.

Sample name	Definition
DIVERT participants	All DIVERT participants (n=1,034).
Intervention group	All DIVERT participants included in the final matched sample (n=531).
Control group	All cases in the control group (n=15,220).
Matched control group	All control cases in the final matched sample (n=531).
Matched sample	All DIVERT and control cases that have been included in the PSM (n=1,062: intervention = 531; matched control = 531).

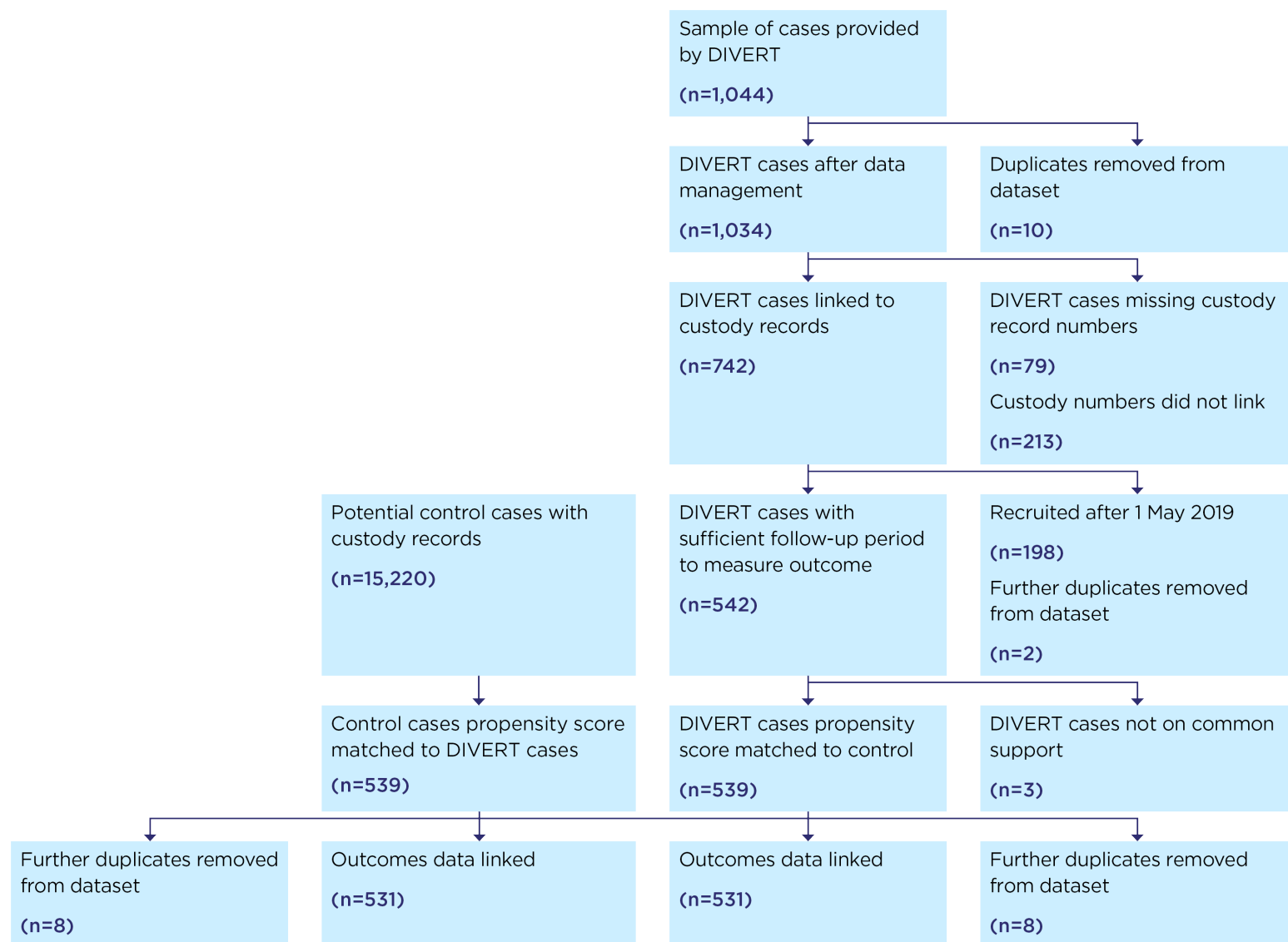
²⁰ Examples of questions are: 'Are you dependent on alcohol?' and 'Are you dependent on drugs?'.

²¹ 164 out of 20,629 records.

In total, 1,044 records from DIVERT management data were provided to NatGen. After removing duplications, 1,034 individuals were identified. In 292 cases, records in the DIVERT management data could not be linked to custody records or risk management data.²² Of these, 79 could not be linked because they did not have a custody record number. The remaining 213 cases had the required identifier variables. However, these cases could not be linked to custody records because their corresponding custody record could not be found.

²² In theory, some individuals without custody record numbers may be self-referrals, though there was no quantitative data to verify this.

Figure 4.1: DIVERT data flow.



Descriptive analysis of sample characteristics at each stage are presented in Tables 10.1 and 10.2 in Appendix B. Differences in characteristics between the excluded cases due to non-linkage (n=292) and the DIVERT cases linked to custody records (n=742) were analysed. No statistically significant differences were found between the two groups on gender, ethnicity or offence type.²³

Table 4.6: Proportion of linked cases by custody suite.

Category	Cases linked with custody suite records (n=742)		Cases not linked with custody suite records (n=292)	
	n/N	Proportion (%)	n/N	Proportion (%)
Brixton	273/351	78	78/351	22
Croydon	97/123	79	26/123	21
Stoke Newington	132/227	58	95/227	42
Lewisham	52/75	69	23/75	31
Tower Hamlets	38/59	64	21/59	36
Wood Green	150/199	75	49/199	25

Source: Custody suite management data (n=1,034).

There is no missing data.

The proportion of cases successfully linked to custody records varied between custody suites (see Table 4.6). Individuals who were successfully linked were marginally younger compared with those not linked (22 and 24 years old respectively). Data linkage was less successful in Stoke Newington and Tower

²³ The only statistically significant difference was in the 'Miscellaneous' offence category.

Hamlets relative to other custody suites, though the reasons for the disparity are unknown. There were no observed differences in characteristics between the samples (see Table 10.1 and Table 10.2 in Annex B).

The included 742 cases were composed of programme participants referred between April 2016 and 30 September 2019. Re-arrest data was available until 2 October 2019. To ensure that outcomes were consistently recorded, only cases referred at least six months earlier (1 May 2019) were included in the matching.²⁴ Cases that were missing a date were excluded at this stage. Cases with an initial interview after that date (n=198) were excluded to ensure consistent outcome measurement. A further two duplicate cases were identified at this stage and were also removed from the sample.

The remaining 542 cases were then matched to individuals in the control group. To be matched, each DIVERT participant needed at least one individual in the control group with a similar propensity score (common support). Further detail on the estimation of the propensity score can be found in section 4.4.1 of this document. Three cases were not on common support, meaning that similar individuals could not be found in the control group. This left 539 individuals across the intervention group and 539 individuals in the matched control group.

The matched sample was shared with the MPS, so that the re-arrest outcome data could be added to the dataset. This led to the identification of a further eight duplicate cases in the intervention group. These cases were removed, along with the linked cases in the matched control group. A final matched sample of 531 cases in the intervention group and 531 cases in the matched control group was used for analysis.

3.5.2.2. Variables used and requested

NatCen received all information available in the DIVERT management data on 27 September 2019. This was preceded by efforts from the DIVERT team to collate the

²⁴ The re-arrest outcome after 12 months had a cut-off date of 1 November 2018. However, this subsample can be selected from the matched intervention and control groups, and did not need to be matched separately. Temporal differences were accounted for by matching individuals within custody suite and quarter of each year.

data from different CICs across suites and delete information that could lead to the identification of individuals (for example, names, postcodes and addresses).

In parallel, NatCen received the custody records and risk assessments of everyone aged 18 to 25 who was brought into custody in one of the six eligible custody suites during the period from 1 April 2016 to 30 September 2019. NatCen then linked the DIVERT management data to custody records and risk management data.

3.5.2.3. Missing data

Data quality varied between the DIVERT management data and police records. Police records were completed in a similar way across custody suites. The quality of the DIVERT management data varied across custody suites, with different approaches towards inputting the information.²⁵

Cases with missing data could not be included in analysis models. However, it is possible to impute values for missing data and include them in the analysis when data is missing at random (MAR). Data can be described as MAR if there are patterns between missing data and other observed characteristics (but not with unobserved characteristics). For example, if data on age is missing, but age is associated with employment status, the values of age may be estimated from the values of employment status. The process of estimating missing values, and subsequently estimating the impact of the intervention, is called multiple imputation.

To assess whether data was MAR, correlations between the variables used in the propensity score model – such as age, gender and ethnicity – and binary indicators of missing covariate data were estimated.

Covariate data on risks related to alcohol, drugs, solvents, other substance use, mental health and self-harm were missing in 3.2% of all intervention²⁶ and control cases (504 of 15,762 individuals). Missing data for solvents and other substance use risks did not have any strong predictors. These variables were therefore simply

²⁵ For example, one of the custody suites did not collect data on the sex of DIVERT participants. Another merged the 'referral partner' and 'type of intervention received'. There was also variation in how referral organisations were listed, with some custody suites and CICs giving more detail than others. There were also typographical errors, such as implausible dates of birth or 'dates of interview' (the time when the CIC interviewed the individual under arrest).

²⁶ In total, 542 intervention cases were included at this stage, as they had been trimmed to those with a sufficient follow-up period.

imputed using the mode (ie, the most common characteristic was imputed, rather than alternative approaches such as null imputation). Gender, ethnicity and employment were correlated with missing data for the remaining risks.

Multiple imputation using chained equations (MICE)²⁷ was implemented to obtain covariate data for these variables. In total, 25 imputed datasets were created. Results were then pooled using the mode before propensity scores were estimated. This approach has methodological limitations, as the uncertainty around the imputed estimates were not incorporated into the wider analysis. In the final matched sample, 11 of 531 programme participants had some imputed characteristics, and 13 of 531 individuals in the control group had imputed characteristics, a relatively small proportion of the matched sample. The small proportion should mean that the effect estimates would be relatively consistent with a model that did not use cases where data was missing.

3.6. Matching DIVERT participants to non-treated individuals

There are two key steps to consider when using PSM. Firstly, the probability of being selected for the programme (the propensity score) is estimated. This is done using a regression where the outcome is binary: the individual was either in the intervention or the control group. The regression model should have a range of variables predictive of selection into treatment and the outcome. The distributions of the propensity scores in the intervention and control groups can then be compared to ensure that everyone in the intervention group has at least one corresponding individual in the control group with a similar propensity score (ie, common support).

Provided that common support was achieved, the next step was to match individuals in the intervention group with individuals in control, based on their propensity scores. There are numerous algorithms that can be used to implement this process (Caliendo and Kopeinig, 2005). The characteristics of the intervention group should

²⁷ MICE is a technique for multiple imputation of missing values. For more information, see Van Buuren (2007).

then be compared with the matched control group, to ensure that any bias on observed characteristics has been eliminated (covariate balance).

If the selection mechanism has been appropriately modelled and covariate balance has been achieved, then selection bias should be eliminated. However, it is not possible to assess covariate balance on unobserved characteristics. For example, this could include the individual's motivation to change, or whether they have support from peers. The outcomes of those in the intervention group can then be compared with the outcomes of those in the matched control group.

3.6.1. Modelling the propensity of entering DIVERT

The propensity scores were estimated using a least absolute shrinkage and selection operator (LASSO) penalised logistic regression. LASSO is a common regression technique for prediction because it reduces the variance in predicted values. As a sensitivity analysis, a logistic regression model was estimated, producing similar results. The variables included in the propensity score model were:

- sex
- age at arrest
- number of previous arrests
- most serious offence score
- self-assessed ethnicity
- employment
- nationality
- indicator that data was imputed
- indicators that the custody suite was aware of risks with the individual, such as:
 - alcohol dependence
 - drug dependency (prescribed or otherwise)
 - dependency on substances (such as solvents)
 - mental health problems
 - self-harm

The full definition of the variables used in the propensity score estimation are outlined in Table 12.1 (Appendix D). The distribution of propensity scores and assessment of common support are also reported in Appendix D.

3.6.2. Propensity score matching

To minimise unobserved differences, control cases were identified from individuals who were arrested in the same quarter of the year and taken to the same custody suites. Matching was implemented separately within custody suites. Within custody suites, matching was conducted separately for each quarter that the custody suite was open.

Each programme participant was matched to one individual in the control group. Matching was performed with replacement, meaning that an individual in the control group could be used as the matched observation for more than one observation in the intervention group, if necessary. The matching used a calliper²⁸ to minimise the risk of matching individuals with different characteristics.

The primary analysis model used the propensity scores from the LASSO regression. Three programme participants did not have a corresponding similar individual in the control group (ie, they were not on common support). These programme participants were not included in the matched sample.

A sensitivity analysis was conducted, using the propensity scores estimated from the logistic regression model. This model also used one-to-one calliper matching with replacement. This produced broadly consistent results, with five programme participants not on common support and unable to be matched.

3.6.3. Balance of matched samples

Table 11.1 in Appendix C reports the covariate balance in the sample before and after matching. Differences in characteristics between groups are reported as Hedges' g effect sizes (the standardised mean difference). The effect sizes are highlighted in bold if the difference between the two groups has an effect size of greater than 0.10, which could be considered indicative of imbalance.

²⁸ 0.2 standard deviations of the propensity score.

The results indicate that DIVERT participants were systematically different to the control sample prior to matching. Specifically, there was imbalance between the two samples in terms of:

- gender
- age
- number and severity of previous arrests
- some ethnic groups
- employment status
- nationality

After matching, the two groups were relatively balanced on observed characteristics, suggesting that the matching may have reduced selection bias on observed characteristics. However, there could be imbalance on unobserved characteristics.

There are some outstanding imbalances. In total, 10.7% of the intervention group had a serious offence score between 520 and 801, compared with 7.3% of the matched control group. This suggests slight imbalance on those arrested for offences of 'moderate' severity. Although a relatively small difference in percentage terms, this equates to an effect size of 0.12, which could indicate imbalance. No substantive differences between the intervention and matched control sample were observed for low- and high-severity cases. There was also a marginally higher incidence of drug dependency risk in the matched control group (11.1%) compared with the intervention group (8.9%, effect size of 0.08).

As a sensitivity analysis, the propensity scores from the logistic regression were also matched. The intervention and matched control samples were less similar when using this model, particularly for ethnicity and employment status. The full covariate balance table for the sensitivity analysis can be found in Appendix C. As the LASSO model achieved better covariate balance, outcomes were requested for the matched sample from this model.

3.7. Estimating effects of the intervention

The primary analysis compared whether an individual had been re-arrested six months and 12 months after they were initially approached for DIVERT. As the

number of cases in the newer custody suites was relatively low, the primary analysis only includes cases from Brixton and Tower Hamlets. The primary analysis implements a doubly robust approach, using logistic regression and including all the variables from the propensity score model as covariates. In addition, fixed effects were used to control for which custody suite the individual was in. The doubly robust approach may further reduce observed covariate imbalance between the intervention group and the matched control group.

As a sensitivity analysis, the model was also implemented using cases from all custody suites. An additional sensitivity analysis analysed the results from the PSM model, not using the doubly robust method (ie, not including the covariates from the propensity score estimation in the model).

3.7.1. Arrests for specific offences

Secondary analysis was also conducted, exploring the impact of DIVERT on re-arrests related to drugs, violence and weapons. These offences were selected as they were the most prevalent offence types in the intervention group.

The analysis uses the PSM model (rather than the doubly robust approach), where the binary outcome was whether they had been arrested six and 12 months after the initial CIC contact for the specific offences. Separate models were estimated for each of the three offences.

3.7.2. Testing for heterogeneous effects across custody suites

A secondary analysis estimated how the impact of DIVERT varied across custody suites. However, given that CICs are synonymous with custody suites, these results should be interpreted with care, as CIC could be a confounder. It may therefore be that variation is due to the CIC, rather than differences between custody suites. However, we are unable to separate out the impact of the two in this analysis.

Treatment effect heterogeneity was estimated using cases from all custody suites. This used a multi-level logistic regression, including a random coefficient for the impact of the intervention by custody suite.

Additionally, a single-level logistic regression model was also estimated, using Huber–White cluster robust standard errors. This model used the PSM estimates,

rather than the doubly robust approach. This model used interaction terms between the indicator of intervention allocation and custody suites.

3.8. Cost analysis

To assess the sustainability of DIVERT, NatCen collected cost data from the programme leads using a pro forma. Costs were divided into four categories:

- 'one-off' implementation costs
- staff time costs
- marginal financial costs
- other variable costs

Implementation costs are defined as fixed costs associated with the setup or early rollout of the programme.

Staff time costs are estimated using the midpoint of staff pay bands, accounting for the proportion of the time they spend each month working on the intervention. This reflects the nature of policing, where operational needs sometimes require staff to be diverted to other responsibilities.

Marginal financial costs include equipment, expert advice, rent, utilities and bills, as well as any other goods or services purchased on a regular basis. Other variable costs include printing, events, other services purchased externally, ongoing training and support.

The costs are estimated as a three-year average. This reflects the higher costs associated with setup and implementation. A breakdown of the estimated costs is provided for each of the four categories outlined above, alongside an estimate of the total cost and the cost per participant.

The cost per participant was calculated using the volumes of people recorded as engaged with an intervention. However, it is important to note that the interventions may approach or consider a greater number of individuals. Costs are presented at 2019 prices and have not been adjusted for inflation.

4. Findings

This chapter integrates findings from across the three evaluation strands (process, impact and cost).

Summary of key findings

- Initial views and expectations of DIVERT were largely positive across staff groups, due to the perceived need and value of the intervention at a teachable moment for young adults. Early concerns included the perception that DIVERT went beyond the remit of traditional policing.
- An important part of the setup phase was felt to be building partnerships with referral organisations and strategic partners that aligned with the core values of DIVERT. These values included delivering on commitments made to young adults.
- Recruiting CICs with the required skills and characteristics (such as good communication skills, empathy and resilience) to work effectively with young adults in police custody and in the community was considered essential to DIVERT's success.
- Delivery was felt to be supported by the collaborative working style of CICs and intervention leads, as well as strong communication across staff and partners supporting programme delivery.
- Engagement and awareness of DIVERT among custody staff and officers was felt to be key to reaching eligible young adults in police custody. CICs facilitated engagement and awareness by building relationships and sharing information and success stories with staff.
- Young adults' initial and ongoing engagement with DIVERT was underpinned by consistent and efficient delivery alongside the perseverance of CICs. Increased and sustainable funding was recognised as important to facilitate ongoing delivery of the intervention, and to provide certainty to staff and partners supporting DIVERT.
- Perceived impacts on young adults included reduced involvement in criminal activity, improved psychosocial wellbeing, increased motivation to access

support and improved access to education, training and other support services.

- External factors reported as affecting impact included housing, financial stability, family support and peer influences (including gang associations). Another factor reported as affecting outcomes was the need for young adults to want to change and to be able to do so.
- Six months after the initial interview with CICs, re-arrests were higher in the intervention group compared with the matched control group. However, there were no differences in the proportions re-arrested 12 months after the initial interview. This may be because the intervention takes some time to have an effect on individuals' outcomes, as outlined in the intervention logic model.²⁹
- There is some quantitative evidence to suggest that the programme had a positive impact on reducing reoffending in Brixton 12 months after the initial CIC approach. The intervention was no more effective than 'business as usual' in the remaining five custody suites. Brixton has been using DIVERT the longest out of all six custody suites, which may indicate that DIVERT could be more effective after it has had time to become established.

4.1. Setup and implementation

This section explores the setup and implementation of DIVERT from the perspective of the leadership team, CICs, strategic partners (for example, football clubs providing CICs to the programme), and police custody staff and officers. Issues discussed by these groups include:

- initial expectations and views of DIVERT
- funding and resources underpinning delivery
- governance
- training and guidance
- establishing partnerships

²⁹ The primary analysis uses data from Brixton and Tower Hamlets only, but the results are consistent with a sensitivity analysis using data from all custody suites. This is discussed further in section 4.5 of this document.

4.1.1. Early strengths

Across staff groups, initial views and expectations of DIVERT were largely positive. The perceived value and need for the programme in each local area was a key driver of support and buy-in. For example, custody staff and officers (particularly at inspector level) spoke positively about the need for DIVERT and considered it 'more meaningful and targeted' than other diversion schemes.³⁰ Strategic partners across football clubs understood and supported the programme's aims from the outset, partly because of the model's relative simplicity: using custody as an opportunity to engage young adults at a teachable moment.

'The theory behind it in terms of the teachable moment made sense. I think it was quite creative because it's not something that we had thought about before, but when it was said, it was something that I thought [...] yes, this actually makes sense.'

– Strategic partner

Strategic partners and CICs' initial engagement with the programme was underpinned by existing relationships with DIVERT's leadership team, combined with their enthusiasm for the programme, an effective communication strategy and social media presence. Receptiveness to, and engagement with, DIVERT among custody staff was greater where the programme had been in place for longer (such as Brixton) and had become established as part of the suite's routine.

'I was very interested because I used to do quite a lot of work in youth engagement in my previous roles [...] Anything nowadays is a bonus; there've been so many essential cuts to youth diversion, anything like this [DIVERT] is very rare, to be honest.'

– Custody officer

³⁰ Liaison and diversion is a process whereby people are screened and assessed for vulnerabilities as they pass through the CJS. Individuals can be given access to appropriate services, including – but not limited to – mental and physical health care, social care and/or substance misuse treatment, depending on their needs. Information from liaison and diversion assessments is shared appropriately with relevant agencies so that informed decisions can be made around case management and sentencing (NHS, 2013).

Similarly, CICs recognised the need for DIVERT in their local community, due to previous work with young adults and adults who regularly reoffended and needed support to break this cycle. For some, this included personal experiences of being arrested and held in police custody in the past.

Strategic partners felt that supporting DIVERT was beneficial for their organisations in two ways.

- DIVERT provided a quick and straightforward way to target young adults in need of support (for example, targeted programmes offering coaching training or traineeships to young adults) without requiring a bureaucratic referral process.
- The publicity generated by DIVERT provided an opportunity to showcase the work that their football clubs' charitable trusts and foundations were doing locally, and this could assist with raising their profile in these communities.

In terms of initial expectations, strategic partners and CICs hoped that the programme would 'work' and felt committed to supporting DIVERT in bringing about positive changes for those involved.

'I couldn't wait to get started. It didn't frighten me or scare me or cause me any anxiety, I was just so happy to be doing something that would actually be more practical [for young adults] [...] My early expectations were just like, let me at them.'

– Custody intervention coach

This optimism was reflected in the accounts of young adults, who spoke about feeling motivated to participate in the programme after the IAG with a CIC, believing it could assist them in making the changes needed to their lives (see 5.2.2).

4.1.2. Early challenges and concerns

The leadership team and CICs described three initial concerns about DIVERT delivery and management.

- **Sustainability.** Other custody-based interventions that staff perceived to have been working well had been withdrawn due to lack of sustained funding. This meant some felt pessimistic about DIVERT's future and this affected their own initial buy-in and support.

- A perception that DIVERT **fell outside of traditional policing**, due to its less punitive stance towards those in police custody. This view was reportedly more commonly held among longer-serving police staff, who felt that DIVERT was beyond the remit of their role (to safely detain people in order to support, in most cases, the investigation of a suspected criminal offence).

‘They just thought, ‘Why are you spending your time helping these people that come into custody? That’s not our job, our job is to arrest people.’

– **DIVERT leadership team**

- The programme was perceived as giving an **‘unfair’ advantage to young adults detained in police custody**, over those who had not had contact with the police and did not receive equivalent support. This was reportedly an initial concern at sergeant level, particularly among those with a similar background to the young adults being supported.

‘[Custody staff and officers think] ‘Who’s helping all the normal [...] young women and young boys? Nobody’s helping them find a job. Why is all this help going into people in custody?’.

– **Custody intervention coach**

However, both the leadership team and CICs described a process whereby these views changed over time, with the perceived successes of the intervention overcoming initial concerns. CICs also continued to build and develop relationships with custody staff and officers, to help change their perceptions of the programme and to share success stories where possible.

A further initial concern reported by strategic partners was that the salary provided to CICs from DIVERT was too low to cover all the costs associated with the role, so these additional costs had to be met by strategic partners (see 5.1.3). There were also concerns about reputational risk, with fears that some young adults may not want to associate with their football club if it was seen to be partnering with the police, due to some groups being less trusting of the police. However, these concerns were overcome by the perceived value and need for DIVERT, as well as the perceived benefits for their organisation in supporting the programme (see 5.1.1).

Productive partnerships were also reportedly developed between football clubs and the police because of DIVERT, with strategic partners looking to work with the police on other programmes and community projects (see 5.3.3).

4.1.3. Funding and resources

DIVERT is primarily delivered by the New Era Foundation and programme funding has been secured from the Home Office via the Early Intervention Youth Fund until March 2020. The DIVERT leadership team felt that the funding available to run the intervention to date across the six custody suite locations had been helpful, but not adequate to cover the actual costs of the intervention. For example, current funding does not cover laptops or mobile phones for the CICs.

‘In terms of resources, we don’t have any. I feel so sorry for the CICs because they’ve had to use their own laptops, their own phones, all of that sort of stuff, because we just don’t have enough funding.’

– DIVERT leadership team

To avoid costly IT systems, CICs across custody suite locations recorded caseload information in Excel spreadsheets, in addition to using paper-based files to store completed documents (for example, consent forms, meeting notes and review sheets). One CIC felt that it would be useful to be able to store all of this information on an online, centralised location to make it quicker and easier to retrieve. The leadership team were working to modernise this process at the time of writing.

To deliver the intervention with current levels of funding, DIVERT is run using a ‘very lean’ model.

- Opportunities offered to young adults via referral partner organisations were funded by those organisations without financial contributions from DIVERT.
- CICs and the DIVERT leadership team used football clubs’ or referral organisations’ premises to meet young adults or to meet as a team, rather than having dedicated office space.
- Some CICs were seconded to DIVERT from the MPS and football clubs, which meant that additional costs associated with the role were covered by these

organisations. These included pension contributions, National Insurance payments, sickness leave, football uniforms and mobile phones.

These funding and resource restrictions highlight the importance of hiring and working with partner organisations and individuals within them who were dedicated to the programme's success.

'The point I'm making is there's a hell of a lot of goodwill that keeps the work going, and that's just the calibre of the people that work on it. It's got very much a can-do attitude; we're always looking at ways as to how we can do something as [opposed] to reasons why we can't.'

– DIVERT leadership team

However, to help retain and develop relationships with football clubs in the future, strategic partners highlighted the need for increased funding moving forwards.

'We're covering all those costs ourselves, so I think that highlights the commitment that we're making, as in [...] we think DIVERT is a great programme to be part of, but if they are to be successful with funding going forward, that a raise of level of funding would be taken into consideration.'

– Strategic partner

Strategic partners expressed the uncertainty caused by having a cut-off for funding (March 2020), which meant that strategic and financial succession planning was difficult. This led to one football club no longer being able to commit to supporting DIVERT for the next year because of the impact this uncertainty had on financial and resource planning. Financial uncertainty also affected CICs, who noted that they were unsure whether to look for other work as the end of funding approached. The DIVERT leadership team acknowledged this and felt they needed to be able to provide longer-term contracts and assurances to the people they were working with to prevent CICs looking for other, potentially more secure, employment.

'Funding is a key issue for people that work on the programme, because they themselves have to earn a living and it's a case of, 'What is going on with the funding? Do I need to look at my own

options?’ People that work on the programme are crucial, they’ve got corporate memory, they’ve got these skills, they’ve got knowhow. I want to keep hold of those people.’

– DIVERT leadership team

Across all participant groups, there was a strong sense of wanting DIVERT to continue and optimism around the programme’s ability to secure future funding to ensure its sustainability.

4.1.4. Governance

The leadership team, CICs and strategic partners provided a clear understanding of the governance structure for DIVERT (see Figure 3.1). The New Era Foundation, a registered charity, delivered DIVERT on behalf of, and in collaboration with, the MPS. The leadership team consisted of an overall lead situated within the MPS and two area leads from the New Era Foundation, covering police custody suites in North and South London respectively. CICs seconded from football clubs had dual line management, from both their football club and the DIVERT leadership team (see 3.1.1 for additional context).

4.1.4.1. Recruitment of CICs

The CICs were recruited in one of three ways (see Figure 3.1):

- directly by the DIVERT leads from their existing roles as MPS volunteers
- from within other liaison and diversion schemes
- by senior managers at the football clubs

Several characteristics were noted as essential for the role by DIVERT leadership, strategic partners and the CICs themselves, including the ability to engage and build relationships, effectively manage a caseload, and provide non-judgemental support. The requirement of working within a custody environment meant that CICs also had to be committed, resilient, patient and confident with a ‘can-do’ attitude. Strategic partners described the challenge of finding people who met these requirements.

‘We struggled a bit in terms of finding the right member of staff who we thought would be able to handle the workload and responsibility of going into [...] custodial suites [...] There was

talk about maybe dividing it across our current officers [CICs] at the time, which wasn't really practical in terms of time management due to the amount of time needed to be at the [custody suite] and [...] follow-up work that would've needed.'

– Strategic partner

The custody-based nature of the CIC role caused some difficulties for recruitment, with one individual leaving the role due to their own personal experience in police custody. Despite these recruitment and retention challenges, both leadership and partners felt it was important to maintain high standards in selection. Individual CICs without direct experience in a custody suite were able to visit police custody after their interview to get practical insight into the role and allow them to consider whether they could work in that environment. CICs also described the confidence that came with being handpicked by either the DIVERT team or their football club.

'The really good thing about DIVERT is that it's the people and the staff that make the work as successful as it is. So yes, it was just to say basically, 'Go and do what you do best', and being told that at an early stage. It just makes you feel ten feet tall. So being told that, just to go and work your best [...] that was all I needed to know'.

– Custody intervention coach

4.1.5. Training and guidance

The level of training and guidance provided was on a spectrum of formal training to informal information sharing, depending on the staff role.

4.1.5.1. Information sharing

Informal information and guidance about DIVERT was provided both to strategic partners and to custody staff and officers, by the leadership team and/or CICs. Strategic partners described having a good understanding of both the intervention and their role in providing CICs, which was 'very clearly explained' to them by intervention leads.

Custody staff and officers learned about DIVERT by talking to CICs when they encountered them in the custody suite. Leaflets were provided in some suites and there were regular email updates sent from the programme leads to the six custody suites. However, feedback suggested that emails were often not read. Custody staff awareness of DIVERT varied, with lower awareness and understanding among those in junior roles compared to those in senior positions. For example, junior staff members described a lack of clarity about the aim of DIVERT and role of CICs.

‘I heard of DIVERT, it was this year and a colleague of mine was working on that project. I wasn’t too clear about their role as such. The brief understanding I got is, they’re to divert people away from criminality. I think that was the idea I was getting [...] They just used to be here on some days, and some days not.’

– Custody staff

Familiarity with, and understanding of, DIVERT was also dependent on the extent to which individual CICs had tried to communicate information about the programme within the custody suite. For example, custody staff and officers appeared to have a better understanding of DIVERT if the CIC working in their location had proactively explained the intervention to them and had included them in the identification process of eligible young adults (see 5.2.1). Limited awareness among custody staff and officers could lead to a lack of engagement with DIVERT, with CICs suggesting that it would be useful to raise its profile by providing a suite-wide information session or briefing to help encourage staff engagement.

4.1.5.2. Formal training

A one-week external training programme was delivered to CICs, including topics such as rules within a custody environment, implications of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE),³¹ risk management, safeguarding principles and first aid. Essential information about how to carry out their role as a CIC, such as identifying eligible young adults and completing consultations in custody, was also explained.

³¹ PACE is an Act of Parliament that makes further provision in relation to the powers and duties of the police, and provides for the issuing of codes of practice in relation to the exercise of these powers, including detention.

Speakers from external organisations and the MPS attended to provide insight into pertinent topics to the areas that DIVERT is delivered in, such as knife crime.

This formal training was responsive to CICs' needs and has developed over time following their feedback. For example, a mental health component was added to the training on the advice of a nurse now in a CIC role. Ongoing and ad hoc training was also offered, including continuing professional development days for staff, opportunities to learn about trauma-informed approaches to supporting young adults, and information and research on adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). These potential training needs were discussed in monthly DIVERT meetings with leadership and other CICs.

While the CICs felt that the training offered was adequate, there was a sense that if they had not had a background in custody, prison or working with young offenders, then they would need more practical support in the custody suite early on, such as formal shadowing opportunities.

'If I hadn't worked in a prison, I don't know [...] if I would have understood the culture of the custody suites. I think that I understood the work, I understood the consultation and what you're trying to do, but it was that this is a service that's delivered in custody.'

– Custody intervention coach

4.1.6. Setting up referral pathways

In each custody suite, the DIVERT leadership team and CICs established relationships with different organisations who were willing and able to offer fully funded employment, training and support services for young adults. These referral partners offered pathways for CICs to refer young adults into and covered a range of activities, such as music, construction, security, mental health and addiction services (see Appendix E for a list of referral pathways). CICs also worked with local councils to support young adults with benefit and housing applications. The leadership team initially assisted CICs in building relationships and creating core partnerships in different custody suite locations with well-connected local organisations, who now work closely with DIVERT. For example, leadership helped to build a relationship

with Bounce Back, an organisation specialising in helping ex-offenders into employment and training. Bounce Back now work in regular partnership with DIVERT and have multiple referral programmes for ex-offenders in construction, painting and decorating.

After the initial support from the leadership team, setting up new referral partnerships and maintaining those relationships was largely the CICs' responsibility. Referral networks were developed by CICs in three key ways.

- CICs used their **existing connections** to build referral partnerships, including the football clubs they have been seconded from (for example, Palace for Life's Talent Match programme) and local businesses connected to those football clubs (such as construction hubs and security firms).
- **New partnerships:** CICs conducted promotional work on social media (such as Twitter) to attract referral organisations to DIVERT. They also searched online for providers in their area and appealed to local authorities to create additional opportunities in their borough for young adults. Networking events organised by DIVERT leadership, such as events with local organisations to visit the custody suites, further supported this work.
- CICs looked for **bespoke opportunities** on an ad hoc basis in response to the needs of young adults on their caseload. For example, one CIC spoke to a local hairdresser about an individual who wanted to become a barber and was able to secure a training opportunity for them.

Developing referral pathways for young adults was facilitated by the need for some organisations to fill available spaces on their courses and/or to fulfil their corporate social responsibility objectives in order to receive funding – for example, music programmes and construction courses run by local councils or charities.

'I guess it's a partnership that makes sense from both sides. Because we're often looking for young people who they are working with and they are looking for opportunities for young people they're working with. So, it's been quite a natural collaboration.'

– Referral partner

Reported challenges to establishing relationships with referral partners included the following.

- **Identifying referral partners who shared DIVERT's values and commitment.**

Organisations needed to accept people who may have an offending history and be able to treat young adults with patience as they adapted to work or training. Partners were also required to deliver on any opportunities they promised to young adults and not let them down, for example, by promising space on a training course and then not delivering. If this happened, the DIVERT leadership team and CICs would usually decide to not work with that partner in the future.

'For me, the early stage of building those relationships was about QAing [quality assuring] those organisations [...] Some organisations, 'Yes, we've got this, we've got that,' and then you send them one person and it just falls flat on its feet. I walk away from that because what basically that means is if you can't help one person, you're not going to be able to help 10, 15, and if you let that person down, then you're going to let DIVERT down, and ultimately you're going to not let that person get away from their lifestyle.'

– DIVERT leadership team

- **Finding training and opportunities that were fully funded.** For example, if a training provider charged a fee for someone to complete their Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) card course, it was no longer possible for DIVERT to work with them.

Before expanding to new custody suite locations, the DIVERT team started to build these referral pathways to ensure that core partners and pathways were established from the outset.

4.2. Delivery

This section considers how DIVERT was delivered in practice, looking at the barriers and facilitators involved in the process of identifying eligible young adults for the programme, the IAG meetings, and ongoing communication between programme

participants and CICs over time. It also explores partnership working, including facilitators and barriers to success.

4.2.1. Initial referral of young adults to DIVERT

To identify eligible young adults for DIVERT, CICs across custody suite locations reviewed the list of young adults detained in police custody, which was displayed on the 'whiteboard' to see whether they met the basic eligibility criteria (young adults aged 18-25 years old and not in ETE). Young adults were considered ineligible in the following circumstances.

- They required the presence of an appropriate adult due to a learning difficulty or mental health issue.
- They were deemed high-risk by an inspector, sergeant or the CIC due to their behaviour in the suite (for example, if they were being uncooperative or aggressive towards staff).
- They were on a serious offence charge: arson, (attempted) murder or sexual assault. In these cases, it was considered unfair to raise potential participants' expectations by introducing them to DIVERT if they were unlikely to be accepted into training or employment due to the nature of their alleged offence. Similarly, offence history was also considered (for example, if they had committed sexual offences). In addition, if someone was facing a lengthy custodial sentence (two or more years), it was not deemed appropriate to develop an action plan with them at this stage.

Each CIC also used their own judgement when applying these criteria and deciding who to speak to.

'We then make, as CICs, a conscious decision of who to go and speak with. So, if we get printed [...] off five or six individuals potentially, you're probably only going to speak to two or three of those. The reason would be is because you speak with the custody staff, you look at the risk assessments, and ultimately you go with your gut instinct as well. You think, you know what, I've got a feeling about that one. I'm going to speak to him or her, and that's basically how we do our own sifting process.'

– Custody intervention coach

Throughout the identification process, CICs also described varying levels of collaboration with custody staff or officers, such as sergeants and DDOs. For example, some staff in the custody suite worked closely with the CICs in assessing eligibility, while other CICs worked more independently.

‘We just basically go through the whiteboard, all the detainees who are in, and we identify the ones who are suitable. It’s almost like a triage; we identify the ones who are suitable and those who aren’t. We then write down the cell numbers of the ones that are suitable for it and give a quick briefing [to them] later on.’

– Custody officer

In some cases, custody staff and officers were familiar with certain young adults who were regularly arrested and recommended them to the CIC.

‘One of the biggest helps in the referral process is the police force. On several occasions, because the police force are quite close to some of the [young people] – they’re known to them [...] they will come up and say to you, ‘Look, we’ve got this lad in, he’s a good lad but he keeps on getting into trouble. He’s worth seeing.’ That’s the sort of thing that really helps: experience, they’ve got some background.’

– Custody intervention coach

Depending on their level of engagement with DIVERT, custody staff and officers could also refer young adults to DIVERT when CICs were not present in police custody (see 5.2.1.1).

CICs typically asked police custody staff and officers for the front sheet³² and risk assessments of any individuals they were considering for DIVERT. The CIC's level of police vetting determined their access to data and information on potential participants. Those with an MPS volunteer (special constables) background were more likely to have the required vetting to access police systems (eg, PNC data) themselves, while other CICs often relied on custody staff and officers for access to this information. For example, CICs in Croydon, Brixton, Tower Hamlets and Stoke Newington were able to access police systems directly, while CICs in Lewisham and Wood Green could not.

The police vetting process raised four key barriers for the delivery of DIVERT.

- Vetting for new staff can take over six months. Without police vetting, CICs were dependent on custody staff and officers' willingness and capacity to escort them around the suite.
- For CICs without access to police systems, reliance on custody staff and officers could lead to delays in gathering information about young adults. This also placed an additional burden on the custody staff.
- CICs without full access to police systems were not always able to complete an accurate risk assessment of that individual or correctly check their eligibility for DIVERT, as they did not know their full offending history.
- Frontline custody staff and officers did not always have a consistent understanding of information sharing agreements governing CICs' access to data on young adults, which could be particularly difficult for CICs without access to police systems. Despite agreement at senior levels that CICs should have access to personal data and front sheets, this was not consistently adhered to. This challenge was exacerbated by key custody staff and officers moving roles or locations due to operational requirements. Internal moves could lead to loss of

³² The front sheet is a custody record of an individual's time of arrival, circumstances of arrest and reason to be detained, as well as the police officers involved and whether detention is authorised by the custody officer (in accordance with PACE). When a person is detained at a police station, a custody record is created and becomes a live record of everything in relation to the person arrested. The document will also contain a risk assessment asking a series of questions concerning the detainee's health and welfare (app.college.police.uk/app-content/detention-and-custody-2/detainee-care/#maintaining-custody-records).

knowledge about DIVERT and information sharing agreements among custody staff and officers, with CICs having to re-explain how the intervention worked for new staff and encourage buy-in.

4.2.1.1. Referrals to DIVERT from custody staff and officers

CICs operated a flexible working pattern and managed their caseloads by moving between police custody and the community. As a result, CICs were not always available in the custody suite. When CICs were working in the community, there was a reliance on the support of custody staff and officers to provide referrals to CICs to avoid missing eligible young adults. Custody staff and officers were asked to:

- send an email to the CIC with the young adult's contact or case information
- give the young adult the CIC's contact details directly
- flag eligible cases to the CIC upon their next arrival at the custody suite

'From my point of view really as a custody sergeant, I can identify young people who I think might benefit from this and then I send through a referral to the team [...] I copy in [the CIC] and they then take the referral from me and [...] they basically action it.'

– Custody officer

However, if the CIC's first contact with the young adult is outside of the custody suite, then this perhaps lessens the power of the 'teachable moment' aspect of the programme (which the custody context is integral to).

Variation in information sharing within different suites meant that staff were sometimes unaware of the need to refer cases to CICs or uncertain about how to do so. Staff in less senior roles also felt that the 'unpredictable' working pattern of the CICs could lessen engagement of custody staff with DIVERT, as it could result in infrequent contact with CICs, particularly in comparison to more structured liaison and diversion schemes. Some custody staff were also unsure about how to contact CICs when they were not present in the suite.

'There's no communication with the custody suite in terms of when DIVERT workers would be coming. For example, we have

drug workers based here, so we know they're here between certain times, [...] we know who to call [...] but DIVERT are very hit and miss in terms of how would we contact someone? Where would we get someone to come to if we needed someone?'

– Custody staff

This issue was more readily overcome by CICs who had built strong relationships with staff and raised awareness about DIVERT. The level of engagement of custody staff with DIVERT was also partly reflective of whether the CICs provided feedback about the outcome of a case that they may have referred on to the programme. Where staff were aware of success stories, this encouraged buy-in and supported future referrals.

'Sometimes it's good to have the success story to say, 'Hold on a minute, well, this person went on to achieve this or this person went on to achieve that.' [...] I think there needs to be a system where there is feedback where they can – so custody knows, this was a bit of a good intervention, and what worked, and maybe that could be passed on to custody.'

– Custody staff

4.2.1.2. Self-referrals

Another way in which young adults could take part in DIVERT was by making a self-referral, outside of the custody suite environment. CICs explained that self-referrals occurred when a previous programme participant recommended DIVERT to a friend and provided them with their CIC's contact details. Young adults who self-referred³³ described deciding to contact DIVERT because they had seen how it had helped their friend gain employment or training, and they felt that they could benefit from this too. A CIC would usually conduct an initial engagement meeting with a self-referral case over the phone, speaking to that person about their circumstances and what type of support, training or employment they need. There were no set eligibility criteria around self-referrals (although the exclusions set out in 5.2.1.1 would still

³³ Three of the nine young adults interviewed were self-referrals. There is no quantitative data on the number of individuals engaging with DIVERT who self-referred.

apply), as it was presumed that these individuals were likely to be at higher risk of offending or reoffending if they were sharing the same social networks and environments as peers already involved in DIVERT.

'It's important that we open those self-referrals with open arms. We accept them with open arms, and the reason being is because [...] if they're [peers are] getting arrested, they're in certain environments [...] So, the way we look at it, is that regardless if they've been arrested or they haven't been arrested, let's do some work because the impact that we can have, an intervention we can have will be a huge desistance factor for them, and it will probably stop them coming into police custody. Ultimately that's what we want.'

– Custody intervention coach

However, there was variation among CICs, with some deciding to limit the number of self-referrals by only accepting young adults who had previously been arrested or prioritising clients they met in the custody suite. In addition, CICs did not receive any self-referrals in certain locations, such as Croydon.

4.2.2. Initial engagement meeting with young adults

After identifying eligible cases, CICs approached the young adult's cell to introduce DIVERT and ask if they would be interested in speaking with them. As DIVERT is voluntary, there were cases where the young adults did not want to engage.

Depending on their police vetting, CICs were either escorted to the cell by a custody sergeant or DDO, or they went alone. One view among police officers was that only the detention team should be allowed access to the cells without an escort. This view was not shared at inspector level, although the risk to the CICs' safety in approaching young adults alone in their cell was acknowledged. However, CICs reported that they checked the risk assessment for an individual and gained approval from the custody sergeant prior to attending a cell alone.

If the young adult agreed to a meeting with the CIC, they were either taken from their cell into a consultation room or, depending on availability, the meeting could take place in their cell or a public area of the suite. Availability of consultation rooms

varied according to size of the custody suite, with meetings between legal staff and clients taking priority. For self-referrals to DIVERT, the IAG meetings took place over the phone and were less detailed than the conversations that took place in police custody.

The IAG meetings between the young adults and the CICs covered a range of topics about young adults' lifestyles and experiences, including:

- experience of ETE
- family, friends and relationships
- physical and mental health (including drug or alcohol use)
- decision-making
- lifestyle

These conversations were focused on CICs understanding the reasons behind an individual's detention in custody, what may have caused them to get there and what support they needed to break any cycle of behaviour. If appropriate, IAG meetings also explored past trauma and childhood experiences that may have contributed to them being arrested.

‘I’m not afraid to ask the difficult questions because I need to ask the difficult questions to get things triggered off in their mind. It’s not just about getting them into training, getting them into a job, it’s about talking about the trauma and the abuse. That’s not always appropriate, but nine times out of ten [...] I’m like, ‘Right, you’re an adult now, I’ve got your back, let’s work this out together.’”

– Custody intervention coach

IAG meetings were perceived to be impactful by CICs, particularly as they were delivered at a teachable moment in police custody³⁴ when a young adult may have considered the need to change their lives.

³⁴ Except for self-referrals.

‘The power of the IAG is sometimes enough. So, the conversation that they have with us, a non-statutory party in police custody is sometimes enough for them to reflect and think, ‘Do you know what? This isn’t what I want to do. I don’t want to offend. I don’t want to come in here [...] I just needed to hear those words from somebody who I’ve never met before’ [...] I think it’s the contribution that we have in that person’s life at that moment in time.’

– Custody intervention coach

As part of the IAG meetings, CICs also asked young adults what interested them in terms of employment, putting in place a plan to identify an appropriate referral partner. Education and training opportunities were also discussed where a young adult needed certain qualifications in order to move into their choice of employment. Depending on their individual circumstances, other support was also considered for young adults, such as substance misuse services, housing and benefits advice, or practical support (for example, setting up a bank account or acquiring personal identification). Before the end of the meeting, contact details were shared between the CIC and young adult, as well as next of kin information. The young adult also signed an ethnicity monitoring form and a General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) consent form.

4.2.2.1. Young adults’ views on initial engagement

The young adults interviewed described feeling positive after their IAG meetings with the CICs. These meetings communicated next steps for when they returned to the community, often resulting in young adults feeling a sense of reassurance about the future.

‘I wouldn’t say I was excited or whatever, but I was just calm because I knew that if I need help, or whenever I need help when it comes to job opportunities for anything I want to do, I can just ask them and they will help me straight away.’

– Young adult

CICs took a non-judgemental approach to their engagement with young adults, which helped to build mutual respect.

‘They then took me out of my cell and I went into a room, spoke about that I was in the construction, spoke about what made me do what I’ve done. We had a conversation. [...] They look at the situation you’ve been in and they say, ‘Right, what would’ve forced this person to do what they’ve done?’ [...] You could tell them anything and you know they’re never going to look down or judge you; they’re just going to try and help you get around it.’

– Young adult

The CICs, being distinct from the police, were perceived to support engagement from the young adults, particularly if the CICs were wearing a football club uniform in police custody. In some cases, young adults recognised the CIC in custody after having previously worked with them in a different capacity in the community, and seeing a familiar, supportive face was felt to be ‘reassuring’.

‘Before all of this, [...] I went into a traineeship to get my CSCS card and it was literally in the Millwall centre, so when I saw [a CIC] wearing the Millwall uniform [in the custody suite], I think I just thought, ‘Do I know him from somewhere or do I know the uniform from somewhere?’ I thought that because they’ve helped me in the past, [...] because I’ve been with them before – why not? Why not take the opportunity?’.

– Young adult

Some young adults described how they had taken up DIVERT as they had reached an ‘all-time low’ and were ‘down in life’, with limited opportunities available to them.

‘I felt like after being arrested I didn’t want to go back. So, I wanted to come out because I didn’t have a job at the time so I thought ‘Ah, if he can help me find a job then I might as well take it.’

– Young adult

This was also reflected in the experiences of young adults self-referring to DIVERT.

Challenges around engagement emerged from young adults who previously had negative experiences with other practitioners or support providers, such as a lack of follow-up. Previous negative experiences made some participants reluctant to engage with the CIC initially and, as DIVERT was voluntary, it also meant that some young adults refused to engage entirely. Other young adults were also resistant to engaging with a CIC, as they did not feel ready or motivated to make the necessary changes to their lifestyle and behaviour.

4.2.3. Ongoing engagement between CICs and young adults

To keep track of their caseloads, CICs used a combination of Excel spreadsheets and paper-based notes (such as review sheets) to log each young adult's progress. After a young adult returned to the community, the CIC would contact them using the personal details provided during the IAG meeting, including their next of kin's details if they were unable to contact the young adult. Alternatively, the young adult would call or text the CIC directly themselves. The CIC would complete a risk assessment, to confirm with DIVERT leadership that it was safe for them to meet face-to-face in the community.

The mode and frequency of ongoing communication was dependent on the young adult's preferences. Some CICs would call or text an individual daily, while others arranged to meet once every few weeks. Most commonly, contact took place over the phone. In some cases, young adults would not be contactable at all in the community (either because the CIC could not make contact or because the young adult did not want to be contacted again), so these individuals would only have received the IAG meetings with the CICs.³⁵

The action plans developed in IAG meetings were flexible. They were used as a dynamic guide to navigate the preferences of participants and the opportunities available to them. Participants' preferences were subject to change, as reflected in the follow-up interviews with young adults, with one individual changing their planned career path from construction to research with the support of their CIC, after feeling that they would like to try a different, less physical career path.

³⁵ The impact analysis includes all young adults, even if they did not engage with DIVERT after the IAG meeting.

When a young adult was starting a new training course or employment opportunity, CICs often accompanied them or called them beforehand to provide support and encourage their attendance. At the end of the course or after their first day of employment, the CICs all described following up with young adults for a review of the day and to see if there was any additional support they needed.

Gang associations presented a key challenge for CICs when arranging to meet a young adult or for young adults attending opportunities in certain parts of London. Travelling through, or to, certain locations – particularly in areas where there were ‘postcode gangs’ – could risk the safety of CICs or participants, and occasionally this limited opportunities available to young adults. To ensure the young adult’s safety, CICs described explicitly asking them if they would be safe in certain areas, as well as using police data including the MPS Gangs Matrix.³⁶

‘We always have to make sure, because I’m not going to send somebody on a course or send them for a job in an area where their face is known as being from a different gang [...] Even if it’s one street across, which it does happen, you always have to check, ‘What areas can you travel to? What areas would you be comfortable going to a course in?’

– Custody intervention coach

There was no ‘cut-off’ point for the length of engagement a young adult may have with a CIC, even if that young adult returned to police custody or reoffended.

‘Whenever I need help he’ll just help me. He [CIC] will literally just help me. He will go out of his way to help me. He’s been on holiday and he’s still trying his best to help me and get me into some sort of education.’

– Young adult

³⁶ The MPS Gangs Matrix is an intelligence tool to supplement enforcement and diversion action against street-focused violence (london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/gangs_matrix_review_-_final.pdf)

Follow-up interviews with young adults suggested that ongoing engagement with CICs had naturally lessened over time as participants gradually moved into training or employment, while others still spoke to their CIC on 'a daily basis'.

'I don't often speak to him now, but obviously we speak on and off. It's not on a weekly basis, probably every two weeks. Sometimes he'll just randomly call me to check up on me to see if I'm all right, or if there's something I'm interested in and that, he'll just call me to give me an update on it.'

– Young adult

All follow-up interview participants noted that if they needed help again in the future, either to find new employment or if they needed advice, they would contact their CIC. In general, young adults felt that the CICs were accessible and responsive if they were to contact them.

The perseverance and reliability of the CICs in helping young adults to achieve their goals was felt to underpin the continued engagement of young adults with DIVERT.

'I told him I wanted to find an apprenticeship or a job, he will do anything he can to go and help me look for that job, make sure I get what I want. That's what he's basically done with me throughout that whole year I've known him for, and I basically thank him for all he's done for me, throughout that whole year.'

– Young adult)

4.2.4. Partnership working during delivery

Communication between the DIVERT leadership team, the CICs and strategic partners was essential to successfully delivering DIVERT. Regular meetings and reports contributed to this, including the following.

- DIVERT leadership held monthly strategic partnership meetings to discuss progress and any problems or issues arising. This time was also used to deliver workshops on topics of interest (for example, safeguarding).
- CICs produced weekly progress reports for DIVERT leadership, detailing how many people they had seen in custody, hours spent in custody versus the

community, and any outcomes achieved for young adults in terms of education and training. The leadership team also checked in with each CIC after receiving their weekly report, to see if they needed any advice or support with their caseload (see 4.2.4).

- DIVERT sent quarterly reports on programme activity to the Home Office as part of the Early Intervention Youth Fund, to document progress for funding and accountability purposes. The CICs were required to produce a case study as supporting evidence, and to include the number of individuals in employment, training or initial engagement. However, CICs noted that less tangible outcomes – for example, those involving soft skills and personal development – are not formally tracked.
- CICs met monthly to discuss their experiences, identify training needs and share referral partner contacts where required. Outside of these meetings, the CICs had formed strong relationships with one another and were described as being in ‘constant communication’ via a WhatsApp group and email.

Throughout programme delivery, CICs were supported by the leadership team, who they contacted on an ad hoc basis to discuss problems or seek advice on cases.

‘Communication lines are open with everybody at DIVERT [...] There’s no problem with me ever getting through to [DIVERT lead]. I speak to [DIVERT lead] near enough every day [...] It’s seamless work really, to be honest. If any issues do arise, then yes, I can make that call and just run a couple of things past them, get a little bit of advice [...] It really, really is a close-knit, close-bonded group of people, because we are quite a small team.’

– Custody intervention coach

CICs seconded from football clubs kept in regular contact with their respective managers and worked with them to make referrals to the programmes being run by the football clubs’ charities (such as coaching initiatives) or to use meeting room space at their office headquarters.

The DIVERT leadership team described other liaison and diversion services delivered within each custody suite location, specifically by mental health nurses and

substance or addiction support workers. Where appropriate, CICs worked collaboratively with other services present within the custody suite, for example, by signposting cases to the mental health team or by providing employment and training advice to young adults who were already being provided with support by these services.

4.2.4.1. Referral partners

Each CIC had their own bespoke list of referral partners they worked with in their local community. This network of partners responded to the needs and preferences of the young adults supported by DIVERT. Partners changed according to provision at particular times (for example, if a new course had started at one organisation or an apprenticeship window had ended). Without a central database, the CICs used different mediums to store their personal database of contact information for the referral partners that they worked with, for example, in a notebook or an Excel spreadsheet.

Referral partners reported strong working relationships with CICs across custody suite locations and described regular communication throughout the referral process. Before referring a young adult to an organisation, the CICs would typically ensure that the partner agency was briefed about that individual and would make follow-up calls to check that the young adult had attended. The CIC was also available to speak to referral partners if any issues or problems arose about the young adult or their placement.

‘They’re brilliant. They’re really on it, really communicative, have always been really keen on referring people for our project and always have kept a really good level of communication throughout the process, and always been really helpful with supporting young people to get to the project or following up when we haven’t been able to get hold of, and just have been really easy to work with, in that sense, which really makes our lives a lot easier. They just seem really genuinely enthusiastic about the opportunities we have to offer and about the partnership.’

– Referral partner

Interviews with referral partners also suggested a high level of collaboration between individual members of staff at core referral organisations and CICs to track the progress of young adults. This often resulted in referral partners and CICs proactively working together to provide ongoing support to those individuals.

‘Between me and [CIC] we work together in respect of how we approach [an] individual. [CIC] is very good at working with the individuals, picking them up and talking to them, and we’re always on the phone and my line’s always open to them as well. We build that trust between the three of us, and me and [CIC] talk an awful lot, ‘Right, what’s the next stages for this person? I can’t get hold of this person,’ so he will do some chasing and vice versa, and we take it from there’.

– Referral partner

A key benefit of working with DIVERT identified by referral partners was that it helped to raise the profile of their local organisations. It also increased interest and awareness of the other important work that they were carrying out with vulnerable people in the community.

The DIVERT leadership team and CICs highlighted some of the challenges and considerations around the referral pathway process.

- **Opportunities were limited by the background and experience of young adults:** The CICs highlighted the importance of managing expectations about what was achievable in the short term, without preventing individuals from following their long-term ambitions. For example, if a young adult would like to become an electrician, this requires A Levels. Short-term goals can be put in place, such as completing a CSCS course to quickly achieve financial stability, with the young adult then working towards college qualifications in an open-learning course over time.

‘Managing expectations is at the forefront of our work [...we] need to have some frank honest conversations with people who set unrealistic expectations. It’s not about crushing dreams, it’s about creating an effective plan for someone to work towards over a longer-term basis. [...] It’s about what can we look at and

what other interests have you got, even if not an interest, what wouldn't you mind having a go at just to improve your sustenance [...] and access their bigger dreams further down the line.'

– Custody intervention coach

By framing this in a positive way, young adults were generally receptive and aware that other opportunities may need to be pursued that were accessible to them given their circumstances (for example, an offending history).

'I wanted to do that [construction] but also I knew that would be the easiest option because [...] for someone that's got a conviction, they [construction employer] don't care about this, paperwork, so I knew that would be the easy way to just get back, yes [...] once I put my mind on to starting to work for construction, that's like I just forgot about everything else.'

– Young adult

- **Opportunities available were limited to funded provision:** Young adults acknowledged that funding might restrict the range of opportunities available to them, for example, when comparing DIVERT to better-funded organisations they have previously worked with. CICs and young adults also explained that the high cost of training in certain fields, such as to be a car mechanic or electrician, meant that these opportunities were not available to DIVERT as funded provision. As one young adult described, while he was able to attend a basic personal training course, the next stage of that training was more expensive and therefore could not be offered as fully funded by the training provider. As a result, the participant was unable to take the next course.

'We get opportunities, but we don't have opportunities in every field. There are fields where it's hard to get free opportunities. Like electrician courses. It's just trying to find a way that we can get, I don't know, maybe funding for a pot of money that allows us to directly put people on to different courses, rather than leaning on different organisations all the time.'

– Custody intervention coach

However, in most cases, both CICs and young adults noted that the range of opportunities available for DIVERT was adequate, with many young adults willing to try any opportunities presented, even if they were not within their first choice of career. The opportunities available also matched the type of career that young adults would like to pursue. While DIVERT do not provide funding for referrals to education, training and support services, leadership could decide on a case-by-case basis whether to fund a specific course for an individual if there was nothing else suitable available.

- **Difficulty finding organisations who meet expectations in terms of delivery:**

Both CICs and DIVERT leadership suggested that larger national organisations could offer further support for young adults but were not always successful in delivering outcomes, for example, finding them employment. In contrast, local organisations like churches or grassroots charities often deliver on promises made to the young adults. If a referral organisation fails to deliver, CICs will no longer work with them.

- **Reliance on individual CICs' relationships:** While the DIVERT leadership develop some core partnerships in the community, day-to-day relationship-building and maintenance was the responsibility of individual CICs. Referral partners noted that while partnership working with CICs was very effective, there was some over-reliance on those individuals and if they were to leave DIVERT, that relationship would have to be rebuilt.

'It's good partnership working, we work very well together, the two of us. I'm not sure if it would work with someone new because obviously [...] if [CIC] went or something, or if things changed and someone new come in, then it's starting that kind of relationship again about how I work and how that individual works and what works well together. We have a really good working relationship at the moment.'

– Referral partner

- **Young adults' readiness to change:** Participants described having been provided opportunities by CICs but not feeling able to continue with them. For example, a young adult was given a long-term employment contract via their CIC,

but they did not enjoy the role and felt they 'did not fit in' with other employees, leading them to leave.

In some cases, CICs talked about young adults who were not psychologically prepared to take on these opportunities and behaved inappropriately or unreasonably on training courses or in employment, which resulted in them being removed or fired. These instances created a reputational risk for the CIC with partner organisations and, in these circumstances, ongoing CIC engagement with that young adult could involve developing life skills (such as time management) and a sense of accountability for their actions.

Referral partners also spoke about young adults not 'turning up' to programmes they had been enrolled onto. The CICs ensured they were in regular contact with referral partners and managed expectations around each young adult to pre-empt this challenge.

'We had five people referred to us by DIVERT but unfortunately in the end, none of them actually were able to do the course. Obviously, that sometimes can be a challenge because when you're working with young people who are vulnerable [...] For example there's been twice where two of the people referred to us had court dates, and then been sentenced, so haven't been able to do the project. Or they just drop off the radar because they're not engaged [...] I can definitely say that it was not for lack of communication from DIVERT. They're always really on top of, and communicative about, why somebody might not be coming or any difficulties they will be having.'

– Referral partner

Issues with housing or mental health concerns were felt to be common factors affecting a young adult's readiness and ability to engage with support, or with opportunities they have been referred on to.

'We've had a couple that have got some serious home issues, mental health issues, they're in a hostel, and they've sort of gone what we call rogue really. They've disappeared, we don't know where they are, but we've had someone go into prison for

three months and we've been there when they've come out as well [...] If they want it, they will come back; if they don't want it then we don't give up on them, but we won't waste our time and spend loads of time chasing them around.'

– Referral partner

- **Measurability of outcomes:** When reporting outcomes to the Home Office, the number of young adults in employment or training via referral partners was used to measure DIVERT's progress (see 5.2.4). However, the work of CICs also included providing practical support to young adults to sign them up for benefits, supporting contact with the council around their housing needs, or helping them acquire personal identification documents that were needed to access further employment and education opportunities. CICs would often work with different referral partners, such as advice and support organisations, to achieve these things. CICs reported the need to include these non-measurable outcomes as part of the overall picture of progress.

4.3. Perceived impacts

This section describes the perceived impacts of DIVERT on young adults, staff and agencies involved in delivery, and explores the programme attributes contributing to these impacts.

Wider perceived impacts of DIVERT on local communities were discussed in interviews with staff. However, it was largely felt that these were minimal at this stage and that it would take time for any impacts to be evident. One view across staff groups was that in preventing or reducing the number of young adults committing crime through the delivery of DIVERT, there would be a positive impact on safety in the community.

4.3.1. Impacts on young adults

A view across staff groups was that preventing reoffending and re-arrests constituted a successful outcome for young adults, the CJS and wider society. Staff across roles (DIVERT leadership, CICs, custody staff and officers, strategic and referral partners) highlighted how the right measure of success differed for each individual taking part in DIVERT. For young adults who regularly returned to police custody, reducing the

amount of reoffending or severity of the offence could also be considered successful outcomes.

DIVERT was perceived to have a positive impact on programme participants in five key ways, all of which were intended outcomes or longer-term impacts of DIVERT (see the logic model in section 3.2 of this document).

1. **Changes in offending behaviour:** CICs provided examples of young adults they had worked with who were no longer committing offences, no longer being arrested or, in some cases, committing lower level offences than before. This view was supported in interviews with programme participants, who described having more routine and structured goals, so that they no longer had time to 'get into trouble' or needed to pursue criminal behaviours to earn money.

'I've literally been keeping myself to myself. I don't go around any trouble or I just stick to myself. I stick to the educational or job side of things and focus on the positive side to my future.'

– Young adult

2. **Increased sense of responsibility and awareness of consequences of offending behaviour:** Through one-to-one mentoring, CICs described teaching young adults the consequences of their offending behaviour and the need for them to take responsibility for themselves in everyday life.

'On a one-to-one basis, we'll speak to them about the different things in life, like responsibilities, how to take responsibility, why they should take responsibility, owning the decisions that they make, self-reflection, self-ownership [...] those are skills that they can take into their day-to-day life.'

– Custody intervention coach

Developing young adults' resilience and sense of accountability for their actions was perceived to be one of the most important outcomes achieved by CICs.

'I think they're the most important changes, the most prevalent changes I actually see.'

– Custody intervention coach

3. **Improved psychosocial wellbeing:** Young adults described how the CICs' commitment and belief in them had helped to increase their self-confidence and feelings of self-worth.

'Well, normally [...] I doubt myself. The things they were saying, where I can get there and they will tell me how I can get there, and once I do it, I see what they mean because they're not saying this for no reason. If you do what you have to do to go and get that success, you will gain that success. Literally, they've encouraged me a lot.'

– Young adult

Programme participants also felt that the practical support provided by CICs – for example, with accommodation or securing personal identification – had improved their sense of independence and security.

4. **Increased motivation to access ETE opportunities:** Strategic staff and referral partners reported how CICs are able to open doors for young adults to access fully funded opportunities. Young adults suggested that their CIC's consistent encouragement and mentoring increased their motivation to access those opportunities, with some participants feeling that they did not want to 'let down' their coach. The CICs felt that improving the psychosocial wellbeing of young adults, particularly around their self-confidence, increased young adults' motivation to attend support opportunities.

'It's changed my motivation a lot. I've been way more dedicated than I've been before. I will just go for it. They've given me that confidence to go out and get what I want. If you want something, you go out, you put in the effort, you go and get that. That's the motivation they've given me.'

– Young adult

All follow-up interviews with young adults showed participants either successfully following the original action plans developed with CICs or pursuing other training and employment opportunities they had found themselves.

‘I’ve recently finished the six-week course with Highway Maintenance and received three certificates from them. Yesterday, I went to an interview for an apprenticeship with Highway Maintenance as well and they said they were going to get back to me.’

– Young adult

5. **Increased access to opportunities:** Funded training and education courses, as well as different employment opportunities, are made accessible to young adults by working with DIVERT. Most young adults would not have had access to these opportunities without their CIC’s connections. CICs also work to improve accessibility to training and employment for young adults by helping them to acquire, for example, personal identification and secure accommodation.

A number of external factors were identified by staff and young adults as influencing the impact of DIVERT, including the following.

- **External and environmental factors:** These factors included financial hardship, adverse living situations or peer pressure (potentially due to gang associations), which were felt could prevent or hinder a young adult’s progress. Limited housing and accommodation opportunities were also felt to be possibly detrimental to young adults’ progress. In contrast, where friends and family were supportive of young adults engaging with DIVERT, this was felt to be conducive to the positive impact of the programme.
- **Lack of personal identification documents** could prevent young adults from progressing along the path agreed with their CIC, as it was required by some training courses and employers.
- Young adults also acknowledged the importance of their **readiness to change**. If they were not ready, then they would not engage in the support offered. The CICs would not refer them to opportunities with referral partners until they felt that the young adults were psychologically prepared, for example, able to wake up on time and to behave appropriately. Instead, CICs reported focusing on helping those individuals to develop their confidence and soft skills to build their personal motivation.

- Young adults' **ability to change**: The DIVERT leadership team, CICs, strategic and referral partners also highlighted that the process of personal development required for a young adult to change their lifestyle often took time. The CICs helped DIVERT participants gradually develop skills needed to enter ETE.

'Sometimes we underestimate the basic life skills that these young people lack. And it takes time to get someone ready, like psychologically prepared for a training course where they are able to commit themselves to be able to wake up early in the morning, to attend on time, to speak to people with respect, not to use the slang. Just little things, it takes time to teach them. And also that is not being recorded, you know the only [cases] that are being recorded are the ones who are actually in employment training and education. I have a lot of young people who are not able to reach training education and employment, I'm still mentoring them to get to that stage.'

– Custody intervention coach

To support young adults in feeling motivated and ready to change, referral partners noted that both they and CICs needed perseverance. Referral partners provided an example of working with a young adult for 18 months until he was able to secure training and employment opportunities, having 'gone missing' and reoffended at certain points along his journey.

'There's no set time limit for some individuals. Some will go quicker, but the whole point is I'm still there and [the CIC] is still there after 18 months. It doesn't end, it continues and continues. It's vital that the programme continues because people have got to realise some things are not instant. Some things take a long time to get someone, get the things out of their head, get them to see the realities of life, what they can do. Hopefully the more they do and the closer they get, they can see the benefits of what they're doing, which is important.'

– Referral partner

4.3.2. What aspects of DIVERT led to these perceived impacts?

Across team member roles and interviews with young adults, the mentorship of the CICs was believed to be central to DIVERT's success. The following were felt to be key elements.

- **IAG meetings** were perceived by CICs and the leadership team to be critical for DIVERT's success. They were felt to provide an opportunity for young adults to reflect and talk about difficulties in their lives without interruptions, sometimes for the first time, and could result in young adults recognising the need to make changes to their lifestyle.
- **Using the teachable moment:** The context of the custody suite was felt to be an important component of the programme, as being arrested was thought to serve as a 'wake-up call' for some young adults, particularly if it was their first time. However, despite reporting recognising the need to change their lifestyle after arrest, without the ongoing guidance and mentorship of the CIC, young adults pointed out that they would not have known how to change their lives and may have returned to a cycle of offending.

'I don't know where I would have been after I came out of custody. I would have just gone out and just try and look for work. There would just be nothing. I don't know. Without them, I do not know where I would have been. I don't know whether life would have been going worse and downhill, but without them, I know where I am right now, I wouldn't have been there if it wasn't for them, that's all I can say.'

– Young adult

This was reflected in the experiences of young adult respondents who had self-referred to DIVERT outside of the custody context, when they recognised a need to change their lives but needed help to achieve this.

'I was, well, a bad time, this was – when was it? A month and a half ago, I'd say. Lost my job, I was just at a low, all-time low and, yes, I just picked up the phone to [CIC]. I said, '[CIC], look, I need help.' I was struggling bad.'

– Young adult

- **The commitment and consistency of the CICs:** Young adults considered it essential that CICs' support was ongoing. In follow-up interviews, young adults described 'trusting' their CIC to 'stick to their word' and deliver on promises made. CICs noted that even if a young adult reoffended or returned to police custody, they would continue to support them.

'I've had past experiences where people basically have told me, 'We can do this for you, do that for you,' but there's not been no outcomes. They're just doing, like, just basically sending me places, saying this, that, do you get what I mean? [...]
[DIVERT's] definitely been different because obviously there was a great outcome. It wasn't a thing where someone just sold me a dream and then nothing came out of it.'

– Young adult

4.3.3. Impacts on staff

Staff across participant groups reported the positive impacts they felt DIVERT had on those delivering the programme in six key ways.

- DIVERT was perceived to have **changed the perception of young adults among custody staff and officers**. Some staff working in police custody reported more positive attitudes about the ability of young adults to stop offending. CICs and DIVERT leadership described this as the start of a 'culture shift' in custody suites. Changes in custody staff and officers' attitudes were supported by feedback from DIVERT about success stories. A contrasting view among less senior custody staff and officers was that there had been no impact on their perceptions of young adults. This was due to minimal interaction with DIVERT and, in some cases, a sense that they already had positive perceptions of young adults' ability to change their behaviour.
- DIVERT was perceived to have **changed the way that police staff interacted with young adults**. A custody officer described how DIVERT provided them with another avenue to support young adults in custody, not just looking after them while they were in the suite.

‘I think it’s given us the opportunity to have another weapon, another tool to try and help them. It’s the job that we do, although we’re coppers and civilian staff, we are not allowed to get involved in the investigation [...] We’re there to look after them and it’s nice to have another support mechanism that could potentially help.’

– Custody officer

A view among inspectors was that DIVERT had, to some extent, shown the value of taking a ‘softer’ approach to young adults, as opposed to focusing on trying to convict people.

‘[Q]uite often, we’re just the hammer that are nailing people – sometimes we’ve got to be a little bit softer, and I think something like DIVERT helps with that. All we do is, we search in people’s houses; we’re interviewing them; we’re trying to find ways of convicting people; and does that help society? I don’t know [...] I think it’d be a real shame if DIVERT disappeared.’

– Inspector

Changes to interactions with young adults might be relatively subtle, as one member of staff described:

‘Even simple little things like booking a person in and asking them, ‘How are you today?’ when it’s not like, ‘Okay officer, why are they here?’ It’s changing the terminology and the tone and how we talk to people who come into our suites.’

– Custody staff

- **Improved police–community relations:** Strategic partners reported that any initial concerns about potential reputational risks involved in working with the police – for example, discouraging young adults to take part in their support programmes – had been avoided. Productive partnerships with the police were developed and strategic partners plan to use these relationships to enhance police support for, and involvement in, other programmes run by football clubs’ community partnerships.

One view among custody staff was that the messaging related to DIVERT was becoming known in local communities and there was a positive shift in attitude towards the police, who were seen to be trying to help the community.

‘I think overall the wider community is now starting to understand what DIVERT is about. Just the other day I was walking past my hairdressers and he’s a big advocate for the community and I was talking to him [...] about DIVERT. He goes, ‘Yes, I’ve heard of it. We need to get the community together now to come together to understand that the police are here to help us. They’re not against us.’

– Custody staff

- **Skills development and improved ability to work with young adults:**

Strategic staff reported improved skills within their organisation as a result of providing a CIC to DIVERT. Working in custody had developed their ability to work with higher-risk young people and adults, as well as providing increased awareness and understanding of risk management and safeguarding around people with offending histories.

CICs described being personally fulfilled and enjoying their role, and a sense of increased confidence over time in working with young adults in police custody. Working with DIVERT to identify eligible young adults had also increased custody staff and officers’ understanding of the needs of this age group and those with vulnerabilities.

- **Increased partnership working and raised profile of strategic partners:**

DIVERT was perceived to have aided partnership working and sharing of learning between two football clubs in particular, and they also advised other football clubs on how to support DIVERT. The publicity and press coverage that DIVERT received helped to raise the external profile of strategic partners and their community work.

- **Capacity and workload:** CICs’ caseloads were facilitated by flexible working hours and being able to take time out of the custody suite, to focus on cases in the community according to caseload demands. The flexibility of this approach was recommended by the DIVERT leadership team and valued by CICs.

‘If it gets to a point where you think, ‘God, I’ve got so many things to chase up, so many loose ends to tie up for these four people that I’ve got,’ you take the time out of custody, get that done, and then you come back to custody. They are really, really supportive with that, and it does work. [...] That’s really good, knowing we’ve got that flexibility.’

– Custody intervention coach

However, flexible working hours needed to be balanced with gaps in a CIC’s presence within the custody suite, which highlighted the importance of having custody staff and officers’ buy-in to support referrals in their absence.

A more negative impact was the impact of DIVERT on referral partners’ resources. Some partners had to reallocate resources to support DIVERT. For example, one partner found it difficult to manage the number of referrals from DIVERT for its employment and training opportunities and, in response, felt they would need an additional caseworker to better manage the referral caseload.

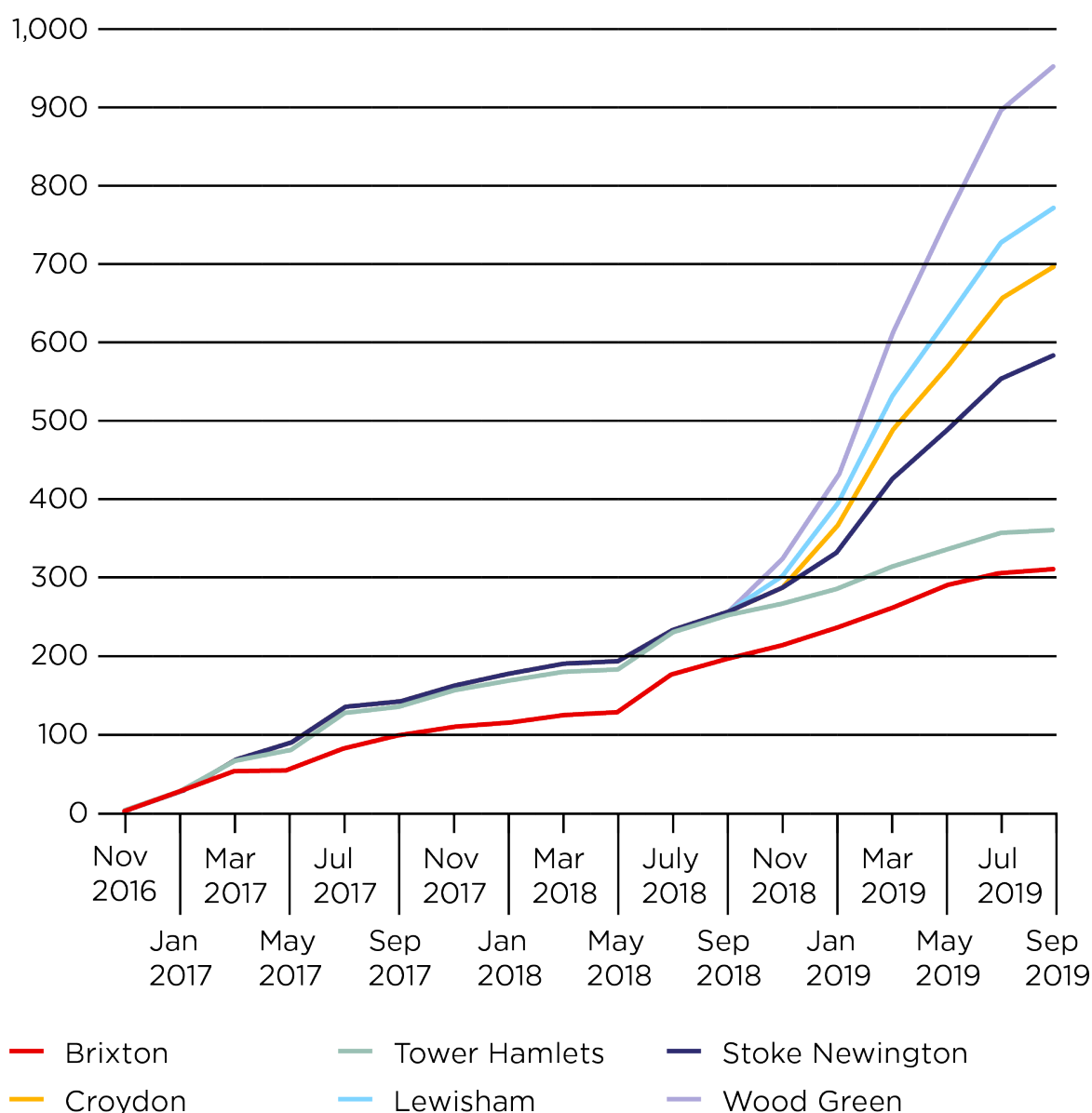
4.4. Impact evaluation

This section first describes the profile of DIVERT participants. It also outlines estimated effects of DIVERT on re-arrest within six and 12 months of initial contact with a CIC. Differences between impact estimates across custody suites are also considered.

4.4.1. Profile of DIVERT participants

Between November 2016 and October 2019, 1,034 people participated in DIVERT. Figure 5.1 illustrates the cumulative number of people who had an IAG meeting. The programme started in Brixton in 2016 and Tower Hamlets in 2017, and there was a steady increase in participants over the following year. In October 2018, DIVERT launched in four additional custody suites: Croydon, Stoke Newington, Lewisham and Wood Green. The total number of people who have participated in DIVERT has continued to increase since expanding into these custody suites.

Figure 5.1: Number of DIVERT participants by month and custody suite.*



Source: Custody suite management data (n=1,034).

***The graph excludes 81 cases where the date of the IAG meeting is missing.**

Demographic characteristics for DIVERT participants are provided in Appendix B. Programme participants were overwhelmingly male (94%). Age was recorded for 85% of participants. Of these, over half (51%) were aged 18-21 and a third (33%) were aged 22-25. Although the programme is targeted at the 18-25 age group, 12% of participants were 26 or above and 3% were below 18. Over half (52%) of all participants were Black, a quarter (24%) were White and 12% were Asian.

Offences committed by participants were categorised into the offence classification categories used for court proceedings in 2017 (MoJ, 2018). Burglary was separated from theft to allow for comparability with ONS crime categories. Drug offences were the most common (31%), followed by violence (16%), possession of weapons (16%) and summary non-motoring offences (12%).

4.4.2. Referral pathways

Custody suite management data was used to explore referrals into partner organisations. The dataset contains demographic characteristics of the participant, as well as programme engagement information recorded by the CIC, including the partner organisation(s) that the individual has been referred to. As referral information may have been coded at any time during the participant's DIVERT involvement, it may not represent the full range of organisations they are referred to during their engagement. In addition, the data does not show whether the participant has actually engaged with the organisation they have been referred to.

Data quality only allowed us to investigate referrals in four custody suites: Brixton, Lewisham, Croydon and Stoke Newington. Recording practices in Tower Hamlets and Wood Green differed, and it was unclear in some cases whether information related to a referred individual or to the referrer.

Between 42% and 54% of DIVERT participants were reported to have been referred to a partner organisation (see Table 5.1). Demographic characteristics (age, ethnicity and gender) of those referred were not significantly different from the characteristics of those who were not referred. While the proportion of people who had committed drug and weapons offences did not differ by referral, those who had committed a violent crime were slightly less likely to be referred than those who had not (12% compared to 18%).

Qualitative findings described in sections 5.2.3 and 5.2.4 suggest reasons why around half of DIVERT participants have not been referred. These include the young adults' readiness to change and the need for the CIC to support them in other areas first. In the latter case, the CIC may have needed to help them acquire personal identification, set up a bank account, sign up for benefits, get more secure accommodation or learn basic life skills, such as waking up on time, behaving appropriately at work or using acceptable language. Some young adults also failed

to reconnect with the CIC after leaving police custody. The data does not allow us to quantify the contribution of these reasons to decisions to not refer.

Table 5.1: Referrals to partner organisations across custody suites, Q4 2016 to Q2 2019.

Custody suite	Number of individuals referred	Proportion of all referrals in suite %
Brixton (N=351)	160	46
Stoke Newington (N=227)	96	42
Croydon (N=123)	67	54
Lewisham (N=75)	40	53
Total (N=776)	363	47

Source: Custody suite management data.

Base: DIVERT participants in Brixton, Croydon, Lewisham and Stoke Newington (n=776).

Table 5.2 shows the volumes of referrals to the different types of referral organisations, as a proportion of all outward referrals (refer to Table 13.1 for categorisation of referral organisations in the dataset). The most popular referral organisations tended to be ones that provided certificates and work opportunities in construction and engineering (31% of referrals), provided employment and skills support (27% of referrals), or were linked with football clubs. Findings here mirror qualitative findings (see 5.1.6), where participants described established links with football clubs and considered opportunities in construction and engineering to be a key referral pathway.

Table 5.2: Referrals to partner organisations as a proportion of all outward referrals, by category, across custody suites, Q4 2016 to Q2 2019.

Category	Brixton	Croydon	Stoke Newington	Lewisham	Total
Construction and engineering	63 (39%)	12 (18%)	10 (10%)	27 (68%)	112 (31%)
Employment skills and support	44 (28%)	6 (9%)	38 (40%)	10 (25%)	98 (27%)
Football club	19 (12%)	49 (73%)	n<5	10 (25%)	†
General	22 (14%)	n<5	n<5	n<5	†
Drugs and alcohol	n<5	n<5	20 (21%)	n<5	†
Other ³⁷	34 (21%)	n<5	33 (34%)	18 (45%)	†
Base	160	67	96	40	363

Note that cells have been suppressed where low counts could have caused statistical disclosure. n<5 indicates that fewer than five DIVERT participants from the custody suite received this support. † indicates that the total has been suppressed to prevent statistical disclosure.

Source: Custody suite management data.

Referral pathways differed across the four custody suites, as described in Tables 13.2-13.5 in Appendix E. The use of a particular type of referral organisation could

³⁷ This category includes support such as: accommodation, arts, community improvement, health services, security, boxing clubs, criminal justice service, recruitment and college.

also vary widely across custody suites. Relationships between the CIC and their local referral partners, the young adult's needs, and the referral partner's funding influenced the use of specific referral organisations across custody suites (see 5.2.4.1). As such, the wide range of referral pathways described by qualitative participants does not reflect reality in all custody suites. The range of referrals appears broadest in Brixton, where DIVERT participants were referred to 15 different types of support organisations. This may be explained by the fact that the programme has been in place for longer here than in the three other custody suites, allowing for a longer period of relationship-building with partner organisations. In all, 12 types of organisations are recorded in Lewisham and 10 in Stoke Newington. In contrast, Croydon referred DIVERT participants to just three types of organisations (football club, construction and engineering, and employment skills).

4.4.3. Estimated impact of DIVERT on re-arrest

The primary analysis estimated the impact of DIVERT on the likelihood of re-arrest for any offence, six months and 12 months after programme participants' initial contact with their CIC. This analysis focuses on those who had an IAG meeting, regardless of whether they subsequently received support from DIVERT (intention to treat).

The number of cases in newer suites was relatively low. Tower Hamlets and Brixton were more established relative to the other four custody suites, and so the primary analysis focuses on these two suites. The impact on different offence types and the number of offences was also estimated as a secondary analysis. The variation in effects across suites was also explored, though this is at risk of confounding with the impact of CICs. Regression tables of exploratory analysis including all six custody suites are provided in Appendix F.

The impact estimate was obtained by contrasting the proportion of programme participants who had been re-arrested to the proportion of people re-arrested in the matched control group in Brixton and Tower Hamlets. These were estimated using a doubly robust logistic regression model, including covariates for all the characteristics used to estimate the propensity scores, as well as an interaction term for custody suite (further information on the primary analysis approach can be found in Chapter 4). The re-arrests for the matched control group represented the

estimated proportion of re-arrests that would have been experienced among participants, had they not been supported by DIVERT.

The results of the primary analysis are illustrated in Table 5.3. Within six months, 42% of programme participants had been re-arrested, compared to 33% in the matched control group. These results are statistically significant (OR 1.52 [95% CI 1.05; 2.21]).

Table 5.3: Primary analysis impact estimates, Q1 2017 to Q2 2019.

Re-arrest	Sample size	Matched control proportion [95% confidence interval]	Intervention group proportion [95% confidence interval]	Impact estimate (odds ratio) [95% confidence interval]
Six months	572	33 [27; 38]	42 [36; 48]	1.52 [1.05; 2.21]
12 months	450 ³⁸	52 [46; 59]	56 [50; 63]	1.19 [0.80; 1.78]

Base: Matched sample for Brixton and Tower Hamlets.

After 12 months, 56% of programme participants had been re-arrested, compared with 52% of the matched control group. Although the odds of being re-arrested among DIVERT participants were 1.19 times those of the matched control group, this odds ratio is not statistically significant.

Sensitivity analysis using just the PSM estimate (rather than the doubly robust approach) produces consistent results (OR 1.51 [95% CI 1.07; 2.12] at six months, OR 1.17 [95% CI 0.81; 1.70] at 12 months).

³⁸ Note that the sample size for re-arrest at 12 months is smaller than that at six months. This is because at the time of analysis, not all DIVERT participants in the evaluation had their initial contact with DIVERT at least 12 months earlier. These cases are therefore excluded from the re-arrest at 12 months analysis to ensure consistent outcome measurement.

The results could be interpreted in several ways. It is possible that DIVERT was no more effective than 'business as usual' at reducing re-arrests. Another plausible explanation is that the intervention may be effective over a longer follow-up period than 12 months, but this cannot be tested with the available data. The logic model (see 3.2) indicated that DIVERT first attempts to change interim outcomes, such as understanding the consequences of crime, taking up support and education opportunities, and finding employment. Until these interim outcomes are achieved, it may not be possible to build up the structure in their day-to-day lives and resilience to move away from offending.

The model also cannot indicate if the severity of re-arrests has changed. While it may be that DIVERT helps individuals reduce the severity of the offences they commit in the short term, leading to lower arrests overall in the long term, the analysis did not explore this possibility.

Methodological limitations should also be considered in interpreting the impact estimates. The PSM model included characteristics that were associated with selection into the intervention, including the number of previous arrests and the severity of previous offences (a full list of variables and their definitions can be found in Table 12.1). However, there may be unobserved characteristics that make an individual more likely to be recruited into DIVERT. An example from the qualitative evidence is that individuals recruited to DIVERT may have already been known to police. If these individuals were higher-risk relative to the control group on unobserved characteristics, this could bias the impact estimates.

In addition, while covariate imbalance was reduced by implementing matching, there were some outstanding imbalances between the two groups. This includes a higher rate of 'moderately serious' prior offending in the intervention group relative to the matched control group (3.4 percentage points, or an effect size of 0.12). This may mean that the intervention group were more likely to be re-arrested than the matched control group, which could bias the estimates.

The findings were also based on a subsample of programme participants. Custody records for 292 of the 1,034 (28%) DIVERT participants could not be linked to the DIVERT case management data. Consequently, the findings may not be generalisable to all programme participants.

4.4.4. Estimated frequency of re-arrest

The impact of DIVERT on the number of re-arrests in Brixton and Tower Hamlets was investigated using three outcome categories: no re-arrests, one re-arrest, and two or more re-arrests. The findings, displayed in Table 5.4, are consistent with those of the primary analysis. The number of re-arrests six months after the initial CIC contact was significantly higher than those in the matched control group (χ^2 : 6.2, p-value 0.045). At 12 months, the proportion of those offending was similar for the intervention group and the matched control group.

Table 5.4: Number of re-arrests in Brixton and Tower Hamlets, Q1 2017 to Q2 2019.

Re-arrest	Sample size	Number of re-arrests	Matched control proportion	Intervention group proportion	Pearson χ^2 (p-value)
Six months	572	None	67	58	6.2 (0.045)
		One	22	26	
		Two or more	11	16	
12 months	450	None	48	44	1.5 (0.469)
		One	28	27	
		Two or more	25	30	

Base: Matched sample for Brixton and Tower Hamlets.

4.4.5. Re-arrest offence type

DIVERT may be more effective at reducing the likelihood of committing some offences over others. Therefore, analysis was also conducted to estimate the impact of DIVERT on re-arrest for drug-, violence- and weapon-related offences. These offences were selected because they were the most prevalent offence types among programme participants. Table 5.5 presents the results.

Table 5.5: Estimated impact of DIVERT on re-arrests for specific offences (Brixton and Tower Hamlets only), Q1 2017 to Q2 2019.

Re-arrest type	Follow-up period	Sample size	Matched control proportion [95% confidence interval]	Intervention group proportion [95% confidence interval]	Impact estimate (odds ratio) [95% confidence interval]
Drugs	Six months	572	12 [9; 14]	17 [14; 21]	1.90 [1.18; 3.06]
	12 months	450	13 [9; 16]	18 [13; 22]	1.72 [1.04; 2.86]
Violence	Six months	572	9 [6; 11]	14 [11; 17]	2.05 [1.26; 3.33]
	12 months	450	17 [13; 21]	21 [16; 25]	1.33 [0.84; 2.09]
Weapons	Six months	572	5 [4; 7]	6 [4; 8]	0.99 [0.51; 1.91]
	12 months	450	7 [4; 9]	6 [4; 9]	1.15 [0.53; 2.49]

Base: Matched sample for Brixton and Tower Hamlets.

The results for drug- and violence-related offences are consistent with the primary analysis. They indicate that six months after the initial CIC contact, re-arrests for these offences were more likely for DIVERT participants relative to the matched

control group. However, 12 months after the initial contact, there are no differences between these two groups.

At both six months and 12 months, there are no significant differences in the proportion of individuals being re-arrested for weapon offences between the intervention and matched control group. These findings may indicate that DIVERT is more effective for some weapons offences relative to drug and violence offences.

4.4.6. Variation in re-arrests across custody suites

This analysis attempts to understand the variation in re-arrests across custody suites (and CICs). The impact of DIVERT on re-arrest may vary across custody. For example, more established suites, such as Brixton, may be better equipped to support individuals because of the greater variety of services on offer. The implementation of DIVERT may also vary across custody suites. For example, CICs may attempt to recruit harder-to-reach individuals more often in some custody suites than in others. It is therefore not possible to distinguish between the impact of custody suites and the impact of CICs in this analysis, so findings should be interpreted with caution.

To estimate the impact of the intervention across custody suites, two analyses were performed. The first analysis used a multi-level logistic regression to assess whether the impact of DIVERT varied across suites (the random coefficient model). The second analysis used a single level logistic regression, with interaction terms between custody suites and an indicator that the individual participated in DIVERT (the interaction model).

The random coefficient model suggested that the impact of the intervention varied only a little between custody suites, both six and 12 months after the initial conversation. The overall level of variance in the coefficients was relatively small at both six months (0.1) and 12 months (0.2). This may indicate that DIVERT participants within specific custody suites may be less likely to be re-arrested relative to DIVERT participants in other custody suites. However, these results should be interpreted cautiously, given the likelihood of bias in the variance estimates. The full regression tables are provided in Appendix F.

The interaction model indicated that the impact of DIVERT on re-arrests after six months did not vary by custody suite. However, there was some variation in re-arrests after 12 months across custody suites. Re-arrests were lower among DIVERT participants relative to the matched control group in Brixton (OR 0.37 [95% CI 0.15; 0.99]). This would indicate that intervention participants in Brixton were approximately one-fifth less likely to be re-arrested within 12 months relative to control. DIVERT has been operating in Brixton longest out of the six custody suites. This may indicate that the intervention takes some time to ‘bed in’ after setting up in a new custody suite. This could include, for example, the greater variety of support that was available in more established suites, relative to newer suites. It could also reflect the greater experience of CICs in identifying and providing appropriate support for these individuals. Full regression tables are provided in Appendix F.

4.5. Sustainability and cost

This section presents a cost of running DIVERT per participant, an estimate of the cost-benefit ratio and the net present value of the intervention. Note that this does not include monetised costs for the increase in crime associated with the intervention, six months after the initial CIC contact.

As discussed in section 4.6, costs are presented as a three-year average. This is because interventions tend to have higher costs during setup or expansion, relative to typical running costs of established interventions. The full cost breakdown by category is presented in Table 5.6.

Table 5.6: Costs of the DIVERT intervention.

Cost type	Average cost per year (over three years)
One-off implementation costs	£850
Staff time costs	£385,000
Marginal financial costs	£16,000

Cost type	Average cost per year (over three years)
Any other variable costs	£0
Total	£401,850

Based on the number of individuals accepted into the DIVERT cohort (n=698),³⁹ the estimated cost per participant is £576.

In 2018, DIVERT was already operating in three custody suites, expanding to three more custody suites in the course of the year. Overall, the intervention incurred relatively low one-off costs associated with expansion, with costs primarily for the development of materials. These costs might be higher if DIVERT were rolled out in a completely new area, though they would still likely form only a small proportion of the intervention's associated costs.

The intervention's biggest financial outlay was for staff costs. DIVERT pays for the intervention lead from the police force (one police inspector), supported by two programme managers and six CICs.

As DIVERT is based within custody suites, there were relatively few associated marginal costs. Rent and utility costs are covered by normal police activity. Marginal costs were predominately driven by the cost of IT equipment.

³⁹ Number of cases from the 12-month period from 2 October 2018 to 1 October 2019.

5. Discussion

This section explores the implications and key learning arising from the evaluation, to inform the ongoing delivery of DIVERT across London. The findings also provide an evidence base to draw on when considering expanding DIVERT or setting up an approach like DIVERT in other locations.

5.1. Key implications from the process evaluation

5.1.1. Key facilitators to impact

Participant groups identified a number of factors supporting the setup, delivery and impact that DIVERT was perceived to have achieved. These included the following.

- **Selecting the right staff and partners:** Given DIVERT's current funding and resource constraints, its success is dependent on committed individuals and a solution-focused attitude. Both strategic and referral partners were carefully selected for being able to deliver opportunities as promised and for having empathy with the young adults referred to them. The key role that CICs played in programme engagement was reflected in young adults' accounts. Participants welcomed their non-judgemental, calm and positive approach, as well as having a consistent and reliable source of guidance and support.
- **Delivering DIVERT at a 'teachable moment':** The context of delivery within custody suites provided a teachable moment for CICs to intervene, at a time when young adults may be most receptive to making changes in their life and in their offending behaviour.
- **Collaborative partnership working:** The collaborative working style of CICs and intervention leads with custody staff and officers, strategic partners and referral partners was identified as key to successful delivery. For example, the offices of referral organisations were used to provide a safe space to meet young adults, and custody staff and officers gave support by making referrals when CICs were not available. The CICs also worked closely to offer advice and support to one another, including sharing contact details of relevant referral partners.
- **Relationship building and information sharing with custody staff and officers:** Building positive relationships with custody staff and officers and

providing feedback about successful programme delivery helped CICs to increase buy-in and support for DIVERT. Variations in support or engagement with DIVERT were also affected by the length of time that the programme had run in each custody suite, as staff became more familiar with the intervention over time. There appeared to be increased buy-in among staff in Brixton, where DIVERT had been established for the longest time. Publicity campaigns and social media continued to increase awareness of DIVERT among staff in police custody.

- **Responsive and non-prescriptive approach to delivery:** CICs partly use their own judgement and 'gut instinct' when selecting the most appropriate individuals to approach about DIVERT. Once individuals had engaged with the programme, CICs were able to offer bespoke support opportunities that were responsive to young adults' interests and needs. For example, CICs helped young adults obtain personal identification as needed and found safe, local ETE opportunities for young adults who were members of 'postcode gangs'. The flexible and adaptable nature of DIVERT meant that support could be delivered quickly. However, its responsiveness also poses potential challenges to the consistency of implementation within and across custody suites.

5.1.2. Key barriers and challenges

Staff also reflected on the challenges to delivery. Key barriers included the following.

- **Low awareness of, and engagement with, DIVERT among police and custody staff and officers:** The nature and extent of information shared by DIVERT leadership and CICs could vary across custody suites and staff roles. Not sharing information and success stories consistently meant that some custody staff were not aware of, or engaged with, DIVERT's aims and potential benefits. They could then be sceptical about the programme as a result. A lack of awareness or engagement meant that custody staff and officers may not have referred young adults when CICs were not present in custody, which meant that some eligible young adults were 'missed'.
- **Police vetting of CICs:** The CIC's level of police vetting determined their access to data and information on potential participants. Vetting for unrestricted access into police buildings, and in some cases for use of police systems (for example,

PNC access), could take over six months. CICs required an escort while waiting for clearance, as they were unable to move freely across the custody suite. A lack of vetting could influence effective delivery of the intervention, and could affect the time and capacity of CICs, as well as custody staff and officers. This is particularly the case where CICs had to rely on custody staff and officers to gain access to the information they needed.

- **Provision of formal systems and facilities to manage caseloads:** Funding constraints meant that CICs did not have dedicated mobile phones or laptops, and relied on Excel spreadsheets or paper files to manage and update their caseloads (which also had potential implications for data security). However, at the time of writing, the leadership team are developing an online system to allow for a systematic case log and easier information sharing across cases.
- **CIC recruitment:** Strategic partners and the DIVERT leadership team described the difficulty in finding the 'right' CIC who was able to meet the necessary requirements of a complex role. These requirements included being able to:
 - engage and build relationships
 - effectively manage a caseload
 - provide non-judgemental support
 - be committed, resilient, patient and confident, with a can-do attitude

5.2. Impact

The impact of DIVERT on re-arrests within six and 12 months of the first CIC interview were estimated using PSM. The matching approach used data from three sources: DIVERT case management data, custody records and risk management data. The analysis is conducted on an intention-to-treat basis, meaning that all those identified are included in the analysis, even if they only attended an IAG meeting. The current method of recording the interventions received by a young adult prevents an analysis of the average treatment effect on those treated.

The PSM approach reduced selection bias on observed characteristics, with only minor imbalances detected on some of the variables in the propensity score model. These imbalances mean that the effect estimates may still suffer from selection bias. For example, a higher proportion of programme participants had previously

committed offences of 'moderate severity', relative to the matched control group. Furthermore, the propensity score model cannot account for the variation between CICs in identification of individuals for the programme. Consequently, the effect estimates may suffer from some bias.

Overall, the impact estimates indicated that DIVERT participants were more likely than the control group to be re-arrested after six months (statistically significant), though there were no statistically significant differences in arrests after 12 months. This could be interpreted in several ways. While it could indicate that DIVERT was ineffective, there are several alternative explanations. One is that the model did not fully eliminate selection bias. For example, the qualitative evidence indicates that individuals known to police may have been more likely to be recruited to DIVERT. These individuals could be more likely to offend relative to other people in custody, but this cannot be accounted for in the PSM. In addition, the analysis cannot distinguish if the severity of offending has reduced, which could otherwise be indicative of a positive direction of travel.

The analysis uses re-arrest data as opposed to convictions because conviction data from the PNC could not be accessed within the evaluation timetable. The analysis also only draws on arrest data from the MPS, meaning that arrests by other forces, or by the British Transport Police, were not included in the analysis.

There was some evidence to suggest that the impact of DIVERT varied by custody suite. In Brixton, programme participants were less likely to be re-arrested after 12 months, relative to the matched control group in Brixton (statistically significant). Relative success in Brixton may reflect the qualitative evidence that a greater range of support was available in the more established custody suites, or could also reflect the greater level of experience of CICs, which may make it easier to identify appropriate support for programme participants. There was no statistically significant difference between treatment and matched groups in the remaining custody suites.

The impact estimates should be treated with caution. In addition to the methodological limitations outlined in this section, the estimates were also based on a subsample of all programme participants. This could bias the effect estimates, as there may be systematic differences between the cases included in the analysis and those that had to be excluded because they could not be linked to custody records.

Establishing systematic data collection practices across custody suites could facilitate more robust analysis in future.

The findings can also only be generalised to those approached for DIVERT by May 2019, as the analysis sample only includes individuals approached up to this date. This means that the newer suites (Croydon, Stoke Newington, Lewisham and Wood Green) had only been open for eight months. The impact of DIVERT in these sites may differ once they have been running for a longer period, as the intervention ‘beds in’ and CICs become more experienced and their networks become more established.

5.3. Costs

DIVERT costs £401,850 a year to run within the six custody suites, equating to approximately £576 per participant.

5.4. Limitations of the data

As with all research, the evaluation methodology had limitations. As outlined in Chapter 4, a range of staff interviews were achieved across roles and all six custody locations (n=22). These interviews captured both positive and negative experiences of setting up and/or delivering DIVERT. Limitations included the number of qualitative encounters, which could have been expanded to include inspectors, sergeants and DDOs in each custody location. There were also challenges in the recruitment of young adults and ensuring diverse characteristics of those who took part. As such, young adults’ perspectives presented here may not be representative of all those involved in DIVERT. These issues are explained in greater depth in section 4.3.1.4.

6. Conclusions

DIVERT targets those aged 18-25 who are detained in police custody and not currently in ETE. Using police custody as a teachable moment, DIVERT aims to prevent young adults from reoffending or returning to police custody by redirecting them to support, education, training and/or employment. CICs provide ongoing support for young adults to build their self-confidence and ability to positively engage with society. CICs also attempt to develop young adults' resilience to help prevent them being drawn into crime and violence. This evaluation provides evidence on the mechanisms underpinning DIVERT, as well as its impact on re-arrest.

The qualitative evidence showed that staff and programme participants were positive about the potential for DIVERT to assist them in desisting from, or reducing, their offending behaviour. The key factor perceived to facilitate DIVERT's success was the ongoing mentoring role of the CICs, as well as their commitment and persistence in supporting each young adult. The bespoke and flexible approach taken in providing ETE opportunities and wider support for programme participants, either from referral partners or through one-to-one meetings with their CIC, was also thought to be important. Delivery was supported by the collaborative working style of CICs and intervention leads, as well as strong communication across staff and partners supporting programme delivery.

Challenges related to:

- awareness of, and support for, the intervention among custody staff and officers
- variations in levels of police vetting for CICs
- lack of certainty about future funding for DIVERT

Some participants emphasised the importance of ensuring sustained resources (staff and infrastructure) to support delivery and confidence to strategic partners.

The qualitative data also described how young adults had to change their attitudes and behaviours, which could take a significant amount of time. CICs and the leadership team acknowledged that many vulnerable young adults came from more challenging backgrounds. They also recognised that these individuals needed to learn basic life skills (such as time management and use of respectful or acceptable language) before they would be ready to begin training or employment. Some young

adults could take up to 18 months to progress to the point where they were ready and able to find employment.

Despite positive findings from the qualitative process evaluation, the impact estimates suggested that DIVERT participants were more likely than those in the control group to be re-arrested after six months (statistically significant), though no statistically significant difference was found at 12 months. These results were subject to methodological limitations and are only generalisable to DIVERT participants approached by May 2019 (as those approached after this date were not included in the analysis). Nevertheless, the results may reflect the time it takes to change offending behaviour. Interim outcomes, such as awareness of the consequences of crime, changing behaviour, and taking up ETE opportunities and wider support, may need to be achieved before longer-term impacts are possible. Data from the qualitative process evaluation supported this interpretation, with staff and young adults reporting impacts of this nature.

DIVERT was also felt to have achieved a number of other shorter- and medium-term impacts (see logic model, 3.2). Young adults and staff described positive impacts on young adults' psychosocial wellbeing, including improved confidence and self-esteem, as well as increased access to ETE opportunities through the referral networks developed under DIVERT. DIVERT leadership, CICs, custody staff and officers felt that DIVERT had changed custody staff and officers' perceptions of young adults, and they reported more positive attitudes about the ability of young adults to stop or change their offending behaviour. DIVERT's more supportive approach was also felt by some custody staff to have fostered a positive shift in attitudes towards the police in local communities.

There was some evidence to suggest that DIVERT may have been effective at reducing re-arrests after 12 months within Brixton's custody suite. The qualitative evidence indicates that established custody suites had a greater variety of support available because of the wider range of partnerships that these suites had established over time. Brixton's custody suite has been delivering DIVERT since 2016, and has had the most time to fully implement the intervention and adapt to the context of the local area. Tower Hamlets opened in 2017, with the remaining four suites (Croydon, Stoke Newington, Lewisham and Wood Green) opening in October 2018. Quantitative analysis in the report draws on the first eight months of suites

being in operation in these newer sites, and their effectiveness may change as implementation 'beds in' and CICs become more experienced.

Qualitative data from the Brixton custody suite supported these quantitative findings, suggesting that staff and officers in Brixton custody were largely engaged with – and supportive of – DIVERT, partly due to the length of time that it had to embed into the culture of the suite. The CICs have also been able to develop positive relationships and connections with custody staff and officers at that location. Referral partner networks (for example, with Bounce Back) were also well established.

Staff participants also described that the 'right' measure of success would differ for each individual taking part in DIVERT. For example, reducing the frequency of reoffending or the severity of the offence should also be considered a successful change in offending behaviour.

6.1. Key considerations for DIVERT delivery and wider rollout

Considerations for the future delivery of DIVERT have been developed by the research team in response to the key facilitators, challenges and barriers identified by staff in the setup and delivery of the intervention. Specific key learning is discussed below.

- **Adequate and sustainable funding** was a clear pre-requisite for DIVERT if it was to be scaled up or rolled out in other locations. The current funding model does not cover the full costs of the basic intervention, including staffing on-costs, office space and basic equipment, so long-term delivery at pilot sites is dependent on continued support from strategic and referral partners to provide these resources. A scaled-up and rolled-out programme cannot assume that this support will be available or sustained.
- **Building a core knowledge base** would also be a key component to any rollout. At present, DIVERT is reliant on the knowledge of individual team members and locally developed relationships. It will be important to document and formalise a core knowledge base on training, governance, information sharing and delivery processes that support intervention development and replication outside of the current custody suite locations.

- **Centralised information systems that support caseload management, including onward referrals to partners**, were needed to ensure the development of a consistent high-quality service that can track outcomes for young adults. The leadership team were developing this resource at the time of writing.
- **Developing standardised recruitment materials** for CICs will support strategic partners and custody suites in identifying candidates with the potential to succeed in the role.
- **Building a structured professional development pathway for CICs**, including performance reviews, training and the potential to progress, will be important in sustaining an effective intervention that can retain staff.
- **Better management of CIC workload and availability** was also an important area for improvement, with potential solutions including more training for, and engagement with, custody staff and officers, as well as a higher staffing ratio of CICs to programme participants. A further solution, fed back by NatGen to DIVERT leadership, could be the creation of a new engagement officer role to develop and manage referral partner relationships in the community on behalf of the CICs. This could help to reduce the CIC's workload and allow them more time to focus on their caseload.
- **Improved targeting of the DIVERT intervention, based on evidence of effectiveness** for particular groups. Setting clear and shared criteria for referrals would improve the intervention's impact and cost effectiveness. The capability to do this is dependent on developing centralised information systems that support effective caseload management and monitoring of outcomes.
- **Establishing sustainable partnerships with larger commercial organisations**: Currently DIVERT relies on funded provision from charitable organisations or local businesses, but larger commercial organisations could potentially provide more stable and consistent opportunities to refer participants into. These organisations would need to embrace the values of DIVERT, particularly in terms of delivering on their promises and demonstrating empathy with the difficulties that young adults might be facing.

- **Making some funding from DIVERT available to CICs to support referrals into training and education opportunities that are not currently funded by partner organisations:** This would also open up a wider range of referral pathways and better targeting of DIVERT. For example, if a young adult would like to pursue a career that requires completing a training course that is not yet offered as funded provision by referral partners (such as personal training qualifications).
- **Incremental growth and period of network building:** It is important that referral pathways are established and that relationships with custody staff and officers have been built before expanding to new custody suite locations. Advanced planning that allows time for new employees to gain police vetting is essential, and will help to ensure that DIVERT's core values of deliverability for young adults and collaborative partnership working are replicated in new sites.
- **Learning from established custody suites:** Partnering new custody suites with established locations would allow trainee CICs to shadow more experienced colleagues. Collaboration and mentoring of this sort would support transfer of learning to the new sites, improving the replication of the intervention, as well as ensuring that the new CICs will have had some frontline experience in police custody.
- **Developing the leadership team:** The model of regular and open communication between CICs and DIVERT leadership has been critical for success at the current custody suite locations. As new sites are set up, this model could be difficult to sustain. Developing a middle management layer to manage day-to-day queries of CICs or operational issues would help ensure that the current leadership team will have time to think strategically about DIVERT.

6.1.1. Core values

DIVERT has been formed and delivered in line with a set of core values (below) that are seen as central to the programme's ethos and success. Development and rollout of DIVERT will need to take account of how to build in, and on, these values. In practical terms, it is essential for the DIVERT team to continue to recruit and partner with staff and organisations who embody the values of the intervention.

- **Deliverability:** All DIVERT staff are expected to deliver on promises made to young adults, to keep them engaged in the programme and support them to change. For example, CICs must try to deliver on action plans agreed with young adults, and referral partners must carry out agreements made with CICs, such as interviewing a young adult or starting them on a course.
- **Commitment:** It is essential to employ, and partner with, individuals and organisations who are committed to the success of the intervention, and who are both positive and solution-focused.
- **Collaboration:** The intervention is supported by effective partnership working, collaboration and sharing of resources between all staff groups involved in DIVERT, including custody staff and officers. For the intervention to succeed, it is important that these groups communicate regularly, and share advice and learning.

6.2. Future evaluation

Further research is needed to provide stronger evidence about the causal impact of DIVERT. Reoffending and convictions data could be sought from the PNC, and outcomes could be explored over a longer time period. Future impact evaluation work implementing PSM could consider sourcing data from other custody suites. However, it will be important that issues around the collection of management information are resolved, as the quality of this information varied across custody suites, as did approaches to data entry. Evaluators could also explore other outcomes, such as employment and accommodation, as both are protective factors against reoffending. Finally, evaluators could consider the feasibility and ethics of conducting a randomised controlled trial.

DIVERT is now expanding outside of London, with new police forces setting up the programme. As new iterations of the programme develop, further opportunities to assess the intervention's effectiveness may present themselves.

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8. Appendix A – Qualitative fieldwork materials and data analysis

8.1. Topic guides

Tailored topic guides were used to ensure a consistent approach across all the interviews and between members of the research team. The guides were used flexibly to allow researchers to respond to the nature and content of each discussion so the topics covered and their order varied between interviews. Researchers used open, non-leading questions, and answers were fully probed to elicit greater depth and detail where necessary.

The main headings and subheadings from the topic guides used for interviews with staff and young adults (initial interviews and follow-up interviews) are provided below.

Staff topic guide

1. Introduction

- Introduce self and NatCen
- Introduce research, aims of study and interview
- Brief overview of topics to be covered in interview
- Length (about 60 minutes)
- Voluntary participation
- Confidentiality, anonymity and potential caveats
- Audio recording (including encryption, data storage and deletion)
- Questions
- Verbal consent audio recorded

2. Background

- Current position or professional role
- Involvement in DIVERT
- Nature and profile of local area

3. Early awareness and expectations

- Awareness and understanding of DIVERT
- Initial views on DIVERT
- Early expectations and hopes for DIVERT

4. Set-up and implementation

- Role in setup and implementation
- Funding and resources available for DIVERT
- Training and guidance received/delivered
- Governance – overview of DIVERT is managed
- Key facilitators/barriers to set-up

5. Delivery

- Identifying potential eligibility for DIVERT
- Facilitators and barriers to identification process
- Initial engagement with young adult
- Facilitators and barriers to engagement
- Ongoing engagement and support between young adult and CIC
- Receiving bespoke support
- Range of referral partners involves
- Infrastructure and operational issues

6. Outcomes and impacts

- Key outcomes DIVERT aims to achieve
- Perceived impact of DIVERT on staff
- Perceived impact of DIVERT on young adults
- Alternatives and added value

7. Recommendations

8. Next steps and close

Initial interviews with young adults – topic guide

1. Introduction

- Introduce self and NatCen
- Introduce research, aims of study and interview
- Brief overview of topics to be covered in interview
- Length (about 60 minutes)
- Voluntary participation
- Confidentiality, anonymity and potential caveats
- Audio recording (including encryption, data storage and deletion)
- Questions
- Verbal consent audio recorded

2. Background

- What they were doing before DIVERT
- Relationship with education or employment
- Support services they had access to at the time

3. Referral pathways and initial engagement

- How they were invited to participate (custody suite or elsewhere)
- Self-referral (if relevant)
- Information provided to DIVERT
- Understanding of reasons for being approached about DIVERT/reasons for self-referral
- Factors that informed decision to participate in DIVERT
- Understanding of next steps in involvement

4. Experience of delivery

- Engagement after initial meeting
- Ongoing engagement with CIC
- Views on engagement activities
- Ongoing engagement with other agencies

- Quality of interactions with those they engaged with (eg, what they liked and did not like)

5. Perceived impacts

- Impacts of DIVERT on the individual
- Which element(s) of the intervention were perceived to lead to these impacts
- External factors underpinning impact
- Wider impacts

6. Recommendations and reflections

7. Next steps and close

Follow-up interviews with young adults – topic guide

1. Introduction

- Introduce self and NatCen
- Introduce research, aims of study and interview
- Brief overview of topics to be covered in interview
- Length (about 60 minutes)
- Voluntary participation
- Confidentiality, anonymity and potential caveats
- Audio recording (including encryption, data storage and deletion)
- Questions
- Verbal consent audio recorded

2. Current activity

- Any changes in employment/training since last spoke and reflections on experiences
- Accessed any services or other support since last spoke (eg, mental health)
- How did this happen if so (eg, through DIVERT, CIC or another source)
- If no changes, reflect on their experiences

3. Views on current activities and progression

- Any challenges encountered following action plan agreed/created with CIC (If applicable)
- Facilitators to gaining employment, training or accessing services
- Describe views on activities engaged in
- View on range of referral pathways available via DIVERT
- Describe quality of interactions with those engaged with/have engaged with
- Comparison of DIVERT with any similar interventions

4. Ongoing engagement with DIVERT

- Ongoing engagement with CIC
- Reasons for loss of engagement (if applicable)
- Describe quality of interactions with CIC
- Understanding of next steps of involvement with DIVERT/any non-DIVERT related steps

5. Perceived impacts

- Impacts of DIVERT on the individual
- Which element(s) of the intervention were perceived to lead to these impacts
- External factors underpinning impact
- Wider impacts

6. Recommendations and reflections

7. Next steps and close

8.2. Qualitative data analysis

With participants' permission, the interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. Where permission was not given, notes were taken instead. Interview data was managed and analysed using the Framework approach developed by NatCen (Ritchie and others, 2013). This matrix-based analytic method facilitates rigorous and

transparent qualitative data management, with a thematic framework used to classify and organise data according to key themes, concepts and emergent categories.

9. Appendix B – Impact evaluation sample characteristics

Table 10.1: Characteristics of participants across the impact evaluation data flow: categorical.

		All DIVERT participants (1,034)		Cases linked with custody suite records (742)		Cases not linked with custody suite records (292)		Cases with sufficient follow-up period (541)	
Variable	Category	n/N	Count %	n/N	Count %	n/N	Count %	n/N	Count %
Gender	Male	911/972	94	653/701	93	258/271	95	472/505	93
	Female	61/972	6	48/701	7	13/271	5	33/505	7
	Missing	62		41		21		36	
Ethnicity	Asian	124/997	12	89/722	12	35/275	13	61/532	11
	Black	519/997	52	387/722	54	132/275	48	287/532	54
	White	239/997	24	159/722	22	80/275	29	115/532	22

		All DIVERT participants (1,034)		Cases linked with custody suite records (742)		Cases not linked with custody suite records (292)		Cases with sufficient follow-up period (541)	
	Mixed	95/997	10	71/722	10	24/275	9	57/532	11
	Other	20/997	2	16/722	2	4/275	1	12/532	2
	Missing	37		20		17		9	
Custody suite	Brixton	351/1,034	34	273/742	37	78/292	27	226/541	42
	Croydon	123/1,034	12	97/742	13	26/292	9	67/541	12
	Stoke Newington	227/1,034	22	132/742	18	95/292	33	78/541	14
	Lewisham	75/1,034	7	52/742	7	23/292	8	37/541	7

		All DIVERT participants (1,034)		Cases linked with custody suite records (742)		Cases not linked with custody suite records (292)		Cases with sufficient follow-up period (541)	
	Tower Hamlets	59/1,034	6	38/742	5	21/292	7	34/541	6
	Wood Green	199/1,034	19	150/742	20	49/292	17	99/541	18
	Missing	0		0		0		0	
Offence*	Drug	319/953	31	241/709	32	78/244	27	175/521	32
	Violence	152/953	16	116/709	16	36/244	15	89/521	17
	Weapons	151/953	16	104/709	15	47/244	19	83/521	16
	Summary non-motoring	110/953	12	81/709	11	29/244	12	62/521	12
	Theft	76/953	8	50/709	7	26/244	11	39/521	7

		All DIVERT participants (1,034)		Cases linked with custody suite records (742)		Cases not linked with custody suite records (292)		Cases with sufficient follow-up period (541)	
	Damage	63/953	7	53/709	7	10/244	4	34/521	7
	Robbery	47/953	5	36/709	5	11/244	5	26/521	5
	Burglary	44/953	5	31/709	4	13/244	5	24/521	5
	Miscellaneous	43/953	5	25/709	4	18/244	7	15/521	3
	Summary motoring	43/953	5	36/709	5	7/244	3	23/521	4
	Public order	38/953	4	27/709	4	11/244	5	20/521	4
	Fraud	29/953	3	24/709	3	5/244	2	20/521	4
	Sexual	<5/953	<1	<5/709	<1	5/244	1	<5/521	<1

		All DIVERT participants (1,034)		Cases linked with custody suite records (742)		Cases not linked with custody suite records (292)		Cases with sufficient follow-up period (541)	
	Other	46/953	5	33/709	5	13/244	5	22/521	4
	Missing	81		33		48		20	

* The percentages of offences do not add up to 100, as an individual may have committed several offences.

Table 10.2: Characteristics of participants across the impact evaluation data flow: continuous.

	All DIVERT participants (1,034)	Cases linked with custody suite records (742)	Cases not linked with custody suite records (292)	Cases with sufficient follow-up period (541)
n (missing)	882 (152)	669 (73)	213 (79)	523 (18)
Mean age (SD)	22 (3)	22 (2)	24 (4)	21 (2)

10. Appendix C – Covariate balance table for logistic propensity score model

Table 11.1: Covariate balance before and after matching.

Category	Variable	Unmatched sample				Matched sample			
		Treated	Control	Difference	Hedges' g	Treated	Control	Difference	Hedges' g
Gender (ref: male)	Female	6.4	10.6	-4.3	0.14	6.2	4.9	1.3	-0.06
Age	Age at arrest	21.4	22.0	-0.6	0.26	21.4	21.3	0.1	-0.06
	Squared age at arrest	465.0	491.2	-26.2	0.26	465.0	459.3	5.7	-0.06
Previous arrests	Previous arrests	0.6	0.5	1.1	-0.14	0.6	0.6	0.0	0.01
	Squared previous arrests	2.5	1.5	7.5	-0.13	2.1	2.1	0.0	0.00
	57-180	17.0	19.9	-2.8	0.07	17.1	15.1	2.1	-0.06

Category	Variable	Unmatched sample				Matched sample			
		Treated	Control	Difference	Hedges' g	Treated	Control	Difference	Hedges' g
Offence seriousness (ref: 0-56)	181-520	46.1	40.2	5.9	-0.12	46.3	49.9	-3.6	0.07
	521-800	11.0	6.0	5.0	-0.21	10.7	7.3	3.4	-0.12
	801-7,000	3.0	3.0	0.0	0.00	3.0	3.0	0.0	0.00
	7,001-10,000	1.1	1.5	-0.3	0.03	1.1	1.3	-0.2	0.02
Ethnicity (ref: North European White)	Asian Bangladeshi	9.0	11.5	-2.5	0.08	9.0	8.1	0.9	-0.03
	Any other Asian background	2.4	5.5	-3.1	0.14	2.4	3.0	-0.6	0.03
	Black Caribbean	18.0	11.2	6.8	-0.21	17.9	17.9	0.0	0.00

Category	Variable	Unmatched sample				Matched sample			
		Treated	Control	Difference	Hedges' g	Treated	Control	Difference	Hedges' g
	Any other Black background	19.5	14.6	4.9	-0.14	19.6	20.5	-0.9	0.02
	Mixed background	9.9	8.1	1.9	-0.07	10.0	11.9	-1.9	0.06
	White British or Irish	14.6	18.1	-3.5	0.09	14.5	13.2	1.3	-0.04
	Any other White background	6.4	11.1	-4.7	0.15	6.2	7.5	-1.3	0.05
	Ethnicity not stated	1.7	1.9	-0.2	0.02	1.7	1.7	0.0	0.00
	Other ethnicity	3.9	3.9	0.0	0.00	4.0	3.6	0.4	-0.02
	Employed	25.5	39.4	-14.0	0.29	25.4	26.6	-1.1	0.03

Category	Variable	Unmatched sample				Matched sample			
		Treated	Control	Difference	Hedges' g	Treated	Control	Difference	Hedges' g
Employment status (ref: unemployed)	Student	10.1	12.1	-2.0	0.06	10.2	11.5	-1.3	0.04
	Employment status unknown	4.9	5.7	-0.9	0.04	4.9	4.9	0.0	0.00
Nationality (ref: other)	UK national	88.8	78.5	10.2	-0.25	88.9	87.6	1.3	-0.04
	EU national	3.6	9.7	-6.2	0.21	3.4	3.8	-0.4	0.02
Characteristics imputed (ref: not imputed)	Characteristics imputed	2.1	3.2	-1.1	0.06	2.1	2.4	-0.4	0.03
Alcohol dependence (ref: not dependent)	Dependent on alcohol	0.9	1.2	-0.2	0.02	0.9	0.9	0.0	0.00

Category	Variable	Unmatched sample				Matched sample			
		Treated	Control	Difference	Hedges' g	Treated	Control	Difference	Hedges' g
Substance dependence (ref: not dependent)	Dependent on other substance	1.7	0.7	0.9	-0.11	1.7	1.5	0.2	-0.01
Drug dependence (ref: not dependent)	Dependent on drugs	9.0	6.8	2.2	-0.09	8.9	11.1	-2.3	0.08
Mental health problem (ref: no mental health problem)	Mental health problem	19.3	16.1	3.2	-0.09	19.4	21.3	-1.9	0.05

Category	Variable	Unmatched sample				Matched sample			
		Treated	Control	Difference	Hedges' g	Treated	Control	Difference	Hedges' g
Self-harm (ref: no recorded self-harm)	Self-harm recorded	13.3	10.9	2.4	-0.08	13.4	13.6	-0.2	0.01

Table 11.2: Covariate balance table for logistic propensity score model.

	Variable	Treated	Control	Difference	Hedges' g
Gender (ref: male)	Female	5.6	6.3	-0.7	0.24
Age	Age at arrest	21.6	21.5	-0.2	2.29
Previous arrests	Previous arrests	0.7	0.6	0.0	1.31
Most serious offence	Most serious offence	2.6	2.6	0.0	1.09
Ethnicity (ref: North European White)	Asian Bangladeshi	7.1	9.1	-2.0	0.29
	Any other Asian background	2.2	2.4	-0.2	0.15
	Black Caribbean	20.3	17.9	2.4	0.38
	Any other Black background	19.2	19.7	-0.6	0.40
	Mixed background	6.3	10.1	-3.7	0.30
	White British or Irish	14.5	14.3	0.2	0.35

	Variable	Treated	Control	Difference	Hedges' g
	Any other White background	9.3	6.1	3.2	0.24
	Other ethnicity	5.2	3.9	1.3	0.19
	Ethnicity not stated	2.2	1.7	0.6	0.13
Employments status (ref: unemployed)	Employed	27.7	25.1	2.6	0.43
	Student	8.9	10.4	-1.5	0.31
	Employment status unknown	3.4	5.0	-1.7	0.22
Nationality (ref: other)	UK national	88.6	89.0	-0.4	0.31
	EU national	3.7	3.4	0.4	0.18
Characteristics imputed (ref: not imputed)	Characteristics imputed	1.7	2.0	-0.4	0.14

	Variable	Treated	Control	Difference	Hedges' g
Alcohol dependence (ref: not dependent)	Dependent on alcohol	0.7	0.9	-0.2	0.10
Substance dependence (ref: not dependent)	Dependent on other substance	0.9	1.5	-0.6	0.12
Drug dependence (ref: not dependent)	Dependent on drugs	10.4	9.1	1.3	0.29
Mental health problem (ref: no mental health problem)	Mental health problem	23.1	19.4	3.7	0.40
Self-harm (ref: no recorded self-harm)	Self-harm recorded	15.3	13.4	1.9	0.34

11. Appendix D – Distribution of propensity scores

Table 12.1: Variables used in the propensity score model.

Variable	Variable type	Definition
Sex	Binary	Indicator of whether an individual is male or female.
Age at arrest	Continuous	Age of an individual at arrest, calculated from their date of birth and date of arrest.
Age at arrest squared	Continuous	Age at arrest squared to estimate quadratic effects. ⁴⁰
Number of previous arrests	Continuous	Number of arrests prior to the date of arrest.
Number of arrests squared	Continuous	Number of arrests squared to estimate quadratic effects.

⁴⁰ If the strength of a relationship changes as the value of a continuous variable increases, this can be described as quadratic relationship. For example, each additional year of experience may be associated with higher income, but there are diminishing returns for each additional year of experience.

Variable	Variable type	Definition
Most serious offence	Categorical	This score has been derived to summarise the severity of previous offences, which has then been banded into categories. At each arrest, the most serious offence was identified using the ONS crime severity scores methodology. ⁴¹ The score for the most serious offence was then summed across all arrests for the individual, and then categorised into six groups of equal size, based on the distribution of the cumulative score.
Self-assessed ethnicity	Categorical	<p>Ethnicity as reported by the individual. This consisted of ten categories, which have been recoded to avoid small cell counts (for ethnic groups with few cases):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ White British or Irish ▪ North European White ▪ Any other White ▪ Black Caribbean ▪ Other Black ▪ Mixed ▪ Bangladeshi

⁴¹ Information about the ONS Crime Severity Scores is available from ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/crimeseverityscoreexperimentalstatistics

Variable	Variable type	Definition
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any other Asian Background Any other ethnic group Not stated
Employment	Categorical	Employed, unemployed, a student or unknown.
Nationality	Categorical	UK, Other EU or Non-EU.
Need imputation	Binary	A binary indicator of whether any characteristics were missing and subsequently imputed.
Risks	Binary	<p>Five binary indicators recorded in custody if the custody suite were aware of risks associated with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> alcohol dependency drug dependency, prescribed or otherwise dependence on other substances (eg, solvents) mental health problems self-harm

Figure 12.1: Tower Hamlets 2017 Q1.

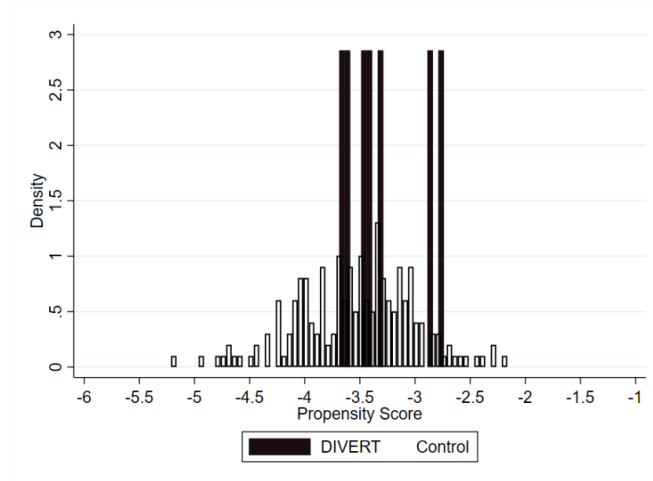


Figure 12.2: Tower Hamlets 2017 Q2.

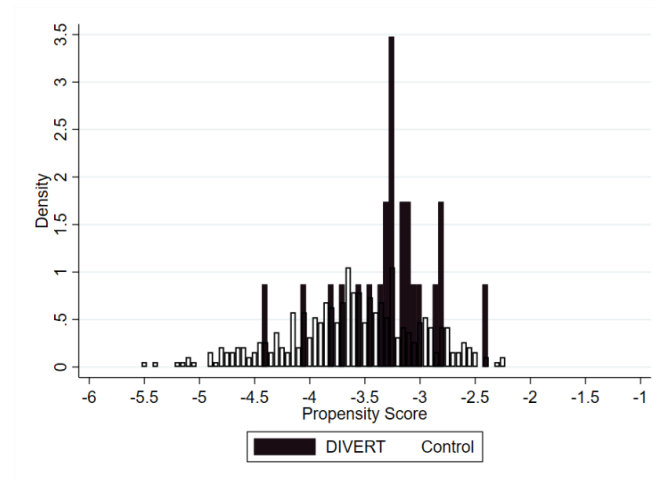


Figure 12.3: Tower Hamlets 2017 Q3.

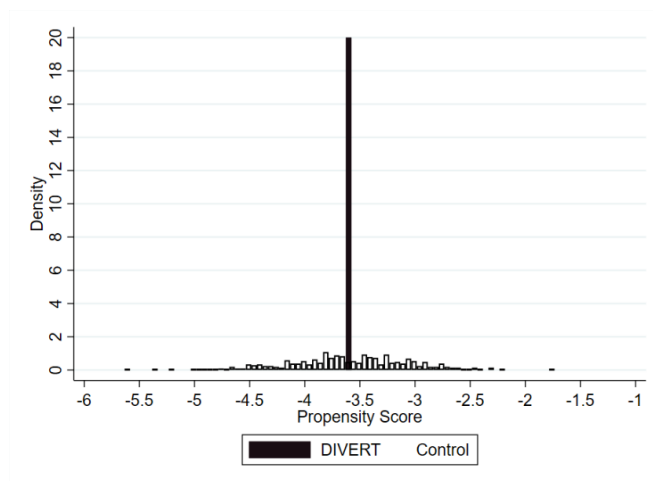


Figure 12.4: Tower Hamlets 2017 Q4.

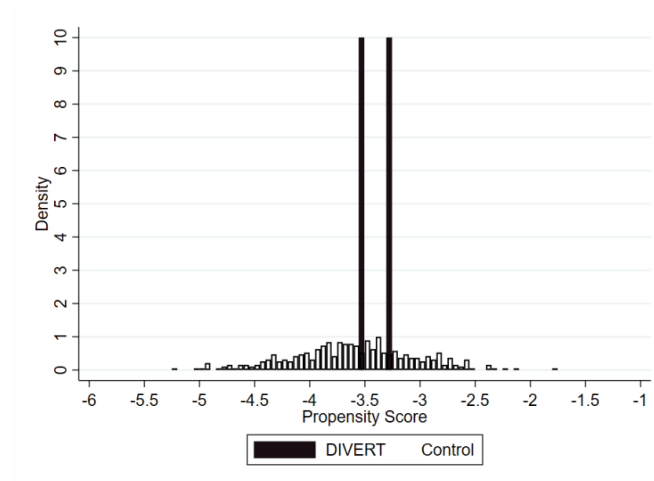


Figure 12.5: Tower Hamlets 2018 Q1.

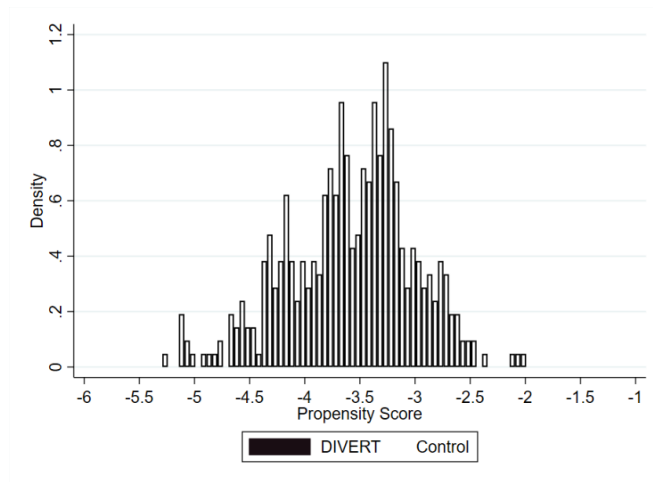


Figure 12.6: Tower Hamlets 2018 Q2.

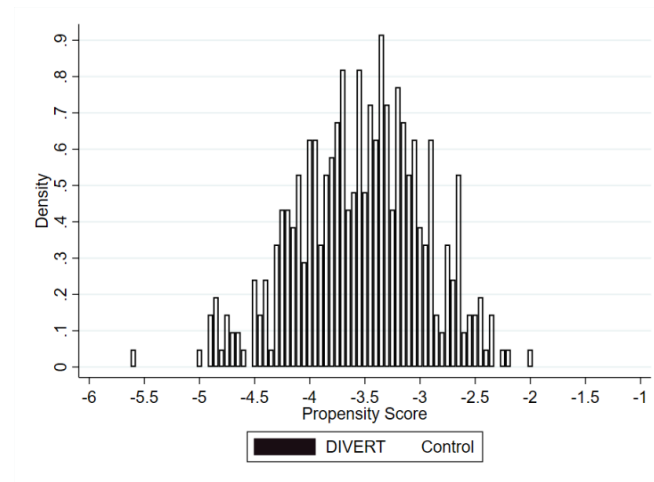


Figure 12.7: Tower Hamlets 2018 Q3.

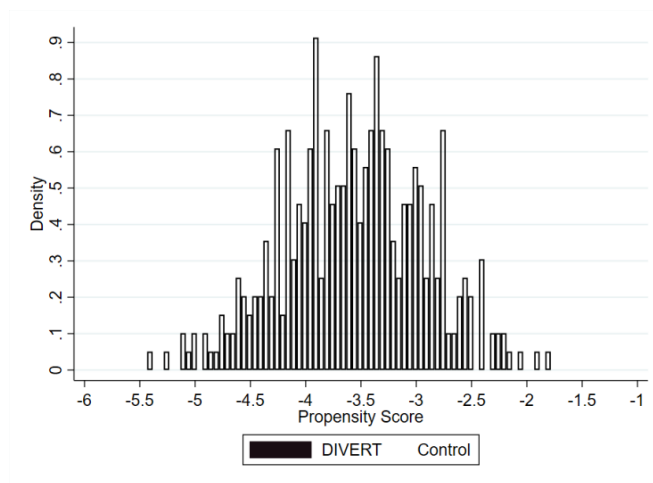


Figure 12.8: Tower Hamlets 2018 Q4.

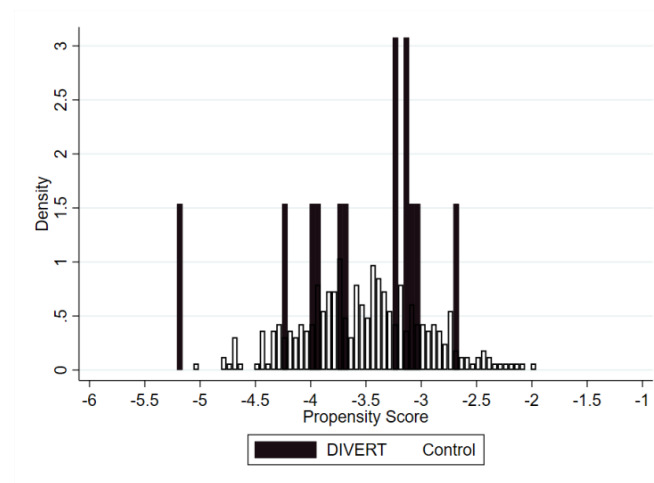


Figure 12.9: Tower Hamlets 2019 Q1.

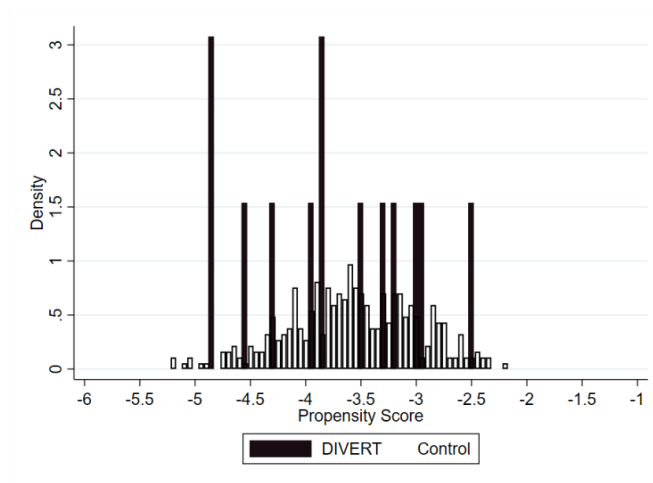


Figure 12.10: Tower Hamlets 2019 Q2.

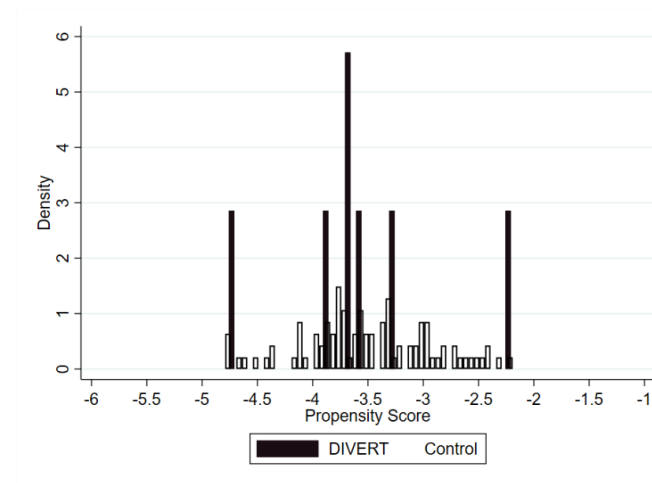


Figure 12.11: Brixton 2016 Q2.

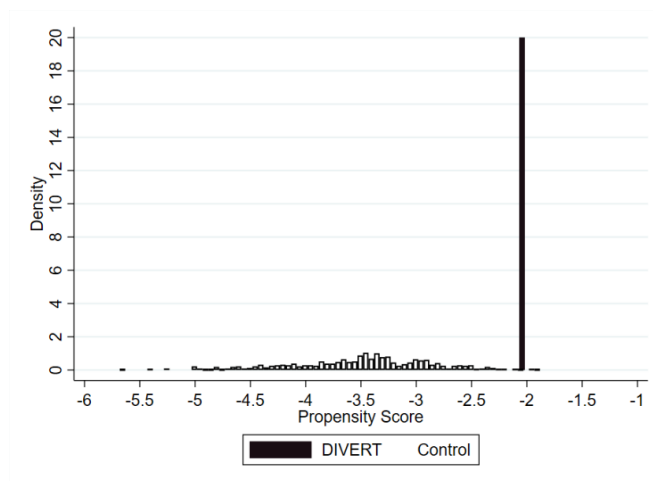


Figure 12.12: Brixton 2016 Q4.

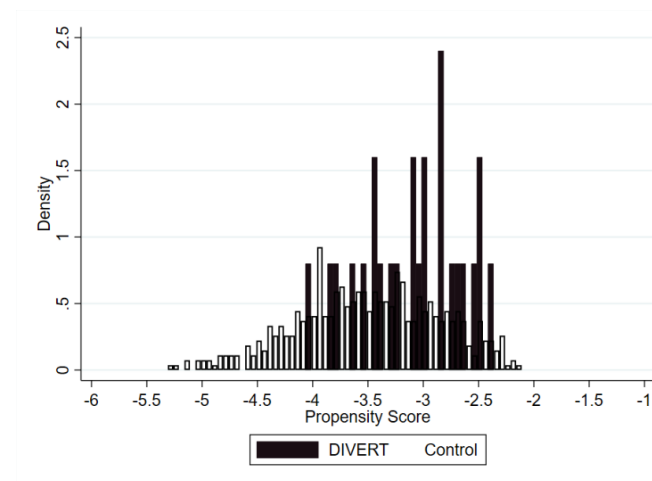


Figure 12.13: Brixton 2017 Q1.

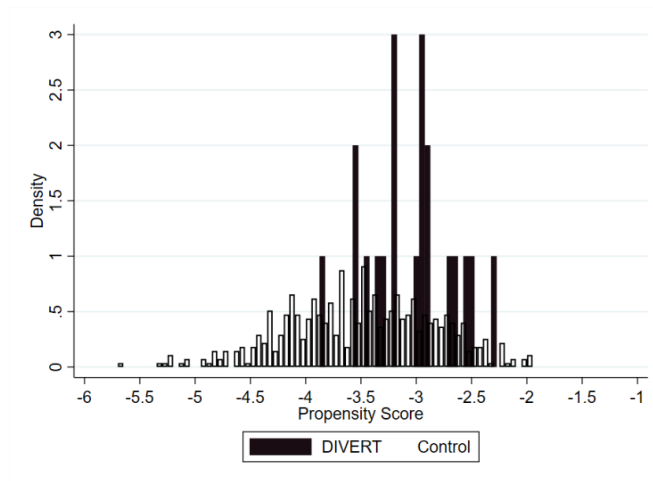


Figure 12.14: Brixton 2017 Q2.

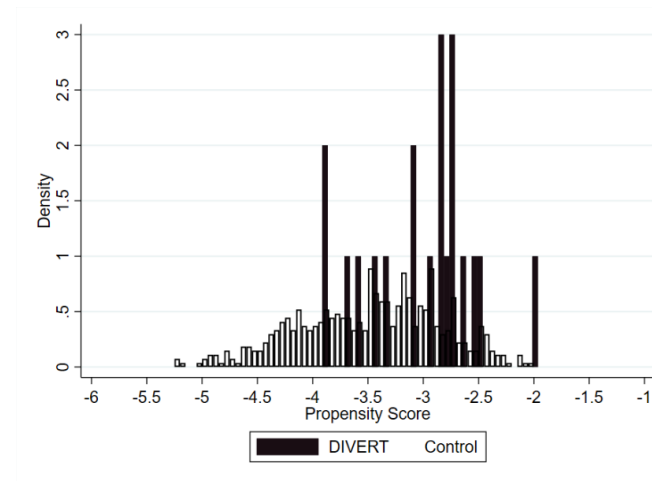


Figure 12.15: Brixton 2017 Q3.

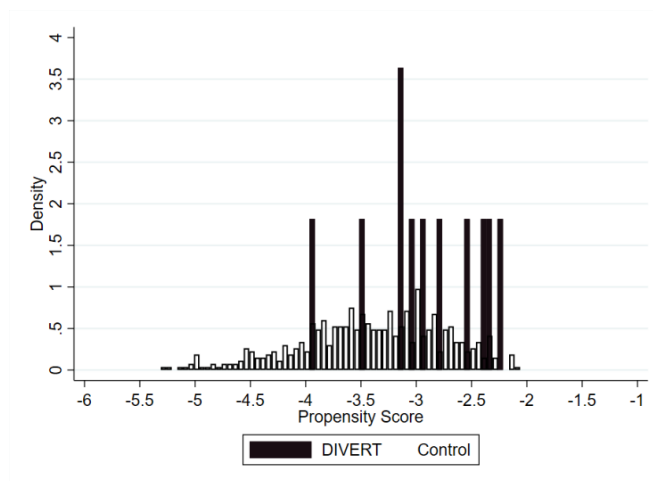


Figure 12.16: Brixton 2017 Q4.

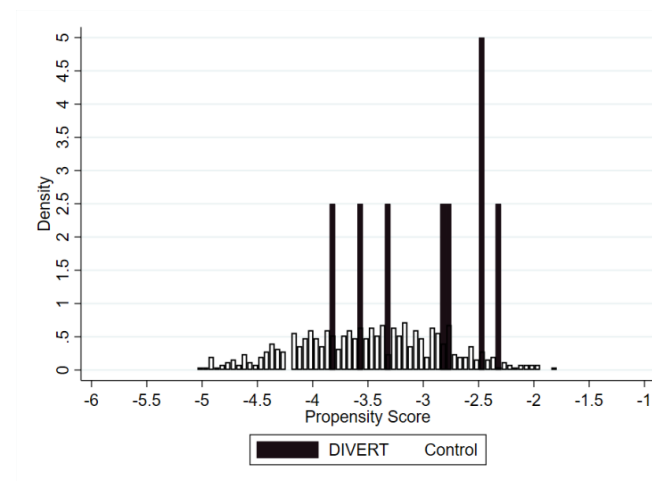


Figure 12.17: Brixton 2018 Q1.

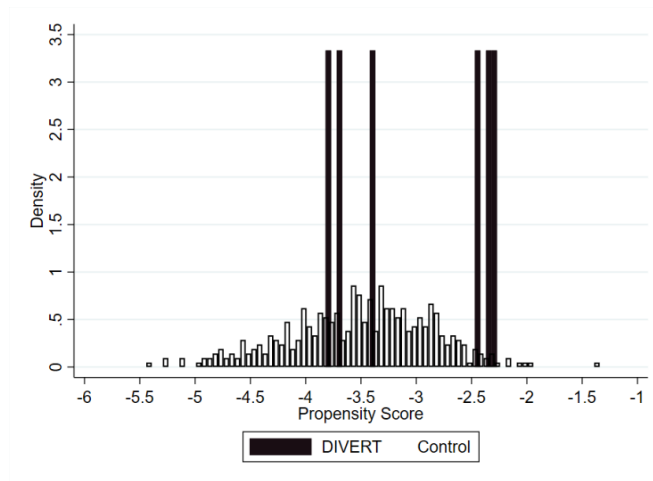


Figure 12.18: Brixton 2018 Q2.

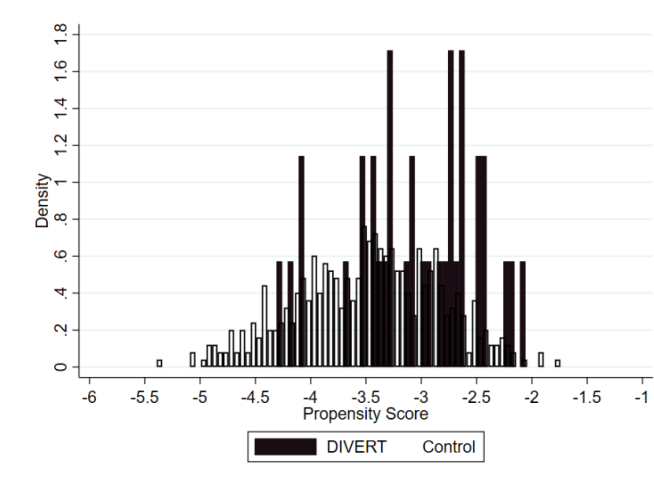


Figure 12.19: Brixton 2018 Q3.

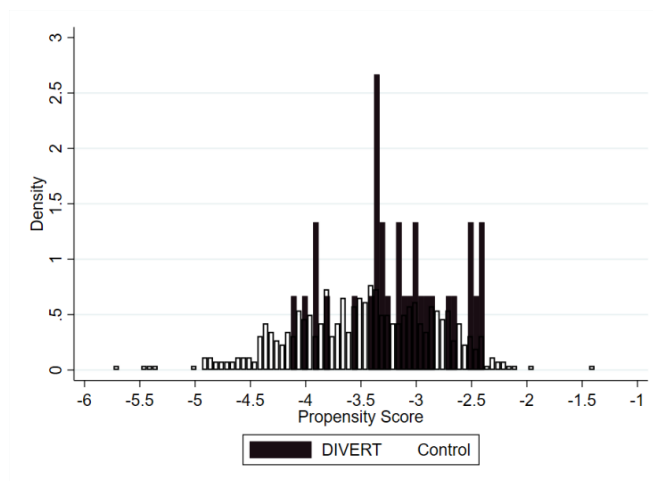


Figure 12.20: Brixton 2018 Q4.

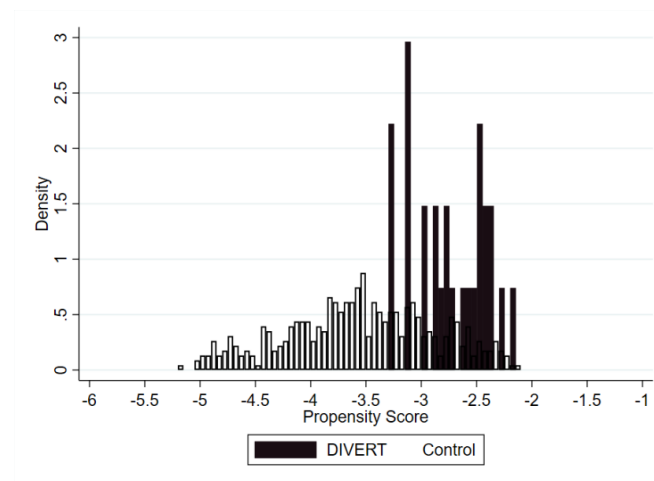


Figure 12.21: Brixton 2019 Q1.

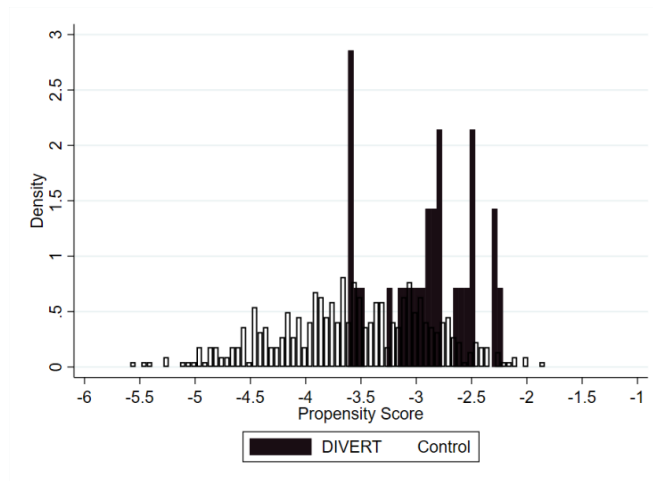


Figure 12.22: Brixton 2019 Q2.

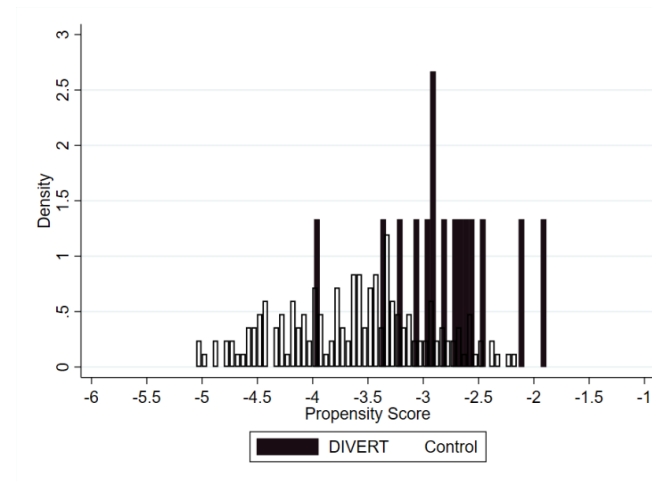


Figure 12.23: Croydon 2018 Q4.

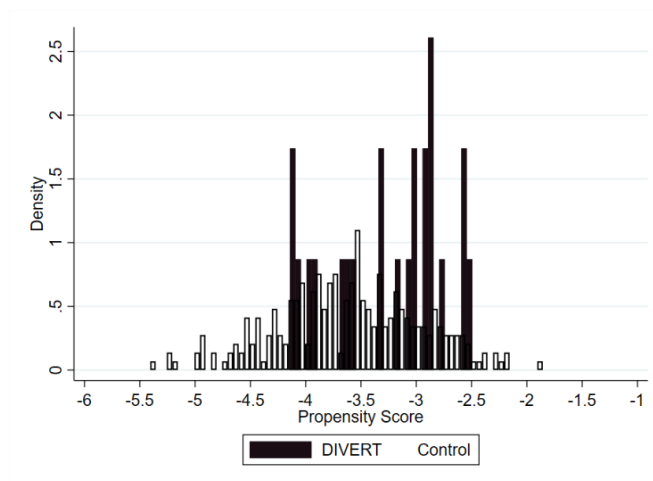


Figure 12.24: Croydon 2019 Q1.

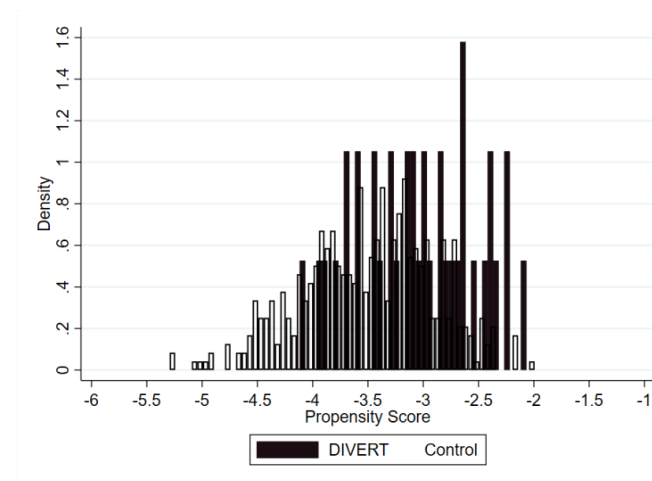


Figure 12.25: Croydon 2019 Q2.

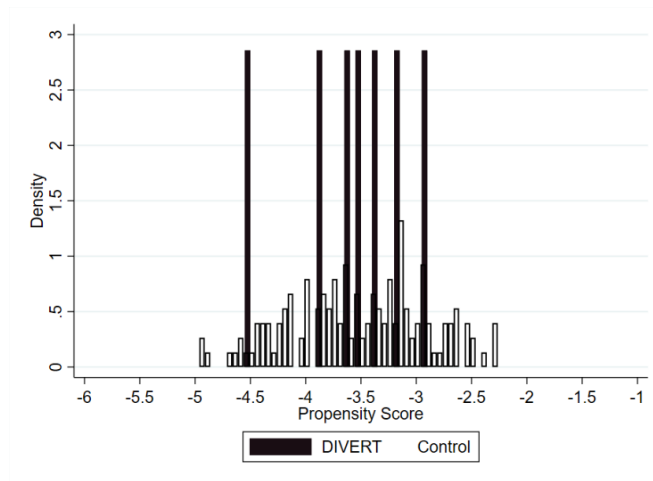


Figure 12.26: Lewisham 2018 Q4.

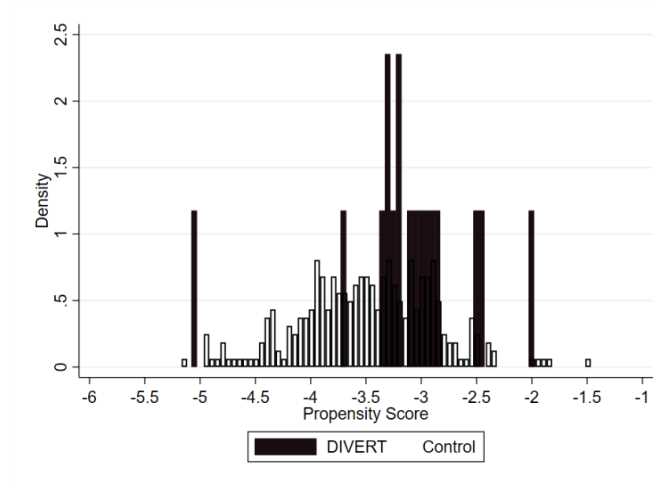


Figure 12.27: Lewisham 2019 Q1.

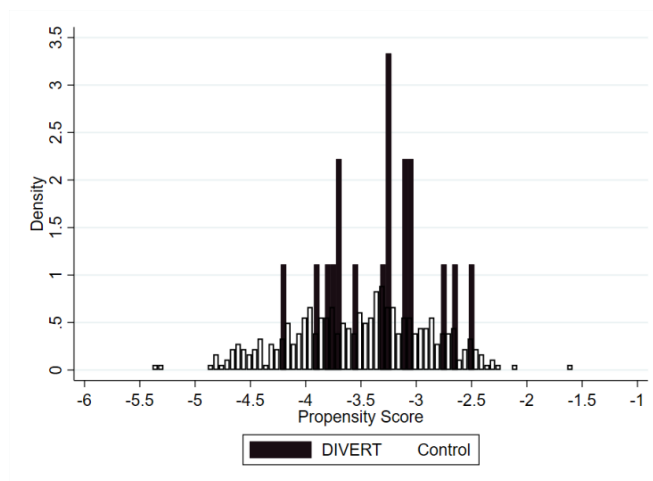


Figure 12.28: Lewisham 2019 Q2.

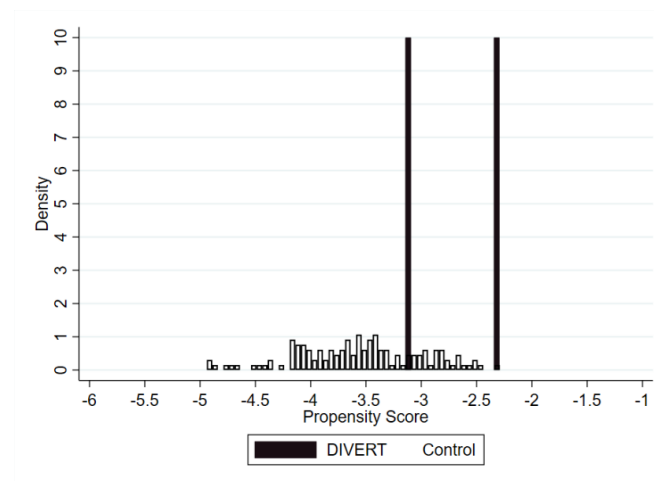


Figure 12.29: Stoke Newington 2017 Q2.

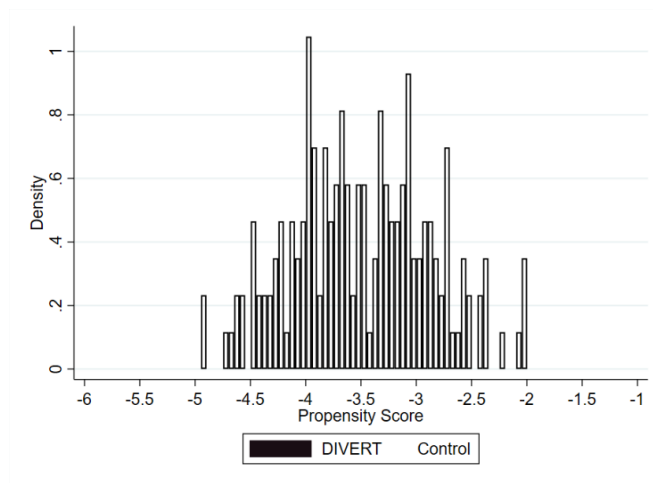


Figure 12.30: Stoke Newington 2017 Q3.

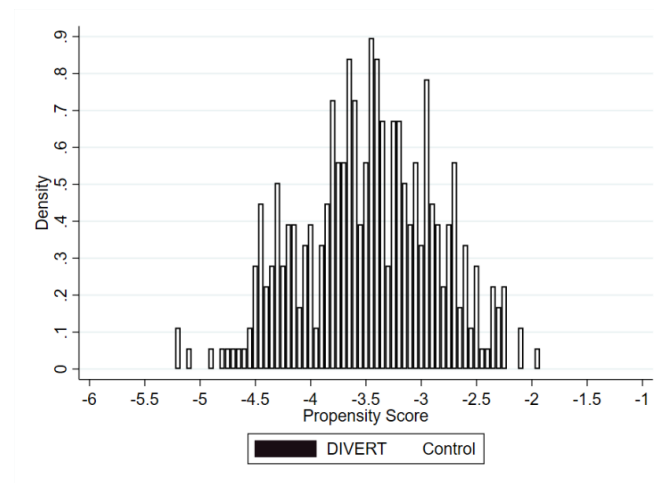


Figure 12.31: Stoke Newington 2017 Q4.

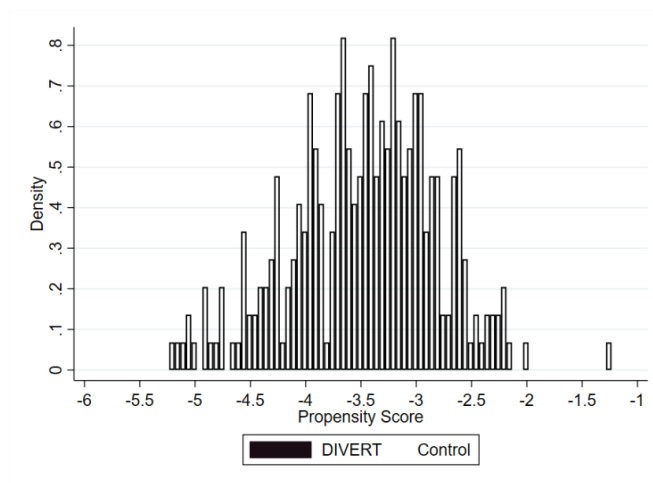


Figure 12.32: Stoke Newington 2018 Q1.

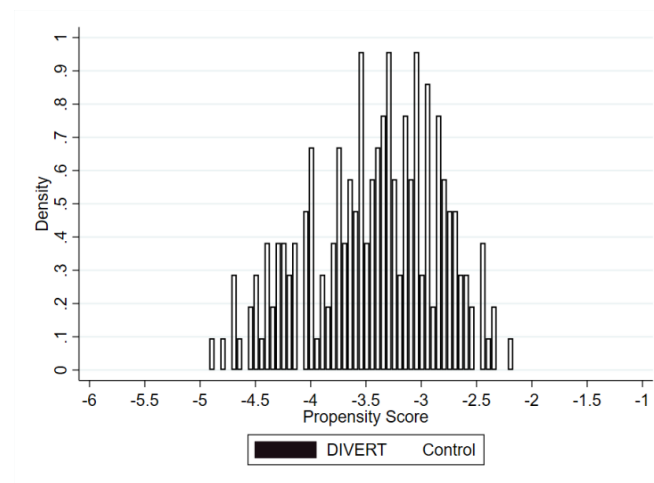


Figure 12.33: Stoke Newington 2018 Q2.

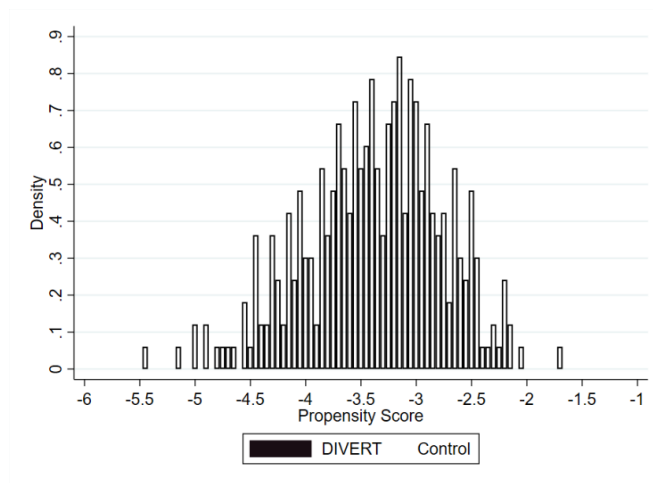


Figure 12.34: Stoke Newington 2018 Q3.

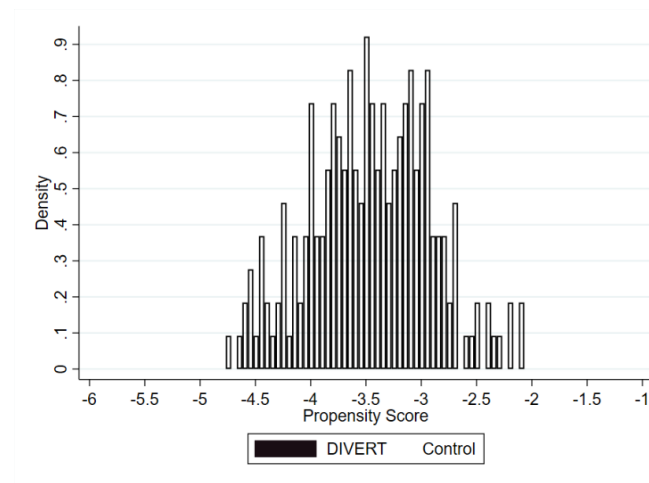


Figure 12.35: Stoke Newington 2018 Q4.

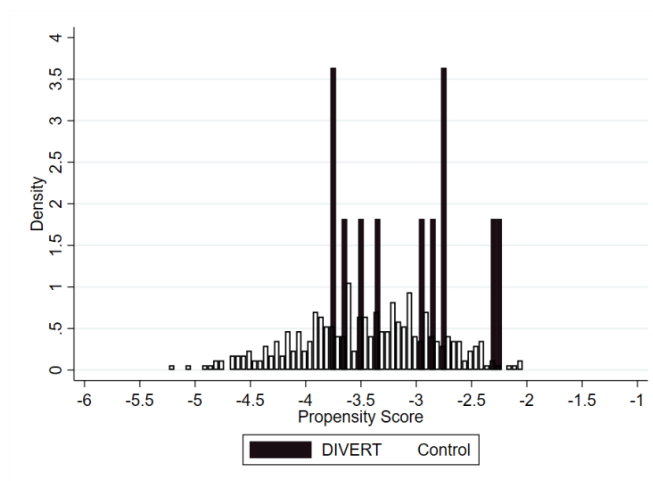


Figure 12.36: Stoke Newington 2019 Q1.

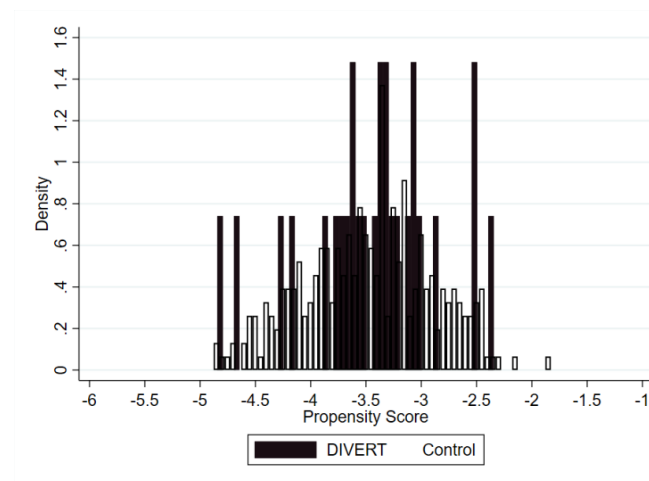


Figure 12.37: Stoke Newington 2019 Q2.

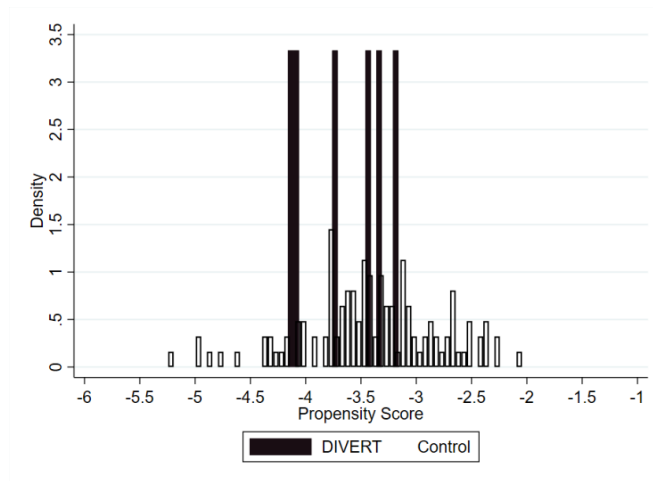


Figure 12.38: Wood Green 2018 Q4.

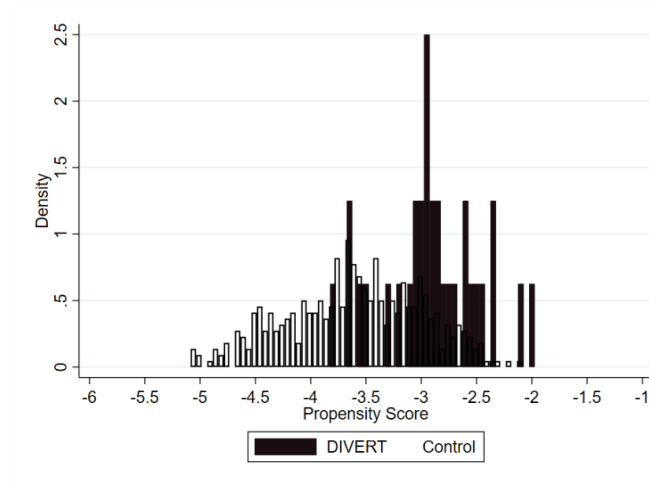


Figure 12.39: Wood Green 2019 Q1.

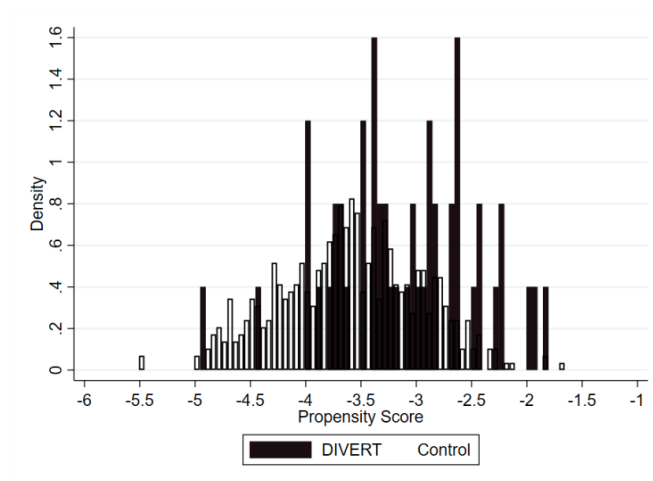
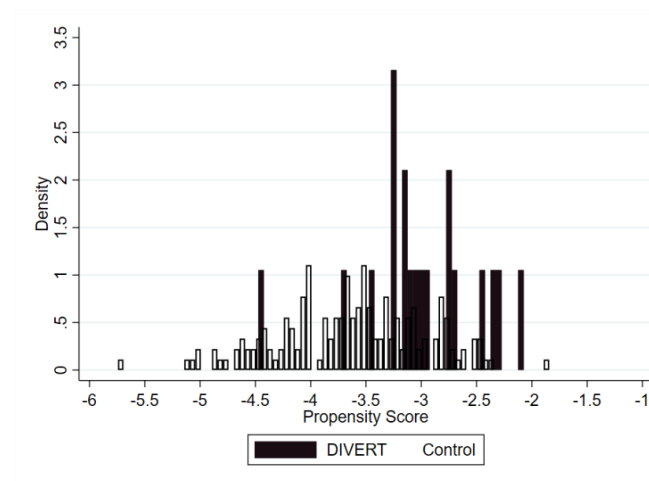


Figure 12.40: Wood Green 2019 Q2.



12. Appendix E – Referral pathways

Table 13.1 presents the categorisation of DIVERT partner organisations present in the custody suite management data. Tables 13.2-13.5 present referral pathways in Brixton, Croydon, Lewisham and Stoke Newington.

Table 13.1: DIVERT referral pathways.

Category	Organisation
Accommodation/homelessness	New Horizon Youth Centre Thames Reach
Arts	Clean Break Disorder Mag Disorder TV Unspecified film production course provider The Grit School Lambeth Sounds The Movement Factory Synergy Theatre Project
Barista	Well Grounded
Boxing	Double Jab
Criminal justice system unit	Integrated Gangs Unit Integrated Offender Management Probation Youth Offending Team

Category	Organisation
College	Hackney College for Catering Westminster College
Community improvement	Groundwork Urban Growth
Company	DHL FedEx Ocado Virgin Media
Construction and engineering	ASM Engineering Chance 2013 Croydon Works Downwell Demolition Flower Skills and Training Lewisham Construction Hub London Construction Academy Nixon PLIAS Resettlement Southwark Construction Skills Centre Supply Construction WSP

Category	Organisation
Drugs and alcohol	Drug Interventions Programme Reset
Employment skills and support	Bounce Back Department for Work and Pensions Free2Learn Green Man Skills Zone GreenSkills Partnership Ixion Milestone Foundation The Prince's Trust SPEAR WorkPath
Football club	The Arsenal Foundation Charlton Athletic Football Club Millwall Community Trust Palace for Life Foundation The St. Matthew's Project Street League Sutton United Football Club West Ham United Football Club Foundation Weston Football Academy

Category	Organisation
General	CherryTree Foundation Juvenis St Giles Trust Unitas Youth Zone Working with Men
Health services	Community Mental Health Services Community Mental Health Team Mind National Health Service
Hospitality	Only A Pavement Away
Rail	Network Rail Personal Track Safety course
Recruitment	GM Recruitment Hays Recruitment Reachout Recruit Step Ahead
Security	Deploy
Shoe and leather	Timpson
Sport	Focus Fitness The Gym Group

Table 13.2: Referral pathways in Brixton.*

Category	n/N	Count %
Construction and engineering	63/160	39
Employment and skills support	44/160	28
General support	22/160	14
Football club	19/160	12
Accommodation	8/160	5
Security	6/160	4
Arts	5/160	3
Community improvement	4/160	3
Health services	3/160	2
Recruitment	3/160	2
Drugs and alcohol	2/160	1
Hospitality	2/160	1
Boxing	1/160	1
Rail	1/160	1
College	1/160	1

***Note that some individuals were referred to multiple organisations and therefore the percentages do not add up to 100.**

Source: custody suite management data.

Base: referred DIVERT participants in Brixton (n=160).

Table 13.3: Referral pathways in Croydon.*

Category	n/N	Count %
Football club	49/67	73
Construction and engineering	12/67	18
Employment and skills support	6/67	9

***Note that some individuals were referred to multiple organisations and therefore the percentages do not add up to 100.**

Source: custody suite management data.

Base: referred DIVERT participants in Croydon (n=67).

Table 13.4: Referral pathways in Stoke Newington.*

Category	n/N	Count %
Employment and skills support	38/96	40
Drugs and alcohol	20/96	21
Criminal justice system unit	14/96	15
Security	11/96	11
Construction and engineering	10/96	10
Health services	3/96	3
Boxing	3/96	3
Arts	1/96	1

Category	n/N	Count %
Football club	1/96	1
College	1/96	1

***Note that some individuals were referred to multiple organisations and therefore the percentages do not add up to 100.**

Source: custody suite management data.

Base: referred DIVERT participants in Stoke Newington (n=96).

Table 13.5: Referral pathways in Lewisham.*

Category	n/N	Count %
Construction and engineering	27/40	68
Employment and skills support	10/40	25
Football club	10/40	25
Recruitment	6/40	15
Company	4/40	10
Sport	3/40	8
Arts	2/40	5
General support	2/40	5
Shoe and leather	2/40	5
Boxing	1/40	3

Category	n/N	Count %
Rail	1/40	3
Barista	1/40	3

***Note that some individuals were referred to multiple organisations and therefore the percentages do not add up to 100.**

Source: custody suite management data.

Base: referred DIVERT participants in Lewisham (n=40).

13. Appendix F – Impact evaluation regression tables

Table 14.1: Estimated variation in the impact of DIVERT on re-arrests between custody suites (random slope model, six months).

DV: Re-arrested within six months (ref: not re-arrested within six months)				
Covariate	Odds ratio	Standard error	95% confidence interval	
			Lower bound	Upper bound
Treatment	1.28	0.22	0.92	1.80
Constant	0.44	0.06	0.34	0.56
Variance components				
Random intercept	0.30	0.07	0.00	2.76
Random slope	0.01	0.03	0.00	368.2

Base: Matched sample for all custody suites.

Table 14.2: Estimated variation in the impact of DIVERT on re-arrests between custody suites (random slope model, 12 months).

DV: Re-arrested within 12 months (ref: not re-arrested within 12 months)				
Covariate	Odds ratio	Standard error	95% confidence interval	
			Lower bound	Upper bound
Treatment	1.24	0.26	0.82	1.86
Constant	0.80	0.16	0.54	1.17
Variance components				
Random intercept	0.05	0.15	0.00	17.57
Random slope	0.06	0.09	0.00	0.99

Base: Matched sample for all custody suites.

Table 14.3: Estimated variation in the impact of DIVERT on re-arrests between custody suites (single-level analysis with interaction term, six months).

DV: Re-arrested within six months (ref: not re-arrested within six months)					
Covariate	Category	Odds ratio	Robust standard error	95% credible interval	
				Lower bound	Upper bound
Treatment (ref: no treatment)	Treatment	1.73	0.64	0.83	3.59

DV: Re-arrested within six months (ref: not re-arrested within six months)					
Covariate	Category	Odds ratio	Robust standard error	95% credible interval	
				Lower bound	Upper bound
Custody suite (ref: Tower Hamlets)	Brixton	1.19	0.37	0.65	2.18
	Croydon	1.08	0.41	0.51	2.28
	Lewisham	0.79	0.37	0.31	1.99
	Stoke Newington	0.61	0.28	0.25	1.51
	Wood Green	1.08	0.38	0.54	2.14
Interaction between treatment and custody suite	Brixton	0.84	0.35	0.37	1.91
	Croydon	0.86	0.44	0.31	2.37
	Lewisham	0.56	0.37	0.15	2.03
	Stoke Newington	1.16	0.72	0.35	3.90
	Wood Green	0.47	0.23	0.18	1.23
Constant		0.42	0.12	0.25	0.72

Pseudo $R^2 = 0.01$.

Table 14.4: Estimated variation in the impact of DIVERT on re-arrests between custody suites (single-level analysis with interaction term, 12 months).

DV: Re-arrested within 12 months (ref: not re-arrested within 12 months)					
Covariate	Category	Odds ratio	Robust standard error	95% credible interval	
				Lower bound	Upper bound
Treatment (ref: no treatment)	Treatment	2.57	1.14	1.08	6.13
Custody suite (ref: Tower Hamlets)	Brixton	1.40	0.47	0.72	2.72
	Croydon	0.77	0.40	0.28	2.15
	Lewisham	0.65	0.39	0.21	2.09
	Stoke Newington	0.27	0.22	0.05	1.38
	Wood Green	0.93	0.44	0.37	2.34
Interaction between treatment and custody suite	Brixton	0.38	0.19	0.15	0.99
	Croydon	0.79	0.59	0.18	3.39
	Lewisham	0.22	0.19	0.04	1.24
	Stoke Newington	1.46	1.58	0.17	12.22
	Wood Green	0.41	0.28	0.11	1.54

DV: Re-arrested within 12 months (ref: not re-arrested within 12 months)					
Covariate	Category	Odds ratio	Robust standard error	95% credible interval	
				Lower bound	Upper bound
Constant		0.83	0.25	0.46	1.51

Pseudo $R^2 = 0.03$.

About the College

We're the professional body for the police service in England and Wales.

Working together with everyone in policing, we share the skills and knowledge officers and staff need to prevent crime and keep people safe.

We set the standards in policing to build and preserve public trust and we help those in policing develop the expertise needed to meet the demands of today and prepare for the challenges of the future.

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