



HM Prison &
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The effect of CFO Activity Hubs on Reoffending Risk Post Release from Custody

Heléna Jarvis, November 2023

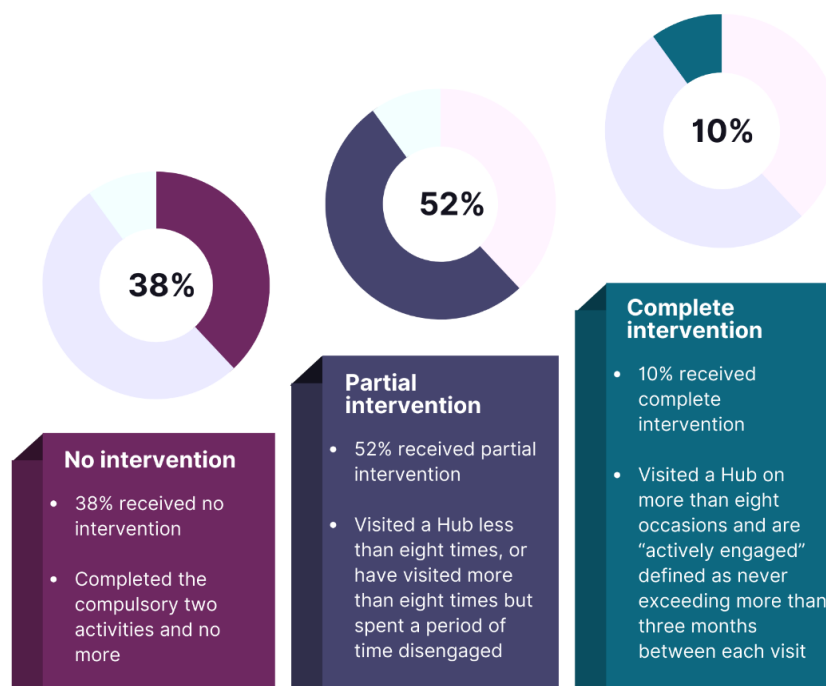
This report provides a brief overview of the impact on reoffending rates of the CFO Activity Hubs programme. Results show that over a 6-month follow up period after enrolling onto the CFO Activity Hubs programme, participants who received intervention were **less likely to reoffend** compared to a 'similar' group of participants that did not receive intervention.

1. ABOUT THE CFO ACTIVITY HUBS PROGRAMME

The CFO Activity Hubs is a voluntary programme from the HMPPS Creating Future Opportunities (CFO) which aims to assist individuals on a licence or community order to abstain from criminal behaviour by supporting them to successfully reintegrate and contribute to their communities. The programme is primarily delivered within the community (with one Hub located in HMP Holme House) and focuses on offering support to those who face multiple barriers, have complex needs, and would have difficulty accessing existing mainstream services. Many offenders have skill deficits that make it difficult for them to succeed in the community, the CFO Activity Hubs seek to address this by offering a holistic range of meaningful activities where participants can learn new skills, spend time with others who understand their rehabilitation journey, and receive support to develop the necessary personal skills to ultimately desist from offending.

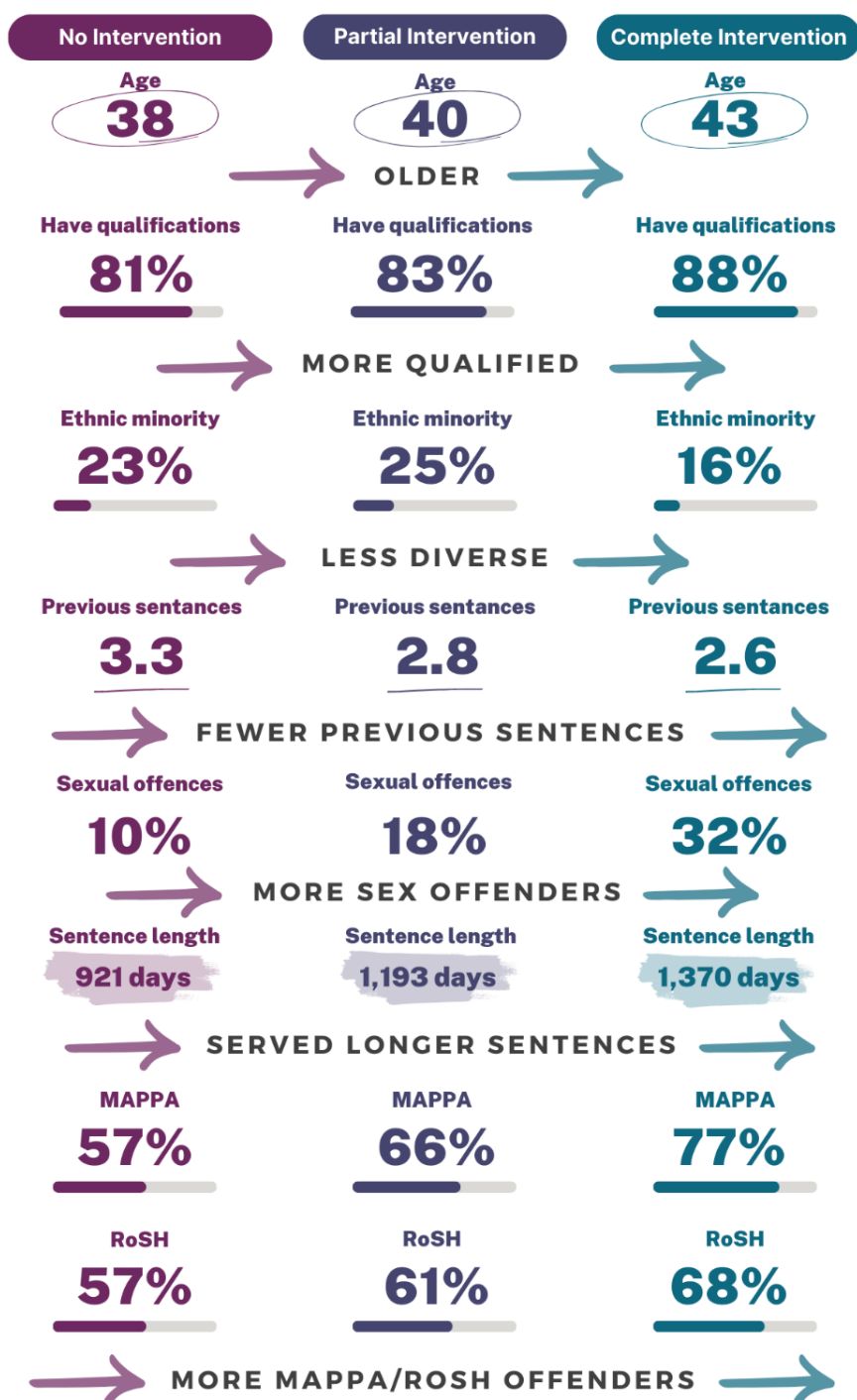
2. THE EVALUATION

The aim of this analysis is to assess the impact on reoffending rates of the CFO Activity Hubs programme (excluding the Hub at HMP Holme House) within a six month follow up period after enrolment onto the programme. For this analysis we use a binary measure of proven reoffending (reoffending rate) – ‘did they reoffend?’ We define reoffending as having received a new prison or non-custodial sentence that resulted in a sentence length of greater than zero days. The analysis is restricted to individuals who have enrolled onto the CFO Activity Hubs programme between June 2021 and December 2022 and have spent a period of time in custody prior to enrolling. For the purpose of this analysis, the level of programme intervention is split into three ordinal categories: None, Partial and Complete.



The final sample size was 3,143 offenders who enrolled onto the programme, including 93.16% men and 6.84% women. The treatment sample comprised 308 (10%) individuals who received an intervention level of ‘complete’ and 1,649 (52%) who received an intervention level of ‘partial’. The remaining 1,186 (38%) individuals did not receive intervention and were used to select a matched comparison group. While we could in theory have compared those who have enrolled onto the CFO Activity Hubs programme with the general offender cohort, there was likely to be substantial differences between the two groups.

3. GROUP PROFILES



Some factors are associated with a lower reoffending risk. For example, each additional year of age is associated with a two percent reduction in the odds of reoffending. In addition, those who served longer sentences are less likely to reoffend than those on shorter sentences¹. As those that received 'complete' intervention possess more factors associated with a lower reoffending risk, we expect to observe differences in the reoffending rates between the groups independent of the intervention. As such, we must identify a way of isolating to what extent any differences in reoffending rates can be attributed to the intervention, rather than the differences in participant characteristics.

¹ [The factors associated with proven re-offending following release from prison: findings from Waves 1 to 3 of Surveying Prisoner Crime Reduction \(SPCR\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/research-data-and-analysis/publications/surveying-prisoner-crime-reduction-spcr)

4. MATCHING THE TREATMENT AND COMPARISON GROUPS

It is not possible to assess the impact of CFO Activity Hubs intervention by looking at the reoffending rate of participants in isolation, nor is it valid to make comparisons to the reoffending rate of the entire offender cohort. This is due to a difference in how reoffending is defined, in addition to the characteristics of CFO participants likely being considerably different to the general offender cohort in several respects. Thus, to enable the measurement of effects the CFO Activity Hubs intervention has on reoffending rates, we must compare the observed reoffending rate of programme participants to the 'counterfactual'. For those that received intervention, this is the outcome had they not received intervention; similarly, for those that did not receive intervention, this is the outcome had they received intervention.

As we are unable to observe the counterfactual outcomes, they must be estimated. We do this by creating a comparison group of individuals who did not receive intervention, that is as similar as possible to those that did and vice versa, based on a set of pre-selected characteristics. Those in the comparison group are weighted proportionally to how well they match the characteristics of participants who received intervention, this ensures that the only major difference between the two groups is that one received intervention, whilst the other did not. Creating a matched comparison group allows for other factors that influence reoffending to be controlled for, providing the data is available.

In this analysis we control for factors that influence both the likelihood of an individual receiving the intervention and reoffending (e.g. age, offence). This allows for the effect of the intervention to be isolated, such that any difference in reoffending rates can be more confidently attributed to CFO Activity Hubs intervention, rather than other factors. It is worth noting that whilst every effort was made to reduce bias, it is not possible to control for all factors that may influence the findings, as such the results need to be interpreted with caution. For example, participating in the programme is voluntary and this may produce a bias in the results, as participants who more actively engage with the Hubs have demonstrated motivation and a commitment to making life changes, and this may be an important factor in whether they go on to reoffend.

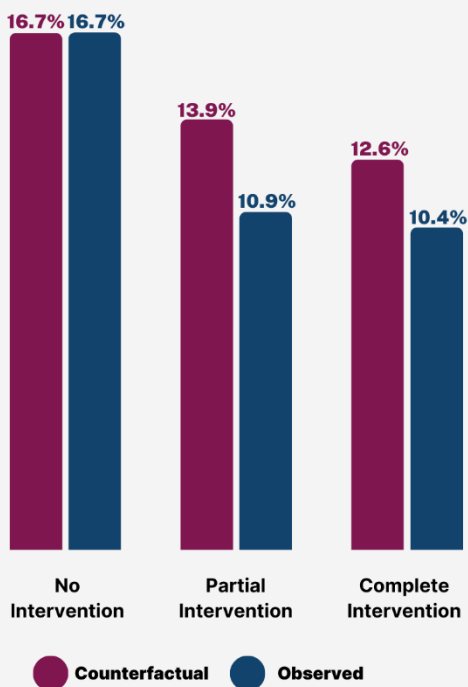
5. ESTIMATES OF THE IMPACT OF CFO ACTIVITY HUBS INTERVENTION

5.1 EFFECT ON THOSE THAT RECEIVED INTERVENTION

The six-month observed reoffending rate of the 1,649 individuals who received '**partial**' intervention was 10.9% compared with 13.9% for a matched group of similar individuals who **did not receive intervention**. This is a 3.0 percentage-point difference, in other words 3.0 participants per 100 were prevented from reoffending due to receiving 'partial' intervention. The six-month observed reoffending rate of the 308 individuals who received '**complete**' intervention was 10.4% compared with 12.6% for a matched group of similar individuals who **did not receive intervention**. This is a 2.2 percentage-point difference, meaning 2.2 participants per 100 were prevented from reoffending due to receiving 'complete' intervention.

Overall, the six-month observed reoffending rate all 3,143 individuals enrolled onto the programme was 13.0%, compared with 14.8% for a matched group of similar individuals who did not receive intervention. This is a 1.8 percentage-point difference, meaning 1.8 participants per 100 were prevented from reoffending. This is approximately a 12% reduction in the rate of reoffending. This represents the impact of CFO Activity Hubs intervention in real world practice. The overall effectiveness of the intervention is diminished as only a portion (62%) of those enrolled are receiving intervention at present.

Impact on reoffending rate amongst participants who received the intervention



The six-month observed reoffending rate is 13.0%, compared with 14.8% for a matched group of similar individuals who did not receive intervention.

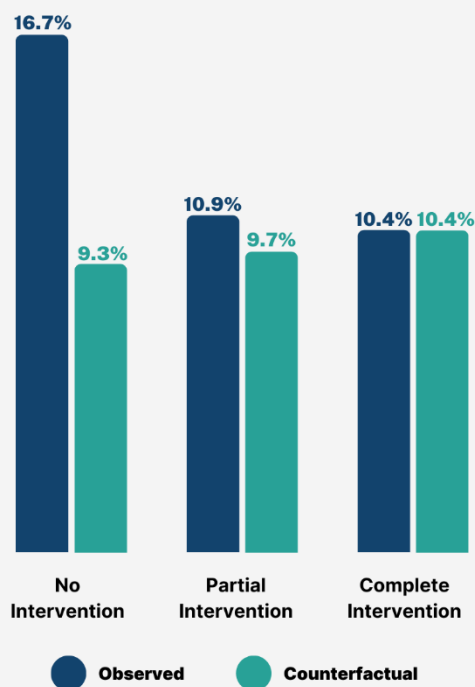
↓12%
Reduction in
reoffending rate

5.2 EFFECT ON THOSE THAT DID NOT RECEIVE 'COMPLETE' INTERVENTION

The six-month observed reoffending rate of the 1,186 individuals who received an **intervention level of 'none'** was 16.7%, compared to 9.3% for a matched group of similar individuals who received **'complete' intervention**. This is a 7.4 percentage-point difference, in other words if those currently receiving an intervention level of 'none' instead received 'complete' intervention, 7.4 participants per 100 would be prevented from reoffending. The six-month observed reoffending rate of the 1,186 individuals who received an **intervention level of 'none'** was 16.7%, compared to 14.3% for a matched group of similar individuals who received **'partial' intervention**. This is a 2.4 percentage-point difference, meaning if those currently receiving an intervention level of 'none' instead received 'partial' intervention, 2.4 participants per 100 would be prevented from reoffending. The six-month observed reoffending rate of the 1,649 individuals who received **'partial' intervention** was 10.9%, compared to 9.7% for a matched group of similar individuals who received **'complete' intervention**. This is a 1.2 percentage-point difference, meaning if those currently receiving 'partial' intervention instead received 'complete' intervention, 1.2 participants per 100 would be prevented from reoffending.

The six-month observed reoffending rate of the 3,143 individuals in the sample was 13.0%, compared with 9.6% for a matched group of similar individuals who received 'complete' intervention. This is a 3.4 percentage-point difference, meaning 3.4 participants per 100 would be prevented from reoffending. This is approximately a 26% reduction in the rate of reoffending should all participants receive 'complete' intervention. This represents the potential outcome under the most ideal circumstances, which in this case is 100% uptake of 'complete' intervention. This result overestimates the effect of the intervention, as it is unlikely that all those that enrol onto the programme would receive 'complete' intervention in practice.

Projected reoffending rate should all participants receive 'complete' intervention



The six-month observed reoffending rate is 13.0%, compared with 9.6% for a matched group of similar individuals who received 'complete' intervention.

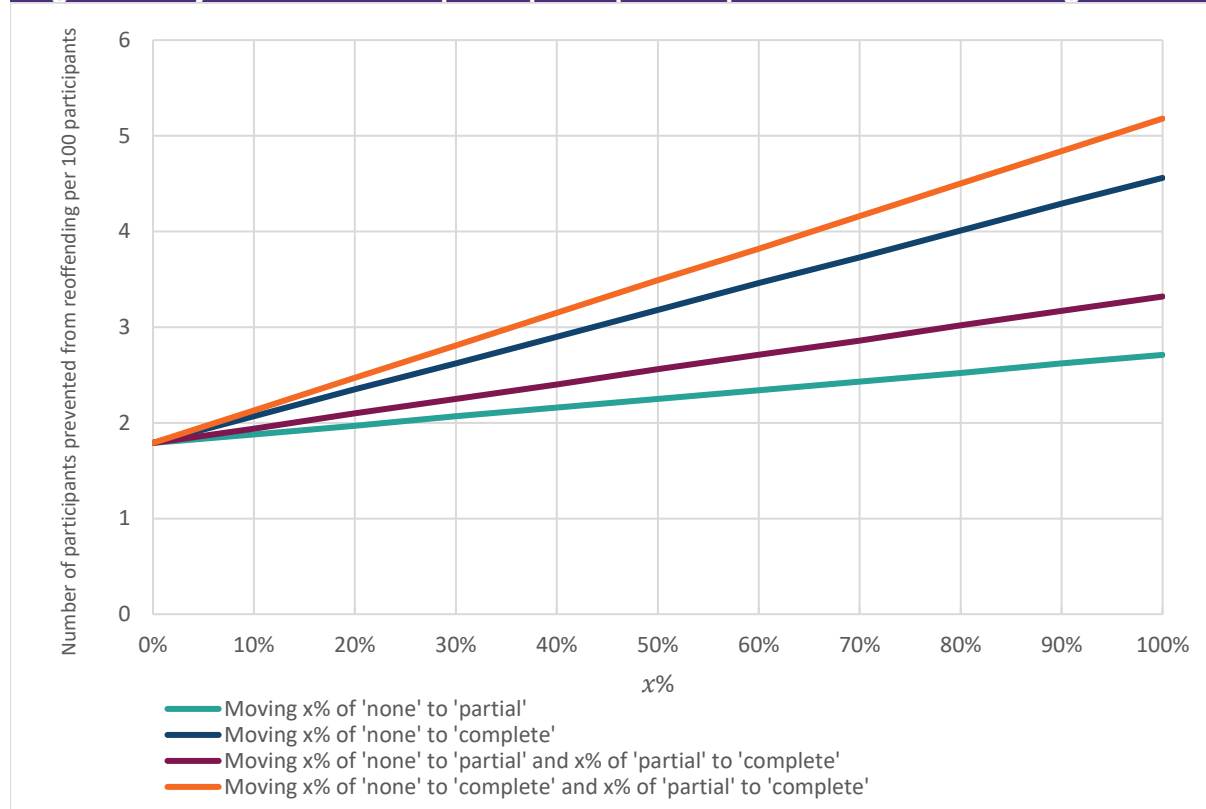
↓26%
Reduction in
reoffending rate

5.3 PROJECTED EFFECTS IF UPTAKE INCREASED

Figure 1 shows projections on how the effectiveness of CFO Activity Hubs intervention could improve should uptake increase. At the current level of uptake (62% receiving intervention), 1.8 participants are prevented from reoffending for every 100 participants. However, if an additional 10% of those currently receiving an intervention level of 'none' instead received 'partial' or 'complete' intervention, the number of participants prevented from committing a reoffence would increase by 5% and 15%, respectively. Similarly, if an additional 50% of those currently receiving an intervention level of 'none' instead received 'partial' or 'complete' intervention, the number of participants prevented from committing a reoffence would increase by 26% and 77%, respectively.

If 10% of those currently receiving an intervention level of 'none' instead received 'complete' intervention, in addition to 10% of those currently receiving 'partial' intervention instead receiving 'complete' intervention, the number of participants prevented from committing a reoffence would increase by 19%. Similarly, if 50% of those currently receiving intervention level of 'none' instead received 'complete' intervention, in addition to 50% of those currently receiving 'partial' intervention instead receiving 'complete' intervention, the number of participants prevented from committing a reoffence would approximately double (increase by 95%).

Figure 1 Projected number of participants per 100 prevented from offending



It should be noted that the projected number of participants per 100 prevented from reoffending exceeds that which was estimated in Section 5.2 (effect of 'complete' intervention on those that did not receive it). This is because we are combining the estimate of how many participants were prevented from reoffending by receiving an intervention level of 'partial' or 'complete' from Section 5.1, with the estimate of how many additional participants would be prevented from reoffending if uptake of 'partial' and 'complete' intervention were to further increase.

5.4 EFFECT AMONGST DIFFERENT SUBGROUPS

There is some preliminary evidence suggesting that there is no significant effect of ethnicity, gender, age, homelessness, or disability on the efficacy of CFO Activity Hubs intervention. This means that the benefits of receiving intervention can be considered equal across these groups. Although, some of these groups do not have comparable 'deliverability', for example, approximately 59% of men received 'partial' intervention, compared to 53% of women. For age, 67% of those aged 50 to 59 received 'partial' intervention compared to 52% of those aged under 30. Similarly, homeless participants and those that do not have a disability are more likely to receive 'partial' intervention than their counterparts.

In contrast, the efficacy of CFO Activity Hubs intervention differs across other groups, with those who have received CFO3 intervention prior to, or whilst enrolled on the Activity Hubs programme benefiting particularly from the intervention. Similarly, the impact of intervention is greater for participants that have dependent children, are a lone parent, do not have basic literacy skills, feel they do not possess good personal qualities or have spent greater than three years in custody for their index offence (most recent proven offence prior to enrolling). In addition to greater efficacy, deliverability is also higher amongst these groups. It is unclear from the data alone why such effects are present and further work would be necessary to provide clarity in this area. Note that we looked at the effect amongst different subgroups for the 'partial' intervention group only, this was due to the small sample size of the 'complete' intervention group.

6. CONCLUSION

Overall, the findings of this study suggest that over a six month follow up period after enrolling onto the CFO Activity Hubs programme, participants who received 'partial' or 'complete' intervention, were **less likely to reoffend** compared to those that received an intervention level of 'none'. However, it must be noted that reoffending alone is a narrow measure of impact and is subject to limitations, for example, it only accounts for proven offences.

The impact of receiving 'complete' intervention for those who ultimately received it is small by comparison to what it would have been for otherwise equivalent participants who did not receive intervention. In other words, the estimated reduction in reoffending would have been **greater for those that did not receive intervention** than it was for those that ultimately received 'complete' intervention. This is due to the distribution of factors (i.e., age, offence) differing between those that received 'complete' intervention and those that did not receive any intervention. The 'complete' intervention group possess more factors associated with a reduced reoffending risk, thus had less to gain from receiving intervention. There would therefore seem to be a definite need to maximise retention to ensure those that stand to benefit the most from the intervention are receiving it.

The gain from moving participants from 'partial' intervention to 'complete' intervention is minimal when compared to moving participants currently receiving an intervention level of 'none' to 'complete' intervention. This again suggests that a focus on retention should be prioritised. Further analysis is required in order to identify the point of diminishing returns, in which any further Hub activity results in minimal reduction to reoffending rates.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are a list of recommendations based on the findings of this study.

- The effect has been found to be greatest for those who have enrolled onto the Activity Hubs programme but received no intervention. However, the 26% reduction to participants reoffending rate will not start to materialise until all those that are enrolled receive complete intervention, suggesting the focus should be on maximising retention. Therefore, a qualitative study to investigate what keeps participants returning to the Hubs is recommended.
- The precision of the estimates could be improved if the size of the study cohort used in the analysis was increased. Therefore, it is recommended that the analysis is repeated on a larger sample, six months after the programme has concluded. On this basis, it is also recommended that the analysis is repeated with individuals who have not previously had custody sentences included.
- This analysis revealed that impact of CFO Activity Hubs intervention is greater for participants who have previously been enrolled on CFO3, have dependent children, are a lone parent, do not have basic literacy skills, feel they do not possess good personal qualities or have spent greater than three years in custody for their index offence. In contrast, there was no significant effect of ethnicity, gender, age, homelessness, or disability on the reoffending impact of the intervention, although deliverability was not comparable for these groups. On this basis, a further study is recommended in order to better understand the efficacy and deliverability of the CFO Activity Hubs intervention amongst different subgroups and the intersectionality of these groups, for example, where gender and ethnicity interact.