



Drug Testing Trial FACT SHEET

CANTERBURY-BANKSTOWN

Subject to the passage of legislation, drug testing of new recipients of JobSeeker Payment and Youth Allowance (other) will be trialled in the Local Government Area (LGA) of Canterbury-Bankstown in New South Wales to assist in addressing illicit drug use and help job seekers to ultimately secure employment.

What area of Canterbury-Bankstown will the trial cover?

The trial covers the LGA 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 JobSeeker Payment 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 Services Australia 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 (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?

Job seekers who test positive to a first drug test will be placed on Income Management for a period of 24 months. A second drug test will be scheduled within 25 working days of the 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.

Under Income Management, JobSeeker Payment and Youth Allowance (other) job seekers still receive 100 per cent of their fortnightly welfare payment rate.

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

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

More information on how the BasicsCard works can be found [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 use issues.

Job seekers 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, job seekers may be required to participate in treatment to address their drug use as part of their Job Plan. These job seekers will also be referred to a local case manager to assist them to access treatment and provide ongoing support.

The Government is also establishing a treatment fund of up to \$10 million to assist job seekers identified through the trial to access the treatment they need. The Treatment Fund will consist of:

- \$1 million for case management services to help people who test positive to more than one drug test during the trial to access the services and treatment identified in their treatment plan
- \$3 million to boost drug treatment capacity in the three trial sites and respond to any additional demand

- approximately \$6 million in an individual funding pool for additional accredited treatment support, in the event state or Commonwealth funded services are not able to be accessed in a timely manner.

What does this drug testing trial aim to achieve?

The trial is designed to identify people with illicit drug use 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 2019 National Drug Strategy Household Survey shows that unemployed Australians were 2.3 times more likely to use ice and other amphetamines than those who were employed.

- The Australian Government is establishing a treatment fund of up to \$10 million to assist job seekers identified through the trial to access treatment and overcome barriers to work.
- The Government has committed more than \$800 million over four years (from 1 July 2018) to reduce the impact of drug and alcohol misuse on individuals, families and communities through the overarching Drug and Alcohol Program.