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### **Botched DTTO response to crack using offenders**

Most worrying of the recent crop of reports on coerced treatment in Britain was a [report](#) not released until 2007 on how in 2003 and 2004 three English DTTO teams handled their crack using caseloads.<sup>1</sup> For two of the sites no outcome assessment was possible because the most basic of records were lacking. Though there too much data was missing, the third (in London) was able to provide records for 70 relevant offenders. At most five may (we only know the rest did not) have completed their court orders and remained free of crack or heroin use or heavy drinking.

Administrative confusion was apparent from the start when the researchers found central authorities mistakenly thought the teams saw large numbers of primary crack users. In fact there were few; even if using crack, most offenders saw themselves as primarily heroin users.

Though what happened to most of the offenders is unclear, the inflexibility of the court orders and of the treatments combined with poor management and inter-agency working suggest any successes would have been as much in spite of as because of the DTTO process. Each site failed to individualise the treatments they offered and relations between partner agencies were strained.

Staff knew things needed to change and changes were afoot. Confidence that things really did improve after the research ended is diminished by the fact that several years earlier [the first DTTO schemes](#) had suffered similar problems.<sup>2</sup>

1 Turnbull P.J. et al. [Supervising crack-using offenders on drug treatment and testing orders](#). National Treatment Agency for Substance Misuse, 2007.

2 Ashton M. [First test for the DTTO](#). Drug and Alcohol Findings: 2001, issue 6.

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