



HM Inspectorate of Probation

AUDIT OF ACCREDITED PROGRAMMES

Eastern Region of the
National Probation Service for
England and Wales

*Report on:
Essex Probation Area –
Reasoning and Rehabilitation and
Drink Impaired Drivers*

April 2003

Acknowledgements:

We are grateful for the cooperation of staff from the Essex Probation Area in completing this audit.

The audit team comprised:

Peter Carter
Mary Barnish

Inspection and Audit Officers

Frances Flaxington

HM Deputy Chief Inspector of Probation

Glossary

ACE	Assessment, Case Recording and Evaluation System
ACO	Assistant chief officer
CO	Chief officer
DIDs	Drink Impaired Drivers
HMIP	HM Inspectorate of Probation
HR	Human resources
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
R&R	Reasoning and Rehabilitation
SSR	Specific sentence report

Contents

	Page
Context:	3
Scoring Approach:	3
Overview:	4
Findings and recommendations:	5
<u>SECTION A: COMMITTED LEADERSHIP</u>	<u>6</u>
<u>SECTION B: PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES</u>	<u>9</u>
<u>SECTION C: QUALITY OF PROGRAMME DELIVERY</u>	<u>22</u>
<u>SECTION D: CASE MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES</u>	<u>25</u>
Next Steps:	29
Scoring summary sheets:	30

Context:

Programmes achieving accredited status have undergone a rigorous process of development and scrutiny to ensure they have maximum impact in terms of reducing reoffending. Selecting well-tested programmes is however only part of the picture – without effective implementation by probation areas much of the positive influence on offenders’ behaviour may be lost.

Establishing robust quality assurance systems and independent audit arrangements for accredited programmes is therefore crucial. HMIP is responsible for auditing accredited programmes on behalf of the Correctional Services Accreditation Panel. Each probation area will be assessed against the delivery criteria given in the Performance Standards Manual June 2001, which also outlines how these criteria are to be met and evidenced.

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 sheets at the end of this report show the marks awarded for each criterion in each programme – 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.

Overview:

- The audit visit to Essex was conducted during February 2003.
- R&R and DIDs were delivered on six sites, three of which were visited – Basildon, Chelmsford and Harlow. A total of 16 R&R and five DIDs offenders were interviewed.
- The audit comprised four main elements: assessment of advance information; video monitoring of 20 programme sessions; a file reading exercise of 45 cases; and a visit to the area where a wide range of staff were interviewed. These included senior and middle managers, programme tutors, case managers and PSR authors.
- This report relates to two accredited general offending programmes: R&R and DIDs. Throughout the report comments relate to both programmes unless otherwise indicated.
- One criterion for both programmes was not assessed (D1.8) because plans were awaited nationally for the accreditation of the Cognitive Skills Booster Programme. One further criterion for DIDs was also not assessed (B4.3) as accreditation training was still awaited.

Findings:

Essex's commitment to the What Works agenda and accredited programmes was reflected in the 2002/2003 Area Business Plan, attendance of staff at context setting events for both programmes and the allocation of funding for additional personnel. A functional structure had been implemented in 2001 and there was evidence that senior programme managers had made considerable efforts to ensure effective communication and integration of accredited programmes across the area. Although current functional action plans did not reflect how units were to achieve area business plan objectives and targets, changes were in place to address this issue in 2003/2004.

The 'Accredited Programmes Policy' focused on pre- and post-programme responsibilities of case managers. There had been insufficient guidance to staff about their requirement to support offenders during their attendance on group work sessions and to reinforce learning where appropriate. Supervision plans lacked SMART objectives integrating the programme within the overall plan of work for the offender and did not consistently take account of post-programme reports.

The area had shown an awareness of the need to monitor programme delivery and detailed evaluation of information to address attrition and improve completion rates was in progress.

The case file reading exercise demonstrated that attendance and enforcement were addressed in a timely manner for both programmes, but further work was required to minimise delays to R&R programme commencement and to accurately record catch-ups in order to comply with national requirements.

Tutor knowledge and skills were impressive and reflected a commitment on the part of both individuals and managers to ensure consistently high standards of delivery. Video monitoring of R&R sessions, in particular, demonstrated the quality and range of techniques used by tutors to achieve the aims and objectives of the programme and offender learning.

Recommendations – General

The CO should ensure that the area:

- *improves leaflets for both programmes to reflect accurate suitability information and address race equality and wider diversity issues (B1.2);*
- *implements a strategy for both programmes to maximise referral of eligible offenders, minimise delays to programme commencement, reduce attrition and improve completion rates (B2.1, B2.4, B6.1);*
- *draws up guidelines for simpler recording and monitoring of catch-ups to address inconsistencies and comply with R&R programme requirements (B2.3);*
- *standardises oral and written information given to potential tutors and implements the proposed deselection policy (B3.1);*
- *establishes robust contingency arrangements to ensure staff continuity (B3.4);*
- *introduces a framework for consistent recording of supervision session discussions with clear links to the appraisal process in respect of development (B5.1);*
- *implements a monitoring and evaluation strategy for programmes, taking account of the information needs of different staff groups (B7.1, B7.2);*
- *improves the quality of supervision planning and review, especially the integration of programme work within the supervision process for R&R and DID's (D1.1, D1.7);*
- *sets out expectations of case managers' training to improve their role in supporting offenders and the reinforcement of learning during and following the programme (D1.3).*

SECTION A: COMMITTED LEADERSHIP

A1.1 Committed leadership

DIDs
2

R&R
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.*

Strengths:

- The 2002/2003 Area Business Plan contained clear DIDs and R&R programme-related objectives and targets. The plan highlighted the importance of case management in the achievement of results.
- Appropriate support for programme delivery had been made available, with financial resources identified to increase capacity through the recruitment of additional tutors.
- The majority of senior and case managers and PSR authors had attended context setting events for both programmes.
- Regular discussion of relevant issues took place at senior management meetings on the basis of which resources and action plans were commissioned.
- The ACO and programme managers went to considerable lengths to provide information about content, performance and procedures through staff newsletters and attendance at presentations and meetings.
- A comprehensive guidance document ‘Accredited Programmes Policy’ had been produced which integrated delivery with case manager responsibilities, targeting and assessment.
- Implementation plans for both programmes had been produced and in the case of R&R had been regularly updated to reflect developments.

Areas for improvement:

- Current functional action plans did not reflect a complementary approach by units to the achievement of objectives and targets set in the area business plan. However, this had been addressed in the formulation of plans for 2003/2004.

A1.2 Management structures

DIDs
1

R&R
1

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.*

Strengths:

- ACOs held functional, operational and geographic responsibilities which were outlined in the organisational chart.
- Programmes were discussed at ACO operational policy group meetings. Where necessary, recommendations were made to the chief officers’ group for ratification and implementation of policy.

Areas for improvement:

- Minutes of functional and geographic meetings did not reflect regular and detailed discussion of programme issues and targets. Managers recognised that the organisational structure did not facilitate the smooth transmission of information and constant effort was required to ensure effective communication.
- Postholders held dual responsibilities as programme and treatment managers for different programmes. Senior managers recognised that the former role was still developing and that there was a need to consider separation of these two duties as capacity increased.

A1.3 Staff ownership of the accredited programme

DIDs
1

R&R
1

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

Strengths:

- Over 50% of case managers and the majority of PSR authors had attended regional training for the DIDs programme.
- There was consistent attendance at three-way meetings, both pre- and post-programme, by case managers. In 17 of 20 R&R files examined (85%), case managers attended the latter meeting.
- Three PSR author fora were held annually and featured presentations on key aspects of accredited programmes and targeting guidance.
- The programme team demonstrated ownership and enthusiasm for accredited programmes and a commitment to communicate to colleagues and sentencers the benefits for offenders.

Areas for improvement:

- Although local presentations covering programme issues had taken place, there was no evidence of recent formal case manager training for R&R. Senior managers had identified the need to provide this.
- Referral data indicated that consistent usage was not made of the R&R programme across each district, or that each functional unit, e.g. community supervision and resettlement teams, had referred appropriate numbers to the programme.
- The 'Accredited Programmes Policy' did not contain guidance for case managers as to their responsibilities to offenders during their attendance on group work sessions.
- Managers recognised that PSOs who prepared SSRs required further training and guidance in respect of assessment of offenders for the DIDs programme.

A1.4 Effective communication with sentencers

DIDs 1

R&R 1

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

Strengths:

- The area newsletter *Essex Briefing* had been used to promote accredited programmes to sentencers.
- Programme managers were regular contributors of relevant articles to *Justice Matters* a magistrates' court journal.
- The area held a conference for sentencers in July 2002 which included presentations on accredited programmes.
- There was regular direct contact and communication between programme managers and sentencers. Two formal presentations were held annually at each of the six magistrates' courts.
- Information leaflets for courts gave clear explanations of programmes and the expectations placed on offenders.

Areas for improvement:

- Information needs of other stakeholders, e.g. defence solicitors, had not yet been addressed.
- The effectiveness of liaison with sentencers in respect of programme work and the impact on concordance rates had not been monitored or evaluated.

SECTION B: PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

B1.1 Resources and facilities

DIDs
2

R&R
2

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

Strengths:

- At the three sites visited accommodation provided was of a high quality.
- There was appropriate equipment in each room, with adequate lighting and comfortable chairs. 'Break out' rooms were available.
- Secure video storage facilities were available at each of the sites.

Areas for improvement:

- Although secure storage facilities were available, open boxes of videos were found in the group room and programme manager's office at one of the locations visited.

B1.2 Provision of information leaflets about the programme

DIDs
1

R&R
1

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

Strengths:

- A range of leaflets and laminated guides were available for staff, sentencers and offenders.
- An R&R course summary for staff, which provided an overview of the programme and session content, had been produced.
- Information had been provided to case managers for use at the three-way pre-programme meeting.
- The area newsletter was used to disseminate programme information to all staff groups.

Areas for improvement:

- The R&R laminated guide contained factual inaccuracies, e.g. on the targeting band it stated that offenders outside the OGRS 2 scores would be admitted. The national manual states that only those with a minimum score of 31% must be considered.
- DID's staff guidance indicated that offenders with less than four convictions were suitable and not five as contained in the programme manual. There were no references to attendance requirements, diversity and accessibility.
- R&R offender leaflets did not address diversity issues or outline a complaints procedure. The DID's leaflet did not cover cultural diversity in sufficient detail.

B2.1 Managing attendance

DIDs
2

R&R
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.*

Strengths:

- Enforcement procedures were comprehensive and identified individual responsibilities. A working party was undertaking a review of practice.
- In 25 of 27 (93%) R&R and all DIDs cases programme staff and case managers addressed attendance and enforcement issues in a timely and appropriate manner. All staff were clear about their respective roles and responsibilities and shared attendance information promptly.
- The three-way pre-programme meeting was used by case managers and tutors to identify any potential problems likely to affect attendance.

Areas for improvement:

- There was no specific policy and strategy to maximise attendance and improve completion rates in order to achieve national targets.
- The area had only recently undertaken work to analyse patterns of attendance and absence and explore points of drop-out.
- Completion of R&R attendance registers varied across the area, with information not consistently recorded, e.g. reasons for absence, drop-out and catch-up sessions.

B2.2 Avoidance of cancellation or disruption to sessions

DIDs
1

R&R
1

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.*

Strengths:

- Programmes had not been cancelled due to staffing difficulties. Programme and treatment managers collaborated together to ensure R&R sessions were covered, by either moving tutors around the area or delivering sessions themselves.
- A schedule of programmes had been made available on Lotus Notes for all staff groups. This had proved particularly helpful to PSR authors.
- Records indicated that the frequency of sessions conformed to the requirements of the R&R and DIDs programme manuals.

Areas for improvement:

- The ‘Accredited Programmes Policy’ and case manager practice guidance did not provide instructions on dealing with offender problems outside of sessions.
- Only two tutors were allocated to each R&R group, which resulted in absences being covered by different tutors during the course of the programme.

B2.3 Catch-up sessions/AttendanceDIDs
1R&R
0

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.*

Strengths:

- A reliable system existed by which catch-up sessions were delivered by one of the designated tutors immediately prior to the next session of DIDs.
- The scheduling of catch-up sessions was built into the R&R programme timetable.
- Case file reading results showed that in 21 of 27 R&R (78%) and all DIDs cases instructions to attend catch-up sessions were routinely issued in cases of absence and that the majority of offenders subsequently attended.

Areas for improvement:

- The 'Accredited Programmes Policy' did not contain sufficient guidance in relation to catch-up sessions.
- Attendance records of nine R&R programmes showed that six offenders had exceeded the maximum number of catch-up sessions. Programme and treatment managers confirmed that they sanctioned this practice based on the individual circumstances of the offender and the point reached in the programme.
- Accurate recording of catch-up sessions on attendance registers was not consistent across the area.
- There was no system for monitoring if the required one in seven catch-up sessions were routinely subject to integrity checks as required under Probation Circular 92/2001.
- Tutors indicated that the scheduling of R&R catch-ups immediately prior to evening sessions occasionally caused problems in terms of time available to prepare for the main group.

B2.4 TimelinessDIDs
0R&R
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.*

Strengths:

- Managers were examining the feasibility of commencing a R&R programme every six weeks at one of the delivery sites in order to improve timeliness.
- Administrative staff held details of offenders waiting commencement and maintained contact with the relevant case managers.

Areas for improvement:

- The timeliness of commencements was not routinely monitored for either programme.
- In 25 of 30 R&R cases examined (83%), offenders did not start the programme within the first month. Reasons for delays mainly resulted from programme scheduling. No files recorded details of any planned work being undertaken to ensure programme readiness.
- DID's case files showed that six of 15 cases (40%) commenced within a month. The main delays occurred prior to the first programme during which time tutors were undergoing training.
- It was a matter of concern that waiting lists at the three sites visited showed that a number of offenders had been waiting to commence programmes for over a month. This applied equally to both male and female offenders, with several for R&R experiencing delays of over six months.

B3.1 Staff selection

DID's	R&R
1	1

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.*

Strengths:

- All programme tutors had successfully completed assessment centre and core training events.
- Prospective tutors received a great deal of informal information from programme staff.
- DID's tutors attended a regional event to prepare candidates for assessment centres and core training.

Areas for improvement:

- Apart from information contained in general HR policy, no detailed written explanations or advice in respect of assessment centre procedures, or support mechanisms in cases of unsuccessful completion of both assessment centre and initial accreditation training were available.
- Although the 'Accredited Programmes Policy' made brief reference to competencies, there was no written information outlining the role of accredited programme tutors for potential applicants.

B3.2 Staff roles and competencies

DID's	R&R
2	2

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.*

Strengths:

- Staff roles and responsibilities were clearly set out in the 'Accredited Programmes Policy'.
- Job descriptions for programme managers and tutors were generic to the relevant grade and contained specific competencies and responsibilities.
- Programme and treatment managers and tutors expressed a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

Areas for improvement:

- The job description for the programme psychologist did not contain relevant standards and competencies.

B3.3 Preparation and debriefing time for tutors

DIDs

1

R&R

1

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

Strengths:

- Programme and treatment managers stated that it was their practice to allow the necessary time for preparation and debriefing and tutors confirmed this in interview.
- Tutors used pre-prepared session material to reduce unnecessary work.

Areas for improvement:

- Occasionally, delivery of R&R catch-up sessions affected preparation time.
- Records of actual time spent in preparation and debrief were not maintained.

B3.4 Staff continuity

DIDs

2

R&R

0

Description: *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.*

Strengths:

- Documentation and offender interviews confirmed that the same two tutors delivered all sessions throughout the DIDs programme. The partnership contract between the area and Essex Motor Project included a requirement for the latter to provide sufficient tutors to cover delivery of the agreed number of groups.

Areas for improvement:

- Two tutors were assigned to each R&R programme, with absences covered by either a member of staff drawn from the pool of tutors or programme and treatment managers. Sessions with a small number of offenders were delivered by one tutor.
- In four of nine R&R records reviewed, four or more tutors were involved in delivery of the programme, which occasionally resulted in a loss of continuity between consecutive sessions.
- R&R contingency arrangements for staff cover were unclear and there was no formal monitoring of tutor continuity. Staff records did not always make it clear who delivered the session and the presence of observers added further confusion.

B4.1 Training arrangements for new staff

DIDs
2

R&R
2

Description: *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.*

Strengths:

- All programme tutors had received the nationally recognised core training prior to delivering their first programme.
- Full training records were maintained for all tutors.
- A strong commitment to the provision of appropriate training was evident from tutor interviews and documentation for all delivery staff involved in programmes.

Areas for improvement:

- There was no structured induction for new tutors prior to delivery of the programme.

B4.2 New staff paired with an experienced colleague when running their first programme

DIDs
2

R&R
2

Description: *Staff newly trained in a programme should be paired with a more experienced colleague when running their first course.*

Strengths:

- It was established practice to pair new staff with experienced colleagues which was confirmed by tutors and programme records.
- Inexperienced staff were encouraged to observe videos and actual sessions in order to familiarise themselves with the programmes.
- Programme managers had compiled a selection of R&R sessions which contained examples of best practice for training and development purposes.
- Treatment managers regularly observed live sessions involving newly appointed tutors and provided additional supervision and support.

Areas for improvement:

- Inexperienced tutors had occasionally been paired together as a consequence of scheduling difficulties and staff shortages. However, this occurred on rare occasions.
- There were no written policies or guidelines in respect of inexperienced tutors.

B4.3 Training arrangements for experienced staffDIDs
N/AR&R
2

Description: *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.]*

This criterion was not assessed for DIDs as accreditation training was still awaited.

Strengths:

- A total of 18 members of staff had completed R&R accreditation training and a number of their colleagues had been identified as candidates for future courses.
- The requirement for tutors to achieve accredited status was reflected in appraisal documents.
- Progress towards accreditation training was clearly understood by tutors.

B4.4 Staff knowledge of the concepts and methods used in the programmeDIDs
2R&R
2

Description: *All relevant staff have a knowledge of the programme model, targeting, objectives and methods sufficient for effective delivery of the programme.*

Strengths:

- The offending behaviour programmes unit R&R course summary manual, which outlined key aims of the programme and details of the content of each session in the programme, had been made available to staff.
- Programme staff regularly gave presentations about the model and content at staff meetings. There was evidence to show that these were well received and were an effective channel of communication. Case managers and PSR authors demonstrated an acceptable knowledge of the main concepts and methods used in programmes which reflected the efforts made to disseminate information.
- All tutors assigned to programmes had been assessed as competent at the point of training and in interview demonstrated detailed knowledge of concepts and methods. Programme and treatment managers also gave comprehensive accounts.
- The area had produced pre- and post-programme guidance documents for case managers which linked their supervision planning responsibilities to key concepts and session content of R&R.

B4.5 Staff knowledge of the theoretical and evidential basis of the programmeDIDs
2R&R
2

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

Strengths:

- Tutors gave regular presentations to their colleagues outlining the cognitive-behavioural basis of accredited programmes.
- All staff interviewed made the link between R&R and relevant theory.
- Tutors demonstrated their understanding and knowledge of the theoretical and evidential base of R&R and DIDs. They spoke enthusiastically of the changes they saw in offenders' attitudes and development during the programmes.

Areas for improvement:

- Case managers and PSR authors were unable to give an account of the evidential base for the DIDs programme.

B4.6 Supporting skills necessary to run programmes

DIDs	R&R
1	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.*

Strengths:

- Appraisal documents identified training needs related to the successful delivery of programmes.
- Training was widely available to tutors, e.g. motivational interviewing, presentation skills and group work skills. Programme managers also provided workshops which dealt with practice skills improvement. Details of these events were widely circulated and attended by tutors.
- Programme and treatment managers had received considerable training in staff management and support skills.
- Assessment of videotaped sessions showed that R&R tutors consistently demonstrated a high level of delivery skills.

Areas for improvement:

- Although development issues were discussed in supervision, video monitoring forms did not routinely identify the training needs of individual tutors.
- DIDs tutors had not received any additional training since completion of initial accreditation.

B5.1 Staff supervision and quality of practice

DIDs	R&R
1	1

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.*

Strengths:

- Supervision of tutors took place on a regular basis, often at a frequency which exceeded national requirements. New tutors received additional supervision from treatment managers.
- Documentation showed that sessions were focused on delivery issues informed by video monitoring. Treatment managers provided specific advice on areas of practice.
- In addition to video monitoring, the DIDs treatment manager frequently attended sessions as an observer.

Areas for improvement:

- The recording of supervision sessions varied across the area, with some treatment managers completing both the video monitoring form and additional notes whilst, in other cases, only the form was completed. At some sites this had been amended and no longer covered the full range of assessment criteria.
- Examination of supervision notes showed that training needs were not routinely identified by treatment managers and the setting and review of objectives was inconsistent.
- There was no area supervision policy or guidance on how the supervision of tutors should be undertaken and recorded in order to ensure consistency of approach across each site.
- Treatment manager scores were consistently higher than those assessed by HMIP and area assessors.

B5.2 Staff appraisal

DIDs
1

R&R
1

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.*

Strengths:

- Staff received written annual appraisals with clearly defined SMART improvement objectives linked to relevant competencies and functional action plans.
- Development needs identified during appraisal were forwarded to the training unit, who reflected the requirements of programme staff in their provision.
- A draft deselection policy had recently been approved by senior managers and was subject to consultation with staff representatives.

Areas for improvement:

- Tutor strengths and areas for improvement were not systematically recorded during supervision and links to the appraisal process were unclear.
- The partnership contract between the area and Essex Motor Project was unclear as to the course of action to be taken by treatment managers if tutor performance was considered unsatisfactory.

B6.1 Offender selection and assessment

DIDs 1

R&R 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.*

Strengths:

- The ‘Accredited Programmes Policy’ provided guidance on targeting requirements and exclusion criteria for both R&R and DIDs.
- In 25 of 30 R&R cases examined (83%), the OGRS 2 score was within the target range.
- All 15 DIDs cases examined showed that offenders met the required targeting criteria.
- The pre-group three-way meeting was an integral element in monitoring suitability and the allocation of offenders to the most appropriate general offending behaviour programme. Literacy screening and support were also integrated into this process.

Areas for improvement:

- There was no reliable system in place to monitor referrals and identify possible missed allocations of suitable offenders.
- Laminated guidance documents contained misleading information, e.g. R&R OGRS 2 score (31-74%) and the number of offences relevant to the DIDs programme (see B1.2). The R&R implementation plan dated November 2002 showed this targeting range and PSR authors appeared to have accepted that referrals should fall within this band.
- Since April 2002 only five offenders on licence had accessed R&R. There were no figures for offenders on DTTOs having attended the programme.
- The area had undertaken limited monitoring of targeting practice and did not breakdown data to individual PSR authors.

B6.2 Offender knowledge and understanding of the programme requirements

DIDs 2

R&R 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.*

Strengths:

- In 19 of 30 R&R cases (63%) and 10 of 15 DIDs cases (67%) examined, the requirements of the programmes were communicated to offenders on at least two occasions, both in writing and verbally.
- In eight of 10 R&R cases (80%) and three of five DIDs cases (60%), a full explanation had been given to the offender verbally. In only one R&R case and two DIDs cases was there no record of any information having been supplied.
- Interviews with offenders demonstrated a good understanding of the requirements of both programmes.
- Documentation and checklists produced for the pre-programme three-way meeting proved useful aids to case managers and ensured consistent and comprehensive information was provided to offenders.

B6.3 Group size

DIDs
2

R&R
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.*

Strengths:

- Group size at programme commencement was consistently between four and 12 offenders.
- Administrative staff monitored waiting lists and maintained contact with case managers in order to brief programme managers as to the circumstances of individual offenders prior to their allocation to a group.
- Arrangements were in place for the timely transfer of offenders to other programmes when groups collapsed due to low numbers.

B6.4 Accessibility of group work programmes

DIDs
2

R&R
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.*

Strengths:

- Approximately 70% of R&R programmes were now delivered during the evening as a response to the high number of employed offenders.
- There was a clear commitment to maximise the accessibility of the programmes to all groups of offenders.
- Essex was taking part in the Black and Asian Pathfinder Project to provide mentor support for offenders attending R&R. Implementation plans had been prepared and the project included as a key objective in the programmes functional action plan.
- Full discussions took place between tutors and case managers prior to the singleton placements of minority ethnic and women offenders. The three-way meeting was used to identify practical problems and agree support strategies. In cases where singleton placements were deemed inappropriate, offenders were considered for the one-to-one programme.
- The area's *Race Equality Scheme* leaflet emphasised the importance of providing support for minority ethnic offenders.
- It was evident during interview that tutors gave appropriate consideration to the needs of minority ethnic and women offenders.

Areas for improvement:

- Although the 'Accredited Programmes Policy' referred to singleton placements, there was no related guidance for staff in terms of support for minority ethnic and women offenders.

B7.1 Implementation of monitoring and evaluation design

DIDs
1

R&R
1

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.*

Strengths:

- A monthly information report, based on NPD requirements, was prepared showing area performance across all programmes. This was supplemented by a bi-monthly county report which contained programme statistics.
- Administrative staff maintained information databases at delivery sites and provided both programme managers and the information and systems unit with data.
- Programme managers collated information on R&R and DIDs in general and in specific areas, e.g. women offenders, black and Asian offenders and basic skills research.

Areas for improvement:

- The area did not have a monitoring and evaluation strategy for accredited programmes and managers recognised that existing data collection systems did not provide consistently accurate information.
- Aggregation and interrogation of available information was limited. Insufficient attention had been given to detailed analysis of programme attendance, attrition, PSR proposals, concordance rates and points of drop-out in order to improve completions and inform practice.
- Although the ‘Accredited Programmes Policy’ referred to the need for the timely collection and evaluation of performance data, there was no specific detail of actual requirements and individual responsibilities.
- There was insufficient use made of administrative systems to monitor potential allocations to both programmes as offenders were not routinely tracked from the point of PSR proposal.

B7.2 Practice is informed by monitoring and evaluation evidence

DIDs
1

R&R
1

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.*

Strengths:

- The ACO and programme managers received information relating to programmes on a regular basis and there was evidence of discussion and use of data, e.g. allocation and pairing of staff and group composition.
- Cross-functional working groups had been formed to examine reasons for attrition.
- The area had increased the provision of R&R evening groups for employed offenders with the aim of improving completion rates. Day groups consistently started with low numbers and 40% had collapsed during the past 12 months.
- Recommendations from a recent mock audit of programmes were being used to formulate action plans in various areas to improve performance.

Areas for improvement:

- There was little evidence of evaluation of data to identify programme trends and inform decision making processes and practice. Apart from referrals, commencements and completions there was limited aggregated information on programme performance, particularly in areas such as eligibility and attrition.
- Managers did not routinely use interpretation data from psychometric testing and offender feedback reporting.
- Comparative data and results from other areas delivering R&R were not readily apparent.
- The area recognised the need to monitor pre- and post-programme work more effectively. The case file exercise showed that closer scrutiny of case manager support for offenders during the programme was required.

SECTION C: QUALITY OF PROGRAMME DELIVERY

C1.1 Adherence to programme manual

DIDs
1

R&R
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.*

Strengths:

- R&R and DIDs programme material was covered in the correct order and exercises properly explained. Inappropriate extras were not added.
- Tutors used effective summarising techniques to ensure aims and objectives were achieved and verify group learning had taken place.

Areas for improvement:

- There were some occasions when R&R and DIDs exercises were not set up and run correctly.
- The timing and pace of exercises, which took place early in the sessions of both programmes, occasionally resulted in subsequent work being rushed.

C1.2 Adherence to treatment style

DIDs
1

R&R
2

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.*

Strengths:

- R&R groups were encouraged to make links between exercises and sessions. Points were summarised and reflected back.
- Group members on both programmes were encouraged to explain and validate ideas for themselves.
- Tutors demonstrated good skills in engaging offenders and communicating session material.

Areas for improvement:

- Opportunities to challenge offence supporting views and anti-social behaviour were occasionally overlooked by R&R tutors.
- DIDs tutors did not always encourage offenders to elicit self-motivating statements.

C1.3 Group work skillsDIDs
1R&R
2

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.*

Strengths:

- R&R tutors displayed a range of group work skills which demonstrated a confident and assured approach to delivery of material and management of group members.
- Tutors used appropriate language and created a positive rapport with R&R offenders. This was reinforced by the effective use of praise and encouragement.
- There were good examples of co-working and handovers during R&R sessions which helped facilitate learning and improve delivery of material.
- DID's tutors were clearly spoken and used language which was easily understood by offenders.

Areas for improvement:

- There were occasions when R&R sessions were disrupted by mobile phones and offenders being permitted to leave the room.
- The co-working skills of DID's tutors were not consistently demonstrated and exercises were not always fully introduced.

C1.4 Programme delivered addressing race equality and diversity issuesDIDs
2R&R
2

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.*

Strengths:

- Observations of R&R videotapes showed that tutors responded to differences in offenders' understanding of diversity and learning styles by adopting appropriate methods of delivery and adapting material without compromising programme integrity.
- From interviews with staff it was apparent that there was a commitment to addressing race equality and wider diversity issues within the programmes.
- A great deal of attention had been given to the needs of offenders with literacy problems, with additional support provided by basic skills tutors and volunteers. A research project to establish the actual number of offenders was being undertaken and initial findings suggested a significant number fell within this category.

C1.5 Programme integrity checklist

DIDs
1

R&R
1

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

Strengths:

- A sample check of documentation in respect of nine R&R and two DIDs programmes showed that it was established practice for programme integrity checklists to be completed by tutors for each session delivered.
- Session evaluation forms were completed on offender engagement and understanding and provided a good guide for case managers. They also informed post-programme reports.

Areas for improvement:

- Scrutiny of checklists suggested that tutor self-assessment could be overgenerous. These disparities were not explicitly addressed through supervision or the use of benchmarking exercises.
- Video monitoring forms showed that not all criteria were covered and that treatment managers needed to adopt a more critical approach to scoring tutor performance.

C1.6 End of programme summary reports

DIDs
2

R&R
2

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.*

Strengths:

- Comprehensive and detailed post-programme reports had been completed for all offenders completing programmes prior to the three-way meeting.
- Post-programme reports included useful information and observations on the likelihood of reoffending and objectives for further work.
- Case managers reported that post-programme reports were useful documents in planning future supervision.

SECTION D: CASE MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

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

DIDs
1

R&R
1

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.*

Strengths:

- The area had developed an assessment tool which was widely used to inform supervision plans.
- In 28 of 30 R&R cases (93%) and 14 of 15 DIDs cases (93%), supervision plans contained evidence of relevant assessment information.
- In 11 of 15 DIDs cases (73%) there was some evidence of the supervision plan integrating the programme within the overall plan of work.
- Supervision plan objectives were regularly reviewed in 11 of 15 DIDs cases (73%).

Areas for improvement:

- In only five of 30 R&R cases (17%) were programme objectives fully integrated into supervision plans. There was insufficient attention to the sequencing of programme work with other supervision components.
- SMART objectives were not set in 12 of 30 R&R cases (40%) and plans were not consistently reviewed on a regular basis.
- Fully SMART objectives were set in only three of 15 DIDs cases (20%).

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

DIDs
1

R&R
1

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.*

Strengths:

- Programme staff regularly communicated with case managers, both personally and via e-mail, in relation to offender attendance, motivation and progress.
- Case managers attended three-way meetings in 17 of 20 relevant R&R cases (85%).

Areas for improvement:

- Communication was principally from tutors to case managers rather than a two-way exchange. It was evident from discussions with staff that not all communication was recorded. There was a great deal of informal exchange of information where staff were based on the same site.
- Case managers attended three-way meetings in four of nine relevant DIDs cases (44%).

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

DIDs
0

R&R
0

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.*

Strengths:

- Pre-programme meetings held by case managers and tutors with offenders identified potential problems and issues likely to affect participation on the programme, e.g. literacy difficulties.
- Case managers responded to offender crises or attendance problems in a timely and effective manner. Offenders acknowledged the value of this support.

Areas for improvement:

- In 11 of 30 R&R case files (37%) there was no evidence of pre-programme work having taken place. In nine other cases only a proportion of the work was undertaken within the required timescale. Pre-programme work was recorded either wholly or in part in five of 15 DIDs cases (33%).
- There was no area policy or guidance concerning the reinforcement of learning or offender contact during and following group work sessions.
- No evidence of reinforcement of learning by case managers was apparent in 28 of 30 R&R case files (93%) and 11 of 15 DIDs cases (73%).
- Case managers expressed their concern with the difficulties in finding the most suitable time to schedule pre-programme work as a result of lengthy delays to commencement of R&R group work sessions.

D1.4 Understanding and knowledge of programme methods

DIDs
1

R&R
1

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.*

Strengths:

- Case managers interviewed had attended regional context setting events for DIDs. A number also referred to their attendance at fora led by programme staff to raise awareness and knowledge of R&R methods and content.
- There was an open invitation to case managers to attend delivery of R&R sessions as observers in order to gain a greater understanding of the programme. A small number had attended and there were signs of increased interest as a result of a positive response.

Areas for improvement:

- Although a good understanding of programme methods was evident in case manager interviews, this was not reflected in the recording of pre-programme work and reinforcement of offender learning.
- Case managers indicated a need for R&R refresher training due to the length of time since initial events.

D1.5 Monitoring of attendance and enforcementDIDs
2R&R
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.*

Strengths:

- There was ample evidence of timely communication between programme staff and case managers in the event of non-attendance at sessions.
- Case managers were clear as to their responsibilities for deciding acceptability of absences and initiating enforcement and breach action.
- In 93% of R&R and DIDs case files examined, attendance and enforcement issues were closely monitored and actioned within required timescales.
- Offenders clearly understood the consequences of failing to comply with attendance requirements.

D1.6 DocumentationDIDs
2R&R
2

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

Strengths:

- Thirteen R&R and seven DIDs files contained all relevant documentation. Whilst the remaining 16 R&R and eight DIDs files contained the majority of the required information.

Areas for improvement:

- Supervision plan reviews and offender contracts were most commonly absent from case files.

D1.7 End of programme reviewDIDs
1R&R
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.*

Strengths:

- In 16 of 21 relevant R&R cases (76%), attention was given to community reintegration issues.
- Post-programme reports were written to a high standard and contained sufficient information for use in supervision plan reviews. Case managers recognised the usefulness of the document.
- In four of six relevant DIDs cases (67%) there was evidence that the post-programme report had influenced supervision plans and objectives.

Areas for improvement:

- In only four of 18 relevant R&R cases (22%) had the post-programme report influenced supervision plan reviews.
- Fully SMART objectives were set in only two of 17 R&R cases (12%).
- Attention had been given to community reintegration issues in two of eight relevant DIDs cases (25%).

D1.8 Reinforcement and relapse prevention work

DIDs
N/A

R&R
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.*

This criterion was not assessed due to the non-availability of the Cognitive Skills Booster Programme.

Next Steps

In this the second year of the audit cycle, HMIP has moved to a revised follow-up process depending on a probation area's performance rating.

HMIP advised COs in June 2002 that areas scoring less than a 50% IQR would be subject to a fresh audit within six months of the report being received by the probation area.

Areas which have now met or exceeded a 50% IQR will not be subject to any follow-up process but will next be audited within HMIP's normal inspection cycle.

IQR scores

Essex Probation Area achieved IQRs of **65%** for DIDs and **70%** for R&R.

This audit report and the IQRs will be received by the Correctional Services Accreditation Panel in Autumn 2003.