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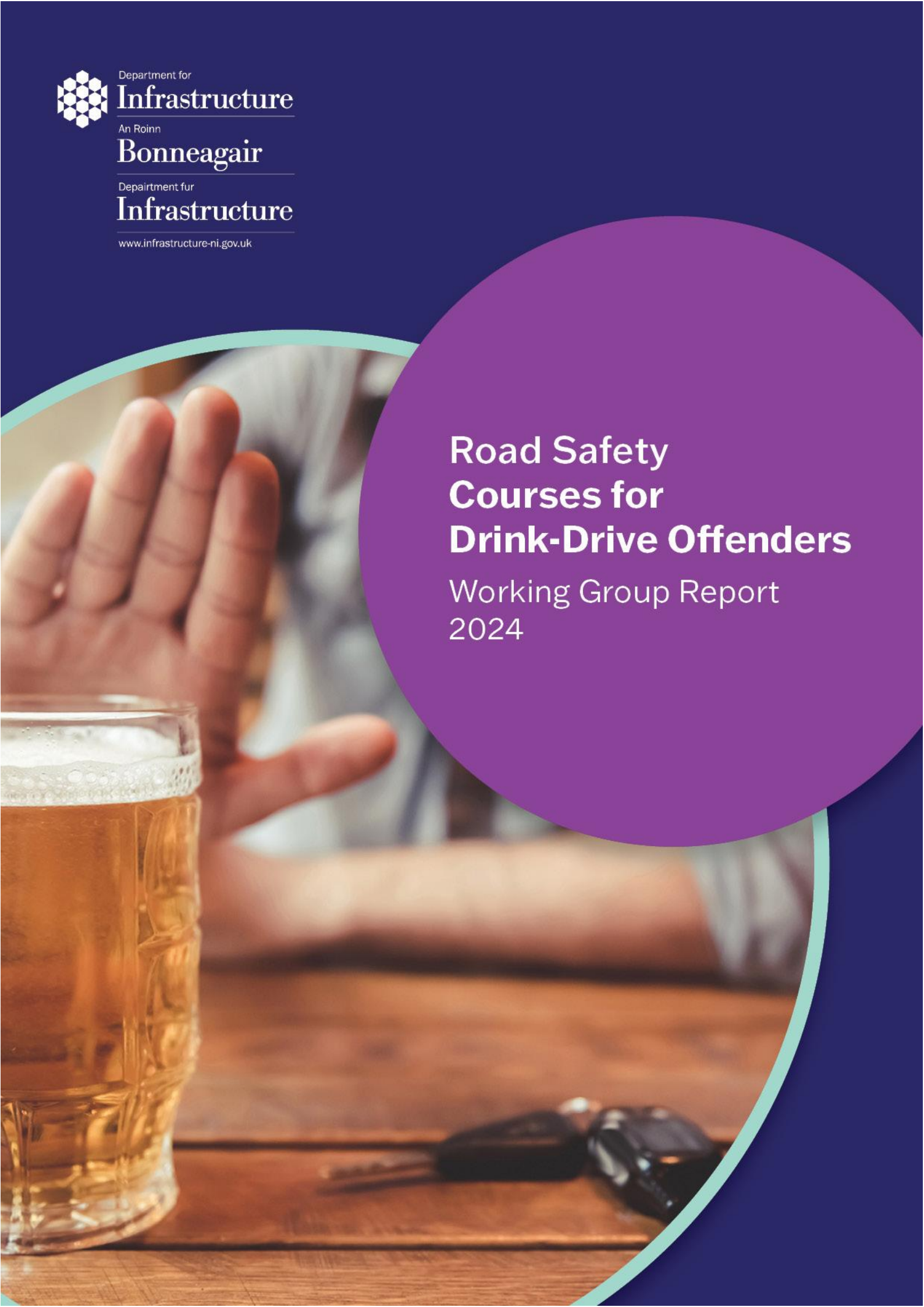
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Road Safety Courses for Drink-Drive Offenders

Working Group Report 2024

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Executive Summary

The courts in Northern Ireland can offer drink drive offenders the opportunity to attend a drink drive rehabilitation course as a sentencing option. Where an offender is disqualified for 12 months or more in respect of an alcohol-related driving offence, the court will (except for special reasons) order that the period of disqualification be reduced if the offender satisfactorily completes an approved Course for Drink Drive Offenders (CDDO). More detail on the courses can be found at [Annex A](#).

The scheme is managed by the Department for Infrastructure (the Department) through a Working Group which has responsibility for overseeing and monitoring the delivery of the scheme throughout Northern Ireland. The Working Group is chaired by the Department and its membership drawn from a range of organisations from across the criminal justice system.

The success of the CDDO scheme can be measured in terms of its use by courts as a sentencing option i.e. number of referrals, number of course completions and the effect of course attendance on subsequent reoffending rates. This report provides details on the operation of the scheme during the period 2024. A summary of performance indicators is provided in the table below.

Table 1: Performance Indicators

	2024
Courses Delivered	59
Numbers Trained	643
Referral Rate ¹	71%
Take-up Rate ²	37%

It is important that as many drivers as possible who receive a drink drive conviction are given the opportunity to take up the offer of completing a course. This reporting period has seen a slight increase in the number of course referrals from the courts – 1.5% increase since 2023. [The number of convictions at courts for drink driving offences has decreased almost 3% in the same period]. It remains essential that referrals can be converted into attendance and ultimately a high number of course completions.

¹ Referral Rate – number of convicted drink drivers who were referred by a court to attend a course as a percentage of convictions.

² Take-up Rate – course completions as a percentage of referrals.

1.0 Introduction

The CDDO Working Group, established by the Department, has responsibility for overseeing and monitoring the delivery of the scheme throughout Northern Ireland. The Working Group, chaired by the Department for Infrastructure, comprises of representatives from the Department's Driving, Vehicle & Road Safety Policy Division, Analysis Statistics and Research Branch (ASRB), the Driver Vehicle Agency (DVA), the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), the NI Courts and Tribunals Service (NICTS), and the Public Prosecution Service (PPS). The course provider is also represented at meetings. The terms of reference for the Working Group are provided at [Annex C](#).

The Working Group's primary role is to ensure that the operation of courses is carried out by the provider in line with the terms and conditions of its contract and that activities and processes remain effective. In particular, it must ensure the effectiveness of the scheme is regularly measured and evaluated.

The CDDO Working Group report provides an overview of how the effectiveness of the scheme is regularly measured and evaluated. It provides details on the operation of the scheme during 2024, and, amongst other things, it considers the continuing demand for online training vs a return to face-to-face training. The importance of being able to deliver both options to course participants (as demand dictates) remains a priority for the Working Group.

A legislative change³ making referral onto the courses automatic (except for special reasons) took effect on 28 June 2021. This report evaluates the effect of that change and whether it continues to have an impact on the number of course participants.

³ [The Road Traffic \(Amendment\) \(2016 Act\) \(Commencement No. 3\) Order \(Northern Ireland\) 2021](#)

2.0 Delivery of Courses in Northern Ireland

2.1 Aim

The underlying aim of the scheme is to provide offenders who are referred onto a course with expert training, in a group situation, about the problems associated with drink-driving; enabling them to develop future non-offending behaviour and thereby reducing re-offending. Details of the course which runs in Northern Ireland can be found on the nidirect website – <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/courses-drink-drive-offenders>

2.2 Courses Delivered

Primarily, digital online courses were held during 2024 – see Table 2 below. Since 2021 the demand for classroom based training has been consistently tested by the addition of further classroom courses. However, trends do indicate that digital online courses are the preferred option but, importantly, where demand is expressed, classroom options are offered.

This situation remains under review and classroom-based courses will continue to be offered as demand dictates i.e. to accommodate those who are unable to attend a digital course, perhaps due to limited knowledge / experience of how zoom works or lack of internet access. The important point to make is that course content and format remain the same irrespective of the course delivery method.

Table 2: Total Number of Courses delivered in 2024

	2024
Total Courses Delivered	59
Online	56
Classroom	3

A list of the venues used for classroom-based courses is provided at [Annex B](#).

Table 3: Courses – Digital and Online

Total Completion numbers	Digital	Classroom
643	621	22

2.3 Course Completers

A total of 643 offenders in Northern Ireland received drink drive rehabilitation training in 2024. This type of training assists offenders in taking personal responsibility for their behaviour and provides the knowledge and tools to help prevent reoffending in the future. The following tables provide a breakdown of course completers age and gender.

Table 4: Course Completers

	2024
Course Completers	643

Table 5: Course Completers - Age Groups

Completion numbers	17-24	25-64	65+
640⁴	518	104	18

Table 6: Course Completers - Gender

Completion numbers	Male	Female
640	437	203

The course provider conducts a survey at the end of each course and will utilise client feedback in order to both maximise the numbers undertaking the course and to continuously improve the experience of course participants. The Working Group has had an opportunity during this reporting period to review the survey questions and to add any additional questions that could provide further feedback.

3.0 Performance Indicators

The table below provides a summary of the performance indicators. These are discussed in more detail throughout this section

Table 7: Performance Indicators

	2024
Courses Delivered	59
Numbers Trained	643
Referral Rate	71%

⁴ Please note that the breakdowns provided in Tables 5 & 6 exclude 3 records due to a system error.

(number of convicted drink drivers who were referred by a court to attend a course as a percentage of convictions)	
Take-up Rate (course completions as a percentage of referrals)	37%
Non-Completion Rate⁵ (number of non-completions as a percentage of referrals)	53%

Referral Rates

Making maximum use of approved drink drive offender courses can help offenders take personal responsibility for their actions and, significantly, research shows that those who participate in a course are less likely to reoffend. A reoffending analysis for participants who completed the course in Northern Ireland 2010 to 2013 indicates that completing the course significantly reduced the one, two, three and four year offending rates of course completers compared to a matched sample of non-attending offenders.

During 2021, a change to legislation means that referral onto a course is now automatic (unless for special reasons the courts decide attendance would be inappropriate). Prior to this change, referral onto a course was at the discretion of the court. However, following automatic referral, it remains for the offender to decide as to whether or not they wish to complete the training. The voluntary nature of the scheme highlights that CDDO is not seen as part of the penalty but instead aims to make the offender take responsibility for their actions and reduce the risk of re-offending.

3.1 Referral Rate – 2024

Between 1 January and 31 December 2024, a total of 1717 **referrals** were made. This represents an increase of 1.48% compared to 2023 (1692).

During this same period there were 2,404 **convictions** for relevant drink drive offences at courts throughout Northern Ireland. This represents a decrease of almost 3% from 2023 (2,478).

⁵ Non-completions include the following group: those invited by course provider but never make contact; those invited by course provider and do make contact but never book; or those invited by course provider and do make contact / book - but ultimately do not complete for a range of reasons. All of these individuals will be on the course provider's system and when the date to complete the course (set by the court) has expired; they will be recorded as a 'non-completion' in that particular reporting period.

This is equivalent to a **referral rate** for the period 1 January to 31 December 2024 of approximately **71%** which is a slight increase on the previous year at 68%.

The table below provides a summary of referrals over the last five-year period.

Table 8: Referrals

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Referrals	959	1,241	1,575	1,692	1,717
Convictions	2,029	2,458	2,451	2,478	2,404
Referral Rate	47%	50%	64%	68%	71%

It had been anticipated that a move to automatic referral on 28 June 2021 was likely to have the greatest impact on increasing the number of course participants.

Table 8 shows that referral rates are on an upward trajectory reflecting the change to legislation. Maintaining high referral rates across all court areas remains critical to the scheme's success.

The next table (table 9) lists referral rates by each court area.

Table 9: Referral rate, by court 2024 [3rd full year of automatic referral]

Court	Convictions 2024	Referrals 2024	Referral Rates 2024 (%)	Comparison with 2023 % points
Antrim	92	67	73%	3 ↑
Armagh	56	47	84%	10 ↑
Ballymena	141	86	61%	3 ↓
Banbridge	44	29	66%	13 ↓
Coleraine	122	96	79%	10 ↑
Craigavon	157	114	73%	13 ↑
Downpatrick	79	53	67%	8 ↓
Dungannon	162	131	81%	3 ↓
Enniskillen	88	68	77%	6 ↓
Laganside Courts	583	421	72%	5 ↑
Limavady	35	28	80%	10 ↑
Lisburn	135	90	67%	13 ↑
Londonderry	180	118	66%	6 ↑
Magherafelt	53	38	72%	3 ↓
Newry	162	127	78%	3 ↓
Newtownards	177	94	53%	5 ↑
Omagh	78	69	88%	18 ↑
Strabane	60	41	68%	2 ↓
TOTAL	2,404	1,717	71%	3 ↑

Take-up Rates

3.2 Take-up Rate - 2024

Of the 1717 referrals made during 2024, a total of 643 individuals took up the referral and completed a course. This represents **a take-up rate of 37%** which is a decrease of 9 percentage points compared to 2023. Any reduction in take-up rate is a concern. Ideally both the Working Group and the course provider would like to see a take-up rate of at least 40%. [The non-completion rate in 2024 has increased by 1 percentage point compared to 2023. A definition for non-completions is provided on page 7.]

The Working Group is keen to maximise the number of offenders who choose to complete a course following referral from the court and has welcomed steps taken by the course provider during this reporting period to maximise course participation.

These include:

- Regular communication with courts to maintain service continuity and quality for both courts and clients.
- Monthly monitoring of court referral volumes. Courts with unusually low referral levels are contacted to identify potential issues and offer support where needed.
- A proactive initial client letter that encourages timely course booking. Clients are given a "book-by" date, and the impact of this change is monitored continuously.
- A mailout feature to regularly extract and contact clients who have not yet booked a course. This provides them with updated course information and complements the standard invite letters sent during the disqualification period.
- Client evaluations conducted online two weeks after course completion which assist in gathering feedback on course content, delivery, booking experience, and venue quality.

3.3 Pre and Post Course Questionnaires

A knowledge check at the beginning and end of each course is used to assess effectiveness of education in changing participants' understanding of drink driving issues. This is done by way of a quiz-formatted questionnaire in which the pre and

post course scores are recorded to demonstrate the level of achievement by each participant. An analysis of pre and post course questionnaire scores is carried out by ASRB and more detail can be found in [Annex D](#).

4.0 The CDDO Working Group

The Working Group membership is drawn from a range of organisations from across the criminal justice system. It provides a forum to discuss any problems or concerns around the successful rollout of the training and members have the opportunity to help generate solutions using contacts and experience from their respective areas.

In conjunction with the course provider, the group will seek to identify appropriate marketing and PR activity aimed at raising the profile of the scheme and thereby maintaining and/or increasing course take-up rates. It will also monitor the effectiveness of the courses to ensure they continue to meet their intended objectives.

One face to face meeting of the complete working group was held during the period covered by this report; other information relating to the working group was distributed to members by e-mail and / or via smaller online meetings, as necessary. Advice and input received from members was welcomed by the Department and the course provider. A number of course related issues were considered during this reporting period, and a few are listed below.

4.1 Course Related Issues - 2024

New Contract Award: The Department for Infrastructure in conjunction with the Department of Finance's Construction & Procurement Delivery (CPD) carried out a procurement competition during the summer months. The competition resulted in the incumbent course provider, TTC 2000 Limited, being successful and awarded a new contract from 1st October 2024 to 30th September 2027 (with an option to extend for two further one-year periods up until 30th September 2029).

Continued Monitoring Online / Classroom Courses: It was noted during this reporting period that there continued to be a low level of interest in classroom-based training, and a number of the scheduled classroom-based courses had to be cancelled due to a lack of take up. However, this facility will remain in place as an option for those wishing to attend a classroom-based course. There was recognition that the

online option provided great convenience in terms of time and accessibility - particularly as all those participating in the course will have been banned from driving.

Course Participation - working group members collectively continue to support the course provider with suggestions and/or contacts that have the potential to promote course participation e.g. collaboration with court user groups provides an important opportunity to discuss the merits of the course and most importantly the learning outcomes which can help prevent future reoffending.

Course Materials - During this reporting period an updated course leaflet and poster were approved by the working group. The course provider designed these materials with the aim of making them as user friendly as possible. For example, a QR code was incorporated into the new posters (displayed in police stations) to reduce the need for offenders to retain leaflets whilst waiting for their court appearance. The new materials break down the booking system into three simple steps and promote the accessibility of the course i.e. local class-room venues, online accessibility, weekend and evening opportunities as well as flexible payment options.

4.2 Quarterly Reports / Annual Reports

Updates are routinely provided to the Working Group through quarterly reports prepared by the course provider. The reports assist the Working Group to assess trends in take up of the course and to identify and address any emerging issues and potential risks to the successful delivery of the scheme.

Annual Reports provide details of venues, syllabus, internal quality control mechanisms, staff training and action taken in response to any quality control or disciplinary issues during that period are provided. Summary sheets are also included for each venue highlighting gender and age demographics as well as pre and post course questionnaire scores. The report is also a useful vehicle to highlight any new issues that may have arisen throughout the reporting period – providing details of how these were managed, evaluated and any lessons learned.

ANNEX A: More Course Details

Background	Courses for Drink Drive Offenders have been used as a sentencing option in courts across Northern Ireland since January 2006. Where an offender is disqualified for 12 months or more in respect of an alcohol-related driving offence, the court will⁶ order that the period of disqualification be reduced if the offender satisfactorily completes an approved CDDO course. Currently attendance is voluntary, costs are met by the offender and those successfully completing the course receive a reduction of up to 25% in the period of disqualification.
Course Policy	Completion of a course, and the subsequent reduction in the period of disqualification, will depend on regular attendance and completion of all sessions, payment of the appropriate course fee and compliance with the course provider's reasonable requirements. It is important that all course attendees participate and contribute within the sessions and in doing so respect and keep confidences shared on the course. It is important also that those attending the course do not turn up under the influence of alcohol or drugs and do not consume alcohol or drugs before or during the course (including break times). Measures are in place to verify the identity of the attendee as the offender and not an imposter.
Eligibility	To be eligible to attend a course, a person must be at least 17 years old and have been convicted of a relevant drink-driving offence for which they have been disqualified from driving for 12 months or more. A relevant conviction is one made under any of the following provisions of the Road Traffic (NI) Order 1995⁷: • Article 14 (causing death, or grievous bodily injury, by careless driving when under influence of drink or drugs);

⁶ Unless for special reasons the court decides attendance would be inappropriate.

⁷ Although some of the offences relate to both drink and drug-driving, the Department has approved no courses in respect of drug driving. People convicted solely of drug-driving offences should not be referred to an approved drink drive course as this would not serve the purpose of the legislation and bring no gains for road safety.

	• Article 15 (driving or being in charge when under influence of drink or drugs); • Article 16 (driving or being in charge with excess alcohol); or • Article 18 (failing to provide a specimen).
Referral	A change to legislation means that from 28 June 2021 referral to the course has become automatic - unless for special reasons - the court decides attendance would be inappropriate. Prior to this change, referral to the course was at the discretion of the District Judge (Magistrates' Courts). The decision to enrol on a course remains voluntary. There is no penalty for not attending and the original period of disqualification, as stated in court, is applied.
Course Fees	Each attendee must pay the course fee. The course fee is currently £170 and may be paid by instalments. There is a reduced fee of £110 for individuals on certain benefits, in full-time education or in receipt of a pension. Further details can be supplied by the training provider.

ANNEX B: Venues used in 2024 for classroom training

Note: a total of 59 courses (see page 5) were delivered throughout 2024. 56 courses were delivered online, and **3 courses** were delivered in a classroom setting.

The following provides a breakdown of the venues used to deliver classroom-based training. Where possible, the course provider will prioritise hiring community-based venues—such as those run by charities or local authorities — ensuring hire fees directly benefit local causes.

Venue	Status
Pro-Paramedics Unit 4 B & D, Weavers Court, Linfield Road Belfast, B12 5GH	Two courses
Omagh Library 1 Spillars Place Irish Town Road Omagh Co. Tyrone BT78 1HL	One course

ANNEX C: Terms of Reference for CDDO Working Group

The Working Group's role is to:

- ensure the content and operation of courses are carried out in line with the terms and conditions stipulated in the current contract;
- ensure current activities and internal processes remain effective; agreeing or proposing corrective action as appropriate;
- in conjunction with the course provider, seek to identify appropriate marketing and PR activity aimed at raising the profile of the scheme and thereby maintaining and/or increasing the referral and take-up rates;
- ensure the delivery of related action measures contained in the Road Safety Strategy to 2030;
- ensure the effectiveness of the scheme is regularly measured and evaluated, namely,
 - the proportion of convicted drink/drive offenders referred to the scheme by courts ('referral rate'),
 - the proportion of referred offenders who go on to complete a course ('take-up rate'), and
 - the effect of course attendance on convictions for a subsequent drink/drive offence ('reoffending rate');
- consider 1) the annual reports on the operation of the CDDO scheme and 2) periodic reoffending rate analyses reports produced by the Department of Justice;
- consider, on an ongoing basis, how best drink driving in Northern Ireland can be reduced through the use of remedial training; and
- consider how best drink driving in Northern Ireland can be reduced through other measures.

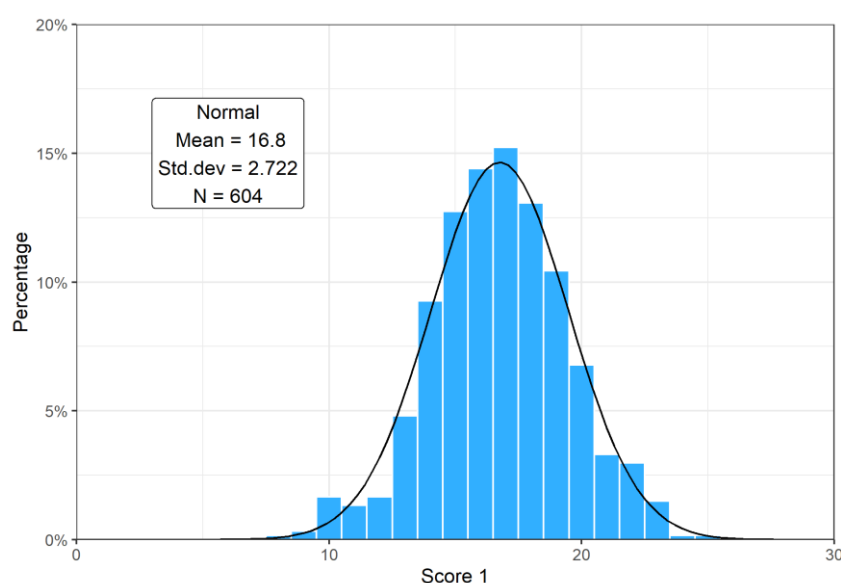
ANNEX D: Pre and Post Course Questionnaires

1. To assess the effectiveness of the course in improving knowledge, attendees are asked to complete a pre and post course quiz questionnaire. The 'Questionnaire and Alcohol Knowledge Quiz' asks respondents about their attitudes to drinking and driving and drink/drive legislation; their drinking behaviour; and their knowledge of alcohol and its effects on the body.
2. A single summary sheet is completed by TTC following the completion of each course. The summary provides overall scores obtained on the alcohol knowledge pre and post quizzes split by gender and age. Results can be analysed to identify changes in levels of the participants understanding of the issues covered. Offenders typically score significantly higher in the post course questionnaire.

Results from the 2024 questionnaires

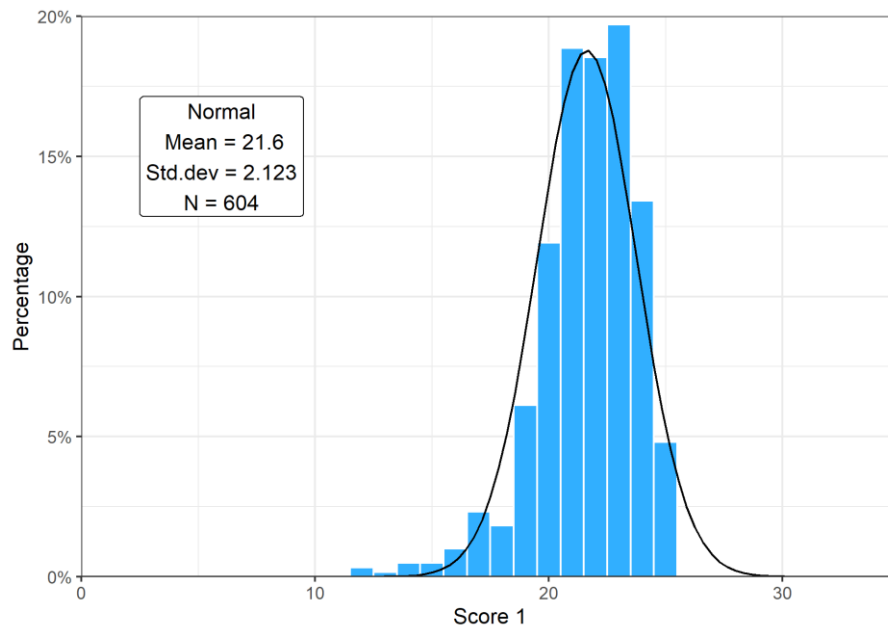
3. Overall scores are recorded from the pre and post quizzes for each participant. During 2024, the average score on the pre course quiz was 17 out of a possible 30. On completion of the course the average score on the post course quiz was 22 correct answers out of a possible 30, an increase of 29%.

Chart 1 – Histogram illustrating pre-course quiz scores⁸



⁸ there were 5 people with no pre-course score recorded

Chart 2 – Histogram illustrating pre-course quiz scores⁹



4. Thirty-two percent of attendees (193) achieved a score of 15 or less in the pre course quiz. In contrast, after completing the course, one percent of attendees (9) obtained a score of 15 or less. Of these, five scored higher than their pre-course result.
5. Overall, 1.7% (10) scored less on the post course quiz, with a further 2.6% (16) remaining unchanged. Ninety-six percent of attendees' scores improved between the pre and post quizzes, with 17% (104) improving their scores by 50% or more.

⁹ there were 34 people with no post-course score recorded



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