

Drug Treatment and Testing Orders (DTTOs) commit drug-related offenders to treatment and supervision usually as an alternative to imprisonment. For these orders the critical outcome is reoffending. Using reconviction data as an indicator, a [new study](#) suggests that their impact has been seriously undermined by a failure to retain offenders.¹ Further data is available in an [earlier unpublished report](#).²

For two years from the start of their orders the study tracked reconvictions for 174 of the 210 offenders sentenced to DTTOs at three English pilot schemes. During this time 80% were reconvicted. At each of the sites the number of convictions fell in the year after the order started compared to the year before, but not by much and only to levels typical of the same offenders in previous years. A further drop in the second year was largely due to the imprisonment of the two thirds of offenders whose DTTOs had been terminated ('revoked'). Usually this occurred in the first year of the order and because offenders had not complied with requirements such as attending appointments. Reconviction and revocation were strongly related. 91% of revokees were reconvicted and in the first year of their orders their conviction rate was about as high as before the order had started. In contrast, just 53% of those who completed their orders were reconvicted, their conviction rate fell dramatically and stayed low, and the convictions they did receive were rarely for more serious offences.

The pilots seem typical of schemes across England and Wales where over two-thirds of DTTOs are terminated due to failure to comply (51%) or reconviction and just a quarter are completed.

LINKS Nugget 9.9

1 Hough M. *et al.* [The impact of Drug Treatment and Testing Orders on offending: two-year reconviction results](#). Home Office, 2003.

2 Clancy A. *et al.* [DTTO one-year reconviction results: early findings](#). 2002.