Centre for Criminology and Criminal Justice report:

An experimental evaluation of an adult female triage pilot project

for Humberside Police

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Executive Summary:

- The evaluation found a 46% reduction in the rearrest rate over a 12 month follow-up period when compared to a control group of similar female offenders.

- The rearrest rate was 13.64% for women referred on to the intervention compared to 25.44% for women who were processed through the criminal justice system as usual.

- Those women who were referred to the intervention and attended their appointment with TWP where less likely to be rearrested and went longer without rearrest than those women who were referred but did not attend their appointments.

- The pilot project is unique insofar as it provides an early-diversion scheme for adult female offenders.

- The pilot project used a modified version a youth triage assessment tool to screen low-severity adult female offenders detained in the custody suite for suitability to an early-diversion intervention.

- The primary goal of the pilot project was to reduce reoffending rates amongst low-severity female offenders by offering a 'one-chance-only' opportunity to receive empowerment support work with Together Women's Project (TWP) rather than the more usual charge or caution.

- The evaluation employed a natural experiment methodology and included eligible arrestees from December 2012 to July 2013 with a reoffending follow-up period of 12 months.

- The evaluation used a combination of interviews, observations and documentary analysis to support and inform the statistical analysis of reoffending rates.

- For the small number of women referred to the intervention who were subsequently rearrested they were rearrested more frequently than those women in the control group. The reasons for this are unknown but could be due to either assessment errors early in the project's lifespan or unknown risk factors in the women's history.

- This suggests the intervention may not be suitable for a sub-group of female offenders and a further follow-up study should be undertaken to investigate this further.

- A further evaluarion with a larger sample who could be randomly assigned the intervention would be required to conclusively demonstrate the effectiveness of the intervention.

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Summary

This report describes and tests the effect on rearrest of a pre-charge diversion scheme for female adult offenders arrested for low-severity offences that was piloted in Humberside police force between December 2012 and May 2014. The project – the Adult Female Triage Project – is unique for adult female arrestees in that it sought to divert them from the criminal justice system towards a supporting organisation, Together Women Project (TWP), before and instead of being charged with a crime.

The report briefly outlines the work of TWP and the empirical context of pre-charge diversion interventions before describing the intervention process and a retrospective cohort evaluation of the effectiveness of the intervention on reducing rates of rearrest, time-to-rearrest and number of subsequent rearrests within a one-year follow-up period.
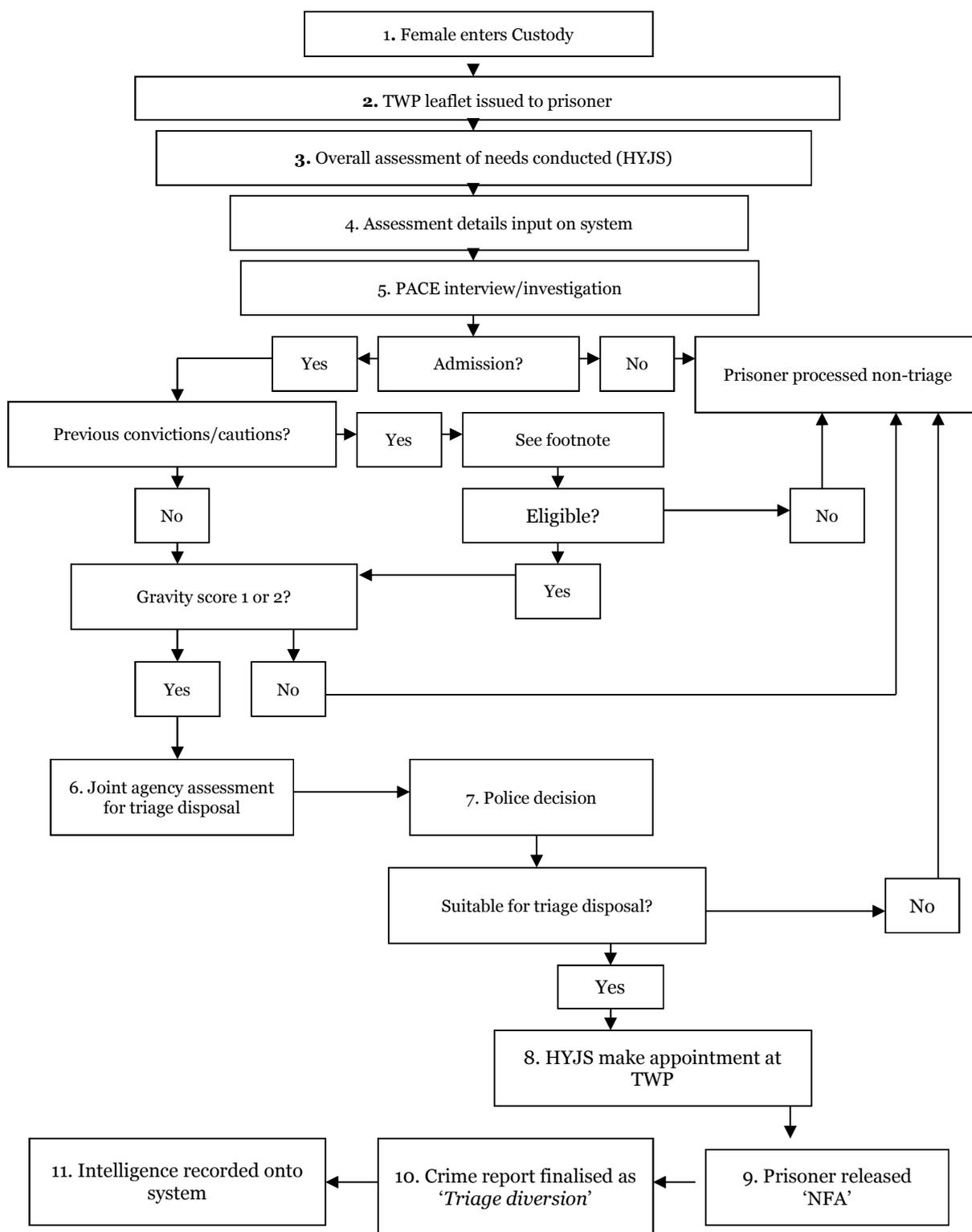
A natural experiment found a promising 46% reduction in rearrest (Relative risk ratio 0.54 (95% Confidence interval (CI) -0.24–1.20) and time-to-rearrest (Proportional hazard ratio 0.52 (95% CI 0.22–1.25) over a twelve month follow-up period among those who received the intervention compared to a control group of similar low-risk arrestees. While this result is promising, the evaluation also demonstrated a higher frequency of rearrest among some of those members of the intervention group who were rearrested. Although the sample of arrestees involved in the evaluation was small, the results are supportive of the continued use of this intervention among female adult offenders. However, as some intervention arrestees were rearrested more frequently than some of the control sample, the eligibility criteria for this intervention should be examined closely.

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Intervention

In December 2012 Humberside Police launched an innovative diversionary scheme from police custody for adult female offenders. Building on the well-established arrest referral scheme introduced under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) 1984, which later became the Drug Intervention Programme (DIP) in the Drugs Act 2005, a screening assessment was conducted with women detained in the police custody suite to determine their eligibility for pre-charge diversion. This screening assessment was based upon a triage model developed by Hull Youth Justice Service as part of a national strategy to develop informal alternatives to criminal justice sanctions for young offenders. The youth justice intervention was designed to identify low-level, less serious and first time young offenders (Bateman 2012) who could be appropriately dealt with outside the criminal justice system. For young offenders this has typically involved an expansion of the warning and reprimand scheme introduced under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to include: letters of apology, restorative meetings and reparation (Home Office 2012). Using similar criteria, Humberside Police introduced a triage assessment tool to divert female offenders to TWP instead of cautioning or charging those who admitted their offence.

The project aimed to assess the suitability of every single adult female brought into police custody. The triage process consisted of three stages explained below and illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Flow chart of female triage referral process

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                    ┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
                    │   1. Female enters Custody           │
                    └─────────────────────────────────────┘
                                     │
                    ┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
                    │   2. TWP leaflet issued to prisoner  │
                    └─────────────────────────────────────┘
                                     │
                    ┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
                    │ 3. Overall assessment of needs       │
                    │    conducted (HYJS)                  │
                    └─────────────────────────────────────┘
                                     │
                    ┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
                    │ 4. Assessment details input on system│
                    └─────────────────────────────────────┘
                                     │
                    ┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
                    │ 5. PACE interview/investigation      │
                    └─────────────────────────────────────┘
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1. Female enters Custody
2. TWP leaflet issued to prisoner
3. Overall assessment of needs conducted (HYJS)
4. Assessment details input on system
5. PACE interview/investigation

Admission? → Yes / No

No → Prisoner processed non-triage

Yes → Previous convictions/cautions? → Yes → See footnote

Previous convictions/cautions? → No → Gravity score 1 or 2?

See footnote → Eligible? → No → Prisoner processed non-triage

Eligible? → Yes → Gravity score 1 or 2?

Gravity score 1 or 2? → Yes → 6. Joint agency assessment for triage disposal

Gravity score 1 or 2? → No → Prisoner processed non-triage

6. Joint agency assessment for triage disposal → 7. Police decision

7. Police decision → Suitable for triage disposal?

Suitable for triage disposal? → No → Prisoner processed non-triage

Suitable for triage disposal? → Yes → 8. HYJS make appointment at TWP

8. HYJS make appointment at TWP → 9. Prisoner released 'NFA'

9. Prisoner released 'NFA' → 10. Crime report finalised as '*Triage diversion*'

10. Crime report finalised as '*Triage diversion*' → 11. Intelligence recorded onto system

In exceptional circumstances consideration may be given for a triage disposal if the female has pre-cons or cautions. For example, they were given a caution 2 years ago.

(Adapted from Humberside Police 2013)

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Stage One: A woman is arrested and brought to the custody suite where she is booked in by a custody sergeant. She is provided with a leaflet explaining the triage scheme and the types of support she can access through TWP. This is normally followed by the standard interview under caution and if the woman admits the offence and shows some remorse then she passes the first eligibility criterion for triage referral. At the next convenient point either a youth justice worker or a Drug Intervention Programme (DIP) worker conducts an initial assessment of needs to determine if the woman is suitable for triage. This is usually after the woman is interviewed under caution but can be affected by factors such as whether the woman is intoxicated, aggressive, meeting with her legal representative or when there are several woman brought into custody within a short time frame which then creates a queue. Youth justice workers are in the custody suite between 8am and 10pm and DIP workers between 8am and midnight. When women are brought into custody between midnight and 8am they are assessed by DIP and youth justice workers when they come into work in the morning. The initial assessment of needs is a comparatively basic form-filling exercise that can either be done alongside other types of assessment or extrapolated from them. The main focus of the form is to determine the woman's offending history, her previous or ongoing involvement in the criminal justice system and if she has any personal circumstances that require support. Examples of such personal circumstances include: prostitution, drug and alcohol misuse, abuse and violence, mental health, housing problems, homelessness, poverty and children in care or adopted. Having collected this information a consultation between the assessor and the police takes place.

Stage 2: Before a triage referral can be approved checks against the Offender Unique Reference Number (URN) and Police National Computer (PNC) are made to confirm details about offending history. The Home Office Gravity Score for Adults (Association of Chief Police Officers 2013) is used to determine eligibility for referral. The triage scheme is intended only for women whose offences have a gravity score of 1 or 2, indicating a less serious offence. Examples of offences with gravity scores of 1 or 2 include common assault, drunk and disorderly and shoplifting (up to £100 in value). A decision is then made by the custody sergeant about whether the woman is suitable for diversion to TWP. If the woman is approved then they are referred to TWP, released and given a date to attend an initial meeting at the TWP premises. If a woman is not approved she is charged and processed in the normal fashion.

Stage 3: Funding to support the Adult Female Triage Project was obtained via the Rank Foundation's Community Development Fund which allowed TWP to employ two key

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workers to undertake the one-to-one initial assessments with the women who are referred by the police. These initial appointments involve a much fuller assessment of the woman's history, needs and circumstances. This then informs a plan of work that is undertaken with the woman over a fixed period of time. However, the ethos of TWP is to continue working with women for as long as they need and want help. The types of support offered to women referred to TWP include a range of courses designed to help women with skills such as: parenting, relationships, confidence building, IT and basic skills, anger management and domestic abuse awareness. Alongside these courses TWP offers various advice and support services including: counselling, access to a drug and alcohol specialist, mentoring, debt and money advice and tenancy support. If a woman does not attend her initial meeting TWP follow up with a phone call but if she fails to engage with the support offered this information is then reported back to the police and this would usually preclude the female offender from a second triage referral to TWP. The lack of any further sanction by the police for non-compliance effectively makes attendance at TWP appointments voluntary.

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Together Women Project

Together Women Project (TWP) is a regional charity with centres in Bradford, Hull, Leeds, Sheffield and HMP New Hall adult female prison. TWP was established in 2006 with funding from the Ministry of Justice "to develop and test a new gender-specific community approach to women offenders and women at risk of offending" (Togetherwomen.org). The ethos of TWP is to provide a safe women-only space in which women can access support and services through TWP and other support agencies who work out of their offices (Heidensohn and Silvestri 2012). This provides a 'one-stop-shop' for women who can then address all of their needs in one location (Together Women 2012). As a charity TWP is therefore well positioned to work with both female offenders (or those at risk of offending) and statutory criminal justice agencies like police and probation. With a heavy emphasis on early intervention and diversion TWP seeks to work with women to address the underlying problems that it is believed lead women to offend.

Empirical support

While post-charge diversion from custody schemes have been implemented widely in recent years, schemes that seek to divert from the criminal justice system prior to charge are rare for adults. Empowerment support work, such as TWP, has also existed for many years. However, to our knowledge, this two-pronged intervention for adult females is the first of its kind to be evaluated. Consequently, there is a limited evidence base on which to predict the success of this intervention in reducing or delaying reoffending. A meta-analysis of the evidence for early diversion programmes for juvenile offenders failed to find an effect on reoffending (Schwalbe et. al. 2012), although some support for the effectiveness of restorative justice and family interventions was demonstrated. No comprehensive review of the effectiveness of early diversion schemes for adults exists. An evaluation of diversion from custody to TWP found no effect of the intervention on reoffending of female arrestees at 12-month follow-up, compared to a matched sample of women serving a community order (Jolliffeet.al. 2011). However, because the intervention group were still convicted, the two interventions are not directly comparable.

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Evaluation hypotheses

This report tests the effectiveness of the combined effect of early diversion and empowerment support work for adult females on rates of rearrest, the length of time to rearrest and number of subsequent arrests within a twelve month follow-up period. It was hypothesised that females who were eligible and referred to the diversion scheme would be (i) less likely to reoffend, (ii) would take longer to reoffend and (iii) would do so less frequently than a control group of female offenders who were eligible but not referred to the diversion scheme.

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Method

Evaluation design and cohort allocation

The evaluation capitalised on an uneven roll-out of the intervention. For several months, issues relating to organisational resources among the assessment team limited the number of arrestees who could be assessed. As a result of this, many arrestees who were eligible for the diversion scheme were not assessed and, consequently, not referred to the diversion scheme. This created an opportunistic control condition, which permitted an evaluation of the effectiveness of the scheme on rearrest using a natural experiment design. To account for unmeasured systematic bias between the groups, comparison statistics are detailed below. Arrestees in the control group were processed through the Criminal Justice System as usual.

Sample

The time frame for the intervention was 1st December 2012 to 15th July 2013. Females arrested during this time were followed up for one year from the date of first arrest, resulting in a follow-up time frame from 3rd December 2012 to 15th July 2014. During the intervention time frame, 596 females accounted for 741 arrests.

Inclusion criteria/Eligibility

Eligibility for the evaluation was dependent on the arrestee index offence being of a gravity score 2 or below (ACPO, 2013), admitting to the offence and having no prior convictions or cautions. However, arrestees who received a caution more than two years ago were eligible for this scheme.

Measures

The organisation responsible for collecting and maintaining the data used in this evaluation are detailed in Table 1. With the exception of index of mass deprivation and crime deprivation data, all data were obtained on behalf of the researchers by a police data analyst who was not involved in the evaluation process.

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Table 1 Origin of evaluation data

Variable name	Data collection	Data maintenance
Rearrest	Local police force	Local police force
Time to rearrest	Local police force	Local police force
Number of rearrests	Local police force	Local police force
Age	Local police force	Local police force
Ethnicity	Local police force	Local police force
Index of mass deprivation	Office for National Statistics	Office for National Statistics
Index of crime deprivation	Office for National Statistics	Office for National Statistics
Arrestee eligibility	Police National Computer	Association of Chief Police Officers
Referral attendance	Women's project	Local police force

Outcome variables

Rearrest: Participants were coded as re-arrested (1) if they appeared in the police records for a separate offence between 2 and 365 days from their initial arrest. A 2-day 'grace' period was included to avoid mistaking rearrest for reoffending when participants were rearrested for administrative purposes. For example, occasionally, arrestees with dependent children are released to care for their children and then rearrested soon afterwards when police wish to proceed with interviews.

Time to rearrest: The time between initial arrest and rearrest was measured in days. For the purposes of the survival analysis, participants who were not rearrested were recorded as censored data. Using this technique resulted in all participant having equal follow-up periods.

Number of rearrests: Number of rearrests per participant was recorded as a continuous variable, beginning at zero for those participants who were not rearrested.

Predictor variables

Age: Participant age at time of first arrest was calculated by subtracting the date of the arrest from their date of birth.

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Index of multiple deprivation: Using participant post code at time of first arrest, Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) were identified for each participant. The index of multiple deprivation score for 2010 that corresponded to each LSOA was obtained from the Office for National Statistics (2011) and served as a proxy for individual deprivation. Indices of mass deprivation are a composite of seven domain variables that reflect neighbourhood deprivation in the UK: income, employment, health and disability, education skills and training, barriers to housing and services, living environment and crime. Scores for the 124 LSOAs in the evaluation sample ranged between 0.53 and 87.8 (Median 45.4).

Crime deprivation: Using a similar technique to that described above, LSOA codes were identified for each participant and an index of area crime rate for 2010 was obtained for each participant and served as a proxy for individual exposure to crime. Indices of crime rates are a domain of overall deprivation and are calculated based on the rate of four crime types recorded by police in that area: violence, burglary, theft and criminal damage.

The IMD and Crime Deprivation score are not independent of each other as the IMD score, being a composite of a number of social indicators, incorporates measures of area crime. This composite is weighted so that Crime deprivation represents 9.3% of the overall deprivation (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2011). The Spearman rank correlation between the two variables for the evaluation sample is 0.73, indicating a high correlation between crime deprivation and overall deprivation within neighbourhoods. Nonetheless, these two variables test different phenomena and their inclusion here allows exposure to crime – potentially reflecting attitudes towards crime as well as exposure to crime and criminal behaviour – to be tested separately from more general deprivation.

Ethnicity: Based on self-reported ethnicity according to five Home Office categories of ethnicity, participants were coded as White (1) or Non-white (0).

Group allocation: Participants who were eligible for the intervention and were referred to the women's project were coded as being in the Treatment group (1). All female arrestees who were not seen by the assessment team were potential members of the control group. From this sample, it was possible to retrospectively test their eligibility in terms of previous convictions or cautions and the gravity of their current offence. However, it was not possible to test for their admission of guilt and so this remains a potential confounding variable. Respondents who met these two eligibility criteria but were not seen by the assessment team, and consequently not referred to the women's project, were coded as being in the Control

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group (0). The allocation of participants and their pathway through the evaluation are described in Figure 1.

Statistical methods

As noted above, the intervention and control groups were created opportunistically which leaves the internal validity of the evaluation design susceptible to the effect of confounding variables. For example, bias regarding ethnicity, offence type, offender's appearance or offence type could all have affected the arrestee's likelihood of receiving or not receiving the intervention. In order to test the comparability of the groups a series of chi-square tests and t-tests were undertaken to identify differences between the groups. Groups were compared on age, overall deprivation of home area, crime-related deprivation of home area, ethnicity and offence type.

In order to test hypothesis one, the groups were compared on the proportion of arrestees who were re-arrested within one year of their initial arrest using a log-rank test for equality of survivor estimates[1]. Hypothesis two was tested using Cox regression survival analysis. Kaplan-Meier survival estimates were used to visualise the differences between the groups. Hypothesis three was tested using a Mann-Whitney *U* test.

Intention-to-treat analysis

The effectiveness of the intervention – pre-charge diversion to TWP – was tested on an intention-to-treat basis. Intention-to-treat analysis aims to reflect the way in which interventions work in the 'real world', wherein patients sometimes fail to take their prescribed medication, service users fail to attend counselling sessions or, in this case, arrestees fail to attend their appointments at a women's centre. In this analysis, all of those referred were regarded as having received the treatment, regardless of whether they attended their appointment at TWP. However, in order to further explore the results, a *post hoc* per protocol analysis is also included below.

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[1] This technique was preferred over Propensity Score Matching (PSM) because there was a very limited number of available variables on which to match the groups and the small sample size with low base rate of reoffending would have been further reduced by PSM.

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Results

Six hundred and forty-three female offenders were arrested between 1st December 2012 and 30th June 2013 in the intervention area. Of these, 44 were seen by the triage team and were referred to TWP. Among the remaining arrestees, 114 were eligible for the treatment but were not seen by the triage team for reasons of staffing cover at certain times of day during the early months of the project. These women could therefore not be referred and were processed as usual, providing an appropriate control group. Figure 2 describes the path followed by the population of arrestees during the timeframe of the pilot evaluation. The relatively small sample size of the intervention group coupled with the low rates of rearrest among the arrestee groups limited the power of the tests to detect a statistically significant difference in rate of rearrest between the groups. Based on the rates of reoffending demonstrated in the present evaluation, the estimated required sample size to detect a statistically significant effect (80% likelihood at $\alpha=0.05$) for a further evaluation was 272. Given that the available sample for this evaluation was below this threshold, it was unlikely that a statistically significant effect would be detected. Therefore, estimates of effect sizes and associated 95% confidence intervals were presented alongside p-values.

The survival rates and cumulative hazard rate functions for the total sample are described in Figures 1 and 2, respectively. Figure 3 presents the pathway through the evaluation that was followed by all eligible arrestees during the evaluation time period. Descriptive statistics and comparisons between the intervention and control groups on four comparison variables are described in Table 1.

Figure 1 demonstrates (Kaplan-Meier graph), of the 158 arrestees, 35 (22.2%) were rearrested within the follow-up interval. This represents an average of 314.88 days (Range 5–365 days) without an arrest, a 0.07% daily failure incident rate and a one-year rearrest rate of 23%. The Nelson-Aalen cumulative hazard rate in Figure 2 demonstrates that rearrest was approximately consistent over time. In general, rearrests were more likely in the earlier part of the follow-up period than the later. Figure 4 demonstrates the increased use of the triage diversion by Humberside Police over the course of the evaluation period.

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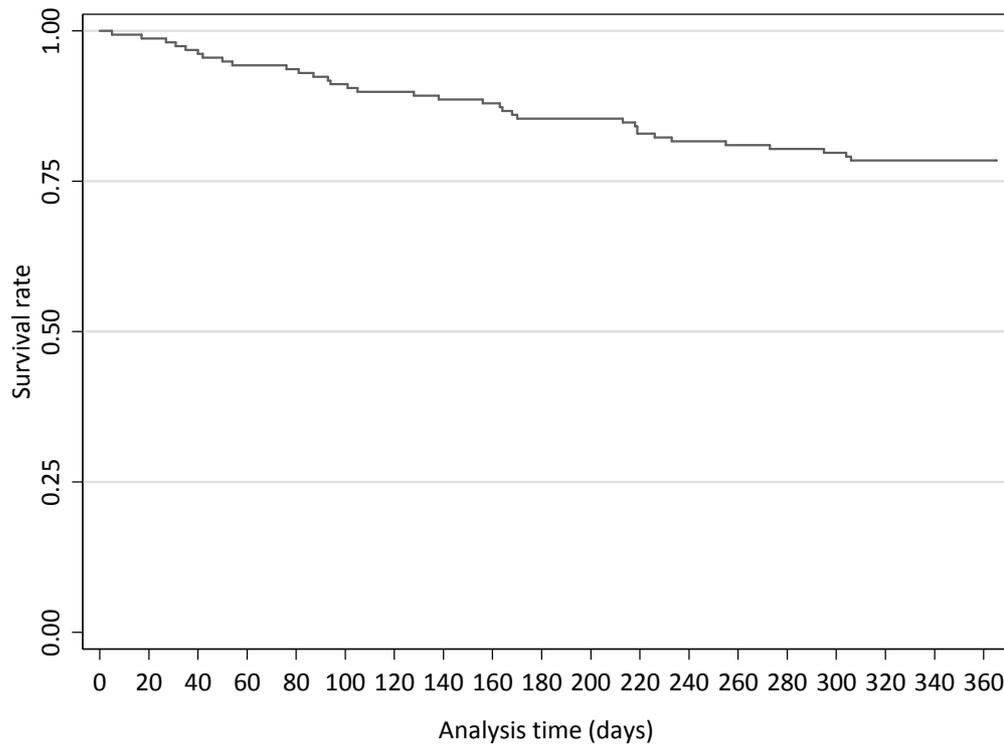Figure 2 Kaplan-Meier survival times of total sample

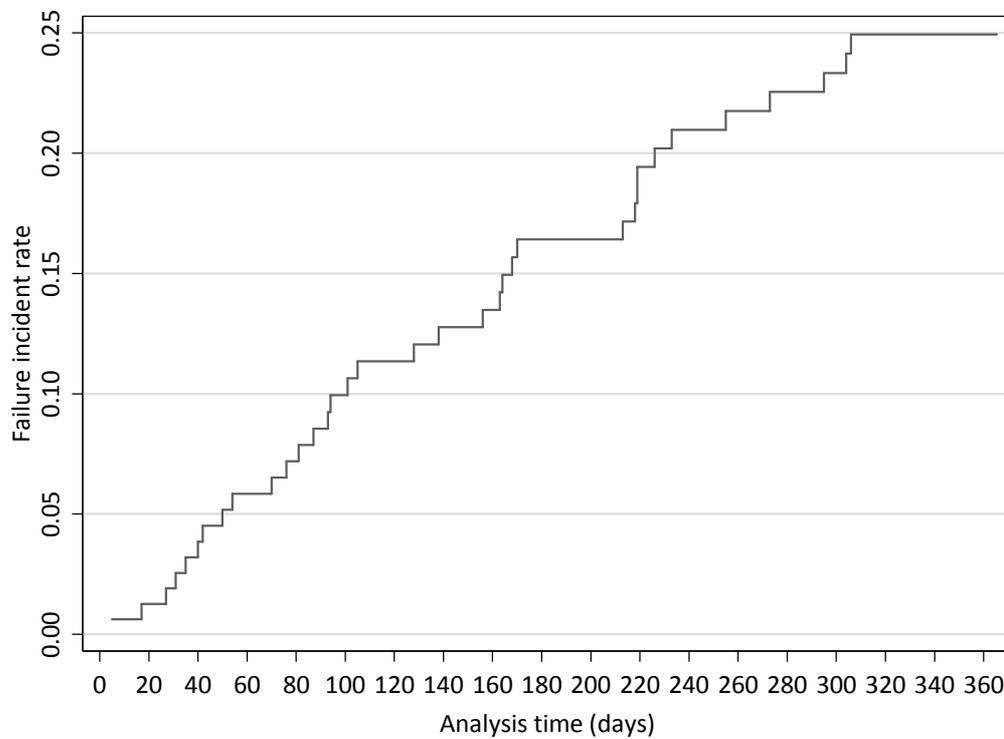
Figure 3 Nelson-Aalen failure rates of total sample

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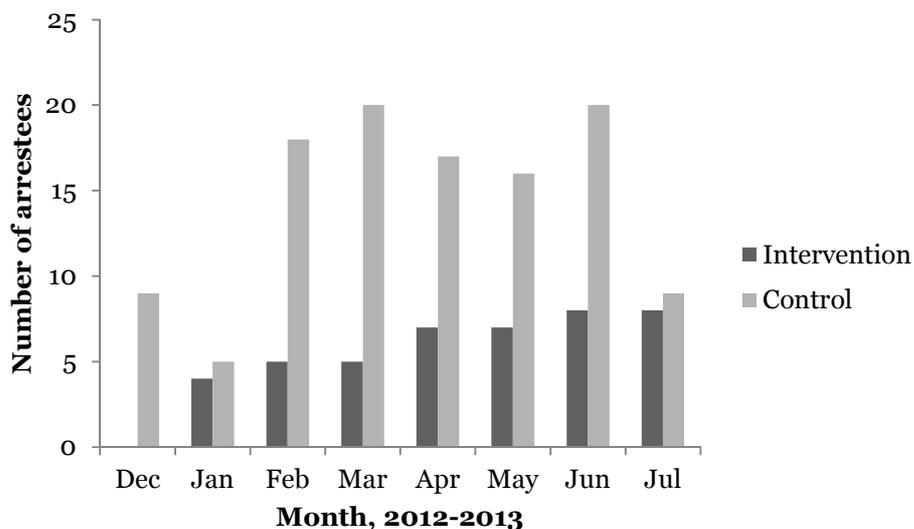Figure 4 Recruitment time for arrestees by month and treatment allocation
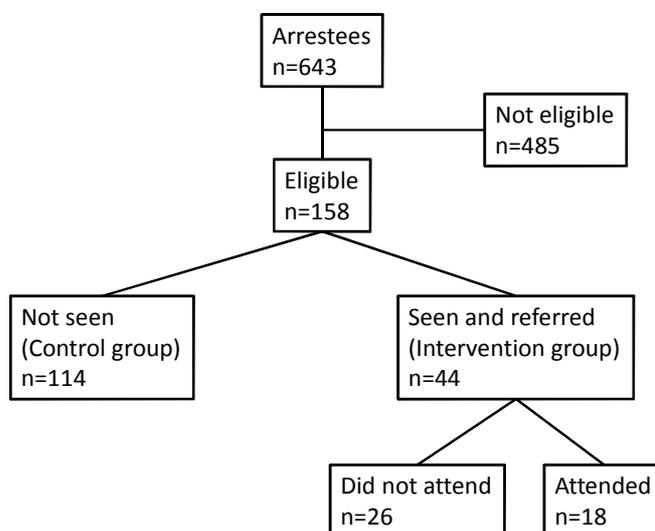

Figure 5 Flowchart of eligible arrestee pathway

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Table 2 Descriptive statistics

	Total	Control group	Intervention group	Difference between groups
Ethnicity				
White	151	110	41	
Non-white	7	4	3	χ^2=0.82, p=0.37
Age	Mdn 30.51 (IQR 22.20–41.38)	Mdn 31.07 (IQR 23.07–42.71)	Mdn 25.93 (IQR 20.20–37.74)	U=2.29, p=0.02
IMD score	Mdn 48.46 (IQR 26.66–58.26)	Mdn 47.26 (IQR 31.48–58.26)	Mdn 51.53 (IQR 23.52–56.93)	U=0.09, p=0.93
Crime Deprivation score	Mdn 0.94 (IQR 0.53–1.25)	Mdn 0.93 (IQR 0.58–1.27)	Mdn 1.00 (IQR 0.39–1.23)	U=-0.09, p=0.93
Offence type				X^2=2.99, p=0.56
Violence	27	21	6	
Criminal damage	21	16	5	
Public order	41	30	12	
Theft	63	44	19	
Drugs	-*	-*	-*	

Mdn Median; SD Standard deviation; IQR Inter-quartile range; *Small number not reported to avoid identification of participants

Of the 158 arrestees, 35 (22.2%) were rearrested within the follow-up interval. This represents an average of 314.88 days (Range 5–365 days) without an arrest and a 0.07% daily failure incident rate. For those who were rearrested, the median time to rearrest was 128 days (IQR 25–219 days). A smaller proportion of arrestees in the treatment group (13.64%) were rearrested than in the control group (25.44%). While this effect was not statistically significant (χ^2 (1)=2.20, p=0.14), it was in the anticipated direction. The difference in risk of rearrest, including 95% confidence intervals between the two groups was -0.12 (-0.25–0.01), representing a 46% improvement (relative risk reduction) in rearrest rates in the treatment group compared to the control group (Risk ratio 0.54 (-0.24–1.20). However, this difference was not statistically significant.

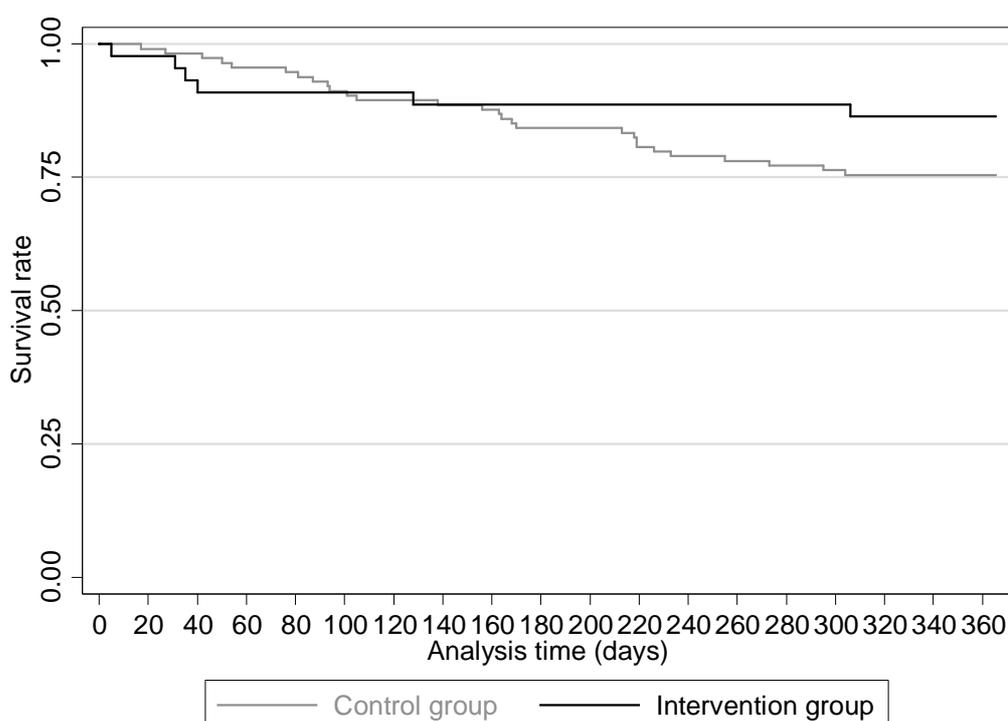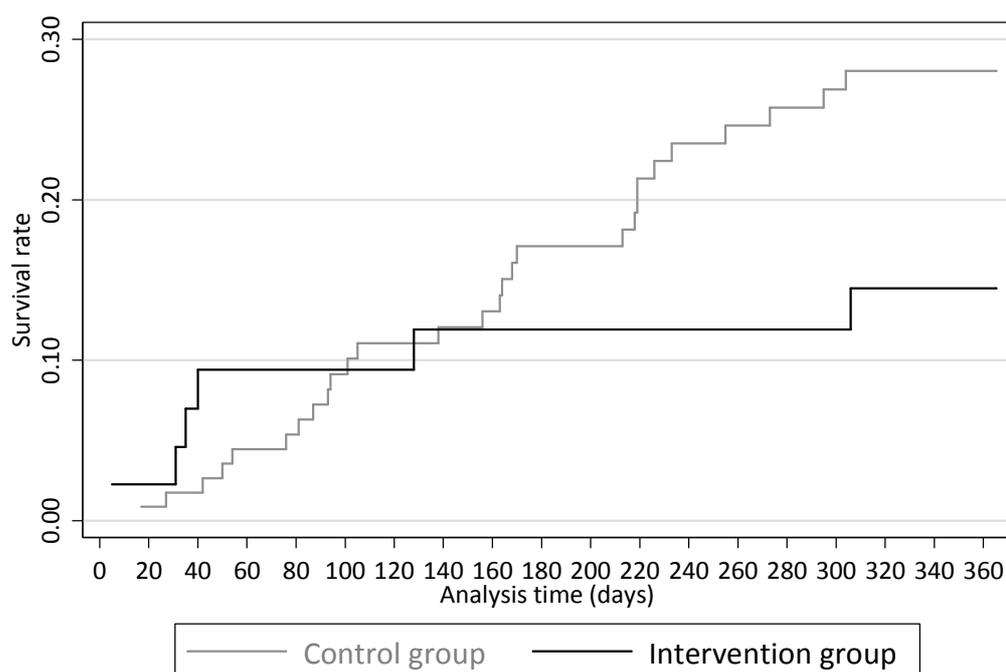Figure 6 Between-group Kaplan-Meier survival estimates

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Figure 7 Between-group Nelson-Aalen cumulative hazard estimates

As demonstrated in Table 2, the average length of time without an arrest was greater for those in the intervention group. The Cox proportional hazard ratio of treatment to control group was 0.52 (95% CI 0.22–1.25, p=0.15), indicating that respondents who received the treatment spent longer without rearrest than those in the control group. However, in the case of both of these statistics, the low rate of failure and the small number of treated arrestees resulted in low statistical power, which limited the ability of the tests to detect a statistically significant difference between the groups. Controlling for age had little effect on the hazard ratio (0.53, 95% CI 0.22–1.29, p=0.16).

Table 3 Number of days without arrest by group

	Average survival time (days)	Standard deviation	Range	Daily incident rate (%)
Intervention group	327.6	102.7	(5–365)	0.08
Control group	310.0	103.5	(17–365)	0.04

Of those rearrested, the average time to rearrest was 138.74 days (SD 90.58, Mdn 128). Of those who were rearrested, the average time to rearrest was shorter for those who received

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the treatment (M 90.83, SD 113.43, Mdn 37.50) than those who did not (M 149.66, SD 84.09, Mdn 156). In these cases, the intervention was associated with shorter time to rearrest but the difference was not statistically significant (Hazard ratio 1.20, 95% CI 0.45–3.21). However, the analysis was considerably underpowered (6% likelihood of detecting a statistically significant effect).

For those who were rearrested, the median number of rearrests was 1 and the average was 1.89 rearrests (SD 1.59, Range 1–9) indicating that a small number of arrestees were arrested repeatedly during the follow-up period. On average, among the sample who were rearrested, the treatment group (M 2.33, SD 1.03, Mdn 2) had more rearrests in the follow-up period than the control group (M 1.79, SD 1.68, Mdn 1; U=1.96, p<0.05).

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Per protocol analysis

Of those who received the intervention, all were diverted from custody and did not receive convictions for their offences and all were referred to a women's centre. Of those referred, 41% attended their appointments. Compared to those who did not receive the intervention, those who attended their appointments were less likely to be rearrested (χ^2=2.56, p=0.11), spent longer without rearrest (Hazard ratio 0.33, 95% CI 0.08–1.38, p=0.13) and had fewer rearrests (U=1.37, p=0.17). However, as this per protocol analysis is based on a very small sample ($n_{treatment}$=22) with only two failure events, the results should be treated with caution.

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Discussion

The results of this pilot evaluation suggest considerable potential for the intervention as a means of reducing reoffending among low-risk female offenders. As hypothesised, the intervention was associated with a reduction in risk of rearrest compared with the control group over a twelve month follow-up period. While the results did not indicate a statistically significant difference between the groups, the effect sizes should be considered to indicate a highly promising intervention.

As hypothesised, those arrestees who received the intervention also spent longer without rearrest than those arrestees in the control group. However, contrary to the hypothesis, among those evaluation participants who were rearrested, those in the intervention group were arrested more frequently than those who did not receive the treatment. In the case of each finding the results were not statistically significant largely as a consequence of a small rate of rearrest among a relatively small sample. However, the findings relating to rearrest and length of time without rearrest were indicative of a desired effect of the intervention and are likely to have practical significance.

The rate of rearrest among both intervention and control groups were low: only one-in-five arrestees were arrested again in the twelve month follow-up period. However, the intervention group were half as likely to be rearrested as the control group, suggesting that the intervention contributed to further reductions in risk of rearrest. The upper bound of the risk ratio (1.20) indicates that the intervention may not be a more successful option for all arrestees. Similarly, while those arrestees who received the intervention were, on average, half as likely to be arrested on any day, the confidence intervals suggest a small possibility that the true effect of the intervention may not be so desirable. It is noteworthy that the quickest rearrest (after five days), was for a member of the intervention group. Therefore, while the intervention appears to have been successful for the majority of the intervention group, it is likely that the intervention was not suitable for some. This is well illustrated by the shape of the Kaplan-Meier survival estimates for the intervention group in Figure 3. While the slope of the line for the control group is steady, the line representing the intervention group drops quickly before stabilising, with several rearrests around 35 days. This finding is further supported by the evidence relating to hypothesis three. The analysis revealed that, among arrestees who 'failed', i.e. were rearrested within the follow-up period, the median number of rearrests was greater for those who received the intervention than for those who were processed as usual through the criminal justice system. The small number of failures among the intervention group limits the generalisability of the findings, but it

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suggests that, for some individuals, the intervention was not suitable and may have had a more negative effect on their likelihood and rate of rearrest than treatment as usual. Post hoc analyses revealed no difference in demographic or characteristics of first arrest between those from the intervention group who did and did not 'fail'. The small sample size means that we cannot rule out this group of 'failures' as a statistical anomaly. However, if it is the case that some arrestees are more likely to fail, fail earlier and subsequently be arrested more frequently, it is imperative that predictors of this failure (for example, motivation to desist or severe substance abuse problems) be identified quickly and incorporated into the eligibility criteria for triage disposal. While TWP has many potentially beneficial components, some arrestees may be beyond their help or that the problems faced by these individuals may be better managed through the criminal justice system.

The intervention was comprised of two parts – a diversion from the criminal justice system and a referral to the TWP. It should be recalled that attendance at TWP was voluntary with failure to attend only precluding a future triage disposal. Although 44 arrestees received these two parts of the intervention, the intention-to-treat approach taken in the analysis did not account for actual attendance at TWP. While this was an intentional component of the evaluation design as it incorporated arrestee compliance into the delivery of the intervention – reflecting how such an intervention would be applied in practice – it limits the extent to which the different mechanisms of the intervention can be isolated. Rather than work as theorised, i.e. the diversion from custody from custody reduces the harms associated with labelling and TWP helps address criminogenic risk factors such as substance misuse or financial problems, it is possible that just one of these components is necessary to reduce risk of rearrest. As all arrestees in the intervention group received a triage disposal, an evaluation design that could help to address this question was not possible. Therefore, the effect of either component could not be isolated. However, the per protocol analysis – despite low statistical power – suggests that those who complied fully with the intervention were slightly less likely to be rearrested. While practitioners applying such an intervention may be more concerned with success rates than with knowing the 'active ingredient', isolating the effects of the twin parts of the intervention has value for understanding how the criminal justice system affects low-risk female offenders and for determining the value of women's centre like TWP. Furthermore, while we have theorised the components of the intervention as working independently, it is possible the avoidance of a conviction interacts positively with directed access to targeted services like TWP to facilitate desistance from crime.

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This evaluation suffers from a number of limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. Firstly, the use of police data to follow up on arrestees is limited as a source of censored data because it is based on the absence of the arrestee from police records. As police force records only count arrests in that region, an arrestee moving to a new residence outside the evaluation police force area or even dying during the follow-up period (without this information becoming apparent to the police or the research team) could create a false negative for rearrest. Secondly, although the evaluation identified a 46% difference in reoffending and a 48% lower daily likelihood of rearrest between intervention and control groups, the low available statistical power prevented this difference from being identified as statistically significant. Low statistical power is a common limitation of fledgling criminal justice interventions but the effect sizes of these results should still offer encouragement for future interventions. Finally, the possible existence of confounding variables should not be overlooked. As the evaluation began after the intervention commenced, it was not feasible to randomly allocate eligible arrestees. Furthermore, only limited data were available to assess the comparability of the groups, which prohibited the more rigorous propensity score matching method of comparison. Taken alongside the promising results, a further evaluation, using random allocation and a larger sample size that reflects the low base rate of reoffending among these offenders should be undertaken.

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