

Police-led diversion

Police-led diversion for drug crimes.

First published 19 October 2022

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Police diversion schemes can include:

- diversion only (often called counsel and release)
- diversion with referral to services
- diversion with police-led restorative justice

Effectiveness of police-led diversion

There is [systematic review](#) evidence that police-led diversion of low-risk youth who come into contact with the justice system – including for drug possession – is more effective in reducing future contact with the justice system compared to traditional processing (Wilson and others, 2018). This review was not specifically focused on drug offending.

Comparison between diversion only and diversion plus referral to services modestly favoured the latter. However, the existing evidence provides no basis for concluding that there are meaningful differences across the diversion types.

Example of relevant practice

Police-led drug diversion schemes (Durham, Thames Valley Police, West Midlands Police)

This police-led diversion targets drug-involved suspects. That is, people suspected of either a drug offence or an offence related to their drug use.

These schemes assess individuals and then refer them to education, treatment or support (as needed) with an out of court disposal, such as community resolution. This does not create a criminal record. (Weir and others, 2021.)

Tags

Evidence-based policing Crime reduction