



HM Inspectorate of Probation

AUDIT OF ACCREDITED PROGRAMMES

Humberside and Yorkshire Region
of the National Probation Service for
England and Wales

*Report on:
Humberside Probation Area – Think First*

December 2001

Acknowledgements:

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

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Glossary

ACE	Assessment, Case Recording and Evaluation System
ACO	Assistant chief officer
CO	Chief officer
DTTO	Drug Treatment and Testing Order
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
PO	Probation officer
PSO	Probation service officer
PSR	Pre-sentence report
SPO	Senior probation officer

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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 Joint 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 sheet at the end of this 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.

Overview:

- The audit comprised four main elements: assessment of advance information; observation of randomly chosen videotaped programme sessions; case file reading; and interviews with staff and offenders.
- Interviews were held with the ACO (Effective Practice), information, training, and programme managers, as well as representatives of programme tutors, case managers, and two PSR writers. The views expressed by case managers may not be representative since they were all from one site, where the programme was also delivered. Four offenders were interviewed at the Scunthorpe site, two at Grimsby and four at Hull. The CO had intended to attend the final feedback meeting but was unable to do so.
- The appointment of treatment managers had been delayed because the area had awaited the roll-out of national training. Programme managers had not been carrying out this role in the interim.
- Humberside had been running Think First at three sites since April 2001: Hull, Scunthorpe, and Grimsby. Site visits were undertaken at each and checks made on resources and facilities. Building work was underway at Grimsby (the group room was due to be enlarged). In the mean time offenders were attending the programme at a YMCA facility.
- Nine videos were assessed from programmes run at each of the three sites.
- Two of the audit criteria were not assessed – B4.3 and D1.8. Plans were awaited nationally for ongoing training for experienced tutors (B4.3); and for the accreditation of the Cognitive Skills Booster Programme to reinforce offender learning (D1.8).
- This audit report refers solely to the Think First programme.

Findings:

Humberside Probation Area had shown an early commitment to Think First and had put forward three members of staff to become trainers. This forward thinking had enabled tutor training to be organised at an early stage, but it was disappointing that some of this momentum had been lost through low numbers of referrals in the first months of roll-out.

The area had already anticipated some of the audit findings, having assessed information from material required by HMIP, and viewed the audit as an opportunity to identify and prioritise areas for development.

The main areas for improvement in Humberside were staff ownership, consistent targeting (with a clear rationale understood by key staff), the development of a strategy for monitoring and evaluation arrangements and the need to establish urgently the treatment manager function, which included the establishment of clear links to the appraisal process and the identification of training needs.

Recommendations

The CO should ensure that the area:

- *puts a strategy in place for improving staff ownership of the programme, which includes the regular and timely communication of evaluation information and promotes common ownership of problems and solutions through joint working;*
- *facilitates the release of staff with spilt roles to carry out their tutor functions effectively;*
- *establishes a comprehensive strategy for sentencer and stakeholder liaison, in order to inform and keep them abreast of developments;*
- *monitors reasons for exclusions from programmes to ensure that targeting is accurate;*
- *addresses reasons for drop-out at the pre-group work stage;*
- *produces guidelines on what are legitimate reasons for delaying the start of programmes;*
- *clearly sets out in writing tutor commitment prior to training;*
- *produces a written policy on selection and deselection criteria;*
- *provides job descriptions which are up to date and reflect the competencies required;*
- *allows all tutors sufficient time for the preparation of each session;*
- *offers refresher training for relevant staff;*
- *fully establishes the treatment manager function, so that tutors' practice is assessed and their training needs identified and addressed;*
- *regularly reviews the skills of all staff with programme responsibility, so that their needs are reflected in appraisal documents as well as in the area training plan;*
- *undertakes integrity checks of catch-up sessions to ascertain whether these cover the material to a satisfactory standard;*
- *develops a strategy for monitoring and evaluation arrangements, clearly setting out the roles of relevant staff;*
- *integrates the programme and post-programme reports into supervision planning through the use of SMART objectives.*

SECTION A: COMMITTED LEADERSHIP

A1.1 Committed leadership

1

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:

- A comprehensive 'Effective Practice Strategy' had been produced which integrated accredited programmes in the overall work of the area, for example, setting in context the assessments required for targeting and referral to Think First.
- Area and divisional meetings included Think First as standing agenda items. This meant that programme issues were regularly addressed. Minutes seen showed, for example, that a meeting in July 2001 had included a presentation highlighting some of the obstacles to the successful implementation of the programme.
- An early commitment for three members of staff to become trainers had facilitated the subsequent training of tutors in Humberside.
- Context setting events had been introduced by a senior manager, generally the ACO (Effective Practice), and most senior managers had attended these.

Areas for improvement:

- The Area Plan 2001/2004 was a high level plan which did not sufficiently emphasise the importance of accredited programmes, or Think First specifically, except as part of an objective to produce an overarching What Works strategy (this was the Effective Practice Strategy referred to above).
- Tensions between the need to achieve completions for accredited programmes and other aspects of service delivery were reflected in the mixed economy of dedicated tutors and tutors with other duties. So, whereas the total allocation of resources to meet the exigencies of programme delivery may have been sufficient, the way in which these resources were shared created difficulties for the management of the programme.

A1.2 Management structures

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.*

The two programme managers were SPOs with an effective practice brief, each covering one of the two divisional areas. They were part of their respective divisional management teams but were line managed by the ACO (Effective Practice). This arrangement had been a conscious attempt to break away from a history of separation between the programmes team and the rest of the area. Programme tutors were therefore drawn from the programmes team and also from other teams across Humberside.

Strengths:

- Humberside had produced an organisational chart outlining the management structures for the delivery of accredited programmes.
- Minutes of North and South Bank team meetings showed that Think First issues were being communicated across operational and functional areas.

Areas for improvement:

- Discussion with programme managers indicated that time-consuming negotiation with other managers was often required to release tutors with split roles from their other responsibilities. Both tutor supervision notes and e-mails between the programme managers and their colleagues bore this out. Programme managers described their role as one which entailed “having responsibility without authority”.
- Although competency-based job descriptions existed for staff involved in Think First, only the job description for tutors made specific reference to programmes by linking it to the programme manual.
- There were no job descriptions for programme or treatment managers.

A1.3 Staff ownership of the accredited programme

0

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

Strengths:

- Programme tutors, case managers and PSR writers were convinced of the usefulness of the programme (despite, in the case of PSR writers, having reservations about its applicability to particular groups of participants, for example some women or minority ethnic offenders, until research proved otherwise).
- There was evidence (from the case file reading exercise as well as discussions with staff) that case managers usually attended programme review meetings at session 14 and at the post-programme stage.

Areas for improvement:

- At present there did not appear to be monitoring in place to identify to what extent the use of Think First was consistent across the area. An internal communication from the ACO (Effective Practice) had suggested that it was not (e-mail dated 14 May 2001).
- Tutors, especially those with split roles, felt that their commitment to the delivery of Think First was seriously compromised by insufficient workload relief and an unremitting schedule. Some tutors with other responsibilities had refused to deliver the programme for these reasons. The effect of this was to place additional strain on existing delivery staff. Tutors described delivery as “running on goodwill”. This did not appear to be a situation which was sustainable in the long run and it risked undermining the willingness of new staff to put themselves forward for tutor training.

A1.4 Effective communication with sentencers

1

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

Strengths:

- A number of Humberside staff had been involved in making presentations to magistrates and judges across the area and further events were planned.
- The Humberside Probation Area newsletter *In Touch* had been used to convey information about accredited programmes to sentencers.
- Sentencer leaflets clearly set out the objectives and requirements of Think First.

Areas for improvement:

- It was not clear how far communication with sentencers had sought to anticipate difficulties by seeking feedback. Nor was it evident the extent to which comments, such as those arising from the return of orders to court for deletion of the Think First condition, had helped shape subsequent communication with sentencers as a whole.
- The information needs of other stakeholders, for example defence solicitors, had not yet been addressed.

SECTION B: PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

B1.1 Resources and facilities

2

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

Strengths:

- All group rooms seen were of an adequate size and able to accommodate 12 offenders. The group room at Grimsby was long and narrow, but was being renovated and would be a more suitable shape once building work had been completed.
- There was appropriate equipment in each room, with adequate light and comfortable chairs.
- Video and sound equipment were of a reasonable quality and enabled sessions to be monitored.
- There were storage facilities for videos, although these would have to be revisited as the number of videos increased.
- Consideration had been given to the needs of hearing-impaired offenders and at the time of the audit an infra-red hearing induction system was being fitted in the group room at Scunthorpe.

Areas for improvement:

- The 'break out' room at Hull was cluttered with furniture and was not therefore available for use. A separate area or room at each site would need to be available by year 2.
- The absence of a second camera at each site prevented tutors from recording and replaying role-plays with participants.
- The sound quality of some of the videos monitored was poor.

B1.2 Provision of information leaflets about the programme

1

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

Strengths:

- Sentencer leaflets were comprehensive and clearly expressed.
- Leaflets for offenders clearly set out the content of Think First and described how women and minority ethnic offenders could expect to be treated.
- The information leaflet referred offenders to Humberside's complaints procedure (which was an excellent example of the use of plain English).
- The case manager and PSR writer packs contained further information about the programme for offenders, which could be given to them prior to and after sentence.

Areas for improvement:

- The section on 'anti-discriminatory practice' in the offender leaflet was somewhat unclear.
- The consequences of failure to comply were implicit rather than explicit in the offender information sheets.

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.

Strengths:

- The case file reading exercise showed that prompt action followed offender absences and that enforcement action was initiated by programme staff where required.
- Staff were clear about their respective roles in relation to the enforcement of orders and licences.
- 'Raising the Standards' guidelines identified the responsibilities of most staff at various stages of an order or licence, with respect to recording and meeting national standards.
- E-mails from programme managers or the ACO (Effective Practice) to other managers showed that there was swift clarification of factors which might prevent offender attendance (such as the length of licence required for an offender to be able to complete the Think First programme).
- The Effective Practice Strategy set out the targets for increased completion rates and identified some of the steps required to meet this challenge.
- Helpful guidance had been issued for staff delivering the programme 'out of hours'. This set out minimum expectations in relation to health and safety, staff roles and the management of high risk of harm offenders.

Areas for improvement:

- Records on individual referrals to the groups, held by the programmes team, were not always complete. Although registers of all offenders with Think First orders existed for each site, these were not broken down by programme group. Session evaluation forms therefore acted as registers of attendance for each programme. There was no means of seeing 'at a glance' how a programme was progressing.
- 'Raising the Standards' did not explicitly refer to the responsibilities of programme staff in meeting national standards. (The role of programme tutors in enforcing attendance was due to be written into these guidelines.)
- The area was collecting the data required by the NPD in terms of commencements, completions and drop-outs. However, while awaiting the roll-out of IAPS, which would fill this gap, the area had not developed a means of ascertaining differential attendance rates across programmes and sites, so that trends could be identified and improvement measures taken.

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.

Strengths:

- A schedule of programmes had been produced and distributed to staff.
- Back-up systems were sufficient to prevent cancellation of sessions at times of unanticipated tutor absence.

- Arrangements to deal with offender crises outside the sessions were set out in the offender information leaflet and seemed generally to be understood by the offenders interviewed.

Areas for improvement:

- Some sessions in the running of early programmes had had to be postponed on a number of occasions because there were insufficient participants. Although the postponements were reasonable, given the circumstances, this was demotivating for the offenders who did attend.

B2.3 Catch-up sessions/Attendance

1

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:

- Catch-ups were scheduled at each site and a member of staff identified to deliver them.
- Case records showed whether or not catch-ups were being attended.
- The offenders interviewed were clear about the maximum number of catch-ups they were permitted during the programme.

Areas for improvement:

- Area policy was that catch-ups were videotaped wherever possible. However, pressure on group rooms meant this did not always happen.
- Integrity checks of catch-ups were not yet taking place.
- Interviews with offenders suggested that some catch-ups were too short (30 minutes in some cases).

B2.4 Timeliness

1

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:

- The majority of case records examined (21/29) showed that offenders did start the programme within one month of the order being made.
- Advance scheduling of psychometric testing sessions was designed to facilitate programme starts. There was evidence from e-mails between managers that this issue was being monitored (though not how systematically).
- The motivational group work being carried out in Hull, for offenders who were waiting to start the programme, was an example of an imaginative and constructive way of dealing with any delay to the start of the programme.

Areas for improvement:

- In 28% (8/29) of case records seen, the offender did not start the programme within the first month of the order.

- In these cases it was not always clear whether the offender's start on the programme had been delayed for legitimate reasons (such as stabilising drug use, etc).
- There were no guidelines for case managers setting out what might be legitimate reasons for a delayed start.

B3.1 Staff selection

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 the staff delivering Think First had successfully completed assessment centre procedures.
- A presentation skills course had preceded recent assessment centre days to prepare candidates for the assessment.

Areas for improvement:

- The area had no written policy confirming that only those staff meeting the selection criteria could deliver the programme.
- Tutors interviewed (who were amongst the first in the area to be trained) said that they had received nothing in writing prior to their training about what was involved in delivering accredited programmes.

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.*

Managers said that Humberside was in the process of reviewing the job descriptions of staff involved in the delivery of accredited programmes.

Strengths:

- Job descriptions for programme tutors existed and were competency based.
- Staff interviewed (case managers, tutors and programme managers) were clear about their areas of responsibility.

Areas for improvement:

- Job descriptions did not exist for all roles involved in accredited programmes (see A1.2).
- Although reference was made to the programme manual competencies in the tutor job description, these were not incorporated into existing ones (see A1.2).
- In the absence of designated treatment managers, more experienced tutors appeared to be taking on elements of this role without this being made explicit. It was not clear how far these informal arrangements were being monitored by the programme managers.

B3.3 Preparation and debriefing time for tutors

0

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

Strengths:

- All tutors confirmed they had sufficient time for debriefing and completing the end of session documentation.

Areas for improvement:

- Although programme managers said that they allocated 2½hours' preparation and debriefing time for all dedicated programme tutors, tutors with split roles said that they did not have enough time to prepare for sessions. Programme managers acknowledged that the negotiation of preparation and debriefing time with these tutors' managers sometimes caused difficulties because of workload relief implications for their originating teams.
- In discussion, tutors claimed there was little opportunity for joint preparation of sessions. This was a general problem which meant that co-working issues could not effectively be addressed. They appeared to have little awareness of the time allowance for preparatory work.
- In discussion, it emerged that tutors were, in some cases, using time set aside for catch-ups to prepare for sessions. It was not clear what the effect on preparation would be when the catch-up had to be delivered.

B3.4 Staff continuity

2

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:

- Three tutors were assigned to each programme and continuity maintained by ensuring that one of the tutors who ran the previous session delivered the following one.
- Session evaluation forms and offender interviews confirmed that there was tutor continuity.

B4.1 Training arrangements for new staff

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:

- Humberside's prompt action in putting forward three staff as trainers for Think First had enabled a regular programme of training to be in place to meet the needs of the area.
- The training received by staff conformed to the programme manual and all staff delivering Think First had received training prior to their first delivery of the programme.
- The area was arranging for refresher training in the form of 'road shows' designed to pick-up on emerging issues, which would then be fed back to managers.

Areas for improvement:

- The early cohort of tutors felt that their knowledge had become somewhat 'rusty' and that they would benefit from refresher training.

- Supervision notes and interviews with tutors suggested that attention was required to ensure that individual developmental needs were being sufficiently considered.
- PSR authors (two) said that there had been no training designed specifically for them. This might have addressed in greater detail some of the targeting issues which emerged later.

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

2

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

Strengths:

- Efforts were being made to ensure that inexperienced tutors delivered sessions with experienced tutors (even beyond their first programme), where possible.

Areas for improvement:

- Plans to maintain this arrangement were threatened by the limited number of tutors available at the smaller sites.

B4.3 Training arrangements for experienced staff

N/A

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 has not been assessed as ongoing training for experienced tutors has still to be rolled-out nationally.

B4.4 Staff knowledge of the concepts and methods used in the programme

1

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

Strengths:

- Staff trainers (unsurprisingly) had an impressive grasp of the programme objectives and methods.
- The case managers interviewed were able to identify confidently programme concepts and methods.
- Planned road shows would address gaps in knowledge highlighted during the audit.

Areas for improvement:

- Not all tutors could fluently describe the aims and objectives of the Think First programme. They acknowledged that they would benefit from refresher training.
- In discussion, PSR writers said they did not have sufficient knowledge of the programme to undertake their role effectively. One had sought additional information about Think First from a tutor.

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

0

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

Strengths:

- PSR writers and case managers interviewed understood the theoretical and evidential basis of Think First.
- Tutors spoke enthusiastically of the evidence they saw of offenders developing and changing their attitudes during the programme.
- The training staff had received was comprehensive in its exploration of the origins and development of cognitive-behavioural work.
- Planned road shows would be able to tackle some of the gaps highlighted during the audit.

Areas for improvement:

- Some tutors needed considerable prompting to be able to identify the theoretical origins of the programme and to remember its research base. The effect of their lack of confidence in this area was reflected in the delivery of some of the sessions observed (see Section C), and in comments from some offenders who said that they could remember exercises undertaken, but not their purpose.

B4.6 Supporting skills necessary to run programmes

0

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:

- All staff attending assessment centres had had the opportunity to attend a presentation skills course, which also stood them in good stead when it came to delivering the programme.
- Group work skills and pro-social modelling training had taken place in 1999 and 2000 respectively. Further training in both these areas was planned (but no date fixed yet).
- 'Murmur to Murder' training had been arranged for all staff in the area. This was designed to assist staff in developing their skills in working with racist offenders.

Areas for improvement:

- There had been no review of the training needs of staff involved in the delivery of accredited programmes.
- No observation of practice was taking place, either by programme managers (in the absence of treatment managers) or by tutors. This seriously limited the ability of programme managers to influence the training plans in the light of assessed need.
- It was not clear what priority the training needs of staff involved in the delivery of accredited programmes had in relation to other demands upon the training schedule. However, the training of PSO staff with no previous group work experience was recognised as a priority.

- The training needs of the programme manager with least experience of accredited programmes had not received sufficient consideration, particularly in the light of her colleague's absence and the delay in the appointment of treatment managers.

B5.1 Staff supervision and quality of practice

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 was taking place regularly and at the frequency specified in the management manual. This arrangement had been maintained despite staff shortages.
- Supervision notes showed that attention was paid to solving practical problems that might have prevented the sessions from running and to the management of groups.
- IAPS tutor supervision forms were being completed (by hand) and copied to tutors.

Areas for improvement:

- Video monitoring forms were not being completed by programme managers and could not, therefore, inform supervision and help identify individual development needs.
- Supervision notes did not demonstrate sufficient attention to skills development.
- The programme manager, responsible for tutor supervision during the previous several months, did not feel she had sufficient knowledge of the programme content and treatment style to carry out all aspects of her role. Consideration was now being given to the development of 'specialisms' within the programme manager role.
- Despite the fact that tutors were completing session evaluation forms, these were not the focus of supervision sessions. Tutors were encouraged to discuss practice issues with more experienced colleagues.

B5.2 Staff appraisal

0

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:

- Regular supervision was taking place which could form the basis of effective appraisals of practice.

Areas for improvement:

- At present, there was no means of assessing the competence of individual tutors to deliver Think First.
- Although an appraisal framework existed, it was not clear how the Think First practice of tutors with a split role would be accommodated within their overall appraisal.

- Given that competence to deliver was not currently being assessed, there was also no evidence of what remedial action could or would be taken with tutors whose practice needed improvement.

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.

Humberside had eliminated the use of ACE from 3 September 2001 and was now using OGRS 2 and the evaluation and monitoring tool, together with the targeting matrix, as the means by which offender eligibility and suitability for Think First were assessed. Most recent figures (July – September 2001 quarter) showed that the profile of offenders receiving orders with a Think First condition was broadly within the Think First risk banding. However, there were issues in relation to offenders with high OGRS scores (20% of orders in that quarter), as well as a much smaller number (10% of orders) with scores of below 31%. Initial guidance that proposals should be made for all suitable offenders, including those with a high OGRS score, had been amended to tackle the skewed profile. There were plans to clarify further what additional work needed to take place with high OGRS offenders, in order to address considerations of dosage.

Strengths:

- PSR writer packs included clear instructions for assessment, including the circumstances in which consultation with an SPO was necessary.
- PSR writers interviewed had a clear understanding that proposals of all suitable offenders within the OGRS banding should be made. A recent communication from the ACO (Effective Practice) had addressed inconsistent practice in relation to the proposal of Think First for offenders with a high OGRS score.
- Area guidance indicated that Think First should be considered for offenders on DTTOs, as well as licences.
- Administrative staff had received training in the completion of OGRS.

Areas for improvement:

- The case file read confirmed that not all offenders fell within the target banding. Only 12 of the 29 case records examined were within the 31-74 OGRS band.
- No systematic action had been taken to identify which staff might be contributing to the referral of offenders who were either ineligible or unsuitable.
- There was little evidence from the case file read of liaison between PSR writers and programme staff regarding an offender's eligibility/suitability for the programme.
- There was little or no assessment of literacy skills at the PSR stage. This had apparently resulted in some orders having to be returned to court, where the literacy skills of the offenders were so poor that they could not be accommodated on the programme (but see Section D also).

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.*

The majority of offenders interviewed were in the early stages of the programme.

Strengths:

- Interviews with offenders showed that they understood the requirements of Think First.
- Case managers and tutors both confirmed that they checked what programme knowledge offenders had before undertaking work with them.
- Both case manager and PSR writer packs included written information for offenders.

Areas for improvement:

- The case file read suggested that offenders had not always received information about the programme in writing and verbally on two separate occasions. Signed letters of understanding were not generally on file.

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.*

Strengths:

- Programmes were not starting with fewer than four offenders.
- Numbers attending each session were monitored through regular supervision.

Areas for improvement:

- Some programme starts had been delayed on several occasions because an insufficient number of offenders had attended. As a result, over-allocation to programmes was taking place in order to ensure a reasonable number of commencements. Other ways of dealing with the significant attrition between sentence and the start of the programme merited attention.
- Humberside had allowed some offenders to have more than the permitted number of catch-ups, in order to obviate the need for 'bus stopping' or restarting those offenders who had attended.

B6.4 Accessibility of group work programmes

1

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.*

Unfortunately, none of the offenders available for interview were from an ethnic minority or female.

Strengths:

- Humberside's equal opportunities policy clearly set out the requirements with respect to singleton placements and a contract in the case manager pack ensured that discussions and decisions about singleton placements were confirmed and agreed by the offender in question.

- Staff interviewed understood their role in supporting women and minority ethnic offenders (for example, consideration of staff group composition, provision of childcare).
- An attempt had been made to run a women-only group, but this had not been possible because of the small number being referred. Instead, women offenders had been 'stacked up' to ensure that the programme which ran was fully mixed.

Areas for improvement:

- Although some consideration had clearly been given to the support needs of minority ethnic offenders, these had not been systematically addressed. The Priestley 1:1 programme was mentioned as an option once it came on stream. It would be important not to assume that this was the best option in every case.

B7.1 Implementation of monitoring and evaluation design

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.

Humberside had been monitoring a number of processes since the start of the Think First roll-out. However, it had also expected to be able to make use of IAPS rather sooner than had been the case and so had not created another database, which would have enabled senior managers to access a greater range of critical information 'at the push of a button'.

Strengths:

- Some key information was being collected, including the targeting matrix and IAPS referral forms for example, and staff knew what they were responsible for completing.
- Summary data required by the NPD were beginning to be circulated to staff (for example, comparative data on the two previous quarters to show trends of Think First orders as a percentage of referrals, numbers of commencements and completions).

Areas for improvement:

- There was no strategy setting out monitoring and evaluation arrangements, for example what data needed to be collected or collated by whom and for what purpose. This meant that while staff had responded to specific instructions to complete forms they did not know how their contribution fitted into the 'bigger picture'.
- Although there were instances of staff being informed of practice developments affecting their roles, key staff such as programme managers and tutors received little local, regional or national information on a regular basis. Thus an opportunity to give staff a sense of 'how we are doing' was missed.
- There was insufficient ability, because of an over-reliance on paper-based systems pending the roll-out of IAPS, to know what profile of referrals the area should have been getting, as opposed to what it was getting. (For example exclusion information was being collected but not collated.) The time-consuming nature of manual manipulation of information was a barrier to collecting more than was required by the NPD.
- Tutors said that they sometimes administered psychometric tests to offenders to whom they had delivered the programme, as there were not enough staff available to do this.

B7.2 Practice is informed by monitoring and evaluation evidence

0

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.

The area had certainly responded to some of the information being collected but, overall, these responses were ad hoc rather than systematic.

Strengths:

- There was evidence of swift action by both the ACO and programme managers as they became aware of trends which needed addressing. An example of this was the ACO's e-mail to the chief officers' team following collation of the first NPD quarterly return. This identified the critical issues to be dealt with at the next meeting.

Areas for improvement:

- The absence of any strategy for monitoring and evaluation had limited the area's ability to forestall problems. For example, regular monitoring of reasons for exclusion from Think First might have alerted managers to the issue of literacy problems; sampling of PSR proposals in different locations might have established reasons for differential referrals, which could have enabled a more specific response to be formulated.
- Despite evidence of a considerable problem of attrition between sentence and the start of the programme, not enough appeared to have happened to address this.
- There was no sign of emerging trends from other areas running Think First programmes having been promulgated across the area, putting the local situation in context.

SECTION C: QUALITY OF PROGRAMME DELIVERY

C1.1 Adherence to programme manual

1

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.*

It was clear from the sessions observed that tutors sought to adhere to the manual: they conscientiously referred either to their notes or the manual. The 'areas for improvement' were likely to improve quickly once tutors began to observe their delivery on video and had the opportunity to discuss their performance with a treatment manager.

Strengths:

- Material was generally covered in the correct order.
- In most of the sessions monitored, the aims and objectives of the session were at least satisfactorily met.
- Where only one offender attended, the tutor had delivered the session as thoroughly as if there had been a full group.

Areas for improvement:

- Discussion was often cursory or insufficiently focused.
- There was not enough checking out of learning. Judging by some of the offenders interviewed, establishing what had been understood and absorbed would be crucial to the benefits they could expect to achieve from the programme.
- In some cases tutors did not appear to have grasped the purpose of the exercises (for example, 'identifying sources of information').
- The result of not encouraging discussion was that some sessions were too short.

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.*

A few of the sessions observed had a group of offenders who tended to express fatalistic or hopeless attitudes. It was crucial that, for this group of participants, the experience and learning on the programme offered an opportunity to develop a different perspective together with new skills and problem-solving capabilities. While some tutors successfully conveyed enthusiasm and energy, others appeared tired and left such expressions unchallenged.

Strengths:

- Tutors succeeded in creating an unthreatening environment in which it was possible to learn.
- There was evidence of offender responsibility being considered. In several cases group members with literacy difficulties were helped to complete a written exercise.
- Tutors allowed offenders the space to respond to questions and did not rush in with the answers.

Areas for improvement:

- Tutors did not use enough open questions.
- There was little summarising of points to help fix learning in participants' minds.
- Offenders were not always given enough opportunity to explain and validate ideas for themselves.
- Unhelpful generalisations (for example about people in authority) were not always challenged or used as a basis for enhancing problem solving skills. Opportunities to make goals specific and concrete were missed.

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.*

Strengths:

- Most of the groups observed showed that members were involved.
- Tutors generally used appropriate language which could be understood by the participants and jargon was mostly avoided.

Areas for improvement:

- Although there appeared to be no difficulties with the co-working arrangements, these could have been more dynamic and imaginative. Co-workers could usefully have scribed when their colleagues delivered the session.
- Exercises were not always introduced or ended in a way which highlighted the aims of the session and the purpose of the exercise.

C1.4 Programme delivered addressing race equality and diversity issues

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:

- Discussion with tutors showed that they were alert to race equality and wider diversity issues. They were able to give examples of instances when they had challenged comments by group members, by referring to the group rules, for example. The events of September 11 2001 had resulted in offenders openly expressing anti-Muslim feeling, which tended to fix upon asylum seekers. Some tutors had evidently discussed how they would tackle this, and now used perspective-taking exercises to counter such views. Case records and supervision notes showed that issues of inappropriate behaviour were taken seriously and tackled.
- Examples were also given of conscious countering of stereotypes about women or minority ethnic people.
- The programme manager was beginning to establish a collection of good practice videos which could be shared in the tutor group.

Areas for improvement:

- The development of more links with outside agencies might offer opportunities for support of some ethnic minority offenders, as had been done in the case of a Somali offender.

C1.5 Programme integrity checklist

1

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

Strengths:

- Programme integrity checklists, in respect of each session delivered, were being completed during the debriefing following session delivery.

Areas for improvement:

- Scrutiny of the checklists suggested that tutor self-assessment could be over generous. This was likely to improve as benchmarking exercises became part of tutor supervision.
- Not all checklists seen were fully completed.

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.*

Up to September 2001, the area had been using its own standardised end of programme report with comprehensive guidance on completion of the document. All the post-programme reports seen were in this format, though the NPD document was now in use.

Of the case managers interviewed, only one had supervised an offender who had completed the group work part of the programme.

Strengths:

- Reports were generally written in straightforward plain language, free from jargon.
- The offender's participation in the programme was addressed in each case, as was their progress through the programme.
- The case manager who had experience of using post-programme reports had found the document very useful in planning future supervision.

Areas for improvement:

- Most reports were not specific enough in terms of the skills which needed to be practised following the end of the group work programme. The national format would encourage greater specificity here.
- Some of the likely relapse scenarios were too general and their usefulness to the offender and case manager was therefore limited.
- The reports seen did not contain clear objectives for future supervision and identification of future treatment needs was weak.

SECTION D: CASE MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

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.*

Strengths:

- Most case managers were including completion of Think First as an objective of supervision.
- The majority of supervision objectives were being reviewed on a regular basis.
- A paper on the implementation of the case manager role in Humberside (dated April 2001) had set out the responsibilities of case managers. This included their responsibilities in relation to accredited programmes and the requirement to produce supervision plans with SMART objectives.

Areas for improvement:

- There was little integration of the programme in the overall plan, nor was sequencing given much consideration.
- Objectives were not generally SMART enough. This meant that the place of Think First in supervision was not sufficiently sharply defined in the supervision plan.
- Although more than half the records seen made some attempt to draw on risk assessments to inform the supervision plan, this was not thorough enough to make clear the connection between risk and the objectives of supervision and the contribution of Think First to these aims.

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

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:

- The area had showed its commitment to integrating the role of the case manager with that of delivery staff, by requiring case managers to attend the three-way meeting at session 14 as well as the post-programme review.
- Discussion with staff indicated that the majority of case managers attended the post-programme review.

Areas for improvement:

- It was evident from discussion with case managers and offenders that not all liaison between tutors and case managers was finding its way into the case record. Unrecorded informal communication seemed particularly likely to take place where staff were operating from the same site.
- The case file read suggested that the practice of attending three-way meetings was inconsistent.
- The return of orders to court for deletion of the Think First condition, for example in cases where the offender had severe literacy problems, indicated that more could be done to pre-empt

these difficulties at the pre-programme stage. Here again, there was insufficient appreciation of what might be a legitimate delay to the start of the programme.

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.*

Strength:

- Discussion with case managers suggested that they took seriously their role as motivators of offenders. They spoke with enthusiasm about how they undertook this task.
- Interviews with offenders showed that some case managers were alert to the need to track offender progress through the programme. This was easier to do where case managers were on site.
- Case managers interviewed said that they paid particular attention to the support needs of women or minority ethnic offenders in singleton placements.

Areas for improvement:

- There was almost no reinforcement of learning by case managers during the programme. This might have taken the form of a Think First-friendly approach to solving problems which emerged.
- Case records showed that pre-programme work was not always completed within the required time-scale.
- There was no guidance on the level of contact case managers were expected to have with offenders, beyond the meetings at session 14 and at the end of the programme.

D1.4 Understanding and knowledge of programme methods

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 showed a good understanding of programme methods.
- The attendance records for training events showed which case managers had attended the Think First training. 24% of the PO establishment had been trained as case managers.
- The five case managers interviewed had all received training, with the exception of a newly appointed member of staff.

Areas for improvement:

- It was not clear how case managers' skills in undertaking their part of the programme would be assessed.
- The area training plan made no reference to the training needs of case managers.
- The area had not yet considered how to enhance the role of case managers while offenders were on the programme, so as to increase their ability to support properly offender learning.

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.*

Strengths:

- Responsibility for monitoring attendance and enforcement in Humberside was shared between tutors and case managers. Initially there had been some confusion as to who took on which role. However, this had been clarified and both case managers and tutors appeared to be clear about their respective responsibilities.
- Case records showed that offender attendance and compliance were closely monitored.
- Enforcement action generally took place within the required national standards time-scales.
- Offenders were clear about the requirements of the programme and what action would flow from their failure to comply with these.
- Area documentation set out the responsibility of staff in relation to enforcement action.

Areas for improvement:

- Tutor responsibilities in relation to enforcement were not included in the document Raising the Standards.

D1.6 Documentation

0

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

Strengths:

- The area was using paper IAPS documents where possible. This familiarised staff with documents which they would be using on screen when IAPS was fully rolled-out.

Areas for improvement:

- The majority of case records examined did not contain all required documentation (21/29).
- Letters of understanding and targeting matrices were held separately from the rest of the case record, so could not easily be referred to by case managers.

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.*

The scrutiny of case records included few cases which had reached the post-programme stage. This criterion has therefore been judged on the small sample seen.

Strengths:

- Most case records (10 of 13) showed that at least some attention had been given to community re-integration.
- Case managers were optimistic that as they dealt with a larger number of offenders completing the programme, their use of the post-programme report in developing further objectives would improve.

- Tutors were able to give some examples of specific work which had been carried forward by case managers, following completion of the programme.

Areas for improvement:

- Very few case records had SMART objectives set relevant to Think First in the supervision plan review.
- There had not yet been any consideration given to ways in which the end of programme reviews could enhance post-programme supervision.

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.

This criterion has not been assessed. Humberside was waiting for the national development of the Cognitive Skills Booster Programme to reinforce learning.

Next Steps:

HMIP will employ a three-tier follow-up process, depending on a probation area's performance rating:

Level 1 follow-up

A level 1 performing area will have met or exceeded the agreed IQR figure of 70%. (This figure rises to 75% for year 2 and 90% for year 3.) The follow-up will normally be conducted within one year of the audit report being received by the probation area, and will usually be limited to a desktop exercise, depending on the advance information received, focusing on the areas for improvement for criteria that were not fully met in the original audit.

Level 2 follow-up

A level 2 area will not have reached the 70% quality rating for programme delivery, but will have attained at least 40%. The follow-up will combine a request for written information and a one-two day visit to the probation area with HMIP auditing further videotapes and case files. This will normally take place within one year of the audit report being received by the probation area.

Level 3 follow-up

A level 3 area will have scored less than a 40% IQR. The follow-up will involve a fresh audit of the probation area and will normally be completed within six months of the audit report being received by the probation area.

Humberside Probation Area achieved an IQR of 51% and is a **level 2 area**. A limited follow-up audit will be carried out in one year's time. The area should pay particular attention to mandatory items, which have not been fully met.

This audit report and the IQR will be received by the Joint Accreditation Panel in October 2002.