

Custody-based diversion – Divert and Engage Programmes

Evaluation

mentor and mentee playing pool

Key information

Publication type: General

Contents

[The programme](#)

[Evaluation summary and methodology](#)

[Timelines](#)

The programme

The VRU's custody-based interventions sit outside the criminal justice system. The programmes involve embedding youth workers into police custody to support young people at a time of crisis. They engage children and young people at a 'reachable moment' and enable access to support services and education, training and employment (ETE) opportunities.

- The [Divert Programme](#) supports young people aged 18-25. Custody intervention coaches – who are youth workers and not police officers – engage with young people, supporting them into education, training, and employment.
- The [Engage Programme](#) provides a partnership approach to diversion for under-18s. Engage is a partnership involving local authority children's services, the Met Police and NHS England. The programme supports young people who may have various care needs and creates a wrap-around care intervention.

Evaluation summary and methodology

The VRU has commissioned [MOPAC's Evidence and Insight Unit](#) to evaluate both Divert and Engage.

The Divert evaluation will use a quasi-experimental design to understand the impact of the Divert Programme on rearrest.

MOPAC's Evidence and Insight Unit have provided an initial report describing the Engage model across London and further evaluation is being scoped.

Timelines

The Divert Programme impact evaluation will be published in early 2025.

[Back to table of contents](#)