

Court Link — how to refer

Court Link is a new program based on individual case management and judicial monitoring to address the underlying causes of offending.

Court Link replacing Queensland Integrated Court Referral Program (QICR)

Court Link is an integrated court assessment, referral and support program for Queensland. Court Link addresses the underlying issues associated with offending. Court Link operates in the Brisbane Magistrates Court district and will replace QICR in Brisbane. QICR will continue to operate in all other locations.

What is Court Link?

Court Link is a 12-week bail-based program offering participants formal case management together with referral to treatment and community support services. Court Link helps participants with their health and social needs.

Who is eligible to participate in Court Link?

A person can participate in Court Link if they are before the Magistrates Court charged with any criminal offence, regardless of whether they will plead guilty or not guilty.

They may have issues or problems associated with:

- a physical or mental disability or illness

- drug and/or alcohol dependency or misuse
- homelessness or risk of homelessness
- inadequate social, family and economic support that contribute to the frequency or severity of their offending.

A person deemed not suitable or eligible for a specialist court or another intervention program may still be eligible for Court Link.

There is no limit to the number of times a person may participate in the Court Link program.

How to refer

Referrals can be made by anyone, at any time. Referrals must be made with the person's consent.

What happens next?

Triage:

Professionally qualified Court Link staff assess referred individuals to understand the support needed.

Community referral:

Court Link staff will refer individuals with low risk and need who are not already involved with treatment or support services to appropriate community-based services.

Court Link participation:

Court Link staff will provide case management services to individuals who are considered suitable for the Court Link program. This will include working with participants to develop a case plan and co-ordinating referral to community-based services for support and assistance.

Treatment Pathway report:

Court Link staff will prepare a treatment pathway report if a person is suitable for Court Link. This provides the court with the individual's personal information and how Court Link can assist. If participation in Court Link is confirmed, a condition will be placed on the person's bail order explaining program participation.

Where the court does not grant bail or place a person on the program, the matter will progress according to the usual court process.

Court Link progress mentions:

Participants engage in regular case management meetings and take part in treatment and support services. Regular judicial monitoring will be provided by the magistrate. Progress reports are provided to the court, detailing the participant's attendance and engagement with service providers. Copies of these reports are provided to the participant, their legal representative and police prosecutors.

Final hearing:

The final hearing provides an opportunity for the participant to engage with the court about their progress and goals. A Final Report, prepared by Court Link staff, is submitted to the court. This includes

strategies to support the participant in their transition out of Court Link.

If a participant pleads guilty to an offence that is dealt with summarily, the final hearing will include sentencing of the participant following their participation in Court Link. The magistrate may consider their Court Link participation when making their sentencing determination.

About the court

A dedicated magistrate will conduct regular monitoring of Court Link participants every first and third Friday in Court Room 32 at the Brisbane Magistrates Court (363 George Street). The Magistrate will oversee the participant's progress, provide guidance and encourage the participant towards their case plan goals. The Magistrate will set regular court appearances to be updated by the Court Link staff on the participant's progress.

A failure to participate or engage in Court Link may be reported by Court Link staff to the magistrate and may result in early exit from the program.

Failure to participate in Court Link will not result in an offence for breach of the defendant's bail.

Further information:

www.courts.qld.gov.au/court-link

Email

courtlink@justice.qld.gov.au