

Programmes That Backfire

Criminal Justice

Popular interventions that, once tested, did nothing or did harm.

Each of these was widely funded before it was properly evaluated.

Programme	Intended effect	Found effect
Scared straight	Deter young people	Increased offending
Boot camps	Instil discipline	No reliable effect
DARE, original form	Prevent drug use	No effect on use
Intensive supervision only	Deter by monitoring	More breach, no crime effect
Group work with peers	Change attitudes	Can spread antisocial norms

Educational reference. Scared straight is one of the clearest cases of an intervention found by trials to make outcomes worse.