

Supervision and Intensive Supervision

EVIDENCE BRIEF

Supervision and intensive supervision are community-based sentences where an adult offender is subject to reporting and other requirements. The sentences have a rehabilitative intent, but there is conflicting evidence on their effectiveness. They seem to be most effective when intensity of supervision is matched to offender risk level, when treatment is included as a requirement, and when administered by suitably-trained probation officers.

OVERVIEW

- Supervision is a community-based sentence that targets adult offenders convicted of less serious offences who have relatively straight-forward rehabilitation needs and a lower risk of reoffending. Offenders can be sentenced to supervision for 6 months to 1 year.
- Intensive supervision is a community-based sentence for medium to high risk offenders. It is imposed if the court deems it would reduce the likelihood of reoffending by supporting adult offenders' rehabilitation and reintegration. Intensive supervision allows for a longer term (between 6 months and 2 years), more stringent reporting and the possibility of judicial monitoring.
- Both supervision and intensive supervision are widely used in New Zealand and similar jurisdictions, albeit with slight differences.
- There is conflicting evidence regarding the effectiveness of supervision and intensive supervision. Consensus is emerging that supervision intensity should be matched to offender risk level, i.e. high risk offenders should receive intensive supervision whereas low risk offenders should receive regular supervision.

- Research suggests supervision sentences are more effective at reducing reoffending when combined with treatment programmes and suitably-trained probation officers.

EVIDENCE BRIEF SUMMARY

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| Evidence rating: | Fair |
| Unit cost (for 2015/16): | \$15.75 per offender per day under supervision \$21.13 per offender per day under intensive supervision |
| Effect size (number needed to treat to prevent 1 instance of reoffending): | Wide range of effect sizes, with an average of 20 adults needed to treat to prevent 1 instance of reoffending. |
| Current yearly spend (for 2015/16): | \$43,566,758 (supervision) \$22,077,310 (intensive supervision) \$65,644,068 (total) |
| Unmet demand: | Low |

DO SUPERVISION AND INTENSIVE SUPERVISION REDUCE CRIME?

How supervision works

Supervision is a community-based sentence that targets adult offenders convicted of less serious offences who have relatively straight-forward rehabilitation needs and a lower risk of reoffending. It serves both reintegration and rehabilitative purposes.

Offenders under supervision must report to a probation officer who explains the requirements and conditions of their sentence, and determines the appropriate ongoing reporting frequency.

Probation officers then work with offenders to ensure they attend appropriate rehabilitation programmes and address their offending needs. Probation officers also manage referrals to programmes and follow up any concerns from programme providers about offenders' attendance or attitude.

Offenders can be sentenced to supervision for between 6 months and 1 year.

How intensive supervision works

Intensive supervision is an alternative to imprisonment and is recommended for adult offenders who are:

- assessed as being of medium to high risk of reoffending
- convicted of more serious offences
- have complex and/or severe rehabilitative needs
- eligible for intensive programmes and interventions.

A sentence of intensive supervision can be between 6 months and 2 years, depending on the offender's level of need and the length of any programmes or interventions recommended.

As with regular supervision, probation officers work with offenders on intensive supervision to make sure they attend rehabilitation programmes and meet reporting requirements. Intensive supervision can be, and often is, imposed alongside community detention and/or community work.

Intensive supervision is the only sentence with a legislated mandatory-minimum reporting frequency: weekly for the first 3 months of the sentence and monthly thereafter.

Intensive supervision can also involve judicial monitoring, which cannot be applied to regular supervision.

Conditions of supervision and intensive supervision

In addition to any special conditions (tailored to the offender's needs and circumstances), standard conditions apply to both supervision and intensive supervision where the offender is:

- not to reside at a specified address
- not to engage in specified employment
- not to associate with a specified person, persons or class of persons
- to take part in needs' assessments.

Standard conditions focus on reintegration, set out reporting requirements and restrict various aspects of the offender's life.

If an offender is non-compliant with the terms of either their supervision or intensive supervision, they might receive:

- an internal sanction such as a warning or additional reporting requirements
- a formal breach that may result in a further conviction and another sentence
- an application to the court to cancel their sentence and replace it with a more restrictive option.

New Zealand evidence

In New Zealand, supervision (under the name of probation) was introduced in 1950s. Offenders were required to report regularly to their probation officers, abstain from alcohol, undergo training or education courses and submit for approval their places of residence and employment. The length of probation varied between 1 to 3 years.

In 1985, supervision became the legal term for the former probation sentence. The sentence remained broadly similar but its length was reduced to between 6 months and 2 years. When breaches occurred, probation officers could apply for re-sentencing of non-compliant offenders.

Later, in 2007, the maximum length of supervision was reduced to 12 months. Imprisonment terms of up to 3 months were introduced for breaches.

In 2007, intensive supervision was introduced for periods of 6 to 24 months. Its scope is similar to supervision, but with higher levels of reporting, oversight and compliance requirements, including participation in rehabilitation programmes.

Compared to similar countries, New Zealand has high volumes of adult offenders on community sentences. This has become even more pronounced since new community sentencing options were introduced in late 2007.¹

There are no robust New Zealand-based studies on the effectiveness of supervision or intensive supervision for adults. This is because it is difficult to account sufficiently for the variables that influence choice of sentence type. In

addition, the risk profile of offenders varies markedly by sentence type¹, so any recidivism differences are more likely to reflect pre-existing characteristics of offenders, rather than effects specific to the sentence type.

Also, offenders may be sentenced to multiple sentence types at the same time (e.g. supervision plus community work), which makes it difficult to isolate the impact of any given sentence. In addition, supervision and intensive supervision are only imposed when there is a recognised need for rehabilitation or reintegration, meaning that offenders sentenced to supervision or intensive supervision will have to meet these criteria. Those without such needs will be sentenced differently. Because of this, finding a true comparison group is near-impossible.

With these caveats, the Department of Corrections conducted a logistic regression reoffending analysis – part of which compared recidivism by community sentence type. Over a 12-month² follow-up period, adjusted reconviction rates³ were:

- Community work – 28.7%
- Supervision – 27.2%
- Intensive supervision – 29.1%
- Community detention – 21.3%
- Home detention 16.1%

It is important to note these rates are measured from sentence start date, which causes community detention and home detention to appear to have lower rates due to the incapacitating effect of the sentence itself and reduced timeframe in which to reoffend. In addition, these figures do not include those given combined sentence types.

¹ As with most sentence types.

² Plus a 3-month grace period for charges to be processed.

³ Reconvicted and sentenced to another community-based sentence or any custodial

sentence administered by the Department of Corrections (i.e. it does not include people who are convicted and fined or convicted and discharged).

Department of Corrections' analysis also indicates that imposing either supervision or intensive supervision – in combination with community detention and/or community work – does not reduce the likelihood of conviction below what would otherwise occur. This suggests that supervision and intensive supervision do not have the intended rehabilitative effect when used in conjunction with a punitive sentence.ⁱⁱ However, it is not possible to say whether this is because of the supervisory sentences or community work.

Supervision, when imposed as a sole sentence type, was the only rehabilitative sentence that produced significantly lower rates of reoffending (compared to other sentence types or combinations). The Department of Corrections concluded 'supervision sentences may serve some other purpose, but on the face of it there is a case for [re]considering the use of these sentences'.ⁱⁱⁱ

It is worth noting that rehabilitation and reintegration are 1 of 8 different purposes of sentencing specified in the Sentencing Act 2002. Other purposes are accountability, acknowledgement of harm, providing for the interests of the victim, reparation, punishment, deterrence, and to protect the community.

International evidence

Methodological issues

International comparisons are particularly difficult with the USA or Australia because federal states tend to have different legislation and sentencing options/practices.

These differences are important to keep in mind when assessing evidence of effectiveness. In addition, supervision sentences are sometimes grouped for analysis with other community sentences or non-custodial sentences.

Villattaz et al.^{iv} looked at studies of custodial versus non-custodial sentences and found that those studies with a lower risk of selection bias

(i.e. randomised controlled trials) found no statistically significant differences between the treatment and control groups. The authors suggested that the outcomes of any statistical differences were, therefore, largely an effect of assigning offenders with different profiles to different sanctions.

The problem is that comparisons between custodial and non-custodial sanctions are inherently biased because, as Bales and Piqueiro pointed out, 'individuals sentenced to prison differ in fundamental ways from those individuals who receive a non-custodial sanction'.^v

Studies that control for a higher number of relevant independent variables seem to provide results closer to a 'null effect', whereas studies with fewer controlled variables produce results that are consistently in favour of non-custodial sanctions. In other words, the problem of omitted variables is a genuine problem when measuring sentence effectiveness. This is consistent with meta-analyses by Smith et al.^{vi} and Nagin et al.^{vii}

Villattaz et al.^{viii} identified several shortcomings in the literature on this topic, including:

- a lack of robust research
- follow-up periods that are rarely longer than two years and/or exclude significant parts of participants' biographies
- measures of reoffending that focus on prevalence (occurrence) but not incidence (frequency) of new offences
- other components of rehabilitation not usually considered, e.g. health, employment, family and social networks — despite claims that short custodial sentences contribute to harm in these areas.

Australia

There are two types of supervised sentences in Australia: intensive corrective orders (similar to New Zealand's intensive supervision) and community-based orders (similar to New

Zealand's regular supervision but with a common addition of community work).^{ix}

In 2014-15, 71% of supervision orders were completed, ranging from 59% in Western Australia to 92% in Tasmania. The rate of completion for all community corrections orders was 73%.^x A 2011 study of reoffending looked at adults given non-custodial sentences. Of the 81,199 offenders, 26% reoffended within the 2 year follow-up period.^{xi}

A second NSW study used propensity score matching to compare offenders who had received an Intensive Corrective Order (ICO) with those who received supervised suspended sentences and those who received periodic detention.^{xii} Offenders on ICOs had 33% lower recidivism rates compared to those on periodic detention. However, there was no significant difference between those who received ICOs and those on supervised suspended sentences. The authors cautioned that future research must include more detailed offender-profile and treatment information in order to account for possible confounding variables.

Further research by Wang and Poynton (2017)^{xiii} compared reoffending rates between those who received an ICO and those who received a short prison sentence (less than two years). Researchers compared 1,266 offenders in the ICO group and 10,660 offenders in the short prison sentence group – all of them sentenced in NSW court in 2010-2012. The authors used a variety of statistical methodologies including propensity scores to deal with selection bias. They found a 11%-31% reduction in the odds of re-offending for an offender who received an ICO compared with an offender who received a prison sentence of up to 24 months. Authors concluded that these results strengthen the evidence base suggesting that supervision combined with rehabilitation programs can have a significant impact on reoffending rates.

Wan et al.^{xiv} also used propensity score matching, this time to evaluate the effectiveness

of parole supervision compared with unsupervised release. Their sample of 7,494 offenders controlled for a comprehensive list of variables, and also sought to determine any differences in terms of reoffending seriousness.

Wan et al. found that offenders under parole supervision took longer to commit new offences, were less likely to commit serious (indictable) offences, and committed fewer offences when compared with unconditionally-released offenders. At 1 year post-release, the number of convictions in the supervision group was 22% lower than in the unsupervised group. By 2.5 years, the difference was smaller (16%) but still highly significant. The authors concluded that parole supervision does indeed reduce the risk of recidivism. However, it is important to note that offenders in their unsupervised group differed in several key ways from offenders in their supervised group; unsupervised offenders were older, more likely to be female, less likely to be indigenous, more likely to experience socioeconomic disadvantage, and more likely to live in the inner city.

Ostermann^{xv} looked at data for almost 30,000 offenders released from prison between 2005 and 2007. His analysis controlled for age, gender, minority status, marital status, deprivation index, the number and type of offenses for which the offender was imprisoned, and the number of arrest events on their criminal record prior to release. After monitoring offenders for 3 years post-release, Ostermann found the reoffending rate of parolees was 1% lower than for unconditionally released prisoners. Recidivism was 8% lower among parolees who were assigned supervision terms of at least 3 years (compared to those released without conditions).

USA and Canada

The term 'probation' in the United States covers a broad range of sentences (including community sentences) that are governed by

over 2,000 separate agencies. Sometimes probation is a mild punishment for offenders, involving minimal supervision and few reporting or other requirements. However, at times probation follows or precedes a period of imprisonment.^{xvi}

Approximately 70% of people under correctional supervision at 31 December 2014 were supervised on probation (3,864,100) or parole (856,900). The remaining 30% were under the jurisdiction of state or federal prisons or held in local jails. After peaking in 2007, the community supervision population has declined each year by an average of 1.2%.^{xvii}

An international systematic review by Villattaz et al.^{xviii} was mixed in its findings. Most of their selected studies found non-custodial sentences to be more beneficial in terms of reoffending than custodial sentences. However, no significant difference was found in the meta-analysis of 4 controlled and 1 natural experiment.

Bonta et al.^{xix} conducted a meta-analysis of the effectiveness of community supervision based on 15 studies published between 1980 and 2006. Their review found a small decrease in general recidivism associated with community supervision. However, there was no statistically significant relationship between community supervision and violent recidivism. They concluded that 'on the whole, community supervision does not appear to work very well'.^{xx}

Lipsey and Cullen^{xxi} conducted a review of meta-analyses. They included studies that focused on the effects of probation and parole supervision compared with no supervision, or more intensive supervision compared with regular supervision — reporting modest 2-8% reductions in reoffending. The authors also reviewed meta-analyses of 'intermediate sanctions' (a grouping that includes supervision alongside monetary fines and other interventions), which reported effects on

recidivism ranging from 8% decreases to 26% *increases*. Lipsey and Cullen concluded there was no consistent evidence that supervision or intermediate sanctions are effective at reducing recidivism.

One of the more comprehensive meta-analyses cited by Lipsey and Cullen was undertaken by Petersilia and Turner in 1993.^{xxii} They used a randomly-assigned experimental design to examine the effects of intensive supervision at 14 locations. They found no reductions in reoffending at any of the locations; in fact, the 1-year recidivism rate for offenders undergoing intensive supervision was higher than that in the probation-as-usual control group (37% versus 33%).^{xxiii}

A further meta-analysis by Smith et al.^{xxiv} was largely unresponsive of supervision as an effective sentence. A review of 117 studies from 1958 onwards found that the type of sanction (community supervision versus custodial sanction) did not decrease recidivism under any of the three conditions tested, and there were no differential effects for adolescents, women or ethnic minorities. Smith et al. concluded that neither imprisonment or community supervision reduced recidivism. Of note, their meta-analysis did find that *intensive* supervision incorporating treatment services was responsible for a 10% reduction in recidivism.^{xxv}

A matched comparison analysis by Pearson and Harper^{xxvi} found that intensive supervision was more likely to reduce recidivism when compared to imprisonment. This study was given a level 3

rating on the Maryland Scientific Methods Scale⁴.

UK

The UK Ministry of Justice conducted a reoffending analysis, comparing offenders either side of the 12 month supervision threshold (and limiting their analysis to offenders with 0-1 previous convictions who had been sentenced to approximately 12 months in prison).^{xxvii} They found those who received supervision had 1-year reoffending rates between 14 and 17 percentage points lower than those who did not receive supervision. At the 2-year mark, reoffending rates were 16-20 percentage points lower for those receiving supervision. While these differences were statistically significant, this was not the case when reoffending was measured at the 3-year mark. However, they concluded that a period of probationary supervision does still reduce reoffending.

In 2001, the Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme (ISSP) was introduced in the UK. ISSP is a community-based programme for persistent and serious youth offenders. Gray et al.^{xxviii} evaluated the first 41 pilot schemes, including reconviction data for 24 months post-intervention. A detailed analysis of ISSP data found:

- A marked reduction in reoffending occurred in the 12- and 24-month periods before and after the start of ISSP. However, similar improvements were seen in the comparison group. Notably, young people who received detention without ISSP, committed significantly fewer offences than young people who received detention with ISSP. The authors speculated that the high demands from combining ISSP and detention were counterproductive.

- Those who completed their ISSP had statistically significant reductions in frequency and seriousness of reoffending when compared with non-completers. However, other pre-existing differences may have explained this difference.^{xxix}

Cost-effectiveness

Australia^{xxx}

In 2014-15, the net operating expenditure for Community Corrections' orders was AU\$22.64 per day, 4.5% more than the previous year. Total expenditure (operation plus capital cost) varied from AU\$13.46 in Tasmania to AU\$46.97 in Western Australia. This partly reflects the different ratio of offenders to all community corrections staff; in Western Australia this was 9.5 but was 25.5 in Tasmania.

USA

Intensive supervision was originally designed as a cost-effective way of diverting adult offenders away from custodial sentences.^{xxxi}

Research by Pearson and Harper^{xxxii} examined cost-benefit of an intensive supervision programme (combining brief imprisonment with supervision) in New Jersey. A matched comparison analysis found that intensive supervision was not only cheaper than imprisonment but was more likely to reduce recidivism. This study was given a level 3 rating on the Maryland Scientific Methods Scale⁵.

However, in their systematic review of cost-benefit studies, McDougall et al.^{xxxiii} found intensive supervision to be cost-effective in only 1 out of 4 studies.

Wiebush^{xxxiv} used a quasi-experimental design to test intensive supervision programme for adolescents. Several different measures of

⁴ <http://www.whatworksgrowth.org/resources/the-scientific-maryland-scale/>

⁵ www.whatworksgrowth.org/resources/the-scientific-maryland-scale

reoffending were used, and offenders were monitored for 18-months. Wiebush concluded that intensive supervision was only cost-effective on a large-scale because of the high costs providing the intensive supervision structure regardless of numbers.

The Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) also assessed the cost-benefit of intensive supervision.^{xxxv} They used multiple regression to test for a possible interaction between the number of monthly contacts and treatment. They found that more contacts combined with treatment resulted in a bigger reduction in crime. However, this effect was only for supervised parolees; they found a statistically significant *increase* in recidivism for offenders on probation.

Overall, WSIPP found a benefit to cost ratio of -1.23 for intensive supervision programmes (i.e. for every dollar invested, the state was losing US\$1.23). However, this compared to the cost of no intervention rather than the cost of an alternative intervention; in the absence of such a comparison their negative figure is somewhat misleading.

A meta-analysis of cost-effectiveness by Drake et al.^{xxxvi} tracked both investment and recidivism over a 13 year period. They compared custodial releases with those under community supervision. From 11 studies of treatment-oriented intensive supervision, there was an average 17.9% reduction in key crime outcomes. This translated to a net benefit to victims and the taxpayer of US\$19,118 per participant (in 2007 dollars).

However, from 23 studies looking at surveillance-oriented intensive supervision, they found no impact on recidivism. This meant the programmes were creating a net deficit of US\$3,869 per participant (in 2007 dollars). Similar net deficits were seen for intensive probation programmes (-US\$1,650) and intensive parole supervision (-US\$6,670) – neither of which were found to reduce

reoffending. Drake et al. concluded that intensive supervision alone was not effective, but was if coupled with treatment programmes.

Other considerations

When interpreting reoffending data related to intensive supervision, it is important to remember that those subject to this intervention are, by definition, under greater levels of surveillance and may be more likely to have their reoffending detected as a result.^{xxxvii}

Hennigan et al.^{xxxviii} also explained how the intensity of intensive supervision creates an opportunity for more violations and more custodial sanctions. Those who accumulate breaches are, in turn, more likely to receive harsher sentences in their subsequent encounters with the justice system.

Notably, Nagin et al.^{xxxix} reported an experimental study in Minnesota where offenders opted for incarceration over intensive supervision because they perceived the reporting requirements to be too onerous.

Villattaz^{xi} also cautioned that offenders sentenced to custody who are offered an alternative sanction may perceive this as a 'second chance', which favourably influences their attitudes or compliance.

WHEN ARE SUPERVISION AND INTENSIVE SUPERVISION MOST EFFECTIVE?

Bonta et al.^{xii} analysed data from 62 probation officers in relation to 154 offenders. They found probation officers in the US spent 'too much time' enforcing the conditions of probation and 'not enough time' addressing criminogenic needs and encouraging behavioural change. They concluded that, in order for probation

officers to become more effective agents of change, they needed to focus on offenders' antisocial attitudes and providing social supports.

A recent meta-analysis by Chadwick et al.^{xliii} found that offenders supervised by trained probation officers had better reoffending outcomes when compared with untrained officers. Their particular training focus related to 'core correctional practices'. A hallmark of successful supervision involved early identification of offenders' criminogenic needs and implementation of a plan to specifically address those needs – citing a 38% reduction in reoffending when intervention strategies were matched to criminogenic needs.^{xliiii}

Similarly, Bonta et al.^{xliv} cited a 1996 study by Trotter that compared recidivism rates of offenders supervised by trained (in prosocial modelling and problem-solving) versus untrained probation officers. Trained probation officers were associated with reoffending rates of 46%, compared to 64% for untrained probation officers.

In his paper on 'what works' in reducing reoffending, McGuire^{xlv} explained the importance of risk assessment when allocating offenders to different levels of supervision. This is supported by Warren^{xlvi}, who reported that intensive supervision for low risk offenders increased the risk of recidivism because of association with high risk offenders. Warren recommended that low risk offenders be subject to low-level supervision or diverted from prosecution altogether. A meta-analysis by Chadwick et al.^{xlvii} supported the risk-need-responsivity framework as central to effective supervision.

Grey et al.^{xlviii} reported that adolescent women subject to intensive supervision performed significantly better than their male counterparts in terms of reduced offence frequency and seriousness. However, they also found evidence

to suggest the differential impact of intensive supervision became less over time. In many cases, statistically significant differences between different sub-groups at 12 months had disappeared at 24 months. The authors commented the impact of intensive supervision 'may well fade over time'.^{xlix} Research on other correctional interventions has found that treatment benefits are not always sustained long term and reinforcement or refreshment treatment may be required.^l

Restorative justice and constructive leisure activities have been identified as supplementary interventions that significantly contribute to reduced reoffending if used in conjunction with intensive supervision.^{li} This same study noted a considerable variation in the effectiveness of youth-focused ISSP depending on the type of scheme and staff roles employed; schemes that did not employ a 'specific model of change' fared significantly worse than other models. Overall, the most successful models were ones that engaged youth for longer periods.

Australian research^{lii} on the content of supervision sessions found that when probation officers used particular skills, offenders under their supervision had lower rates of reoffending than clients of probation officers who did not employ these skills. These 'effective practice skills' included:

- role clarification, so the offender is clear how the probation officer is able to help them
- prosocial modelling and reinforcement, including challenging pro-criminal behaviours
- problem-solving to address criminogenic needs
- building a strong, empathic and open client/worker relationship; there needs to be a positive view of the offender's ability to change
- focusing on high risk offenders (using a risk-need-responsivity approach) and cognitive behavioural techniques

- other techniques such as relapse prevention, matching workers and clients according to learning style and personality.

Research by Warren^{liii} found that sanctions such as intensive supervision only reduced reoffending when they involved a treatment component. Intensive supervision programmes have had similarly positive results when combined with cognitive-behavioural methods and other rehabilitation modules.^{liv}

It is also important to assess the integrity and implementation of a given intervention. Supervision and intensive supervision may not produce desired results when they are not implemented properly, as opposed to not working because they are inherently flawed or ineffective.

Lowenkamp et al.^{lv} examined the effectiveness of 58 intensive supervision programmes, attempting to understand the effect of treatment integrity and programme philosophy on recidivism. They found that both variables were related to meaningful reductions in recidivism, and operated independently of each other. The authors concluded that intensive supervision could be effective if it met certain criteria, specifically when operating under a human service philosophy (as opposed to that of deterrence), and when it abided by the principles of effective intervention.

WHAT MAKES SUPERVISION AND INTENSIVE SUPERVISION EFFECTIVE?

Klockars^{lvi} described the typology of a probation officer as falling somewhere between ‘probation is not casework’ and ‘probation is casework’. He found probation officers tended to define their work in one of many ways:

- as law enforcers – primarily seeing their job as helping the offender comply with a court order

- as time servers – those who perform their role without vocational interest in probation; their duties are performed minimally and methodically
- as therapeutic agents – primarily seeing their job as an administration of treatment and about changing patterns of behaviour
- as a synthetic officer – one who recognises both law enforcement and therapeutic components of their job.

Supervision operates on the assumption that incarceration is either inherently damaging or, if not inherently damaging, then harmful because of its associated effects (i.e. loss of employment, separation from family, labelling as criminal, association with other criminals).^{lvii} In addition, there is thought to be a therapeutic effect to the rapport that develops between an offender and probation officer.

Supervision is underpinned by a triad-like relationship between the offender, probation officer and the correctional department. This allows the probation officer to deflect potential problems (that might arise in the relationship between officer and offender) as being the responsibility of the department. In other words, the probation officer can claim to be an objective instrument of departmental rules whenever it might be beneficial to do so.^{lviii}

Klockars^{lix} also explained how the threat of revocation (that is enforcing breaches of supervision conditions) is used to guide and control the offender during treatment. Research by Wodahl et al.^{lx} found that rewards and sanctions, when used appropriately, could improve outcomes for offenders sentenced to intensive supervision. Importantly, if rewards were in proportionately higher numbers the outcomes were further improved.

Cullen et al.^{lxi} attributed the emergence of community-control sanctions to society’s belief that threats of punishment and enhanced surveillance were key to deterring crime. In

addition, supervision sentences appealed to both sides of the political spectrum; liberals were drawn to the concept of reducing incarceration and conservatives were drawn to the cost-effectiveness.

CURRENT INVESTMENT IN NEW ZEALAND

Both supervision and intensive supervision are widely used in New Zealand.

In the 2015/16 financial year^{lxii}, an average of 578 supervision sentences were imposed each month, with an average 6,939 people serving such sentences at any given time. A snapshot at 30 June 2016 showed 7,597 people serving sentences of supervision.

Intensive supervision sentences over the same period were imposed an average 218 times per month, with 2,621 people serving such sentences at any given time. A snapshot at 30 June 2016 showed 2,867 people serving sentences of intensive supervision.

For the 2015/16 financial year, the Department of Corrections spent \$15.75 per offender per day on administering supervision sentences, and \$21.13 per offender per day on intensive supervision. This equated to a yearly spend of \$43,566,758 on supervision and \$22,077,310 on intensive supervision – a combined total of \$65,644,068.

In 2013/14, of those beginning a community sentence, 4.9% were imprisoned and 27.4% were reconvicted⁶ within the 12 month follow-up period.^{lxiii}

At 30 June 2015, the spread of risk profiles for offenders on supervision was as follows:

- Low – 4,677 (66%)

- Medium – 2,193 (31%)
- High – 196 (3%)

This compares to the risk profiles of those serving intensive supervision sentences:

- Low – 1,133 (44%)
- Medium – 1,257 (49%)
- High – 181 (7%)

⁶ Reconvicted and sentenced to another community-based sentence or any custodial sentence administered by the Department of

Corrections (i.e. it does not include people who are convicted and fined or convicted and discharged).

EVIDENCE RATING AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Each Evidence Brief provides an evidence rating between Harmful and Strong.

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|--------------|--|
| Harmful | Robust evidence that intervention increases crime |
| Poor | Robust evidence that intervention tends to have no effect |
| Inconclusive | Conflicting evidence that intervention can reduce crime |
| Fair | Some evidence that intervention can reduce crime |
| Promising | Robust international <i>or</i> local evidence that intervention tends to reduce crime |
| Strong | Robust international <i>and</i> local evidence that intervention tends to reduce crime |

According to the standard criteria for all evidence briefs⁷, the appropriate evidence rating for supervision and intensive supervision is Fair.

According to our standard interpretation, this means:

- there is some evidence that interventions can reduce crime
- it is uncertain whether interventions will generate return even if implemented well
- it may be unproven in New Zealand or be subject to conflicting research
- interventions may benefit from trial approaches with a research and development focus
- robust evaluation is needed to confirm interventions are delivering a positive return and to aid in detailed service design.

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FIND OUT MORE

Go to the website

www.justice.govt.nz/justice-sector/what-works-to-reduce-crime/

Email

whatworks@justice.govt.nz

Recommended reading

Bonta, J., Rugge, T., Scott, T. L., Bourgon, G., & Yessine, A. K. (2008). Exploring the black box of community supervision. *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, 47(3), 248-270.

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⁷ Available www.justice.govt.nz/justice-sector/what-works-to-reduce-crime/

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SUMMARY OF EFFECT SIZES FROM META-ANALYSES

| Meta-analyses | What is analysed | Reported average effect size on crime | Number of estimates meta-analysis based on | Percentage point reduction in offending (presuming 50% of reoffending for untreated group) | Number needed to treat (to prevent one person from reoffending) |
|--|---|---------------------------------------|--|--|---|
| Drake et al. 2009 | Intensive supervision treatment-oriented programmes | N/A | 11 | 0.18 | 6 |
| Chadwick et al. 2016 | Supervision by trained probation officers vs. other officers | OR=1.48* | 10 | 0.1 | 10 |
| Villattaz et al. 2015 | Non-custodial sanctions (quasi-experimental studies) | OR=0.684* | 8 | 0.09 | 11 |
| Smith et al. 2002 | Community sanctions (regular or combined probation conditions) vs. incarceration | $\Phi=.07^*$ | 104 | 0.06 | 16 |
| Pearson et al. 1997 (as cited in Lipsey et al. 2007) | Community supervision and intensive supervision – probation, parole and group homes | $\Phi=.04^*$ | 52 | 0.04 | 28 |
| Bonta et al. 2008 | Community supervision (all crime) | $\Phi=.022^*$ | 26 | 0.02 | 50 |
| Villattaz et al. 2015 | Non-custodial sanctions (RCT and natural experiments) | OR=0.946 | 4 | 0.01 | 72 |
| Aos et al. 2001 (as cited in Lipsey et al. 2007) | Intensive supervision – probation and parole | $\Phi=.01$ | 22 | 0.01 | 111 |
| Bonta et al. 2008 | Community supervision (violent crime) | $\Phi=.004$ | 8 | 0.0 | - |
| Drake et al. 2009 | Intensive supervision surveillance-oriented programmes | N/A | 23 | 0.0 | - |

* Statistically significant at a 95% threshold

OR=Odds ratio

$\ln(\text{OR})=\log$ odds ratio

Φ =phi coefficient (variant of Pearson correlation coefficient)