

What I'll cover

- Context – ‘Testing on arrest’ and the broader Drug Interventions Programme in England and Wales
- Research aims and objectives
- Methods
- Results
- Policy and practice implications

Context – treatment as crime reduction

- The drug interventions programme (DIP) is a key part of the UK Government's strategy for tackling drugs.
- Starting in 2003/04 across 25 high drug/crime areas as 3-year pilot (allocated £0.5 billion), aims to develop and integrate measures for directing adult drug misusing offenders at different stages of the CJS 'out of crime and into treatment'.
- Drugs Act (2005) introduced compulsory testing (oral swab for recent heroin and cocaine) use on arrest for certain trigger (Theft Act and Misuse of Drugs) offences to facilitate engagement with these processes.
- Major reason for investment in treatment (£597m 06/07 – plus £330m; CJS referrals 23% of 202,666 starts 07/08).
- Increased policy focus now on delivering integrated forms of support to promote 'recovery' and 'reintegration'.

Research aims & objectives

Research specification sought an independent study to describe and critically appraise:

- the extent of ‘drug-related’ offending in this particular region;
- the impact of DIP on rates of offending;
- the cost-effectiveness of this work;
- service user views and experiences;
- the strengths, impacts and weaknesses of the service from the perspective of stakeholders; and
- identifying best practice and making recommendations for improving provision.

Methods

Multi-method approach combining new & existing data sources:

- administrative sources (local needs assessments, unit costs produced by the service provider, test on arrest data, details of criminal histories stored on the Police National Computer (PNC) and data from the Drug Intervention Record (DIR) e.g. demographics , circumstances and needs at point of screening/assessment on arrest);
- semi-structured, face-to-face interviews with 53 service users; and
- in-depth interviews with 11 stakeholders representing a range of backgrounds and perspectives from across the area: commissioners, treatment providers, CJS agencies, user groups.

Results

The extent of local 'drug-related' offending

- 6,468 drug tests conducted by local police against 4,771 individuals following their arrest during 2007/08.
- Equivalent to 8% of the 61,296 people arrested during 2006/07.
- Existing data sources do not allow us to accurately establish the extent to which these offences were 'drug-related' (e.g. induced or inspired).
- But higher levels of drug misuse needs among local prison and probation populations than both the regional and national averages.

Results

Impact on rates of re-offending - sampling (1):

- Identified 515 suspects who tested positive during the first quarter of 2007/08 (i.e. between 01.04.07 and 30.06.07).
- Used this test on arrest data to assemble an experimental group of arrestees engaging with DIP service (i.e. completing an initial screening/assessment) (n=252) and a comparison group of those not (n=263).
- Data linked to PNC to examine offending histories and rates of reconviction in 12 months post-index test.

Results

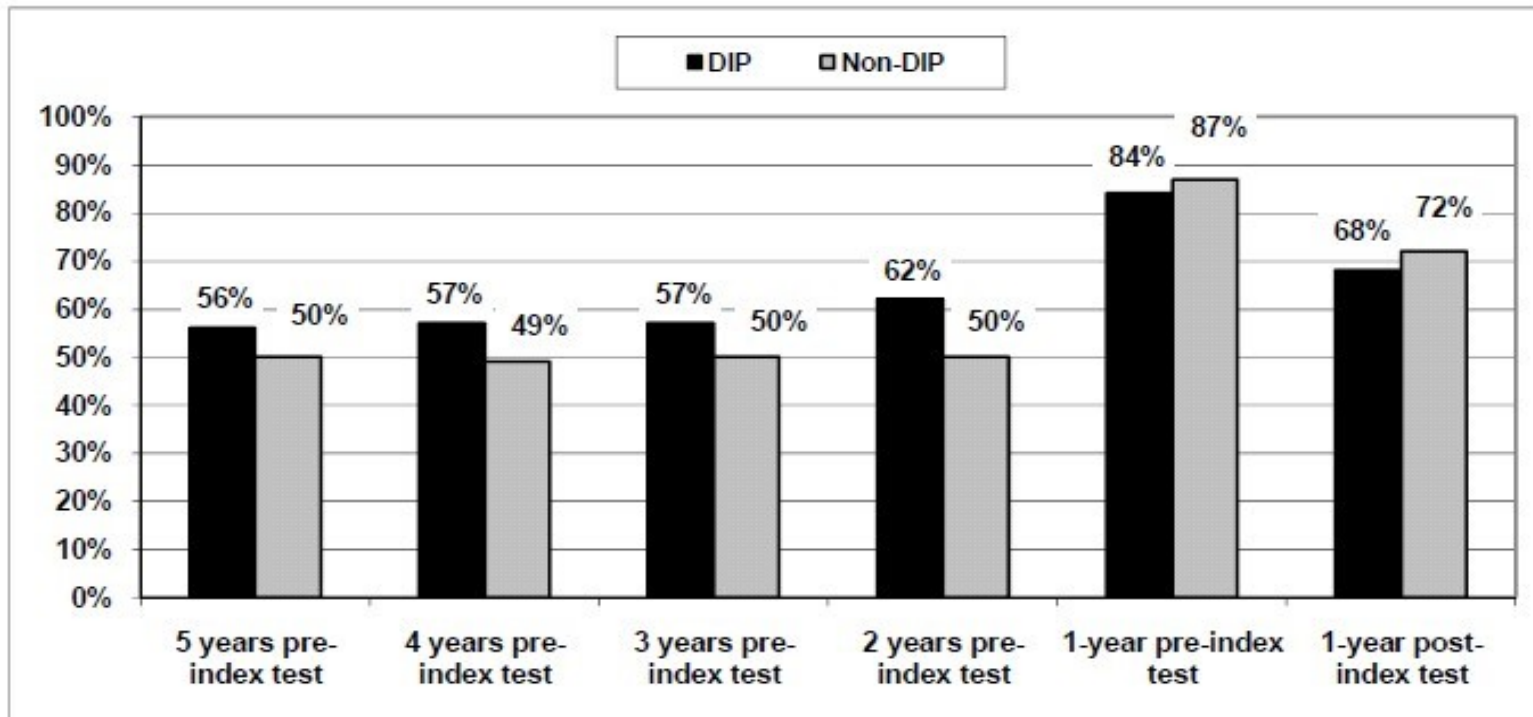
Impact on rates of re-offending – confounding factors (2):

- No differences between groups in terms of age (both averaged 29 years), gender (83% vs 80% male) or drug using profile at arrest (i.e. whether poly (45%), opiate (13%) or cocaine user (42%)).
- But those engaging with DIP had more previous convictions (11.3 vs 9.8) ($p < 0.05$).
- 40 per cent ($n=207$) received a custodial sentence between April 2007 and March 2008.
- No significant differences between groups in likelihood of receiving a custodial sentence (42% vs. 39%) or average length of time spent in prison (3.7 vs. 3.5 months) during this period.
- Confident that any differences in the likelihood of being reconvicted not adversely affected by time at reduced risk because of imprisonment.

Results

Impact on rates of re-offending – trends over time (3):

Trends in conviction rates (N=495)



Results

Impact on rates of re-offending – number of offences (4):

Changes in the number of offences leading to conviction 12 months pre and post-index test (N=494)

Group	Change	N	(%)	Offences 12- months pre-index test		Offences 12- months post- index test		% change
				Sum	Mean	Sum	Mean	
All	Reduction	254	51	1,279	5.0	477	1.9	-63%
	No change	74	15	148	2.0	148	2.0	0%
	Increase	166	34	412	2.5	1,075	6.5	+161%
	Total	494	100	1,839	3.7	1,702	3.4	-7%
DIP	Reduction	116	48	589	5.0	237	2.0	-60%
	No change	44	18	74	1.7	74	1.7	0%
	Increase	82	34	212	2.6	574	7.0	+171%
	Total	242	100	875	3.6	887	3.7	+1%
Non- DIP	Reduction	138	55	690	5.0	240	1.7	-65%
	No change	30	12	74	2.5	74	2.5	0%
	Increase	84	33	200	2.4	501	6.0	+151%
	Total	252	100	964	3.8	815	3.2	-15%

Results

Impact on rates of re-offending – findings in context (5):

- 12-month reconviction rate for DIP cohort (68%) is lower than for both users accessing mainstream treatment (74%) and drug using offenders supervised by the prison and probation services (74-75%).
- General trend observed in offending patterns among DIP cohort – with half showing a reduction and the remainder showing no change or an increase – is entirely consistent with the findings that emerged from an earlier national evaluation of DIP.
- No significant differences between the two groups in terms of changes to the seriousness of their offending.
- Being a prolific offender (i.e. 10+ offences leading to conviction in the year prior to index test) was the only significant factor predicting the likelihood of reduced offending.
- An encouraging finding: illustrates most intractable of target groups appears to be benefiting most from interventions.

Results

Cost effectiveness – assumptions (1):

- In order to assess cost-effectiveness we used the PNC to calculate the cost per incidence of reconviction avoided using estimates previously provided by the Social Exclusion Unit (2005):
 - each re-offender is likely to be responsible for crime costing the criminal justice system an average of £65,000 (excludes the cost of imprisonment and wider non-criminal justice costs e.g. those incurred by victims).
- Adopted two opposing approaches: one offers an optimist assessment while the other a rather more pessimistic view.

Results

Cost effectiveness – optimistic view (2):

- Assumes 16% reduction observed among DIP cohort (from 84% in the 12 months before index test to 68% in the following year) is attributable largely or entirely to the impact of DIP.
- We estimate that reductions on this scale would result in savings of at least £2.6 million in criminal justice costs alone (but excluding the considerable costs of imprisonment and to victims).
- Based on unit cost data supplied by DIP this approach suggests that every pound invested delivers around £4.30 in criminal justice cost savings.

Results

Cost effectiveness – pessimistic view (3):

- Assumes contact with DIP may yield an additional 1% point reduction in reconviction rates, relative to 15% reduction observed among non-DIP group.
- Using this approach DIP will have contributed towards savings of at least £162,500 in criminal justice costs alone.
- This means, however, that around £3.70 has to be invested in the service in order to deliver £1 in criminal justice cost savings.
- More accurate assessment of DIP's cost-effectiveness likely to lie somewhere in the middle of these two estimates.

Results

Key strengths, impacts and weaknesses:

- Praise for strong leadership, effective management, greater accountability and more clarity around roles and responsibilities via DIP.
- Processes and systems ensure a large number of DUOs can access support in a more timely manner than previously.
- But performance still constrained by a range of factors:
 - staff training and development;
 - the range, flexibility and capacity within local treatment services to absorb additional demand;
 - the extent to which interventions were being appropriately sequenced to promote engagement and retention; and (related to this)
 - the degree of focus on ensuring adequate levels of throughcare and aftercare support.

Implications for policy and practice

- Evaluation presents a complicated picture of the impact of DIP across this particular area - but one entirely consistent with contemporary British research on this issue.
- Important findings are interpreted within context of the growing body of studies examining the impact of interventions with drug using offenders (reference to ‘careers’, recovery and desistance).
- Evaluation offers both cause for optimism in DIP’s important work with the most intractable of target groups and clearly establishes where improvements can be made.

Implications for policy and practice

- Impact of work with prolific offenders is particularly encouraging and worthy of further exploration.
- A key challenge - both locally, and at a national level - is to develop strategies for improving offending outcomes for a large proportion of the target group.
- Effectiveness of DIP is either constrained or enhanced by the broader treatment infrastructure within which it operates. Benefits undoubtedly realised but concerns still being raised about the range and availability of support being offered.

Implications for policy and practice

- Consistent calls for a greater emphasis on throughcare and aftercare for those accessing services (from both service users and stakeholders).
- Despite considerable investment and expansion in drug treatment services during recent years, a great deal still needs to be done to ensure that effective and integrated forms of support are consistently delivered to drug using offenders.
- Currently exploring how to fill gaps and develop knowledge with research funders (e.g. data linkage between CJS and health).

Any questions?

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