

TEST on ARREST

The Drug Intervention Programme Richmond upon Thames

In brief

From the beginning of March 2011 people arrested in the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames for offences where drugs are possibly involved, will be tested for heroin and/or cocaine (powder and crack).

The drug test will take place in the custody suites at either Richmond or Teddington Police Stations and will be carried out using a mouth swab. Results will be available within minutes.

Those who test positive will be required to have an assessment of their drug use and will be referred to drug services.

If after testing positive the person has to attend Court, the Magistrates' may not grant them bail unless they agree to engage with drug services.

This Restriction on Bail acts as an incentive for defendants who have tested positive to engage in treatment and/or other support, or face an increased risk of being refused bail.

This will affect people arrested in: Barnes, Ham, Hampton, Hampton Hill, Hampton Wick, Heathfield, Kew, Mortlake, Petersham, Richmond, Sheen, Teddington, Twickenham and Whitton.

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Drug Testing on Arrest

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why are we doing this?

The process involves criminal justice organisations and drug treatment providers working together to reduce drug-related crime.

We aim to do this by engaging with problematic drug users and moving them into the appropriate treatment and support.

The goal is to break the cycle of drug misuse and offending behaviour by intervening at every stage of the criminal justice system, and to engage offenders in drug treatment.

2. Why are we spending money on this?

For every £1 spent on drug treatment and prevention, at least £2.50 is saved in other costs to society.

Source: National Treatment Agency <http://www.nta.nhs.uk/about-benefits.aspx>

3. What will the benefit to society will be?

- Communities suffer less crime; and
- Criminal justice costs are reduced.

4. Who will be tested?

People arrested for a 'trigger' offence (generally a crime involving obtaining money that could be used to buy drugs or a previous drug possession offence) or where a police officer believes drugs may be linked to the offence, will be tested. People will not be arrested purely to obtain a drugs test. Testing positive is not an offence.

5. What happens to anyone who tests positive?

Anyone testing positive for specific Class A drugs will be required to attend and remain at two assessments with a drugs worker. (Section 9 and 10 of the Drugs Act 2005).

Failure to attend and remain at the assessments is an offence.

Anyone testing positive and refusing to engage with drugs treatment may not get bail either from the police or the Magistrates Court.

6. Where will those who test positive go for treatment?

In Richmond upon Thames we estimate that approx 60-70% of our 'trigger' offences are committed by people who don't live in the borough. These arrests will be referred into drug services in their home borough. The Richmond residents will be referred to local services.

7. Does this mean criminals get preferential access into services?

No, since 2001, the average waiting time to get treatment has shrunk from two months to less than a week. The number of adults in contact with community treatment services has more than doubled to over 207,000. (The Story of Drug Treatment, National Treatment Agency 2009). There is therefore no preferential route into treatment for those testing positive.

8. How do people who are not committing crimes get help for a drug problem?

In Richmond there are a number of organisations that can offer help and advice for both adults and young people.

For more information go to: www.richmond.gov.uk/drugs_and_alcohol or www.richmond.gov.uk/young_peoples_drug_and_alcohol_support

9. Where can I find more information about drug treatment and the criminal justice system?

www.nta.nhs.uk/facts-faqs.aspx

www.nta.nhs.uk/about-benefits.aspx

For more information contact the Richmond Council Community Safety Team:

Community.safety@richmond.gov.uk

020 8891 7777