



NATIONAL PROBATION SERVICE  
for England and Wales

Cheshire

### The national picture: "What Works"

"What Works" is a Home office policy to ensure that all probation and prison practice is effective and based on properly researched evidence of success in reducing re-offending.

Common features of "What Works" programmes include:

- reduced re-offending
- improved public protection
- seamless execution of the sentence of the Courts
- greater public confidence in community punishments

### Tried and tested

This is the third programme delivered in Cheshire to be nationally accredited, meaning research has proved that the methods, principles and techniques used are effective in reducing re-offending. By 2004, Cheshire will only deliver programmes that are nationally accredited.

A national target of 60,000 has been set for the number of offenders completing accredited programmes by 2003/4, with 30,000 of these being subject to Community Punishment Orders.

An evaluation of the DID Programme found that it reduced the anticipated rate of re-conviction by half, to only 14% after two years. This compares very favourably with the 21% re-conviction rate for drink drivers sent to prison and 28% for those given other community penalties. The study also showed that 89% of those who started the DID Programme completed it.



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## Drink Impaired Drivers Programme

*Information for Solicitors*

## The DID Programme

This programme tackles the attitudes and behaviour of drink impaired drivers. Its aim is to teach offenders new skills and techniques:

- to stop them from drink driving
- to increase their knowledge of alcohol and its effects
- to plan effectively
- to control their thoughts, feelings and actions
- to promote safe driving.

## Suitable offenders

The programme is aimed at drink drivers who have committed between two and four offences and first time offenders if the drink drive offence is aggravated i.e. twice the legal limit and/or involved in an accident.

Rigorous assessment of offenders during the preparation of Pre-Sentence Reports is essential. There is evidence that putting the wrong offenders on this programme can increase re-offending. First time drink drivers, those who have committed five or more offences, or whose use of alcohol is the main problem, are unsuitable for the programme.

## Pre-Sentence Reports

Where appropriate, Pre-Sentence Reports will contain proposals for offenders' attendance on the Drink Impaired Drivers Programme (DID). This will be a Community Rehabilitation Order with a Schedule 2(3) condition of the Powers of Criminal Courts (Sentencing) Act 2000. It is not appropriate for these Orders to be made as a result of a Specific Sentence Report.

Solicitors should liaise with Probation Court Officers before suggesting adjournments for Pre-Sentence Reports specifically for DID assessments. This will avoid many cases being adjourned which could have been properly dealt with on that day by another disposal.

## Programme Content

Drink Impaired Drivers (DID) is an intensive programme delivered to groups of up to ten offenders. Drink drive offenders seldom think about victims, their families or the consequences for themselves before drinking and driving. The programme tackles the way drink drive offenders think and behave and aims to change behaviour by increasing their knowledge about alcohol and driving, and by teaching problem-solving skills.

It runs for 20 - 26 sessions, comprising four pre-group, 16 group and up to six post-group sessions.

## Attendance

Offenders are expected to attend the full programme and must catch up on any missed sessions. If they do not, they are dealt with in accordance with the Service's National Standards and returned to Court after the second missed session. Offenders are clearly expected to find employment/training opportunities and the Service is catering for this.

Completion of the programme represents great commitment and motivation on the part of offenders.

## Assessing individual progress

Tests are given to offenders at the start and end of the programme to measure their knowledge of alcohol and attitudes towards offending. The results of these contribute to regular review meetings and reports written by programme staff and the Case Manager.