



Drug Testing Trial FACT SHEET

CANTERBURY-BANKSTOWN

Drug testing of new recipients of Newstart and Youth Allowance (other) will be trialled in the local government area of Canterbury-Bankstown in New South Wales to assist in addressing substance abuse and help job seekers to ultimately secure work.

What area of Canterbury-Bankstown will the trial cover?

The trial covers the LGA (Local Government Area) of Canterbury-Bankstown. Suburbs included in the trial are: Bankstown, Bass Hill, Canterbury, Campsie, Chester Hill, Earlwood, East Hills, Lakemba, Milperra, Padstow, Picnic Point, Punchbowl, Revesby and Roselands.

How long will the trial run?

The drug testing trial will run for two years, in three different locations in Australia.

Who will be affected?

Up to 5,000 people who are new recipients of Newstart and Youth Allowance (other) will be part of the trial. About one-third of these - approximately 1,750 people - are expected to be tested in Canterbury-Bankstown during the two-year trial period.

Where does testing take place?

If selected for drug testing, job seekers will be notified during an appointment with a Department of Human Services (DHS) officer.

Depending on what kind of test they have been selected for, the test will either take place at a local Centrelink centre or a nearby facility. All tests will be conducted in a private environment by suitably qualified representatives from a contracted drug testing provider.

Will drug test results be shared?

An individual's drug test results will be private and only disclosed in accordance with the strict confidentiality provisions in the social security law *Social Security (Administration) Act 1999*.

Positive test results will not be shared with police under this trial and no criminal action will be taken as a result of a positive drug test.

What happens if job seekers test positive?

Those who test positive to a drug test will be placed onto Income Management for 24 months. A second drug test is then scheduled within 25 working days of their initial positive result.

What is Income Management?

Income Management limits the amount of money people can withdraw as cash, with the remaining funds quarantined for the purchase of essentials for themselves and their families – such as rent, childcare, food, school uniforms and household needs.

Income Management is already in place in Bankstown as a tool to help people manage their welfare payments.

Job seekers who are placed on to Income Management will receive a BasicsCard that will hold 80 per cent of their fortnightly welfare payment.

The other 20 per cent of their payment will go into their regular bank account.

More information on how the BasicsCard works can be found on the DHS website [here](#).

What treatment and supports will be available for people who test positive?

Canterbury-Bankstown has existing drug and alcohol services available to support people in overcoming substance abuse.

People who test positive to more than one drug test will be referred to a medical professional who will assess their particular circumstances and identify appropriate treatment options.

Based on the recommendations of the medical professional, they may be required to participate in treatment to address their substance abuse as part of their Job Plan.

The Government is also establishing a treatment fund of up to \$10 million to assist job seekers in the trial to access the treatment they need.

What does this drug testing trial aim to achieve?

The trial is designed to identify people with drug issues and help them to get to a point where they can look for work and secure a job.

Canterbury-Bankstown is an area that will benefit from this type of measure – data shows it has relatively high rates of hospitalisation related to drug use combined with a high number of job seeker welfare recipients.

The trial is part of a range of welfare measures designed to better support people into work and ensure the welfare system continues to provide a safety net for those who need it most.

Does the trial need new legislation?

Yes, legislation for the drug testing trial will need to be passed by Parliament.

Key facts:

- The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's 2016 National Drug Strategy Household Survey shows that those who were unemployed were 3.1 times more likely to use ice and other amphetamines than those who were employed.
- In 2016-17 there were 22,133 temporary incapacity exemptions given to 16,157 job seekers because of a drug and/or alcohol dependence issue.
- Australia's expenditure on alcohol and other drug treatment services in 2012-13 was \$1.2 billion, with about a third of this coming from the Australian Government.