

3. Drug and alcohol programs

Up to 80% of people in NSW prisons are incarcerated because of drug use or related crimes. Prisons have strict security measures to limit access to drugs. Corrective Services NSW (CSNSW) offer programs to help people reduce or stop drug taking, so that being incarcerated can offer new opportunities for inmates to address drug and alcohol use.

Drug testing in prisons

Drug detector (sniffer) dogs are used to detect drugs in searches of prisons, including cells, inmates and their property. They may also be used in visiting areas. Urine testing is also used to detect drug use among inmates. If an inmate is found to be trafficking drugs, or has traces of drugs in their urine, they may be moved to a more secure prison, may lose privileges, and may face disciplinary action or new charges.

This could increase their time in prison and make it harder to get parole.

Can inmates get help for drug problems while they're in prison?

The prison reception process includes screening for alcohol and drug use. Any one identified as being at risk of being intoxicated or in withdrawal from drugs and/or alcohol are commenced on routine monitoring by the health staff and their symptoms are medically managed, regardless of

the location they are in. All prisons have options for drug and alcohol treatment. Options include:

- > group programs;
- > residential programs, which are specialised treatment programs for three to five months at several prisons – the Intensive Drug and Alcohol Treatment Programs, Compulsory Drug Treatment Centre (CDTC) program;
- > self-help programs such as NA (Narcotics Anonymous) or AA (Alcoholics Anonymous) in some centres;
- > pharmacotherapy (e.g. methadone, suboxone/ buprenorphine) for heroin and other opioid dependence. Anyone on these medications whilst in prison will have a post release care plan arranged by the health team to ensure that they can continue treatment on release.

Some interventions may only be available at certain centres. Where inmates have come into prison because of alcohol or drug use, they'll be encouraged to make use of treatment programs. Progress to

a lower classification, or success in applying for parole, may depend on people participating in drug or alcohol intervention programs.

What if I'm asked to bring in drugs?

No matter how much an inmate begs or threatens you to bring them drugs, **DON'T DO IT.**

Prisons have highly sophisticated mechanisms for detecting drugs on visitors, including children. See p.46 for more information on prison security.

If you're found with drugs, you'll be arrested and charged by the police.

You can also be prohibited from visiting a prison for 12 months or more.

What is the Compulsory Drug Treatment Centre (CDTC)?

Male inmates who have repeated drug-related convictions may be referred to the Drug Court for consideration of a Compulsory Drug Treatment Order. (See next page for information about the Drug Court).

Some people will be excluded from this option because they've committed violent offences or sexual assault, or because of the risks they may pose in the program or in the community. They may be accepted into the Compulsory Drug Treatment Centre. This is located at Parklea and provides group programs and support for inmates in residence and those living in the community under intensive supervision. Only the Drug Court can make referrals to the CDTC.



Alcohol and Other Drugs program, Dillwynia Correctional Centre

What is the Intensive Drug & Alcohol Treatment Program (IDATP)?

The Intensive Drug and Alcohol Treatment Program (IDATP) is a residential (live in) program for male and female inmates who have a drug and/or alcohol problem linked to their offending behaviour. It is a group program which can take up to 12 months to complete. IDATP aims to:

- > help inmates gain an understanding of their substance dependence and offending behaviour;
- > reduce the likelihood of reoffending;
- > give inmates the skills, resources and support needed to return to the community, alcohol and/or drug-free and crime-free.

The program incorporates a range of therapeutic, health, education, vocation and pre-release interventions aimed at addressing substance dependence, offending behaviour and reintegration. It is offered to inmates at the Outer Metropolitan Multi-Purpose Correctional Centre and Dillwynia.

Drug Court

What is the Drug Court?

The Drug Court addresses the cycle of drug use and crime. The individual must reside in the

catchment area for one of the Drug Courts (Parramatta, Downing Centre, Newcastle), and must plead guilty to their charges to be eligible. If found eligible, the individual enters prison into a Drug Court unit in order to be assessed and have a highly suitable treatment plan developed.

The Drug Court focuses both on the offender's offending behaviour and on their drug use. Offenders agree to an individual plan that's monitored through regular appearances at the Drug Court.

Offenders must attend counselling to address their drug use and their offending behaviour; counselling is provided by staff from the Local Health District where the participant resides or within the residential program the participant is involved with, and Corrective Services NSW. Offenders need to agree not to use prohibited drugs, and to limit use of alcohol and legal drugs so they don't interfere with participation in the program. In some cases, participants will also need to agree not to use alcohol.

If participants fail to keep conditions of the Drug Court program they are given sanctions which equal days in prison. When they accumulate 14 days, they return to prison for that period of time. The Drug Court may also send the individual back to prison to serve sanctions before they accumulate 14 days. Decisions

about drug use while on the program are made on an individual basis and don't automatically mean exclusion from the Drug Court program.

Benefits of the Drug Court include reduced time in prison, accessing specialised treatment programs, development of plans that meet individual needs, and the affirmation received from the Drug Court as progress is acknowledged at court.

Eligibility for Drug Court

Participants need to be referred by a magistrate or judge sitting in a court in the Drug Court catchment area. They need to be highly likely to be sentenced to full-time incarceration if convicted. They must be willing to participate, and to plead guilty. They won't be eligible if they've been charged with an offence involving violence, a sexual offence, or some more serious drug offences. They also need to undergo a mental health assessment to ensure they'll be able to participate in the program.

Priority will be given to people who haven't previously had the opportunity to access the Drug Court.

What does Drug Court participation mean for families?

Individuals involved in the Drug Court and their families can really benefit from the relationships with staff, who have an expert

knowledge of drug treatment and an ability to make referrals to a wide range of agencies. Families may see family members benefiting from treatment programs and addressing personal issues. The recognition of progress by the Drug Court can also be encouraging for families, who may feel that no one else appreciates how hard it is to change drug use or offending behaviour.

They may also feel anxious about their family member's capacity to maintain changes, especially as they move back into the community and have greater access to drugs, and the influence of drug-using friends or family. This can place strain on relationships. It can be hard for families to accept that they can't protect their family member if they're not able to take responsibility for the decision to remain drug-free.

If offenders are living at home, their residence needs to be checked by CSNSW staff. Members of the household need to be aware of the offender's participation in the Drug Court, and must be willing to cooperate with relevant staff.

Participation in the Drug Court is restricted to certain areas, so this may affect the household if others in the family wish to move. If a participant fails to keep conditions of the Drug Court program and goes into prison no visits are allowed.

Need help?

Note that 1800 numbers are free for calls from a landline but may only be available in certain locations, e.g. outside Sydney. Some may charge for calls from mobile phones, so check this if you need to call from a mobile. Check with your local library for free internet access.

Family Drug Support Australia



Family Drug Support offers information and referral, family support groups and courses for families affected by a family member's drug use. **1300 368 186 (24/7)**

www.fds.org.au

Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS)



Information about drugs and alcohol, and referrals for detox and rehab programs, drug and alcohol counselling and related services. Open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

1800 250 015

Al-Anon



Al-Anon Family Groups

Self-help

support groups for families and friends of alcoholics. Based on the Alcoholics Anonymous Twelve Step approach.

1300 252 666

www.al-anon.org.au

Nar-Anon

Self-help support groups for families and friends of compulsive drug users.

8004 1214

www.naran.com.au

