



CFO Interim Evaluation

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1. Context

Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service Creating Future Opportunities, formerly known as Co-Financing Organisation, (HMPPS CFO) coordinates large-scale programmes to support offenders into employment. This work is financially backed by the European Social Fund (ESF), The European Unions main instrument for investing in human capital and promoting equal job opportunities. The CFO has set up the CFO Activity Hubs programme in 2021. The Activity Hub programme takes a more holistic approach to the ESF goals. They were set up with the dual aims of increasing offender's engagement with mainstream services and to encourage Hub participants to lead law abiding lives.

The CFO Activity Hub Provision has been designed to offer tailored support for offenders, particularly those who are disadvantaged and face multiple barriers to employment, and who are not fully supported by existing programmes. Activity Hubs are voluntary to offenders and have been implemented to provide safe and supportive spaces for offenders to reintegrate into society. The Hubs have involved local organisations and community representatives with the aim of increasing participant engagement and to allow a space where participants can interact with positive role models and peers while developing plans to move forward and be supported into education, training and employment. The programme is split into nine ESF geographical delivery areas. The CFO Activity Hubs programme consists of 16 Community Activity Hub locations offering bespoke services to offenders, during their community sentences; and one Hub located in HMP Holme House, known as the Veteran Hub, serving ex-service personnel and vulnerable prisoners.



The Community Hubs exist as either single entity buildings/locations, a “Main” Hub; or a single “Main” Hub location and up to two “Satellite” Hub locations. Five of the 16 have opted for the Satellite Hub model, one having two Satellite Hub locations (the other four having only one Satellite Hub location). Figure 1 shows the locations of the Activity Hubs and the date of when the Hub Evaluations took place.

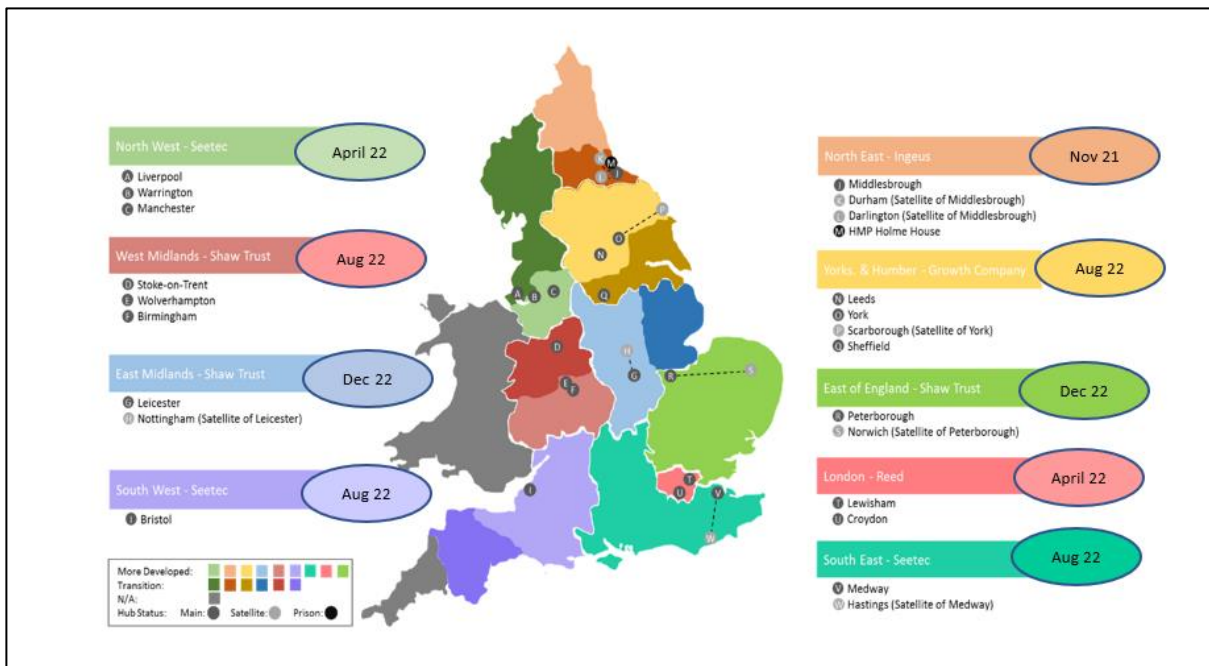


Figure 1. Activity Hub locations and Date of Evaluations

The Activity Hubs should provide a positive atmosphere where participants feel they want to partake in activities and training in non-traditional ways. The provision should have a positive impact on reoffending and provide a supportive environment with a professional working culture, effective interventions and services. Hubs have been assessed against the four Critical Success Factors (CSFs): Participant enrolments; access to human / citizenship activity; access to community and social activity; and access to interventions and services.



The following report will focus on the referral and engagement of participants across all community Activity Hubs¹. The report will be investigating the point of view of participants and Hub staff and how activities identified in the contract specification are being carried out across the hubs.

2. Approach

The purpose of this report is to collate the findings of the individual evaluations of the Hubs drawing up project wide conclusions, areas of good practice, and areas of improvement.

In order to effectively answer the set research aims, two types of methodologies were adopted, qualitative results that were supported by quantitative statistics. Qualitative data was sourced from each Hub evaluation and split into providers/areas. This report will therefore include evaluations from all providers apart from Shaw Trust that covers the East of England and East Midlands as evaluation visits are due in the last quarter of 2022. However, an evaluation has been conducted for Hubs in the West Midlands, which are managed by the same provider as the Eastern Hubs and will therefore give an indication of good practice and provision across the Provider's Hubs.

Quantitative data was sourced from HMPPS CFO's Case Assessment and Tracking System (CATS+) application, a tool used by Case Managers to record and track the details of participants and their progress, in order to provide up to date statistics on participant numbers, their resettlement needs, and achievements claimed.

¹ Due to the delivery in the HMPS Holme House Hub being different to that of the community Hubs, an evaluation of the prison Hub is conducted separately.



3. Results

Referrals

The table below shows the referral routes of all participants across the Hubs and whilst it is evident that referrals are being obtained across a range of sources, the vast majority of referrals come from the Probation Service. Feedback following the evaluation at the North East Hub has found that by engaging with the individual Probation Practitioners by providing weekly feedback on participants engagement, progression as well as highlighting their achievements, trust has been built, which in turn has helped promote the Hubs, ultimately increasing the referrals to the Hub from Probation.

	HMPPS (NPS/CRC)		CFO3 Providers		Community / Voluntary Sector organisation		Education provider (PEF/NCS)		GP/Health worker		Local Authority		Mental Health service		Other		Self referral		Grand Total
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
Wolverhampton (Hub)	359	95%	5	1%	4	1%	1	14%	1	9%	2	8%			4	1%	2	1%	378
Sheffield (Hub)	336	91%	11	3%	1	0%			2	18%					18	5%			368
Leeds (Hub)	219	92%	2	1%	1	0%			1	9%	1	4%	1	8%	12	3%	1	1%	238
Stoke on Trent (Hub)	215	79%	31	11%	11	4%					3	12%	1	8%	5	1%	5	3%	271
Peterborough (Hub)	181	79%	12	5%	3	1%					1	4%	1	8%	14	4%	16	10%	228
Croydon (Hub)	168	95%		0%	1	1%			2	18%	1	4%	1	8%	4	1%			177
Lewisham (Hub)	166	92%	2	1%		0%			1	9%	5	20%	1	8%	5	1%			180
Middlesbrough (Hub)	148	64%	13	6%		0%			1	9%	1	4%	1	8%	50	14%	17	11%	231
Bristol (Hub)	142	71%	2	1%	2	1%					1	4%			53	15%			200
Norwich (Hub)	125	73%	5	3%	2	1%							1	8%	24	7%	14	9%	171
York (Hub)	122	91%	4	3%		0%				0%					8	2%			134
Medway (Hub)	121	80%	3	2%	2	1%									23	7%	2	1%	151
Birmingham (Hub)	118	72%	8	5%	15	9%	5	71%	2	18%	3	12%			10	3%	3	2%	164
Manchester (Hub)	108	78%	5	4%	1	1%					2	8%			13	4%	9	6%	138
Durham (Hub)	77	65%	16	13%	1	1%							2	15%	11	3%	12	8%	119
Hastings (Hub)	72	86%	3	4%		0%									7	2%	2	1%	84
Leicester (Hub)	67	59%	10	9%	5	4%									25	7%	6	4%	113
Nottingham (Hub)	66	67%	1	1%	4	4%	1	14%			4	16%	1	8%	16	5%	5	3%	98
Warrington (Hub)	55	60%	3	3%		0%					1	4%	1	8%	14	4%	18	12%	92
Liverpool (Hub)	48	42%	1	1%	6	5%							1	8%	20	6%	37	24%	114
Darlington (Hub)	46	77%		0%		0%							1	8%	7	2%	6	4%	60
Scarborough (Hub)	14	78%		0%		0%			1	9%					2	1%	1	1%	18
Grand Total	2981		138		59		7		11		25		13		345		156		3776

Table 1 – Referral routes as of 01/09/22



Enrolments

Activity Hub enrolments are a Critical Success Factor for performance against which the provision is measured. All Hubs in the evaluations were frank and transparent about the difficulties that they have faced with regard to securing referrals into the Hubs. Referrals are fairly low across all Hubs, the figure below shows the volume of enrolments since the opening of the Hubs.

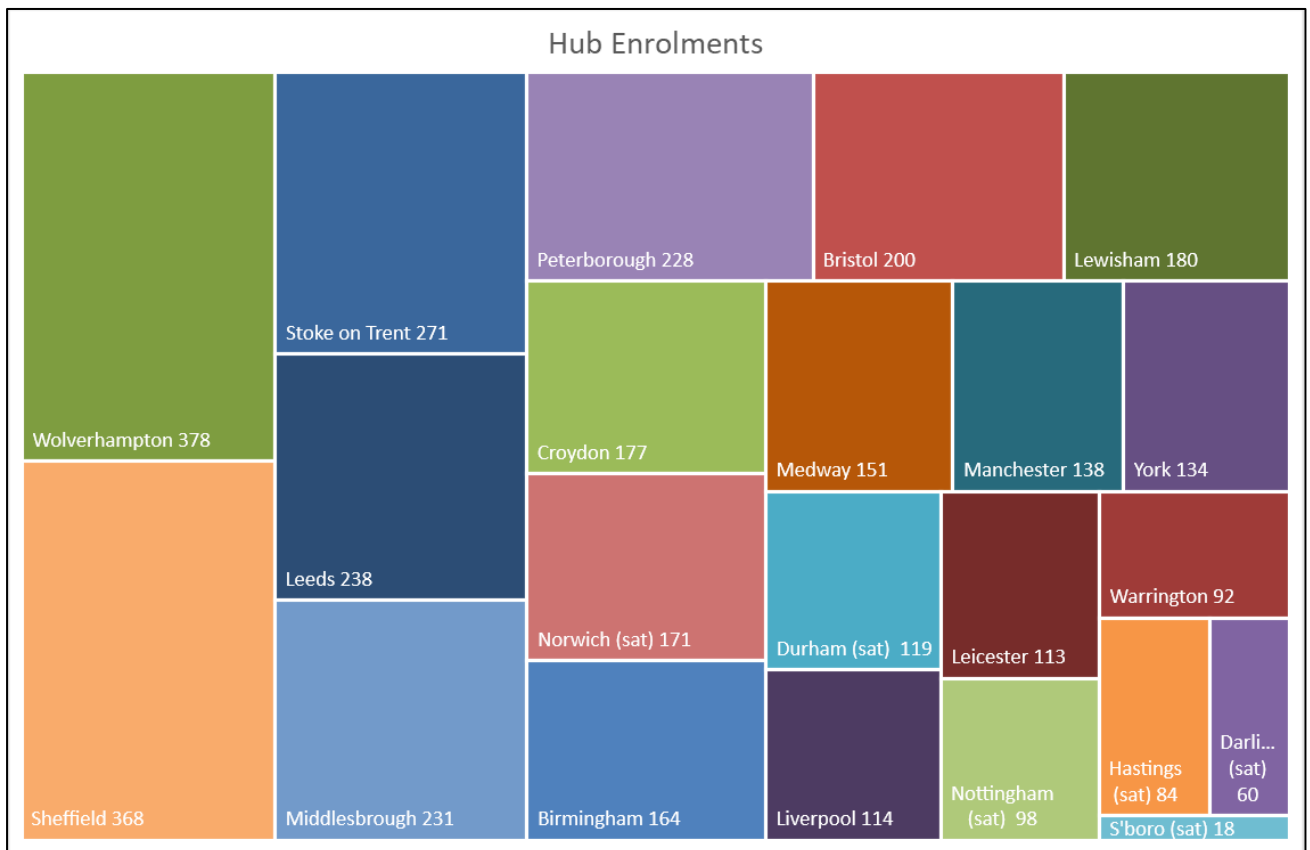


Figure 2. Activity Hubs Enrolments as of 01/09/22



Participant Demographics

Participant demographics change over time, depending on changes in the economy and changes in HMPPS and National Probation Service (NPS) structure.

Gender

Nottingham has the largest male cohort at 98%, and therefore the fewest number of females, however, it is worth noting that the number of enrolments is significantly less due to it being a Satellite Hub in comparison to the remaining Hubs. As shown in the table below Sheffield has the highest percentage of female enrolments when compared to the remaining Hubs. Both Sheffield and Medway Hubs have built links with partners who offer support and tailor their provision for females. For example, at Sheffield to help cater for the greater number of females, the Hub provides specialist, fully accredited, courses as well as the usual Hub activities, such as a Level 2 Qualification in Beauty, followed by a Level 2 Nail qualification. It is highly likely that providing female specific activities significantly increases the numbers of females that attend these two particular Hubs. Additionally, it was noted that Hastings encouraged individuals from the LGBTQIA+ community to make the Hub an accessible space, advocated inclusivity, and were involved in the neighbourhood LGBTQIA+ walk.

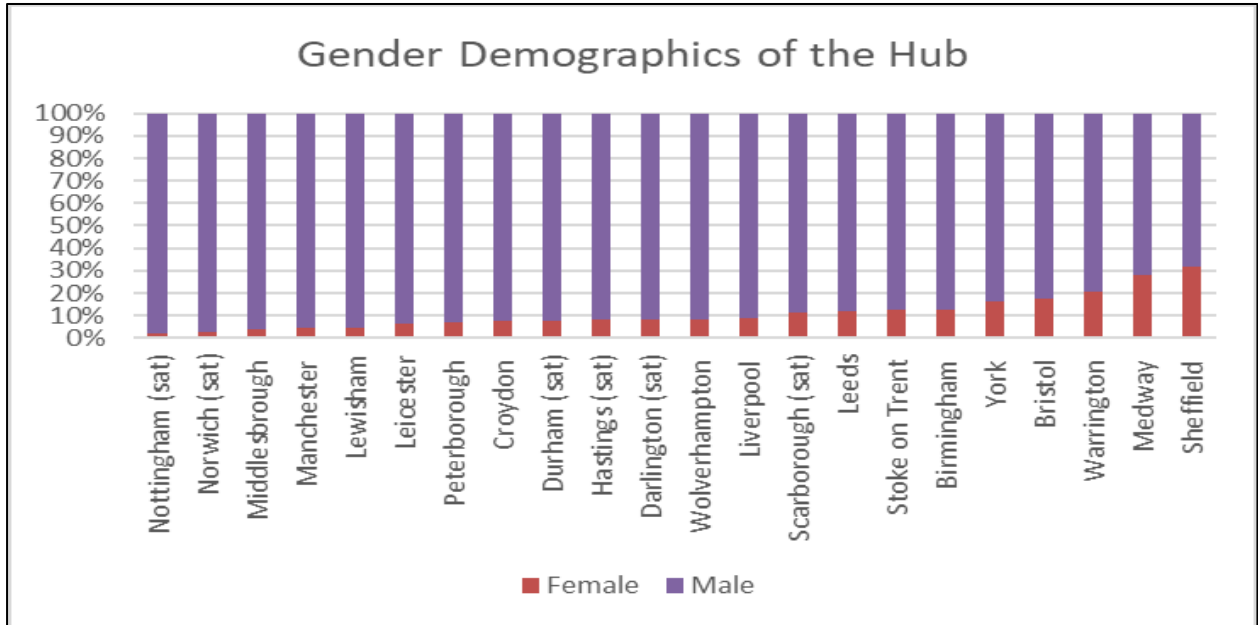


Figure 3. Gender Demographics of the Hubs.

Age

When comparing ages and Hubs, Croydon (23%), Lewisham (26%) and Medway (20%) have the highest proportion of under 25s enrolled. Anecdotal research suggests that the younger the participant is, the harder they are to engage meaning they are less likely to return to the Hub. When combining ages, 47% of Medway’s participant volume is aged 29 or under. Interestingly, when the two age groups are combined, the Scarborough satellite Hub has 39% of its participants aged 29 or under. Although there may be other contributing factors, the fact that Scarborough and Medway Hubs have a higher proportion of participants aged 29 and under, is arguably a contributing factor to both Hubs limited success when compared to activity targets.

When comparing ages to the overall volume of participants across all Hubs, the largest group of participants are between the ages of 30 and 39, accounting for 31% of the total volume, followed by those between the ages of 40 and 49 and 50+, each accounting for 21% of the entire volume. The average Hub participant is over the age of 30, with over 30s accounting for 73% of the Hub population. It is noted that 68% of



the probation population is aged over 30 comprising of 32%, 19% and 17% aged in their 30s, 40s and over 50 respectively. It is probable that those aged under 25 may not be engaging in activities due to being more resistant to intervention-type approaches, or that what is on offer is simply not appealing to many young people. By organising more targeted events or activities to get them more engaged, it is highly likely this will encourage them to return and allow them to benefit from other forms of support. For example, similar to the 'women only' days, maybe introduce a specific slot of activity for under 25-year-olds, such as an afternoon of sports tailored for them. This is not to exclude this age group from other activities, but to boost engagement.

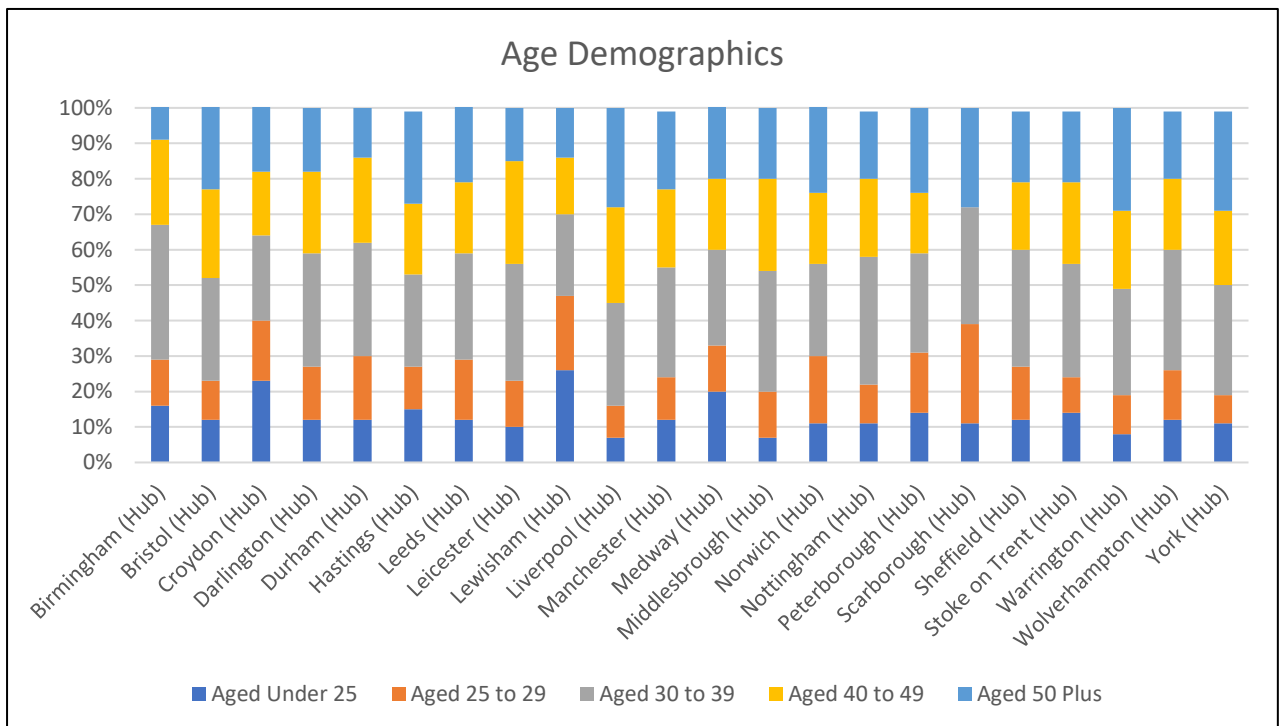


Figure 4 – Age Demographics of Hubs

Ethnicity

The majority of Hub participants are White; however, the BAME participation rates in the Croydon and Lewisham Hubs are higher, with over 60% of participants being of BAME background, which is representative of the local population. This raises the



question of whether the activities offered are intentionally targeted at white older men, or if this group simply participates more frequently in the Hubs.

Below is a chart that shows the comparison of ethnicity across the Hubs.

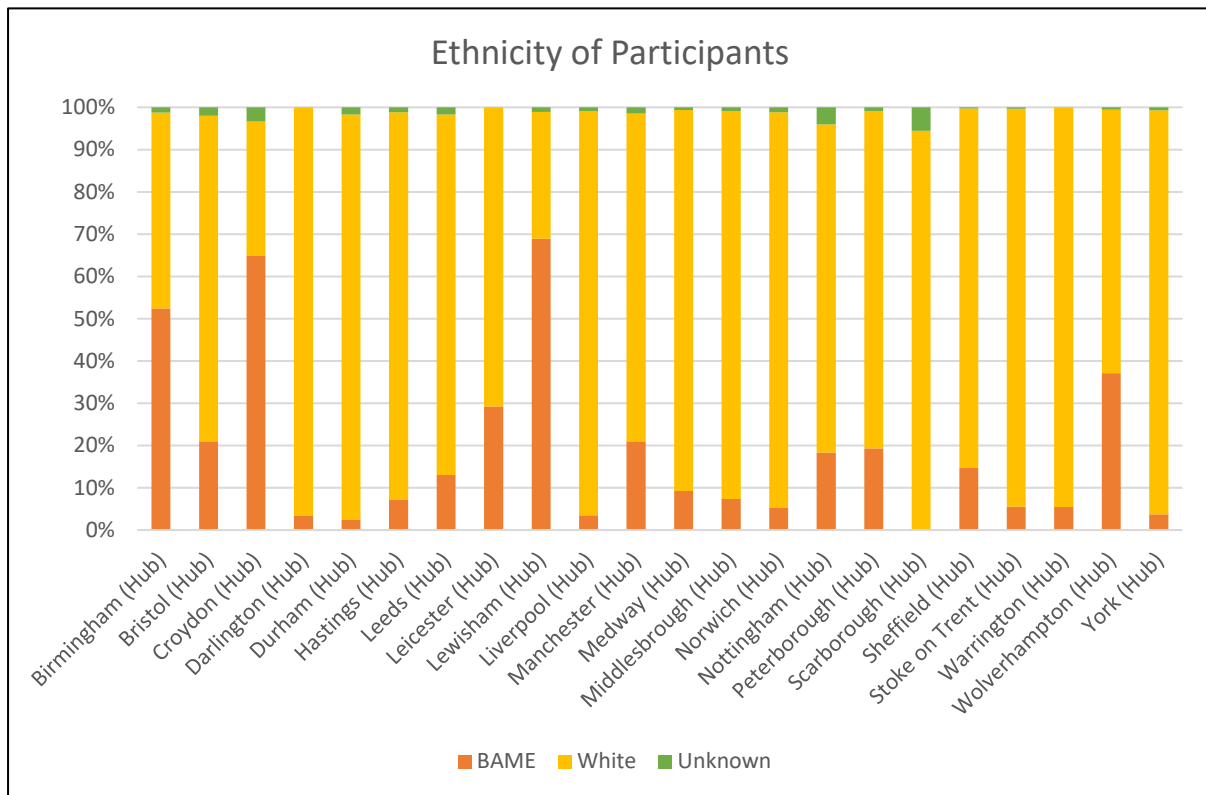


Figure 5 – Ethnicity Demographics of Hubs

Accommodation

Indicative of their housing arrangements, the table below shows that, across all Hubs, a sizable portion of participants reside in rental properties. The data shows an increase in referrals from Approved Premises (APs), which is in line with the Hubs individual evaluation plans where strong links with APs have been evident, for example, the links the Bristol Hub have created with local APs.



A substantial number of participants claim to stay with friends and family, but it would need to be established whether this is merely ‘sofa surfing’ or a genuine strong familial support structure.

Additional research would be needed to evaluate whether alternative reported accommodation status such as homelessness, has any effect on participant engagement and retention.

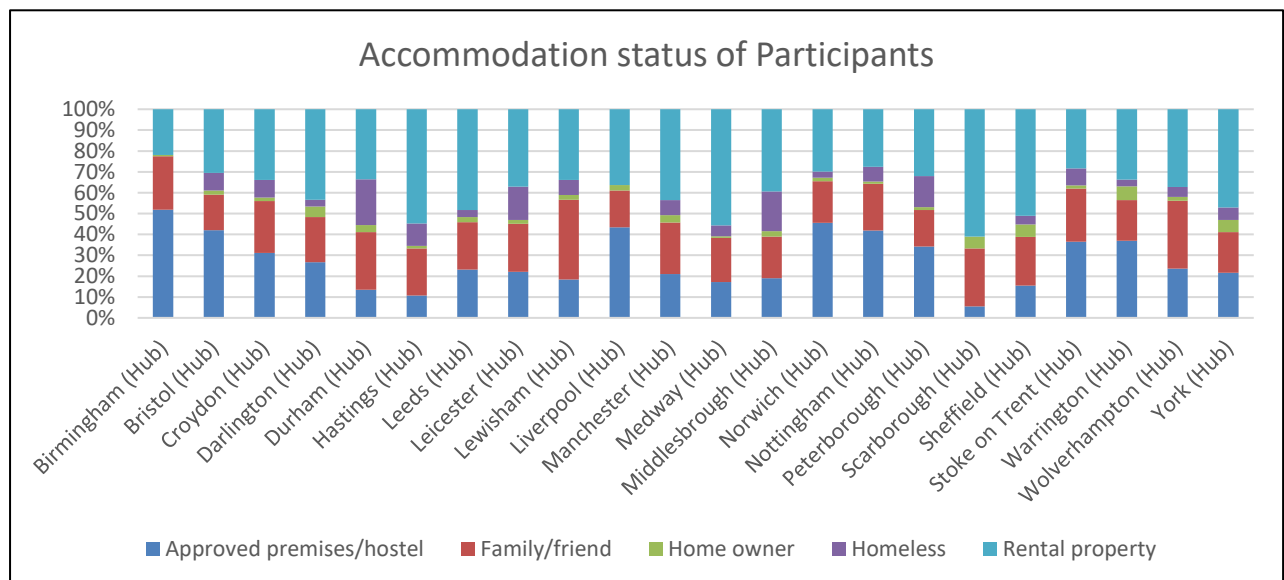


Figure 6 – Accommodation status of participants at enrolment

Travel Times

All Hubs were within easy reach of public transport, with bus and train stations within walking distance. It was found that participants don't necessarily coincide their Hubs visits with appointments with other agencies, such as with the Probation Service. From the conversations that were held with participants, they expressed how they preferred to fill their week up and so were happy to visit the Hub no matter what. However, this didn't seem to be the case for the small number of participants who attended the Scarborough (Satellite) Hub, as participants did appear to coincide their external



appointments with Hub visits, as such siting the Hub near the Probation office would seem to be an advantage in Scarborough, but not necessarily for other Hubs. However, having the Probation office near a Hub is beneficial as most referrals come from NPS.

When exploring the data, the findings suggest that overall, across all of the Hubs, 60% of participants travel under 30 minutes to get to the Hub. Figure 7 below shows the largest proportion of participants are travelling between 15-30 minutes (1,453 participants). However, there are participants travelling for a longer period, for example, 6% of the total participants travel over 60 minutes and 10% travel between 45-60 minutes. This suggests that overall, most participants travel a relatively short distance, so it is highly likely that the majority of participants using the Activity Hubs find it reasonably easy to access in terms of travel time. However, it is unknown if distance is a barrier for those who have not attended the Hub or have attended the Hub only once and have not returned due to the distance as these participants are not available to us to survey.

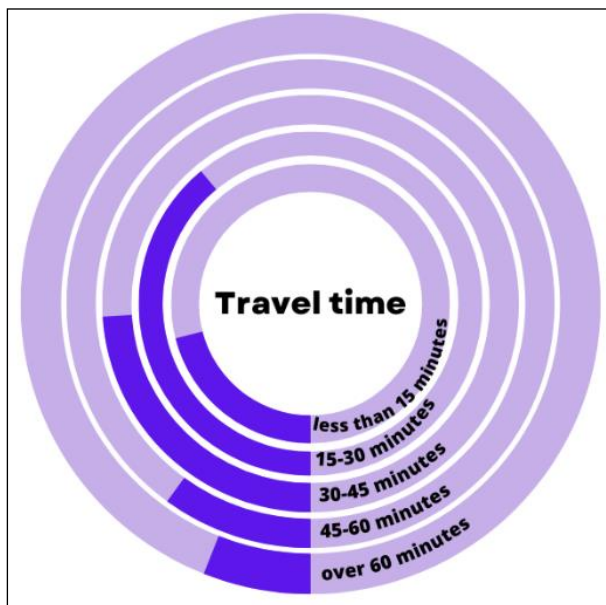


Figure 7 – Travel time of Participants across the Hubs



Hub Accessibility and Impact this has on Retention

The investigation of Activity Hub locations, accessibility, and participant retention has been conducted with regard to how these elements affected retention rates – in other words, a participant returning after their first visit. Additional consideration was also given to whether these elements were linked. The analysis showed that certain Hubs retained participants better than others, with the North East/Ingeus Hubs being able to maintain involvement more than the other regions/providers, despite being less accessible than most Hubs. Therefore, retention cannot be solely linked to accessibility.

The Hub's geographical location does not necessarily have a positive effect on participant retention. The findings suggest that when a Hub is closer to the town centre and other services, such as the job centre and the probation office, participants are less likely to return. Therefore, on the flip side, participants are more likely to return to the Hub when it is not within proximity to the town centre and other services. It should be recognised, nevertheless, that location cannot be the sole factor affecting retention, as the provider and the services provided by the Hubs are also highly likely to influence a participant's return. Furthermore, we do not currently know what the opinions of those who have not visited the Hubs nor the opinions of those who visited the Hub only once and didn't return.

Further to this, from the research conducted, it has been found that accessibility cannot be truly measured by provider due to the significant differences between each Hub location, therefore, accessibility is Hub dependent. While maintaining the Hubs' accessibility for members' modes of transportation is important, their retention does not depend on their closeness geographically. However, it is more probable that participants are highly likely to travel longer distances if the Hub is more appealing to them, illustrating the importance of what the Hub has to offer.

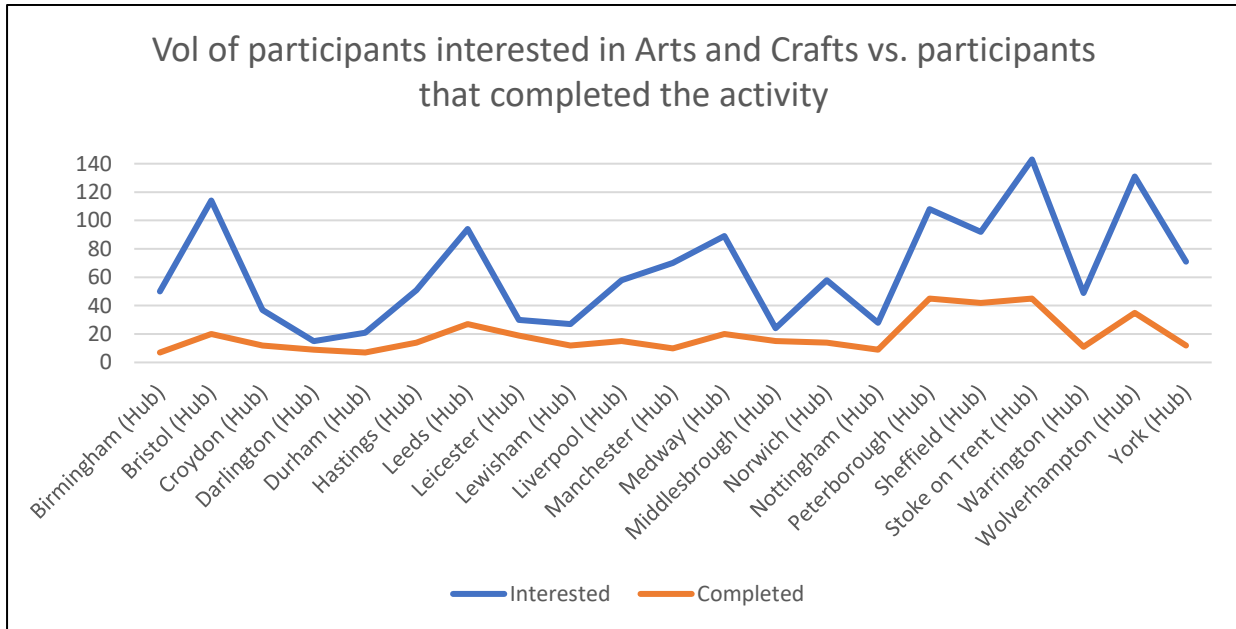


Figure 8 – Vol of participants interested in Arts and Crafts vs. participants that completed the activity

Figure 8 contrasts the proportion of participants who indicated an interest in arts and crafts when assessed² prior to enrolment, with the data recorded in CATS+ under the HC-05 *Arts and Crafts* activity. The difference is likely to be the result of the Hub not offering this activity or the absence of Hub attendees who previously expressed interest in it. The graph shows how few people took part in and finished this activity in comparison to those that indicate interest. Although this is only one illustration of an activity comparison, the trend is likely to be the same to the majority of activities, where the Hub is not delivering activities that participants have expressed an interest in.

Not all activities on CATS+ relate to activities that participants have shown an interest in during the assessment, meaning that it is impossible to analyse any correlation between activities undertaken at the Hub and activities the participant has expressed an interest in.

² During the assessment the Support Worker gains an understanding of the participant’s interests in order to answer the question: “What activities is the Participant interested in? (tick all which apply)” with a list of hobbies/interests.



Offences

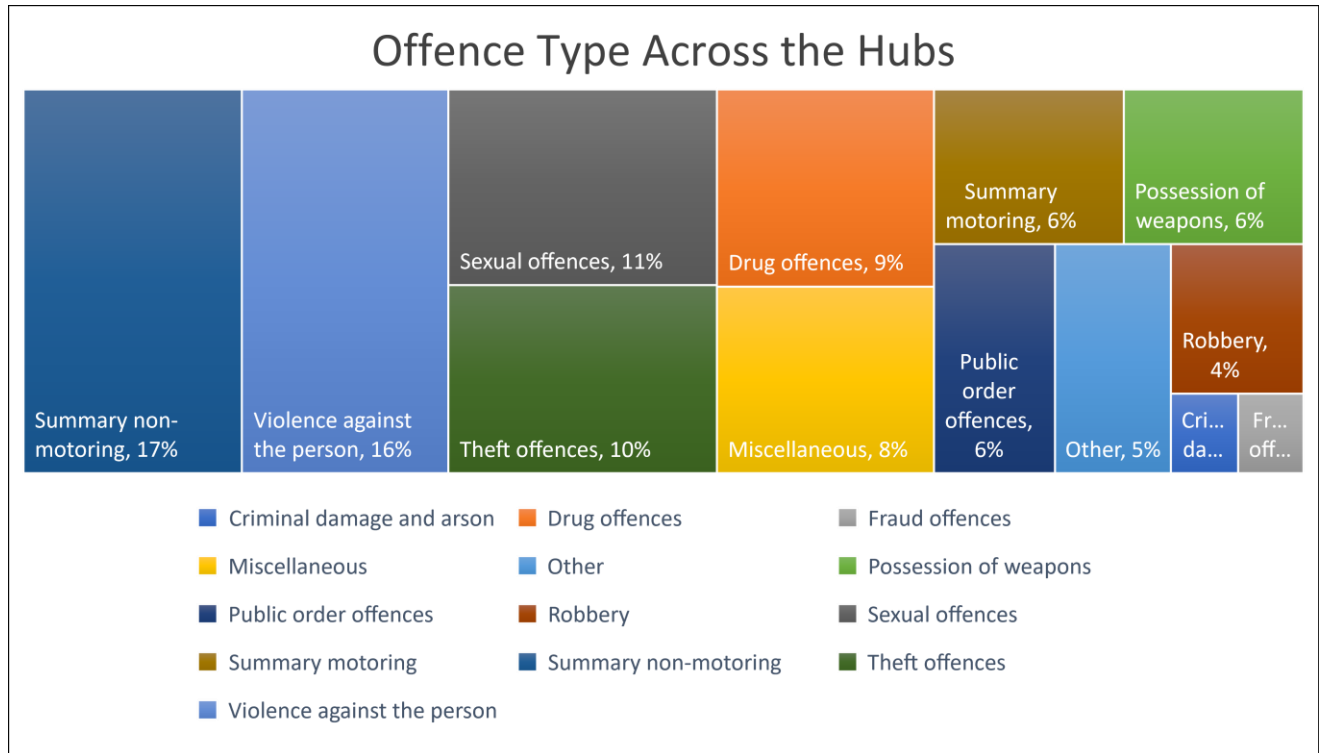


Figure 9 – Offence Type of Participants

The figure above shows the offence types for participants enrolled in the Hubs. Support Workers within the Hubs reported that a high number of participants have been convicted of a *sexual offence*, however from the data, *violence against the person* and *summary of non-motoring* (minor offences dealt with by the Magistrates excluding motoring offences. Examples include minor criminal damage, being drunk and disorderly, common assault), are the offence types that are most likely to be committed by participants.

Further to this, figure 10 shows the proportion of participants engaging with the Hubs that have committed a sexual offence. The Hubs that appear to have the highest proportion of participants convicted of sexual offences are Norwich (20%), Liverpool (15%) and Darlington (15%). Although, the average number of sexual offence convictions across all Hubs is 11%, it is still the third highest reported offence type.



Arguably those that are committed of sexual offences are likely to take up more staff availability/time as they are a cohort of participants that will have a greater dependency on the Hub as their need for support is greater and any individual risks will need to be fully appreciated and managed effectively. Specific adjustments often need to be made to accommodate participants who have committed sexual offences due to the risk. An example of extra measures being utilised for participants that have been convicted of sexual offences would be at the Stoke Hub as they have created a gym space that participants have access too as they are not able to do so in the community.

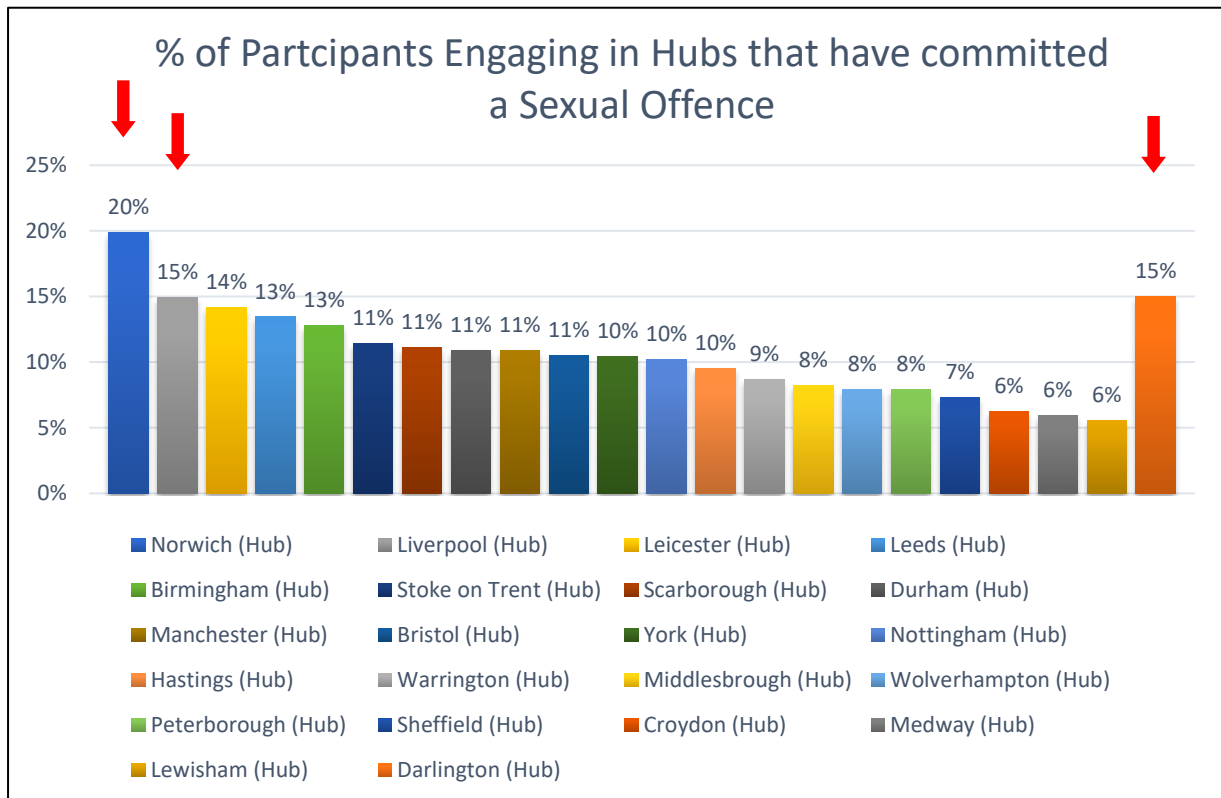


Figure 10 – The percentage of participants engaging in the Hubs that have committed a sexual offence

All Hubs have created their own way of managing certain risk, for example: In the London Hubs they use coloured lanyards that make specific groups of participants easily identifiable, such as identifying gang members who need to be segregated or managed differently to other participants within the Hub. The colours are changed daily



so other participants cannot associate a colour with an offence type/specific sub-group but the staff at the Hubs can identify participants needs easily.

Service Level Performance

Activity Hub	Provider	SL1 - Enrolments	SL2 - Human / Citizenship	SL3 - Community & Social	SL4 - Intervention & Services
		% Achieved	% Achieved	% Achieved	% Achieved
East Midlands - Leicester Hub	Shaw Trust	37%	21%	22%	0%
East of England - Peterborough Hub	Shaw Trust	63%	54%	56%	11%
London - Croydon Hub	Reed	28%	28%	29%	3%
London - Lewisham Hub	Reed	27%	22%	22%	1%
North East - Middlesbrough Hub	Ingeus	57%	83%	85%	31%
North West - Liverpool Hub	Seetec	15%	11%	9%	1%
North West - Manchester Hub	Seetec	17%	7%	9%	0%
North West - Warrington Hub	Seetec	13%	8%	7%	1%
South East - Medway Hub	Seetec	30%	23%	23%	2%
South West - Bristol Hub	Seetec	24%	14%	12%	2%
West Midlands - Birmingham Hub	Shaw Trust	28%	21%	18%	0%
West Midlands - Stoke on Trent Hub	Shaw Trust	43%	53%	42%	5%
West Midlands - Wolverhampton Hub	Shaw Trust	62%	69%	59%	9%
Yorkshire - Leeds Hub	Growth	36%	24%	20%	1%
Yorkshire - Sheffield Hub	Growth	53%	49%	50%	5%
Yorkshire - York Hub	Growth	20%	11%	11%	1%
More Developed		31%	25%	23%	3%
Transition		40%	51%	49%	12%

Table 2 – Performance Figures as of September 2022

The table above shows the performance figures as of September 2022. As can be seen some Hubs are performing better than others. The Peterborough and Wolverhampton Hubs are the two Hubs that have reached over 60% of their overall Service Level (SL) 1 – Enrolment target; with Warrington, Liverpool and Manchester Hubs struggling to enrol participants, with a rate of 17% or under when compared to their target profiles set by each provider for monthly throughput against a single contract period total required by HMPPS CFO.

As seen in Figure 11, the top 5 Hubs for SL 1, 2 and 3 are Peterborough, Wolverhampton, Stoke, Middlesbrough and Sheffield. The Hubs are managed by three different providers, but Shaw Trust is the provider for 3 of the 5 Hubs. Furthermore, the Middlesbrough Hub (and its Satellite Hubs in Durham and Darlington) that is managed by Ingeus, is outperforming the remaining Hubs when it comes to completed



SL4 activities at 31%. As mentioned above, the Hubs that need the most improvement when reviewing targets are mainly Bristol, Warrington, Liverpool and Manchester of which all four come under Seetec, seen in Figure 12. It is noted that the most successful Hub in terms of SLs achieved, is the Hub with the most satellite Hubs. There is a realistic possibility that this success is partly due to the geographic spread of the Hubs allowing for more referrals to be converted into enrolments which in turn feed into more activity taking place.



Figure 11 – The top 5 Performing Hubs

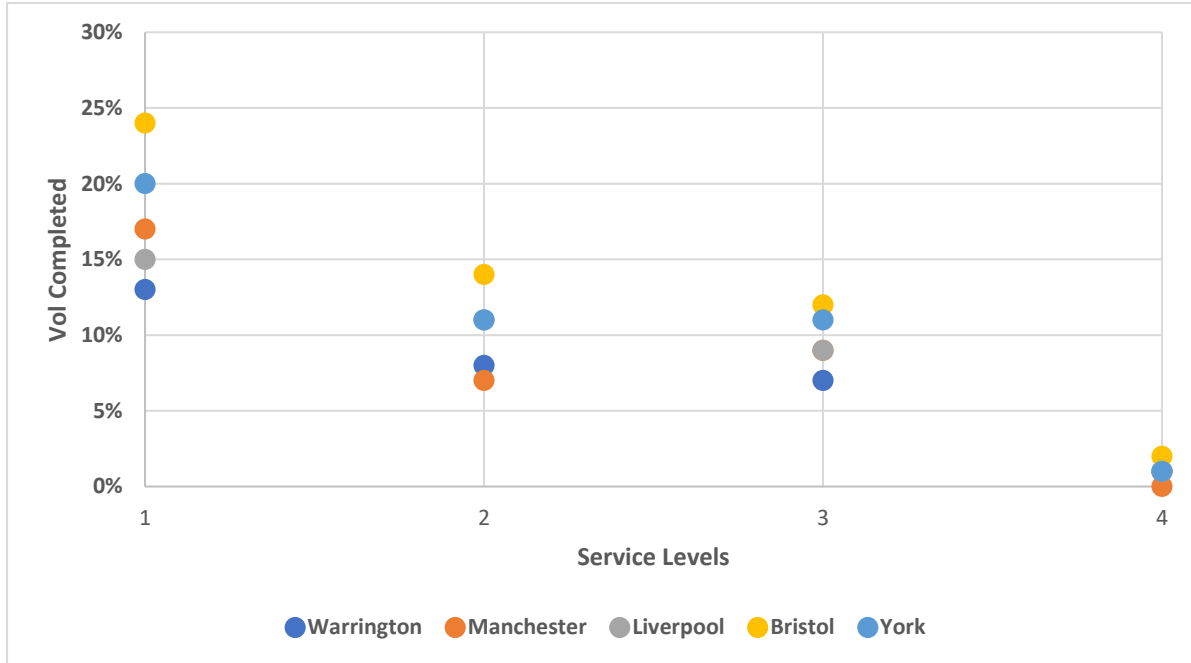


Figure 12 – The Bottom 5 Performing Hubs

Overall, all Hubs are not reaching their targets as identified in the Hubs individual evaluations. When the total activities achieved is combined, all Hubs are achieving less than 40% of their targets. Clearly there is a knock-on effect from the reduced number of referrals being received, which in turn is making the number of enrolments lower than expected and therefore, the number of activities conducted at each Hub being below expectations.

The Effect of Activities on Retention

The data revealed that the major activities provided at the Hubs are in fact related to retention, but it is not largely because of who is engaged — it is only because they are initially available. This indicates that the activities should be seen as more of a "draw" for effective retention as the availability of activities increases the likelihood of higher retention rates. The concept that activities should be seen as a "draw" for participants is further supported by the fact that having activities accessible also connects to greater participation throughout the Hubs as a whole.



Whilst activities being available is clearly the predominant factor in retention, it cannot be ignored that there are gaps within certain demographics. Activities being available at a Hub location increasing participant retention, is likely to be related to returning participants being the ones who find the activities the most enjoyable in the first place. This is demonstrated through the data as participants taking part in the activities is mirrored by who is returning. Evidence suggests that it is white men aged 50 plus benefitting the most from the available activities and thus are returning. Therefore, the activities do successfully correlate to retention, but it seems only to be mainly retaining one particular demographic (albeit one of the largest demographics attending the Hubs). More research is required to get a greater knowledge of the elements influencing retention, but also into what activities would appeal to and be a 'draw' to women, those aged under 50 and BAME offenders.

Additionally, this is not to say that simply having an activity available will automatically increase the actual rate of retention, as it can be argued it is down to how the activities are being offered to participants. Participants are more likely to return to a Hub if the activity they did, such as sports, was relevant to their interests or they were made to feel engaged and welcomed. The differing retention rates across the providers are likely to be down to each Hub's approach to how the activities are being put on. As evaluation visits have found, staff from the Sheffield and Bristol Hubs are actively going out of their way to draw in more female participants and are also tailoring activities in order to appeal to them.



The following visualisation highlights the overall retention and activity rates across providers:

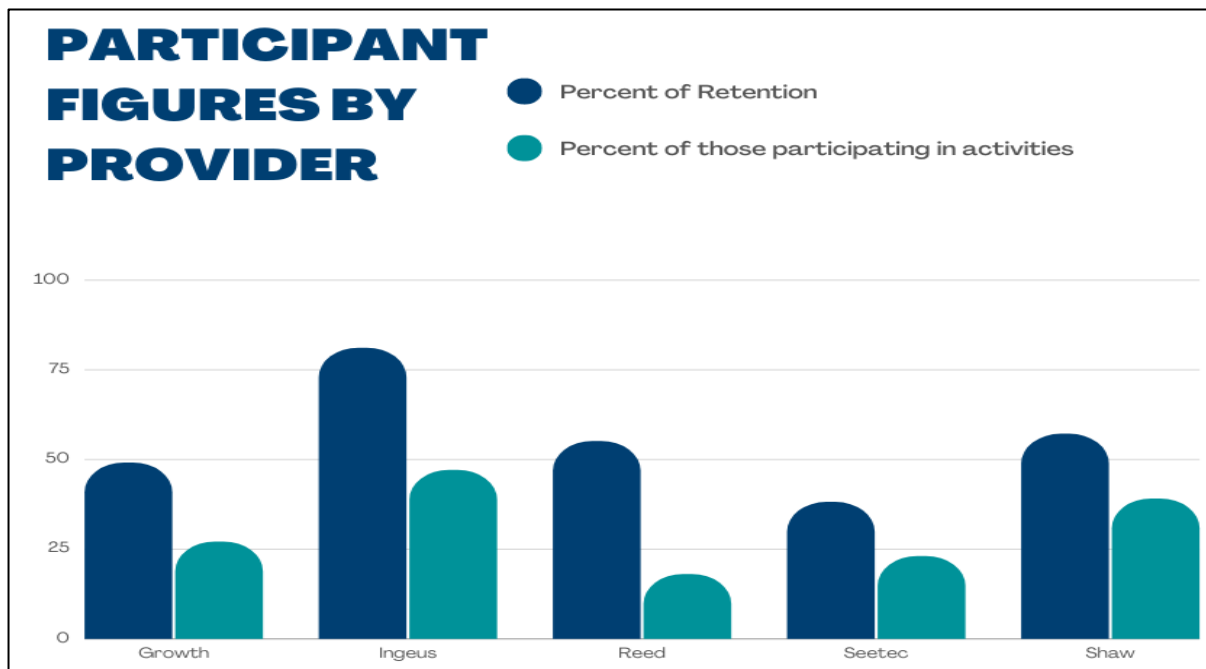


Figure 13 – The percentage of participants taking part in activities vs. retention by Provider

Ingeus had the highest rate of retention, with 81% of participants returning across all three Hubs: Middlesbrough, Durham and Darlington (the latter two being the satellite Hubs). Out of the satellite Hubs, Darlington has the highest rate of retention, with 87% of participants returning, and Durham with the lowest (78%). This is considerably greater than Seetec whose rate of retention was 39%: a 43 percentage-point reduction when compared to Ingeus. Within Seetec’s Hubs, the rate of retention differs, with the highest being Hastings with 55% returning, and the lowest being Medway with only 33% returning. This is highly likely to be due to specific elements inside the Hubs, such as participants not needing a cause to return, differing budgets within each provider or whether they are sufficiently providing an environment conducive to effective delivery of engaging services.



4. Conclusion

To conclude, each Activity Hub is to some extent successful with regard to fostering an environment that is encouraging and motivating for participants. They are providing resources and support to aid participants in developing new skills, gaining confidence, and reintegrating into society. The Hubs are deliberately designed to provide a wide variety of activities that are conducted both one-to-one and in groups depending on what is best for the participant as well as the type of activity to be completed. After reviewing each provider's individual evaluations, it became clear from the recommendations made that there are reoccurring themes across all Hubs. These have been elaborated on below.

There are 16 Community Activity Hub locations that exist as single entity buildings/locations: consisting of either a main Hub or a main Hub with up to two Satellite Hubs. Five of the 16 locations have opted for the Satellite model, one having two Satellite Hub locations (the other four having only one Satellite Hub location). All Hubs are within easy reach of public transport, with bus and train stations within walking distance. When exploring the data, findings suggest that 60% of participants travel under 30 minutes to get to the Hub. This suggests that overall, most participants travel a relatively short distance.

The Nottingham Hub has the largest male cohort when compared to other Hubs however it is worth noting that as it is a Satellite Hub, the number of enrolments is significantly less. When looking at female participants, Sheffield holds the greatest volume when compared to the other Hubs. Furthermore, most participants that attend Hubs are aged between 30 and 39. 73% of the participants across all Hubs are aged over the age of 30, showing that the offenders under 30 are underrepresented across Hubs. Additionally, most Hub participants are White except for Croydon and Lewisham where over 60% of participants belonging to a BAME background; this being representative of the local population. When it comes to accommodation, it can be



seen that most participants reside in rental properties, although, it does appear from the data that there is an increase in referrals from approved premises. There are also a substantial number of participants that claim to stay with family and friends; showing that a lack of stable accommodation is a common theme for Hub participants.

The Hubs geographical location does not necessarily have a positive effect on participant retention. Findings suggest that when a Hub is located closer to the town centre and other services, such as the job centre, participants are less likely to return. However, location cannot be the sole factor affecting retention as the provider and the services provided by the Hubs are also highly likely to influence a participant's return.

All Hubs are failing to hit their targets, from the number of referrals translating into the number of enrolments; to the number of people engaging in the Hub to the number of activities claimed. Over the past few months, performance does appear to have been continually improving and by implementing the recommendations from the individual Hub evaluations and the recommendations below this is almost certain to help with the Hubs' development.

5. Recommendations

- **Improve referrals between the Probation Service & CRS**

All Hubs should prioritise maintaining and developing strong links with the Probation Service & CRS to support participant referrals. Ensuring all relevant offenders are referred to the service would allow more participants to be enrolled onto the caseload and give the opportunity for support. A recommendation would be to support probation with the referral process, or allow for batch referrals, making the process quicker and more efficient for all. This also includes ensuring that referrals to the Hubs can be made through the R&M system. Case Managers should continue to build strong relationships with



other CJS organisations and promote CFO within the CJS to ensure that referrals are being made and duplication is reduced.

- **Establish referral routes with CFO3**

There is very little in the way of referrals from CFO3 programmes. Continuing to build relationships and creating a direct referral pathway from the CFO3 programme is almost certain to increase Hub referrals but will also decrease the number of administrative tasks that the Probation Service must complete.

- **Improve Referral Rates and Retention Rate**

More positive drives for early engagement to increase the number of referrals is highly likely to translate into an improvement in engagement rates. One of the ways of increasing initial interest could be to hold open mornings so that potential participants can view the Hubs. This would help with the 'warming up' of participants as their first appointment is not necessarily their enrolment appointment. Furthermore, open mornings could benefit those individuals that are not very confident or suffer from mental health issues such as anxiety.

- **Establish Partnership working with other agencies**

As shown in Sheffield and Medway the benefits of linking in with other community providers such as women support groups is evident. It is recommended that other Hubs make additional inroads to engage with third party organisations to improve participant engagement.

- **Support Worker visits to Hubs from other providers**

There are Hubs that are doing great things and so if Support Workers had the opportunity to visit Hubs that are outside of their provider area, they can collaborate on what is working well and perhaps what isn't, then hopefully, the participant experience will improve.

- **Review Payments by Results Process**

Due to all Hubs not reaching their original monthly targets and retention rates being poor across the board, a review of the payment process may be beneficial. It is likely to serve the Hubs better to split enrolment payments, so



the emphasis is not on the enrolment/assessment completion but rather on the pathway moving from referrals to enrolment to engagement.

- **Review SL Targets**

Once more as a result of all Hubs failing to meet their SL objectives, it is necessary to evaluate the self-imposed target levels to make them more realistic and to alter the carryover procedure so that achievement of targets is acknowledged on a monthly basis rather than the deficit continuing over.

- **CATS+ Training**

It is strongly recommended that staff who receive regular and multiple 'good example' CATS+ inputs, should be encouraged to complete the train the trainer course. In doing so, best practices can be shared with all staff, as well as having trainers on site daily who can support both new starters and current staff. By having someone on site also means that training can be given at a pace and in a way that Hub staff feel would be most beneficial and effective for them.

- **Correct recording of activities**

It is recommended that all staff at all levels are supported to understand what activities have been agreed from their bid and contract for delivery to participants. It is a recommendation that Hub staff meet regularly with their QA team to ensure everyone is clear about how to improve submissions and ensure they reflect the ACE guidelines and ESF requirements.

- **Further research**

It would be beneficial to investigate the retention rate of participants so that a greater understanding can be gained. For example, there appears to be a higher volume of participants that have been convicted of a sexual offence returning to the Hub. It would be useful to know what are the motivations of the participants that choose to return and the reasons why participants do not return.