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Pathways into services for offenders with intellectual disabilities: childhood experience, diagnostic information and offence variables

Lindsay, William R.; Carson, Derek; O'Brien, Gregory; Holland, Anthony J.; Taylor, John L.; Wheeler, Jessica R.; Middleton, Claire; Price, Karen; Steptoe, Lesley

The patterns and pathways into intellectual disability (ID) offender services were studied through case file review for 477 participants referred in one calendar year to community generic, community forensic, and low, medium, and maximum secure services. Data were gathered on referral source, demographic information, index behavior, prior problem behaviors, diagnostic information, and abuse or deprivation. Community referrers tended to refer to community services and secure service referrers to secure services. Physical and verbal violence were the most frequent index behaviors, whereas contact sexual offenses were more prominent in maximum security. Age at first incident varied with security, with the youngest in maximum secure services. Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder or conduct disorder was the most frequently recorded diagnosis, and severe deprivation was the most frequent adverse developmental experience. Fire starting, theft, and road traffic offenses did not feature prominently. Generic community services accepted a number of referrals with forensic-type behavior and had higher proportions of both women and people with moderate or severe ID.