

The United States has gone considerably further in developing specialist **Veterans Treatment Courts**. These are not directly transferable to the UK – the legal systems and veteran populations are different, and they have higher percentages both of veterans, and of veterans in prison – but they have generated a useful body of research.

One national US study examined 7,931 veterans entering Veterans Treatment Courts through the Department of Veterans Affairs Veterans Justice Outreach programme. During roughly a year in the programme, 14% experienced a new incarceration; there were also improvements in independent housing and access to VA benefits. The researchers stressed the importance of effective substance-misuse treatment and employment services. [Source](#)

Another study, involving more than 22,000 justice-involved veterans, found better housing and employment outcomes among Veterans Treatment Court participants, although the results on subsequent incarceration were more complicated. The authors therefore described the benefits as moderate and emphasised the continuing need for services directed towards reducing reoffending. [Source](#).

That research should not be oversold. Specialist courts involve selection effects, different eligibility rules and closer supervision, all of which make simple comparisons of reoffending rates difficult. Some US research (Erickson 2016) has specifically warned that apparently favourable results may partly reflect who is admitted to these programmes in the first place. [Source](#).

A more recent (2025) overview of Veterans Treatment Court research does, however, reinforce a fairly straightforward principle: addressing the circumstances associated with offending – and helping an offender towards stable accommodation, employment, treatment and social support – can be worthwhile irrespective of whether the individual once wore a uniform. [Source](#).

The 2025 research also appears to show that while veteran offenders are 'generalist' criminals like anyone else, they can have special problems that can benefit from veteran-specific treatment.