



HM Inspectorate of Probation

AUDIT OF ACCREDITED PROGRAMMES

North-West Region of the
National Probation Service for
England and Wales

*Level 2 Follow-up Report on:
Cheshire Probation Area –
Think First*

October 2002

Acknowledgements:

We are grateful for the cooperation of staff from the Cheshire Probation Area in completing this follow-up audit.

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Glossary

ACE	Assessment, Case Recording and Evaluation System
ACO	Assistant chief officer
CO	Chief officer
HMIP	HM Inspectorate of Probation
IAPS	Interim Accredited Programmes Software
IQR	Implementation Quality Rating
LSI-R	Level of Service Inventory-Revised
N/A	Criteria not assessed
NPD	National Probation Directorate
OASys	Offender Assessment System
OGRS	Offender Group Reconviction Scale
PSO	Probation service officer
PSR	Pre-sentence report

Contents

	Page
Scoring Approach:	3
Overview:	3
Findings:	4
<u>SECTION A: COMMITTED LEADERSHIP</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>SECTION B: PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES</u>	<u>7</u>
<u>SECTION C: QUALITY OF PROGRAMME DELIVERY</u>	<u>16</u>
<u>SECTION D: CASE MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES</u>	<u>19</u>
Scoring summary sheet:	22

Scoring Approach:

The criteria for the delivery of accredited programmes have been divided into four sections. These sections, and the overall weighting assigned for each section, are as follows:

Committed leadership and supportive management	20%
Programme management responsibilities	30%
Quality of programme delivery	30%
Case management responsibilities	20%

Each criterion is scored as **Fully Met** (2 marks), **Largely Met** (1 Mark) or **Not Met** (0 marks).

The scoring summary sheet at the end of this follow-up report shows the marks awarded for each criterion – for those criteria designated as Mandatory (see Performance Standards Manual) the mark given is doubled. This denotes the critical impact these criteria have on the effective delivery of programmes.

The marks awarded for each section are shown and then expressed as a % by dividing the total number of marks scored by the maximum available, and multiplying by 100. Section B has been divided into seven sub-sections for ease of scoring.

To determine an area's IQR, the scores for each section are multiplied by the appropriate factor to take account of the relevant weightings given above. The % totals for each section are then added together to give the IQR.

For this follow-up audit, those criteria that were fully met on the original audit have not been re-assessed. The marks awarded then have therefore been carried over.

Overview:

- The original audit for Cheshire Probation Area was carried out in June 2001. The area achieved an IQR of 53%, which resulted in a level 2 follow-up audit. This was completed in August 2002.
- The follow-up audit comprised the provision of advance information by the area and a two day visit during which case file reading, a site visit and interviews were conducted. The quality of programme delivery was scored by area assessors and was based on 11 videotapes.
- Both the original and follow-up audit focused solely on Think First.
- Only those criteria not fully met at the original audit have been re-assessed and new marks awarded.

Findings:

The Cheshire Probation Area had clearly demonstrated its commitment to improved performance in the delivery of Think First and had made impressive progress. The area had produced an action plan to take forward the recommendations from the original audit. All of the recommendations had been either fully or largely met, the most significant progress demonstrated in its development and use of monitoring and evaluation systems and in the knowledge and ownership of Think First by case managers. This, together with the implementation of team and individual targets for the programme, had enabled the area to move from a referral to an allocation culture. Close attention to diversity issues had also helped Cheshire to improve programme accessibility.

Timeliness of commencement to the programme had not improved and attention was still needed to targeting of offenders, particularly those with higher OGRS 2 scores. Supervision planning and review also remained an area for improvement.

Next Steps

Cheshire Probation Area achieved a revised IQR of 77%.

The next full audit will be incorporated into HMIP's normal inspection/audit cycle. The area should pay particular attention to mandatory items which have not been fully met.

This audit follow-up report and the IQR will be received by the Correctional Services Accreditation Panel in March 2003.

SECTION A: COMMITTED LEADERSHIP

Recommendation(s) from the original audit which relate to this section.

The CO should ensure that the area:

- ***includes accredited programmes in its priority performance measures;***
- ***moves from a referral towards an allocation culture to ensure national targets are met.***

- ▶▶ ***Fully met:*** Cheshire had included Think First targets in its annual business plan and appointed a performance information manager whose responsibility was to focus on accredited programmes. This demonstrated the priority given to programme performance measures.
- ▶▶ ***Fully met:*** Senior managers had given close attention to the development of an allocation culture using area and team targets to promote a system of accountability. Ownership of Think First had been made a whole area responsibility and this was reinforced in individual appraisal objectives.

A1.1 Committed leadership

2

Description: *The senior management of the area should be openly and explicitly committed to the proper running of the programme through policy and public statements.*

Progress since the original audit:

- The Cheshire Area Business Plan for 2002/2003 set specific targets for Think First which were reflected in staff objectives throughout the area, including referral targets for case managers.
- An action plan to address the audit recommendations had been implemented and the area had produced its What Works development plan, endorsed by the Probation Board in February 2002.
- Significant resources had been allocated to programme delivery: this included additional staffing and increased management time, as well as investment in buildings and transport facilities.
- The area had produced a video on all accredited programmes available in Cheshire, which was relayed routinely in all waiting areas.
- It was evident that accredited programme issues, including those related to Think First, had been regularly discussed in senior management meetings.

A1.2 Management structures

2

Description: *Effective line management structures exist for the proper operation of the programme integrating this within case management structures. Adequate time should be set aside for the effective management of the programme.*

Progress since the original audit:

- A new area meeting structure had been implemented from January 2002 to support the achievement of objectives and priorities as set out in Cheshire's business plan. This structure facilitated effective communication in relation to programme issues.
- Additional PSO posts had been created for both case management and programmes teams to support programme delivery.

- Discussion with programme tutors indicated that time management pressures for those in case management teams had been addressed sensitively and that they were able to devote sufficient time to programme delivery.

A1.3 Staff ownership of the accredited programme

1

Description: *There is full ownership of the programme by managers, programme tutors and other relevant staff, e.g. court personnel and case managers.*

Progress since the original audit:

- The area had introduced monitoring systems to measure individual and team referral rates to programmes and had set targets to promote appropriate and consistent use of Think First.
- All staff were issued with *Programme News*, a regular area newsletter reporting developments in programme delivery.
- Documentation demonstrated Cheshire's commitment to an allocation culture and this was reflected in the knowledge, ownership and enthusiasm of staff, including case managers and PSR writers.
- Performance had yet to achieve the required targets area-wide and there was variability between teams. The CO and ACO had scheduled visits to all teams in October 2002 as part of the area's approach to structured performance reviews.

A1.4 Effective communication with sentencers

2

Description: *There is high quality, proactive communication with local sentencers and clerks to the justices about the programme, including written information.*

Criterion fully met at original audit.

SECTION B: PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Recommendation(s) from the original audit which relate to this section.

The CO should ensure that the area:

- *develops a strategy on monitoring and evaluation, as identified in its own implementation plan, to achieve a sound information base informing programme delivery and managerial oversight;*
- *gives further attention to the provision of separate and accessible break out rooms;*
- *produces and implements a policy and strategy to maximise attendance and enhance completion rates;*
- *records all pre-programme work and action taken by case managers on specific absences;*
- *has a written policy and procedure to confirm that only those staff meeting the criteria can deliver accredited programmes and explain how those who are not selected, or are deselected, as tutors will be supported;*
- *pays further attention to the accessibility of programmes for women and minority ethnic offenders including them on accredited programmes.*

- ▶▶ **Fully met:** The area had introduced a range of reporting systems to provide information for the management of programme delivery and appointed a performance information manager to maintain and develop these facilities. It was evident that information from existing reports was being considered by managers, whilst close attention was being paid to extending the information base. In June 2002 the area's performance information unit had produced the Cheshire area reports database implementation plan to take this forward.
- ▶▶ **Largely met:** A separate and accessible 'break out' room had been provided on one site and planned for in the two new sites. These had been approved by the NPD.
- ▶▶ **Largely met:** Whilst there was no written strategy to maximise attendance and enhance completion rates, a number of measures had been implemented to achieve this. These included monitoring and recording requirements, as well as attention to group size through the reduction in delivery sites. A strategy of controlled overbooking had also been adopted, although caution was needed to maintain this within manageable limits.
- ▶▶ **Fully met:** Attention had been given to improved recording of pre-programme attendance and case files demonstrated this.
- ▶▶ **Fully met:** Area policy, due for presentation to the Probation Board in September 2002, explicitly set out the assessment and selection process for programme tutors, as well as procedures for those who failed the assessment centre or whose performance fell below the required standard.
- ▶▶ **Fully met:** Policy and practice guidance had been produced to promote accessibility to Think First for women and minority ethnic offenders. The area had provided a range of options including mentors, transport, meeting childcare costs and the possibility of attending specialist groups for women and black offenders in neighbouring areas. This had been done within an overall context of individual choice.

B1.1 Resources and facilities

2

Description: *Adequate accommodation consistent with the Estates Standards Manual is available for all sessions of the programme.*

Progress since the original audit:

- Objectives for the health and safety and property manager specifically identified the provision of new accommodation to meet accredited programme specifications.
- The area had reduced its delivery sites from four to three and improved existing facilities at Runcorn to meet the required standards. Additional group work facilities were also planned for the same building.
- Plans had been approved by the NPD for the development of new group work facilities in Chester and Crewe. Both of these fully met the requirements for 'break out' rooms and included lifts for disabled access. It was anticipated that these facilities would be completed by July 2003.
- Secure storage for video equipment was provided in the site visited and in Cheshire Probation Area headquarters.

B1.2 Provision of information leaflets about the programme

2

Description: *There should be a set of leaflets for offenders, sentencers and staff clearly describing the programme and its requirements.*

Progress since the original audit:

- New leaflets for offenders, courts and solicitors had been produced. The offender leaflet made it clear that they could expect to be treated fairly and without discrimination and offered the option of support within the group. Reference to Cheshire's provision for women and minority ethnic offenders would have further enhanced them.
- Case managers and PSR writers confirmed improved practice in that they discussed the leaflet with offenders prior to their enrolment on Think First.

B2.1 Managing attendance

1

Description: *Offender attendance and absence are managed to achieve the required National Performance Management target for offender completions. Attendance is managed to achieve coherent delivery with full impact for all undertaking the programme. The maximum number of absences by any one offender is consistent with the requirements of the programme manual for the specific accredited programme.*

Progress since the original audit:

- The area had implemented new codes for recording pre and post-programme work which had resulted in clearer identification of session attendance in the case files.
- Cheshire had introduced a 'summary session register' which recorded offender attendance throughout Think First, including pre and post-programme sessions. This was sent to the case manager's line manager three times during the programme and was used to identify offender attendance and the case manager's contribution. This was reinforced by e-mails on offender participation after each session.
- In order to increase group size and viability, the area had reduced the number of delivery sites and provided transport to programmes for offenders.
- The programme newsletter was used to draw attention to attrition and completion rates across the area.

- A pilot project to test the effectiveness of pre-programme preparation by tutors with the dual role of case managers was being undertaken in Macclesfield.
- Attrition rates, particularly prior to offenders starting the programme, were high and the area had not met its completion targets in the previous year.

B2.2 Avoidance of cancellation or disruption to sessions

2

Description: *Sessions are not cancelled or disrupted owing to offender crises, high workload or other pressures, and arrangements exist to deal with crises outside of the programme session. Sessions are delivered at the frequency defined in the programme manual.*

Progress since the original audit:

- A calendar of programmes had been made available to all staff on Lotus Notes and programme details were entered onto the area's electronic booking system.
- The rate of delivery of evening programmes had been altered in order to enhance programme completion.
- Programme registers and discussions with staff demonstrated that sessions were rarely cancelled.

B2.3 Catch-up sessions/Attendance

2

Description: *Provision is made for catch-up sessions, or a 'bus stop' approach, to allow offenders who miss a session to continue with the programme. All offenders missing sessions, who are not excluded from the programme, should attend catch-up sessions, or in the case of a 'bus stop' approach be moved onto another programme within ten working days, to ensure full delivery of the programme. Treatment managers must specify arrangements for monitoring the integrity of catch-up sessions.*

Criterion fully met at original audit.

B2.4 Timeliness

0

Description: *All offenders commence the programme, or specified pre-programme phase, within the first month of the order or within three months if other structured pre-programme work is undertaken. Occasionally, the timing may be different to permit other preliminary work to be completed, e.g. a programme of drug detoxification.*

Progress since the original audit:

- The performance information manager had conducted research into timeliness of commencement in the area and put forward recommendations for improvement.
- Only three of the 37 case files read showed that the offender had started the programme within the first month of the order, with a further six showing evidence of work needing to be undertaken beforehand.
- The area was measuring commencement as the first pre-programme session rather than the date of psychometric testing.

B3.1 Staff selection

2

Description: *A staff selection procedure meeting the requirements of the programme manual is in place and only staff meeting the defined criteria are selected to deliver the programme.*

Progress since the original audit:

- A comprehensive description of the assessment centre process had been produced for prospective programme tutors and those interviewed confirmed that they had been well informed about the role prior to application.
- Procedures had been produced for staff selection, deselection and development. These were scheduled for endorsement by the Cheshire Probation Board in September 2002.

B3.2 Staff roles and competencies

1

Description: *Differences in role between grades or posts are clearly reflected in job descriptions. A defined set of competencies exist for each staff role involved in the programme, using those specified in the programme manuals and the national management manual.*

Progress since the original audit:

- Job descriptions and person specifications existed for all staff involved in the delivery of Think First.
- The area had produced details of staff roles and tasks for programme managers, treatment managers, case managers and programme tutors and developed associated performance objectives relating to the delivery of Think First.
- There was no specific job description for the programme manager.
- Person specifications did not explicitly reflect the competencies in the National Management Manual for the Effective Delivery of Programmes in the Community.

B3.3 Preparation and debriefing time for tutors

2

Description: *Tutors are allowed 1½ hours for preparation and debriefing for each session in addition to the programme delivery time.*

Progress since the original audit:

- The area had appointed additional staff to supplement the number of programme tutors in both case management and programmes teams.
- Practice guidelines for the involvement of case management PSOs in the programme tutor role had been drafted, together with a tutor task list.
- There did not appear to be the same tensions over time management that had been apparent in the original audit, although the increase in programme delivery sometimes restricted preparation time for those delivering more than one programme session a day.
- Programme records showed that tutors usually took between one and two hours to prepare for a session. This was in addition to the time spent debriefing.

B3.4	Staff continuity	2
<p>Description: <i>Three leaders should normally be assigned to each accredited programme to allow for leave, sickness and other contingencies. All sessions of the programmes are delivered by at least two of the three assigned staff. Continuity is maintained by at least one of the staff members having run the previous session.</i></p>		
<p><i>Criterion fully met at original audit.</i></p>		
B4.1	Training arrangements for new staff	2
<p>Description: <i>Training courses exist for all grades and roles involved in delivering the programme and all staff newly assigned to the programme receive training before running their first programme. The training delivered follows that defined in the programme training manual.</i></p>		
<p><i>Criterion fully met at original audit.</i></p>		
B4.2	New staff paired with an experienced colleague when running their first programme	N/A
<p>Description: <i>Staff newly trained in a programme should be paired with a more experienced colleague when running their first course.</i></p>		
<p><i>Criterion not assessed at original audit.</i></p>		
B4.3	Training arrangements for experienced staff	N/A
<p>Description: <i>Competency-based booster and developmental training arrangements exist for all staff experienced in delivering the programme. All programme delivery staff are required to attend such training when they have demonstrated their competence to do so. [This will include delivering a stipulated minimum number of courses.]</i></p>		
<p><i>Criterion not assessed at original audit.</i></p>		
B4.4	Staff knowledge of the concepts and methods used in the programme	2
<p>Description: <i>All relevant staff have a knowledge of the programme model, targeting, objectives and methods sufficient for effective delivery of the programme.</i></p>		
<p><i>Progress since the original audit:</i></p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members of the programmes team had attended team meetings across the area to raise the profile of Think First and a team link person was assigned to case management teams. • The introduction of the area newsletter on programme issues helped to keep all staff informed about Think First. • The experience of supervising offenders who had completed programmes had reinforced their knowledge of Think First concepts and methods. Case managers and PSR writers were able to demonstrate greatly improved knowledge of the programme. 		

B4.5 Staff knowledge of the theoretical and evidential basis of the programme

2

Description: *All relevant staff have a knowledge of the programme's theoretical base and evidence, sufficient for effective delivery of the programme.*

Progress since the original audit:

- A copy of the Think First theory manual had been made available in each office.
- Case managers and PSR writers were familiar with the evidential base for Think First and understood the theory behind the programme.

B4.6 Supporting skills necessary to run programmes

2

Description: *From interview, observation, appraisal and training audits all relevant staff have supporting skills including core group work skills, presentation skills, case management, etc, sufficient for the effective delivery of the programme.*

Criterion fully met at original audit.

B5.1 Staff supervision and quality of practice

2

Description: *All staff involved in the programme receive support and supervision at a frequency specified in the national management manual. This will enable tutor skills to be developed and problems resolved within the lifetime of the current programme by supervisors familiar with effectiveness methods and the programme. The manager to have observed staff in the delivery of the programme either directly or through video prior to each supervision session.*

Progress since the original audit:

- Supervision notes provided by the area showed that treatment managers were practice focused and gave attention to tutor performance.
- Objectives were set for tutors after each supervision session.
- Continuity of supervision was achieved by placing treatment managers in team units.
- The area had made temporary appointments to cover for significant treatment manager absence (e.g. due to maternity leave).

B5.2 Staff appraisal

2

Description: *All members of staff involved with the programme have their competence to perform their assigned role assessed annually through the appraisal process. Staff whose performance is assessed as below the acceptable standard but making progress should be given further training and other assistance to improve their performance and a date set for review. Staff who are not making progress in achieving the required standard of performance should not take any further part in running the programme.*

Progress since the original audit:

- Programme tutors confirmed that they had either had their annual appraisal or that it was scheduled to take place.
- The appraisal framework required treatment managers to give specific attention to tutor performance and to provide feedback to their line managers.

B6.1 Offender selection and assessment

1

Description: *Routine monitoring results confirm the profile of those entering the programme are consistent with the criminogenic needs addressed by the programme, the level of risk of reoffending and the level of risk of harm/dangerousness.*

Progress since the original audit:

- The area used both OGRS 2 (31-74%) and ACE (16-33%) to target offenders for Think First and the electronic booking system required confirmation that the targeting and selection criteria had been met.
- Cheshire required the completion of ACE in all reports and had revised the ACE form to incorporate the evaluation and monitoring information as required by Probation Circular 92/2001.
- PSR monitoring systems had been established in order to support the maximisation of programme referrals.
- 68% of the cases reviewed fully met the OGRS 2 targeting criteria and 27% fell within the area's designated ACE band. However, of the ten cases with an OGRS 2 score above 74%, only one provided evidence of additional structured work.

B6.2 Offender knowledge and understanding of the programme requirements

2

Description: *The requirements of the programme are clearly communicated on at least two occasions to each participant verbally and in writing, and there is evidence from signed consent forms, observation and/or interview that offenders know and understand the requirements.*

Criterion fully met at original audit.

B6.3 Group size

2

Description: *For group programmes the maximum starting group size during the previous year did not exceed 12 and the minimum was not less than four.*

Progress since the original audit:

- A reduction in the number of delivery sites and the introduction of an electronic booking system had taken place during the previous year. This, together with controlled overbooking had been designed to increase the starting size of groups and prevent them falling below an acceptable level. Some caution however was required to the extent of overbooking to ensure that it remained manageable.
- The area had introduced monitoring systems to ascertain the reasons for offender drop-out.
- Groups had conformed to the minimum and maximum starting size.

B6.4 Accessibility of group work programmes

2

Description: *If female or minority ethnic offenders are placed in mixed groups there are no singleton placements unless agreed to by the offender. Appropriate support arrangements should be evidenced for these programme participants.*

Progress since the original audit:

- The area had adopted a policy of equality of opportunity in service delivery. This was supplemented by the *Good Practice Guidance for the Management of Black and Other Minority Ethnic/Women Offenders within the Accredited Programme Delivery Framework* and *Equality of Access – Supporting Services*. These documents provided a sound basis for staff in their efforts to make Think First accessible to minority groups and were underpinned by practical support such as transport provision and meeting childcare costs.
- Agreements had been reached for minority ethnic offenders from Cheshire to attend programmes for black offenders in neighbouring probation areas. A similar arrangement was available for women offenders.
- Whilst providing access to specialist programme delivery, Cheshire continued to offer individuals the choice of participating in mixed groups and had developed mentoring facilities to support this.
- It was evident from discussions with staff that they were familiar with area policy and had used most of the facilities available.

B7.1 Implementation of monitoring and evaluation design

2

Description: *Interview and observation show that monitoring and evaluation arrangements are working as intended and are understood and supported by all staff involved. This should include both input and feedback of data to managers and practitioners at local level.*

Progress since the original audit:

- Specific targets relating to Think First had been included in Cheshire's Area Business Plan for 2002/2003.
- The area had appointed a performance information manager who was responsible to the What Works ACO and whose priority was accredited programme data collection and evaluation.
- The electronic booking system on Lotus Notes had been implemented area-wide from October 2001. In addition to facilitating referrals, this provided data for the NPD quarterly return and allowed examination of referrals by name, sentence date, area and status.
- Weekly consideration of report proposals by unit SPOs was an area requirement, as was the collation of orders made with a Think First condition and this informed target performance.
- A computer-based system had been put in place to collate information on PSRs, parole and other reports. Once complete with retrospective data (by end September 2002) this was designed to identify attrition between proposals and sentence outcomes.
- ACE forms had been amended to include information required by the evaluation and monitoring tool and were electronically recorded.
- All the required information had been inputted onto IAPS.
- It was evident that staff were appropriately informed about monitoring and evaluation requirements and saw the benefit of them.

B7.2 Practice is informed by monitoring and evaluation evidence

2

Description: *Consistent use is made of evaluation information as it becomes available by those with most direct responsibility, e.g. managers giving regular consideration to attendance and completion information, practitioners to offender feedback and attitude/behaviour change scores. Awareness/knowledge about evaluation results from the same programme operating elsewhere will be relevant.*

Progress since the original audit:

- Monitoring reports were issued weekly to all operational managers in respect of Think First orders/licences made and progress reports sent to the senior management team. It was evident that both operational and senior managers gave regular consideration to programme monitoring and performance issues.
- The summary session register, introduced to inform and assist managers to monitor progress, was clearly welcomed and used by relevant staff to identify and address problems.
- Cheshire was a participant in the North-West Effectiveness Group which had considered and compared individual area performance. The area had also used the experience of its neighbours to develop Think First provision for women and minority ethnic offenders.
- Monitoring information had been used to inform changes in the number of programme delivery sites, booking systems and programme scheduling.
- The area had instigated a pre-programme preparation scheme in one team to evaluate the impact of different case management models with a view to reducing early attrition rates.

SECTION C: QUALITY OF PROGRAMME DELIVERY

Recommendation(s) from the original audit which relate to this section.

The CO should ensure that the area:

- ***focuses supervision of programme tutors towards performance and skills.***

- ▶▶ **Largely met:** Supervision notes demonstrated that treatment managers had developed their practice and begun to focus their attention on performance and skills. This was further confirmed by programme tutors. Evidence from video monitoring showed that tutor delivery skills had improved during the year in relation to adherence to the programme manual and treatment style. However, there was still work to be done particularly in relation to group management, co-working skills and challenging anti-social or offence supporting views and language.

C1.1 Adherence to programme manual

2

Description: *All sessions of the programme should be delivered in line with the instructions of the programme manual and demonstrate close adherence to the aims and objectives. There should be evident commitment to follow the intention/purpose of the exercises used, including repetition/reinforcement, where these are designed parts of the programme.*

Progress since the original audit:

- The two areas identified for improvement in the original audit, timing of exercises and checking out offender learning, both achieved a satisfactory score.
- Material was delivered in the right order and without the addition of inappropriate extras.
- Tutors' explanations of exercises were good and they met session aims and objectives.

C1.2 Adherence to treatment style

1

Description: *From direct observation or video evidence, programme tutors make competent and appropriate use of the techniques specified. There will be evidence of effective communication of the material, offender understanding and engagement. Pro-social attitudes are skilfully modelled by workers and are predominant in the group. This includes challenging pro-criminal or anti-social attitudes and behaviour.*

Progress since the original audit:

- The use of open questions and validation of ideas, identified in the original audit as areas for improvement, were satisfactory.
- There was evidence of tutors summarising learning and reflecting it back to offenders.
- Links were made between exercises and sessions.
- Tutors did not always challenge offence-supporting views and there were several examples of failure to challenge inappropriate language.

C1.3 Group work skills

1

Description: *Programme tutors demonstrate effective management of the group, including effective co-working to facilitate learning by offenders and modelling pro-social behaviour. Disruption by participants is minimised.*

Progress since the original audit:

- Tutors delivered the programme clearly and demonstrated judicious use of praise.
- The standard of co-working was variable: whilst there were some good examples of responsive interaction, this was not achieved by all tutor pairings.
- There were instances of poor group management involving drifting discussions and offenders leaving the room during one session.

C1.4 Programme delivered addressing race equality and diversity issues

1

Description: *From direct observation or video evidence, issues of racism and sexism are effectively addressed whether arising within programme delivery or offender response. Staff are alert to race equality and diversity issues, they always respond appropriately and show that they have considered and developed strategies for responding, e.g. relevant resources and arguments, clarity about boundaries, approaches that may promote perspective taking.*

Progress since the original audit:

- Arrangements with neighbouring probation areas had facilitated access to the black offender group in Manchester and similar arrangements were available for women offenders.
- The area had retained individual choice as a basis for Think First provision and had included women and minority ethnic offenders in mixed groups. Attempts had also been made to run a women only group and this remained an option.
- Tutors interviewed showed sensitivity to the needs of women and minority ethnic offenders and described ways in which they would promote inclusion within mixed groups. However, there was one occasion during programme delivery when tutors failed to challenge the use of racist language and this was not addressed by the treatment manager.
- The case file reading demonstrated that attention had been given to diversity issues in a number of relevant cases.
- Cheshire had developed a pool of mentors whose services were available for participants of Think First. They were mainly used to assist with literacy issues, although were available for any group member with an identified need.

C1.5 Programme integrity checklist

2

Description: *The programme integrity checklist for each session is completed.*

Progress since the original audit:

- Following programme delivery tutors were required to complete programme registers and session review forms. A review of the area's documentation confirmed that this was done.
- Information on offender participation was also e-mailed to case managers and their line managers following each session.

C1.6 End of programme summary reports

1

Description: *The case record shows that at the end of the programme delivery staff prepare a summary for the case manager indicating:*

- *participation in the programme*
- *progress made*
- *an assessment of risk, including the identification of factors relevant to the individual concerned*
- *an assessment of the offender's coping skills*
- *likely scenarios for relapse, including immediate precursors and triggers which might give prior warning*
- *identification of remaining treatment needs.*

Progress since the original audit:

- Post-programme reports were completed thoroughly in accordance with the national pro forma and contained objectives for future supervision.
- Case managers indicated that they received the report at the three-way meeting which was usually held about two weeks after the end of the programme.
- The reports did not contain an explicit assessment of risk or identify likely scenarios for relapse.

SECTION D: CASE MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Recommendation(s) from the original audit which relate to this section.

The CO should ensure that the area:

- **reinforces ownership and knowledge of programmes throughout the area, in particular for case managers and PSR writers.**

- **Largely met:** The area had provided additional learning opportunities for case managers through training, visits to team meetings and the establishment of links between programmes and case management teams. The positive results of this were demonstrated by case managers and PSR writers during interview. However, case manager practice in terms of integrating Think First with supervision planning still needed to be improved.

D1.1 Initial supervision plan sets relevant objectives for the offender

0

Description: *The supervision plan integrates the programme into the overall plan of work for each offender. Specific objectives are set in a sequence appropriate for the offender and are recorded in the initial supervision plan and regularly reviewed. Assessments should be based on OASys when available, or ACE or LSI-R before then.*

Progress since the original audit:

- The overall score relating to this criterion in the case file reading exercise had deteriorated over the year from 1.6 to 1.1.
- The area had developed a guide to effective supervision planning which incorporated Think First. Examples of objectives relating to the programme were provided, although these needed further refinement to make them fully SMART.
- Think First was fully integrated into the initial supervision plan in 43% of the cases reviewed with a further 30% showing some linkage.
- The majority of supervision plans contained some evidence of assessments based on ACE or OGRS 2.
- Only three cases reviewed were considered to have fully SMART objectives in relation to Think First.

D1.2 Effective liaison arrangements between the case manager and programme staff

2

Description: *The case records show, and interviews with selected staff indicate, the existence of effective arrangements for liaison, handover and communication. This should include the three-way meetings between the case manager, programme staff and the offender at the end of the programme.*

Criterion fully met at original audit.

D1.3 Supporting the offender through all phases of the programme

1

Description: *The case manager is responsible for preparing and motivating the offender prior to their participation on an accredited programme and for reinforcing learning during the programme.*

Progress since the original audit:

- Pre-programme work was completed fully in 78% of cases reviewed.
- There was evidence of ongoing work to support programme attendance in 74% of the case files read.
- Case managers were expected to attend the mid-way session and it was evident that this was normally done. The summary session register provided a record of this.
- Case files did not demonstrate that case managers had reinforced learning during the programme.

D1.4 Understanding and knowledge of programme methods

2

Description: *Interviews with case managers demonstrate they have a clear understanding of the aims and objectives of the programme and that they either have the requisite skills to undertake reinforcement, follow-up and/or relapse prevention work, or the ability to refer to staff possessing these skills.*

Progress since the original audit:

- Cheshire had provided case managers with team briefings, additional training and information via the area newsletter to improve their knowledge of Think First.
- Case managers demonstrated their increased knowledge of the programme and were well informed about programme methods, aims and objectives.

D1.5 Monitoring of attendance and enforcement

2

Description: *Responsibility for the monitoring of attendance and the enforcement of orders is clearly defined with appropriate systems in place. There is evidence of effective enforcement in all cases.*

Criterion fully met at original audit.

D1.6 Documentation

1

Description: *The case record shows that all relevant documentation is completed.*

Progress since the original audit:

- The area had improved recording practices: case files were well ordered and clearly recorded pre-programme work as well as that undertaken in the group.
- 57% of the files reviewed contained all the required documentation, whilst a further 41% held most of it. The targeting matrix was identified as missing in seven cases.

D1.7 End of programme review

0

Description: *The supervision plan review for each offender shows that at the end of the programme appropriate individual objectives are identified to strengthen and build on the progress made, and to achieve successful community reintegration.*

Progress since the original audit:

- Most relevant cases showed some evidence of attention being given to community reintegration issues at the end of the programme.
- There was no evidence that the post-programme report had influenced the supervision plan review in five of the 12 cases completing Think First.
- In the supervision plan review only two of 12 completed cases contained fully SMART objectives linked to programme work.

D1.8 Reinforcement and relapse prevention work

N/A

Description: *There are specific arrangements in place to reinforce learning and for relapse prevention work, including booster programmes where required by the programme, delivered by appropriately trained and skilled staff.*

Criterion not assessed at original audit.