

Pilot family drug and alcohol court launched in London

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A specialist court to try and help families affected by substance misuse has been officially launched this week at Wells St family proceedings court in West London. The Family Drug and Alcohol Court will start work in January 2008.

The court is based on successful models from the United States and aims to reduce the number of children taken into care, or to return children to their families if this has already taken place.

Parents whose children are at risk of being taken into care will receive support and advice from professionals and help from healthcare workers to begin to tackle their substance misuse problem. Each judge will follow his or her own cases from start to finish.

The London boroughs of Camden, Islington and Westminster are leading the three-year pilot which will be evaluated by Brunel University. Two thirds of the care proceedings issued by these three councils are related to parental substance misuse. Each council has put 450,000 into the project.

The 1.3m pilot is also being supported financially by the Ministry of Justice, the Department for Children, Schools and Families and the Home Office.

For more information please contact Ruth Goldsmith in the DrugScope Press Office on 020 7940 7517 (07736 895563 out of hours) or at press@drugscope.org.uk

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