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Randomised trial of individually delivered focused deterrence for prevention of crime-related harms

Submission date	Recruitment status	[ ] Prospectively registered
05/07/2024	No longer recruiting	[ ] Protocol
Registration date	**Overall study status**	[ ] Statistical analysis plan
24/07/2024	Ongoing	[ ] Results
Last Edited	**Condition category**	[ ] Individual participant data
25/10/2024	Other	[ ] Record updated in last year

Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims
The aim of this study is to identify if crime harm and serious violent offending can be reduced with the introduction of focused deterrence visits, with the ability to signpost people toward partner agency support.

Who can participate?
Individuals identified in police data as suspected of committing a serious violent offence within the last 24 months and who have been involved in three or more serious violent offences in South West England, with the most recent within the last 24 months.

What does the study involve?
Participants will be randomly assigned to the experimental group or the control group. Participants in the control group will be treated in accordance with normal policy and procedure. The experimental group would be treated the same, but would also receive a focused deterrence visit. Focused deterrence visits involve IOM officers going to the homes of individuals in the treatment group and giving a scripted talk to show empathy and concern for the participant's future health and safety and provide the participant with a list of partner agency support resources available in the individual's area. The IOM officers will make three attempts to visit. If the participant is not home on the third attempt, the officer will leave a document with a focused deterrence statement and the list of partner agency support resources. The police will collect crime data for all individuals for the 12 months following the date of randomisation.

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?
The benefits of participating include the potential for reduced harm and criminal offending in the future, if the hypotheses are supported. The researchers do not anticipate any specific risks for individuals being involved in this study.

Where is the study run from?
University of Exeter (UK)

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?
February 2024 to March 2027

Who is funding the study?
Serious Violence Prevention Programme, Devon & Cornwall Office of Police & Crime Commissioner (UK)

Who is the main contact?
Prof. Katharine Boyd, k.boyd@exeter.ac.uk

Contact information

Type(s)
Public, Principal investigator

Contact name
Prof Katharine Boyd

ORCID ID
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9580-0419

Contact details
University of Exeter
Clayden Building
Streatham Rise
Exeter
United Kingdom
EX4 4PE
+44 (0)1392 725644
k.boyd@exeter.ac.uk

Type(s)
Scientific

Contact name
Prof G.J. Melendez-Torres

ORCID ID
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9823-4790

Contact details
University of Exeter
South Cloisters
St Luke's Campus
Exeter
United Kingdom
EX1 2LU
+44 (0)1392 725651
g.j.melendez-torres@exeter.ac.uk

Type(s)
Public

Contact name
Mr Neil Ralph

Contact details
Devon & Cornwall Police HQ
Middlemoor
Exeter
United Kingdom
EX2 7HQ
+44 (0)7730 926853
neil.ralph@avonandsomerset.police.uk

Additional identifiers

Clinical Trials Information System (CTIS)
Nil known

ClinicalTrials.gov (NCT)
Nil known

Protocol serial number
21.6.2024 v.1

Study information

Scientific Title
Randomised evaluation of individually-delivered focused deterrence compared to usual care in individuals with a recent history of violence for prevention of crime harm and arrests

Acronym
TURN IT DoWN

Study objectives
The aim of this study is to identify if crime harm and serious violent offending can be reduced with the introduction of focussed deterrence visits, with the ability to signpost people toward partner agency support.
It is hypothesised that individuals who received the focused deterrence (FD) treatment will have lower crime harm (measured by the Cambridge Crime Harm Index for each offence) totalled in the following 12 months.

It is also hypothesised that individuals in the treatment group will have fewer arrests for the secondary outcomes (violent crime arrests, total arrests, and non-violent arrests within the 12 months following randomization) than individuals in the control group. Lastly, it is hypothesized that the time to the first arrest will be greater for individuals receiving the FD intervention than for individuals in the control group.

Ethics approval required

Ethics approval required

Ethics approval(s)
approved 05/04/2024, FHASS Social Sciences and International Studies Ethics Committee of the University of Exeter (Stocker Road, Exeter, EX4 4PY, United Kingdom; +44 (0)1392661000; fhass-ethics@exeter.ac.uk), ref: 6054510

Study design
Single-centre interventional randomized controlled trial

Primary study design
Interventional

Study type(s)
Prevention

Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied
Prevention of crime harm in individuals with a history of repeat serious violence

Interventions
Individuals with three or more serious violent offences are assigned into one of six strata by gender (male; female) and age group (15-17 years; 18-24 years; and 25+ years old) and then randomised into the experimental or control condition with a 1:1 ratio.

Participants will be randomly assigned into batches of 40, with 20 individuals in each condition, stratified by both trial arm and randomisation strata (i.e. 12 strata overall). Each batch of 40 is then sent to the police sequentially, with the date of transmission marked as the date of randomisation (i.e. starting the clock for the 12-month follow-up period). Following on from this the IOM team will complete the FD interventions for the treatment group as quickly as possible.

Focused deterrence visits involve IOM officers going to the homes of individuals in the treatment group and giving a scripted talk to show empathy and concern for the participant's future health and safety and provide the participant with a list of partner agency support resources available in the individual's area. The IOM officers will make three attempts to visit with individuals in the experimental condition. If the participant is not home on the third attempt, the officer will leave a document with a focused deterrence statement and the list of partner agency support resources. The individuals will be analysed based on the intention-to-treat as they will be given the FD document if they are in the treatment group and do not answer the door.

The control group receives usual care.

The police will collect crime data for all individuals for the 12 months following the date of randomisation.

Intervention Type
Behavioural

Primary outcome(s)
Crime Harm is measured by the Cambridge Crime Harm Index (CHI) score totalled across all crimes perpetrated by the individual (based on official reports across England and Wales) in the

12 months following randomisation. The CHI uses the number of days incarceration recommended for the offense in the sentencing guidelines for England and Wales.

Key secondary outcome(s))
1. The number of arrests for violent crime for the individual (based on official reports across England and Wales) measured at 12 months following randomisation
2. The total number of arrests for the individual (based on official reports across England and Wales) measured at 12 months following randomisation
3. The number of non-violent arrests for the individual (based on official reports across England and Wales) measured at 12 months following randomisation
4. The time to the first arrest based on official reports following randomisation measured in days measured at 12 months following randomisation

Completion date
31/03/2027

Eligibility

Key inclusion criteria
The police force will identify individuals for this study in the recorded crime data. To be eligible for inclusion in the study, individuals must fulfil the following inclusion criteria:
1. Identified in police data as suspected of committing a serious violent offence within the last 24 months
2. Having three or more additional violent offences within the 24-month period prior to the most recent recorded crime

There is no stipulated age range.

Participant type(s)
Other

Healthy volunteers allowed
No

Age group
Mixed

Sex
All

Key exclusion criteria
1. Have a record of domestic abuse violence crime
2. Have a record of child-to-parent violence where the offender is under 18 years old
3. Have an active firearms licence
4. In prison at the time of randomization
5. Identified as out of the country at the time of randomization
6. Assigned to Multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA)
7. Assigned to Management of Sexual or Violent Offenders (MOSOVO)

Date of first enrolment

08/05/2024

Date of final enrolment
01/04/2025

Locations

Countries of recruitment
United Kingdom

England

Study participating centre
University of Exeter
Stocker Road
Exeter
United Kingdom
EX4 4PY

Study participating centre
Devon & Cornwall Police
Devon & Cornwall Constabulary
Middlemoor
Exeter
United Kingdom
EX2 7HQ

Sponsor information

Organisation
University of Exeter

ROR
https://ror.org/03yghzc09

Funder(s)

Funder type
Government

Funder Name
Serious Violence Prevention Programme, Devon & Cornwall Office of Police & Crime Commissioner

Results and Publications

Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan
The datasets generated during and/or analysed during the current study are not expected to be made available due to the sensitive nature of the data, GDPR requirements, and legal ownership by the police.

IPD sharing plan summary
Not expected to be made available

Study outputs

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
Participant information sheet	Participant information sheet	11/11/2025	11/11/2025	No	Yes