

# Police Diversion and Drugs

## A research project to test the benefits of police diversion schemes

- The University of Kent and the Department for Health and Social Care are researching police-led drug diversion schemes.
- When people who use drugs are in contact with the police, diversion schemes provide an opportunity to attend education, treatment, or recovery services rather than traditional punishments such as being charged, fined, sent to prison, and getting a criminal record.
- Avoiding a criminal record may have a wide range of benefits, such as improved health and mental health, and reduced contact with the police in the future. These benefits have not been studied in detail.
- Diversion schemes are only available in some parts of the country. Good quality research could help the government decide whether these schemes should be expanded.
- This research will use data about people who have been in contact with the police in relation to drugs. It will use national databases to compare outcomes for people in areas with diversion schemes against people in areas without these schemes.
- If you have been in contact with the police in relation to drugs, it is possible that your data will be used in this research project. If you are included in the project, the researchers will analyse data about your contact with the police and if you have been to hospital or drug treatment.
- The data will not be used for anything except the research. It will not affect your criminal record and data will not be shared with anyone outside the research team. After the research is completed, the data will be deleted. There are strong safeguards, and no-one's details will be made public. The police, employers, or the NHS will not know who has participated in this research.
- The legal basis for using this data is known as "Section 251". Our project is supported by the Health Research Authority following advice from the Confidentiality Advisory Group.
- You can opt-out, which means your data will not be used for this research. To opt-out, please contact [pdd@dhsc.gov.uk](mailto:pdd@dhsc.gov.uk) before Friday 10 May 2024. After this date, you can opt-out by contacting or posting your details before November 2024 to: Brian Eastwood, Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, Department of Health and Social Care, 39 Victoria Street, London, SW1H 0EU.
- If you have any questions about this research, please contact [pdd@dhsc.gov.uk](mailto:pdd@dhsc.gov.uk).



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