**Drug Treatment Court Programme**

**Related links**
[Dublin Drug Treatment Court Office](http://www.courts.ie/offices.nsf/6501643ba9c14a9680256e43003d68a4/cfaf3511b9b9639e80256e45005861cf?OpenDocument)
[Guides for participants](http://www.courts.ie/courts.ie/library3.nsf/pagecurrent/DBF7DEC660A62D3880256DA60052BC9D?opendocument&l=en)

The Drug Treatment Court Programme is aimed at people with drug addiction problems who come before the District Court on minor criminal charges linked to their drug addiction and who plead guilty or have been convicted of the charge(s). There is a short assessment phase and those chosen to participate are people who

• are serious about wanting to tackle their drug habit and undergo treatment
• are over 17 years of age;
• live in Dublin (ideally at an address with the postcodes of Dublin 1, 2, 3, 6, 7 or 8)

**How does a person get on the programme?**

The person must have pleaded guilty or have been convicted of non-violent crimes in the District Court. They (or their solicitor) can then ask the judge to remand them to the Drug Treatment Court. It will be up to the judge to decide whether to send him/her to the Drug Treatment Court. Once a person is accepted into the programme, his/her charge(s) is/are put on hold.

The Drug Treatment Court (DTC) is supported by a team consisting of:
• a DTC liaison nurse;
• a probation officer;
• an education coordinator;
• a DTC coordinator
• Gardaí working at the DTC; and
• other people who can help the participants.

The members of the team have specific roles in relation to each phase of the programme and the DTC coordinator is their main point of interaction.

**What are the benefits of doing the programme?**

The programme is aimed at people who have had enough of trying to feed a drug habit and want a better way to live their lives. Once on the programme, participants will get a lot of help and support in dealing with the challenge of tackling their addiction.

The team and judges of the DTC have a lot of experience working with people who are struggling with addiction. They understand the difference between someone who has a slip in dealing with their addiction and someone who simply isn’t cooperating with their treatment regime. The longer the participant sticks with the programme, the better the rewards. For instance, if the participant does well, the DTC judge can recommend that they receive a suspended sentence for the offences for which they have pleaded guilty or have been found guilty. In some instances the charges may be struck out. As part of the programme, participants can obtain FETAC educational qualifications, which can help in planning for a career in the future or applying for jobs.

**What happens on the programme?**

At the induction stage potential participants meet the members of the team and are assessed to determine their suitability for the programme. For all participants, accessing treatment is essential. A participant can opt to try to detoxify in the community or in hospital or go drug free, or take methadone maintenance or methadone reduction. The participant will come to an agreement about their treatment with the team and will attend counselling and group work. As well as the drug treatment, the participant will be required to take part in educational and/or other programmes within the community to give him/her new skills or improve skills he/she may already have. Participants must abstain from their main drug of choice upon admission. As they pass through the programme, furthertesting is carried out for other drugs.

For each participant a Personal Progression Credits Chart is drawn up, where they get on-going feedback as to how they are getting on in the programme. The programme consists of 3 phases – [bronze, silver and gold.](http://www.courts.ie/courts.ie/library3.nsf/pagecurrent/DBF7DEC660A62D3880256DA60052BC9D?opendocument&l=en) Decisions on the participants' success at each phase is made by the judge based on information provided by the team. Depending on individual needs and motivation, the programme can last at least a year but participants must make sufficient progress to ensure that they move through the phases in less than 12 months.

More information is available from the Drug Treatment Coordinator, 01 888 6294 or email drugtreatmentcourt@courts.ie.