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# Dublin Drug Treatment Court

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A different approach to dealing with substance abuse in  
the criminal justice system

Presentation to ECAD Conference  
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Tom Ward, Chief Clerk, Dublin Circuit & District Courts

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# Brief History of the Drug Treatment Court

- Pilot Project commenced in January 2001 – initial 18 month period
  - Established on basis that participating agencies would contribute requisite resources
  - Operates and cater for people with substance abuse problems in Dublin County - North of the River Liffey and clients of Castle Street Treatment Centre in South Inner City
  - Treatment and rehabilitation a key feature
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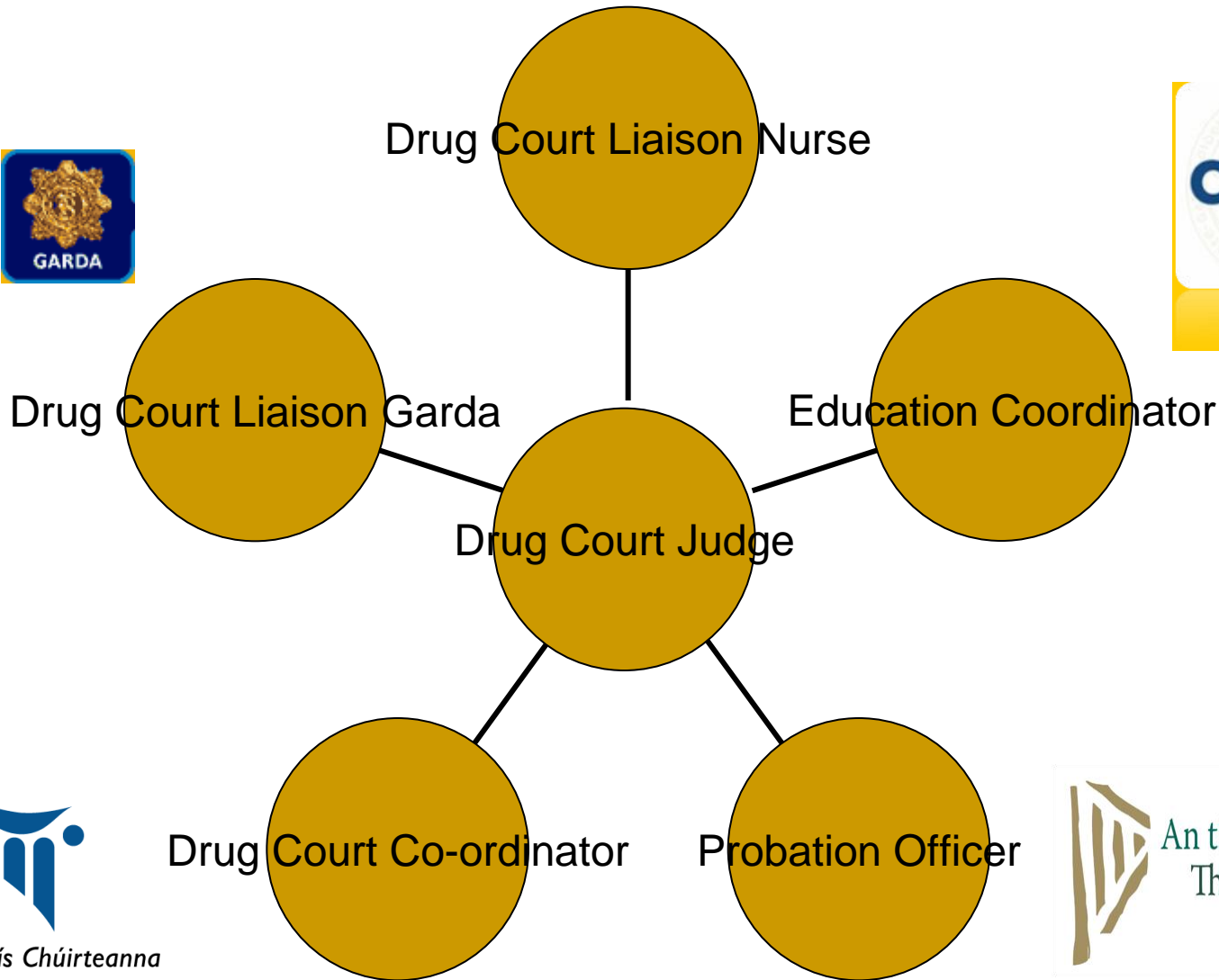
# Other Drug Courts

- Model based on US Drug Courts
  - Other European Drug Courts include those in
    - Liverpool & London, England
    - Glasgow, Scotland
    - Cardiff, Wales
    - Bergen & Oslo, Norway
    - Gent, Belgium
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# Who is it for?

- Participants must
    - be 18 years old or older
    - reside within the catchment area for a period of a minimum of one year
    - have pleaded guilty or been found guilty in court of a non-violent criminal offence
    - be liable to be sentenced to a term of imprisonment if convicted
    - be dependent on the use of prohibited drugs and/or prescribed drugs
    - have a clear understanding of the implications of participation with the Drug Court, and
    - be willing to co-operate with supervision, stop offending, avail of appropriate drug treatment and participate generally on the programme put in place.
  - Substance abusers rather than criminals who use
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An tSeirbhís Phromhaidh  
The Probation Service

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# A Journey through the DTC

- District court transfers to DTC
  - Induction – An Garda Síochána, Probation and Health Service Executive
  - Acceptance - Sign Bail Bond and agree to Treatment Plan
  - Education Assessment
  - Move through 3 phases - approx. 18 - 24 mths
  - Court Sitting : Wednesday 2pm
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# Pre - Court Meetings

- Wednesday 10.30am
  - Inclusive of team members, support resources and leader ( Judge)
  - Verbal Reports from all agencies
  - Open Discussion
  - Sanctions and Incentives
  - Final decision lies with the Judge
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# How it works for participants

- Attendance daily at Parnell Adult Learning Centre for studies
  - Weekly attendance at court in early stages
  - Holistic to considering welfare of participants
  - Stabilisation – facilitating access to treatment, benefits and accommodation
  - Encouragement and support to address reasons for addiction
  - Motivation
  - On-going engagement
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# Personal Progression Plans

- Meet every 4-6 weeks with participant
  - Review – Health / Education / Probation
  - Assist participant in setting short/medium term goals
  - Review accomplishment of short term goals
  - Review Phase progression
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# Why keep it going?

- Is prison really the answer for people with a substance abuse problem?
  - Full prisons and the lack of a deterrent
  - Drugs in prisons
  - One size does not fit all in the criminal justice system
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# Annual Justice Sector costs

Year	Total
2001	€355,228
2002	€354,135
2003	€293,663
2004	€294,381
2005	€302,670
2006	€314,561
2007	€315,507
2008	€303,999
2009	€139,722
2010	€144,175
2011	€166,784

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# Other costs

- €420,000 for Parnell Adult Learning Centre
  - €90,000 for Health Service Executive
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# Compared with

- Annual Cost of keeping a prisoner in custody
  - 2010 - €70,513



# Numbers

	Referrals	Unsuitable	Suitable		Discharged	Graduated
<b>2001</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>2002</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2003</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2004</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2005</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>2006</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2007</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2008</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>2009</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>2010</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>2011</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>4</b>

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# 2010 Department of Justice and Equality Review

- ❑ Actively promote use of the DTC by generating strong links between District Criminal Courts and DTC.
  - ❑ Introduce a protocol which would assist judges in determining whether defendants before them might qualify for participation in the DTC programme.
  - ❑ Advise the legal practitioners about the programme as an option for suitable clients.
  - ❑ Existing catchment area boundaries should be removed on a phased basis.
  - ❑ Participants who may be borderline cases under the existing scheme parameters should be facilitated, where possible.
  - ❑ The programme should be extended to offenders in the 16-18 age group bracket from the Children Court.
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# 2010 Department of Justice and Equality Review (Cont.)

- ❑ The programme should be extended to suitable cases before the Circuit Court.
- ❑ The co-ordinator post should be staffed at an appropriate level by an individual with the relevant skills and training specific to the role should be provided.
- ❑ Data and statistics relating to the DTC should be gathered and collated through the use of ITC and other pathways to provide an evidence base for primary research and future decision making.
- ❑ Establish an Advisory Committee drawn from the participating agencies.
- ❑ Monitor the implementation of the recommendations of this Report, should they be accepted.
- ❑ Assess, on a regular basis, the requirements of the DTC team in consultation with the Judge and the team itself and advise, support and publicise the work of the DTC team.



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# Issues

- Figures for graduates very low and not reflective of high levels of progress made
    - 85% of graduates successfully turn their lives around
    - 55% of participants who complete phase 2 but not phase 3 have 2 or less instances of re-offending
  - Graduate figures used as a basis for criticising court
  - Lack of appreciation of participants and their social circumstances
  - Lack of tracking of performance of graduates versus other forms of rehabilitation
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# Trends

- Older participants do better than younger participants
  - A very different approach required with young people
  - Men do better than women
  - Methadone as a barrier to progress
  - Drug abuse only one of a large number of problems facing participants
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# Barriers to success

- Bar set too high for addicts – unrealistic expectations
  - Revolving door in Prisons or
  - Prisons seen as a break, rather than a deterrent
  - Suffered from a lack of interest – 10 years
  - Low numbers of participants
  - Limited geographical area
  - Attitudes to substance abusers in society
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# Barriers to success (Cont.)

- Absence of link to community
  - Participants with little or no support structures or personal resources, coming from areas where unemployment very high.
  - Access to residential treatment
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# Recent causes for optimism

- Increase in geographical catchment area
  - Reference to DTC in Programme for Government – keen interest in non-custodial remedies
  - Continued commitment of Judge and team
  - Progress towards implementing 12 recommendations of 2010 review
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# Key Features of improved programme

- Credits / Strengths based approach, rather than looking to catch participants out
  - Rewards for interim achievements – recommendation from DTC of suspended sentence after phase 2
  - Rewards for pro-social activities
  - Time limits to progress through the programme
  - Support and Advisory Committee
  - Dedicated 12-steps type support group
  - New promotional materials for participants and key stakeholders
  - Involvement of Community Welfare Officers
  - Increased research and reporting capacity
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# What Lord Mayors can do?

- Facilitate links between criminal justice sector and wider society – drug abuse is a problem facing whole of communities
  - Encourage businesses to sponsor back to work programmes for suitable people going through criminal justice sector
  - Sponsor events for local DTC / Problem solving courts
  - Develop links with local public services and NGOs working with substance abusers
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Any Questions?

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Thanks for attending

[drugtreatmentcourt@courts.ie](mailto:drugtreatmentcourt@courts.ie)

Ph: 8886294