



HM Inspectorate of Probation

AUDIT OF ACCREDITED PROGRAMMES

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

*Report on:
Lancashire Probation Area – Think First*

July 2001

Acknowledgements:

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

The audit team comprised:

Breda Leyne
Rosanna Heal
Inspection and Audit Officers

Andy Bonny
Deputy Audit Manager

Alan MacDonald
Audit Manager

Frances Flaxington
HM Acting Deputy Chief Inspector of Probation

Glossary

| | |
|-------|--|
| ACE | Assessment, Case Recording and Evaluation System |
| ACO | Assistant Chief Officer |
| CO | Chief Officer |
| HMIP | HM Inspectorate of Probation |
| IAPS | Interim Accredited Programmes Software |
| IQR | Implementation Quality Rating |
| JAP | Joint Accreditation Panel |
| LSI-R | Level of Service Inventory-Revised |
| N/A | Criteria not assessed |
| OASys | Offender Assessment System |
| OGRS | Offender Group Reconviction Scale |
| PSR | Pre-sentence report |

Contents

| | Page |
|---|-----------|
| Context: | 4 |
| Scoring Approach: | 4 |
| Overview: | 5 |
| Findings and recommendations: | 6 |
| SECTION A: COMMITTED LEADERSHIP | 7 |
| SECTION B: PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES | 9 |
| SECTION C: QUALITY OF PROGRAMME DELIVERY | 19 |
| SECTION D: CASE MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES | 22 |
| Next Steps | 25 |
| Scoring summary sheet: | 26 |

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 JAP. 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 4 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 7 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:

- Lancashire had been delivering Think First since January 2001. Prior to this it ran an existing McGuire programme (locally known as “STOP”). Staff training, provided by James McGuire for this programme, was similar in content to that available for Think First. The transition to the accredited programme involved some crossover with the original both in managing staff and offenders with existing STOP requirements. This audit focused entirely on the implementation of Think First.
- The programme was delivered by a centrally managed team on 3 sites that served a number of different probation offices.
- The audit comprised video monitoring of randomly selected programme sessions, a case file reading exercise, assessment of advance information material, and a visit to the area where staff involved in delivery or support of the programme were interviewed. They included senior managers, information support staff, programme and treatment managers, programme tutors, case managers and court personnel. Some offenders who had undertaken the programme were also interviewed.
- Nine videos were observed from 3 sites, sampling a group at an earlier stage of implementation and 2 recent groups.
- Three of the criteria specified in the Performance Standards Manual were not applied in this area reflecting the early stage of delivery of Think First: B4.2, where it is assumed that relatively inexperienced tutors will be assigned to deliver programmes together; B4.3 and D1.8, which await national planned training for experienced tutors and the accreditation of the cognitive behavioural booster programme.

Findings:

Lancashire had worked hard to introduce Think First and meet the required criteria for this audit. It was a positive experience for the audit team to work alongside staff that were fully engaged in the audit process, keen to review their strengths and areas for improvement and be forward looking.

This audit has been carried out at a relatively early stage of implementation and the results reflect what had been achieved through advance planning, review and reappraisal now that the programme was up and running. The Think First programme had been implemented in the context of stringent national expectations on pre-determined criteria. This had required significant changes in both culture and structure and Lancashire had recognised that implementation of accredited programmes was a process which would take time to consolidate.

Many aspects of performance that have scored lower in this audit were clearly apparent to senior managers and work was underway to address these issues. The main areas for improvement were in targeting and managing attendance of offenders, refining case management arrangements and in using evaluation to inform practice.

The satisfactory level of performance is therefore well within expectation and there is plenty of scope for improvement with the evident motivation and expertise of staff at all levels.

Recommendations

The CO should ensure that the area:

- *pays further attention to the facilities provided and brings all accommodation up to the required level;*
- *reviews targeting and assessment of offenders and develops a clear plan for improvement;*
- *develops an allocation culture in order to meet national targets for attendance and works on refining assessment within target groups;*
- *gives careful consideration to refining appraisal using national competencies for tutors;*
- *reconsiders the use of tutor time and programming of sessions;*
- *differentiates the developmental needs of individual tutors using video monitoring and supervision sessions to explore practice issues such as co-working arrangements and adherence to the programme manual;*
- *uses the newly developed database to provide staff at all levels with sufficient information to participate in review and refinement of policy and practice;*
- *integrates case management with programme management;*
- *strengthens and structures the case management role during group delivery;*
- *addresses offender motivational and attitudinal issues, and external offender crises to reduce attrition during the group phase;*
- *improves the quality of supervision planning and use of structured tools for assessment in determining SMART objectives for offenders.*

SECTION A: COMMITTED LEADERSHIP

A1.1 Committed leadership**2**

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

Strengths:

- A clear commitment to accredited programmes was demonstrated by the management team in its area strategy for service delivery.
- Clear integration of What Works was shown in the review of the Business Plan for 2001/2004.
- Senior management participation in all training promoted visible leadership and also reflected an approach that sought to include all staff groups in training events.
- An in-house magazine included updates on programmes and a specific newsletter for resettlement staff was used to promote referrals for licencees.

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.*

Strengths:

- Lancashire's operational structure integrated accredited programmes within case management.
- Managers with different functional responsibilities worked in close cooperation with the ACO who had programme responsibility.
- A Think First working party, drawn from across operational functions, identified problems in referral and compliance and made recommendations for structural changes to case management.
- The active involvement of resettlement managers in planning indicated the importance assigned to programmes for offenders on licence.

Areas for improvement:

- Case managers were generally not clear about their roles during the programme and were not integrated into the management of Think First. The area's own Think First working party report proposed the use of designated case managers which was likely to address this.

A1.3 Staff ownership of the accredited programme**1**

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

Strengths:

- Most staff groups demonstrated a strong degree of ownership and commitment to the programme.
- Managers were clearly aware of the lack of ownership among PSR writers and had identified that action needed to be taken.

- A comprehensive training package had included all grades of staff who showed generally good knowledge of theory and programme expectations.

Areas for improvement:

- Inconsistent use of the programme across the area reflected the differing levels of ownership. Information on individual staff allocation had been provided to managers but it was not clear what action had been taken.
- Although Lancashire policy documents indicated an automatic allocation culture, in practice PSR writers showed an emphatic preference for greater discretion and use of “professional judgement” in favour of recognised assessment tools.

A1.4 Effective communication with sentencers

2

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

Strengths:

- The advanced material provided well-documented liaison with sentencers and inclusion of other stakeholders in promoting the programme.
- Senior managers had given sentencers a strong message about the importance assigned to programmes in overall service delivery.
- Clear information leaflets were made available to sentencers, with a procedure for attachment to all reports.

SECTION B: PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

B1.1 Resources and facilities

0

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

Significant investment had been made in providing video monitoring equipment and other resources, but the area's current level of resources and facilities did not meet this criterion. It was acknowledged that this issue is subject to regional decision-making and budget allocation, and that the area had already made a business case to the National Probation Directorate for extension and replacement of properties, to meet the requirements for delivering accredited programmes.

Strengths:

- The sites visited had good levels of equipment for running the programme.
- Two centres were generally well resourced.

Areas for improvement:

- An internal audit of facilities highlighted variations in accommodation standards at different sites.
- Proximity to programmes for offenders varied across this wide geographical area.
- In the 2 centres visited room sizes differed between some good large rooms and smaller less accessible accommodation.
- One centre, not visited, was deemed unsatisfactory in terms of size and condition based on video monitoring and staff feedback.
- Break out rooms were not generally available and as facilities were shared between different programmes, use of other rooms had to be scheduled to manage different offender groups.
- The servicing arrangements for video monitoring equipment were an issue reported by staff as requiring further attention. In the Preston centre the siting of the camera had caused difficulties for staff.

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:

- A range of well-produced leaflets and information guides were available for offenders, sentencers, PSR writers and case managers.
- The offender leaflets used understandable language, which clearly spelled out expectations and recourse for complaints.
- A specific leaflet was provided for licencees with a pre-release letter of explanation.

Areas for improvement:

- Offenders interviewed suggested an inconsistent distribution of leaflets before their court appearance, and a lack of accompanying verbal explanation or reiteration of requirements.
- There was an inaccurate description within the leaflet: "Think First is a sentence ...".

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:

- Attendance registers were comprehensively completed and data was being accumulated as to the reasons for attrition.
- In line with area policy, both delivery and case management staff conscientiously addressed enforcement.
- The Think First working party had set out a strategy for enhancing completion rates and referrals.

Areas for improvement:

- High attrition rates had implications for those remaining, as declining membership numbers reduced the effectiveness of group interaction. Although efforts were being made to address attrition at the pre-group stage, little proactive or supportive input from case managers was in place to support programme deliverers with offenders during the programme.
- Lateness was not dealt with consistently and where group numbers were low, there was a tendency to exercise a more flexible approach in order to maintain group viability.

B2.2 Avoidance of cancellation or disruption to sessions

0

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:

- Policy decision-making for programme/session cancellation remained an operational management responsibility.
- Programmes had not been cancelled due to staffing difficulties.

Areas for improvement:

- Case managers seemed unclear about the availability of the published schedule and reasons for postponement of start dates.
- The published calendar of programmes indicated that groups had been cancelled and low membership numbers had rendered programme delivery impracticable.
- There did not appear to be a back-up procedure for the management of offenders who arrived late or had issues outside of the group. Video monitoring illustrated one offender crisis that disrupted and ultimately cut short a session, and another session where non-programme staff interrupted delivery to advise of an offender's late arrival.

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 10 working days, to ensure full delivery of the programme. Treatment managers must specify arrangements for monitoring the integrity of catch-up sessions.*

Strengths:

- Catch-up sessions took place quickly.
- Contact logs were generally clear about the recording of absence, catch-up and enforcement issues.

Areas for improvement:

- Treatment managers had not monitored the content or delivery of catch-up sessions.
- The time allowed for catch-up sessions was insufficient – 2 sessions missed in one day resulted in just one hour’s catch-up and provided little opportunity for offenders to assimilate learning.
- Scheduling of a catch-up immediately before the next session caused some problems for the tutors. They reported the interference with programme preparation by moving straight from catch-up into delivery of the subsequent session.

B2.4 Timeliness**0**

Description: *All offenders commence the programme, or specified pre-programme phase, within the first month of the order or within 3 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 case file read indicated that although less than 50% of offenders had started within the required timescales, there was documented work where the reason for the delay was offender related.

Areas for improvement:

- Reasons for delay in commencement were generally organisational, such as insufficient numbers for daytime groups and oversubscribed evening provision.
- Low referrals and geographical implications affected programme scheduling, particularly regarding evening groups. At a senior management level, there was some consideration of tactics to improve offender access to the programme.
- Absence of requested documentation in advance material suggested that this issue was not closely monitored, although the Think First working party had considered this within its remit.

B3.1 Staff selection

0

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.*

There was an unusual local situation where staff previously delivering the STOP programme had not been required to pass an assessment centre before receiving training. This was properly addressed following the publication of Probation Circular 96/2000 and existing staff did attend for assessment retrospectively following their participation in booster training. It was clear that newly appointed staff were to be assessed and trained in the expected sequence.

Strengths:

- Training had been given high priority.
- Staff seemed to have been well briefed about the requirements for running Think First.

Areas for improvement:

- Retrospective timing resulted in tutors who had not passed the assessment procedure being involved in delivery before the outcome of the second assessment centre was known.

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.*

Strengths:

- Staff were clear about their roles and areas of responsibility.

Areas for improvement:

- Job descriptions for programme tutors were competency-based, but the competencies described did not follow the requirements of the national management manual or the Criminal Justice Occupational Standards for level 3.
- There was no job description for the post of programme manager.

B3.3 Preparation and debriefing time for tutors

0

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

Strengths:

- Programme integrity forms were adapted to include recording of time spent on preparation.

Areas for improvement:

- Programme tutors identified insufficient time for preparation of sessions and this was reflected in both programme integrity checklists and interviews with relevant staff.
- Scheduling of daytime and evening tutor coverage of sessions appeared to cause fatigue and reduction in attention to detail, evidenced in video monitoring and staff feedback.

B3.4 Staff continuity

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 2 of the 3 assigned staff. Continuity is maintained by at least one of the staff members having run the previous session.*

Strengths:

- The triad system had recently been adopted.
- No programmes had been cancelled due to staff shortages.

Areas for improvement:

- One centre reported difficulties in maintaining staff continuity and this was reflected in programme integrity checklists and offender interviews.
- Video monitoring showed 4 separate tutors delivering 2 consecutive sessions.
- Contingency arrangements for absence cover were unclear and the staffing arrangements in the 3 sites allowed little flexibility.

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:

- Lancashire had a strong commitment to training both locally and using regional resources. Training needs were clearly identified and prioritised by management, e.g. the provision of presentational skills training for tutors as a follow-up to regional training.
- A package of training and support for treatment and programme managers had demonstrated improved results in the delivery of supervision for tutors.
- Staff had a good level of awareness of their own training needs and required areas for development.

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

N/A

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

This criterion has not been assessed as in year 1 relatively inexperienced tutors were necessarily paired together.

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/treatment managers is still being planned nationally.

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

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 strong commitment to training had resulted in good levels of understanding demonstrated by all staff groups interviewed, including those not directly involved in delivery.

Areas for improvement:

- Tutors requested further inputs on programme concepts to assist them in making appropriate links between exercises and improve their confidence in delivery.

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

2

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

Strengths:

- Staff generally demonstrated a clear understanding of the programme's theoretical and evidential base.
- The Training and Staff Development Unit had worked closely with managers to identify additional training that had been delivered cross-grade and to support staff to promote knowledge.

B4.6 Supporting skills necessary to run programmes

1

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:

- Review of treatment managers' use of the video monitoring forms showed that the audit team's assessments were concordant with those of treatment managers.
- There had been a strong training input to treatment and programme managers in developing supervision skills and enhancing staff performance.
- Treatment managers were using video monitoring to identify areas for tutor development, and group supervision to provide a training input.

Areas for improvement:

- The reported frequency of individual supervision by treatment managers of tutors was not consistent and insufficient attention was given to evaluating skills and competencies.
- There was a general assumption that experience in running the STOP programme was a stronger measure of competency in delivering Think First than nationally developed procedures.
- Appraisal systems were used but did not directly address the requisite competencies for tutors outlined in the national management manual.

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:

- Video monitoring was being regularly carried out by treatment managers using appropriate procedures.
- Routine practice meetings were being held between treatment managers and programme tutors, which encouraged identification of common learning needs and areas for development.

Areas for improvement:

- A procedure for group learning was in place, but less attention was paid to individual learning needs and styles.
- There were inconsistencies in the reported frequency of feedback sessions to the tutors delivering the programmes. The geographical proximity of treatment managers to the tutors they were supervising varied and appeared to have an impact on the degree of direct contact.

B5.2 Staff appraisal

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:

- Lancashire had a clear appraisal process through which general learning needs were reviewed and information was passed to the training unit, through functional unit managers, to identify an annual training plan.
- Video monitoring forms were used to identify strengths and areas for improvement.

Areas for improvement:

- Supervision notes did not indicate what action was being taken to ensure improvements nor did they cross-reference to the competencies in the national management manual.

B6.1 Offender selection and assessment

0

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.*

Lancashire had been using ACE until April 2001. A decision was then made that, with the mandatory introduction of the IAPS documentation, it should be withdrawn to reduce the amount of paperwork for PSR writers. The case file read used the supporting evidence of the ACE assessment, where available, to adjust the score if the OGRS 2 score appeared to fall outside the recommended range.

Strengths:

- There was a clear policy instruction on the application of the evaluation and monitoring system in the absence of IAPS.
- Evaluation and monitoring forms were provided on all commencements indicating that case managers and PSR writers had followed through this instruction.
- The approved targeting matrix was in use.
- Following a performance inspection recommendation, a clear policy on risk assessment and management had been developed and implemented, and it was planned for staff to be trained in the use of OASys.

Areas for improvement:

- Lancashire reflected a referral rather than an automatic allocation culture as noted earlier.
- There was a predominance of higher than recommended OGRS 2 scores for offenders entering the programme. Offenders scoring higher than recommended OGRS 2 scores could be considered in Think First where there was sequencing with other programmes or intensive supervision arrangements to increase dosage. However, there was little evidence within the case field read that dosage had been consciously addressed in higher scoring cases.
- The case file exercise also revealed that there were variations of scoring within the same file. Although it was acknowledged that some attention had been paid to evaluation of the accuracy of OGRS 2 scoring, this disparity was evident in recent case files indicating an ongoing problem.

B6.2 Offender knowledge and understanding of the programme requirements

1

Description: *The requirements of the programme are clearly communicated on at least 2 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:

- Records of the pre-group session 4 meeting showed that requirements were clearly communicated by delivery staff.
- The Think First offender diary produced for each allocated case provided a useful tool for offenders and their case managers as to the timing of programme requirements.

- Some case managers showed the offenders a blank workbook to illustrate the content of the programme.

Areas for improvement:

- The case file results produced a low score on the communication of requirements to the offender, prior to commencement on the programme, as noted earlier. This may have been distorted by a failure to record and the sole copy of the “contract” form being kept within the programmes team’s records.

B6.3 Group size

0

Description: *For group programmes the maximum starting group size during the previous year did not exceed 12 and the minimum was not less than 4.*

Strengths:

- Low group numbers were recognised as a concern at all levels and attention was being paid to strategies to both improve referral rates and maintain group size.

Areas for improvement:

- Statistics showed that some groups had commenced with less than 4 members. Where they commenced with up to 7, the high attrition rate had the effect of quickly reducing group sizes.

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.*

Strengths:

- The intention and effort to address a recognised concern were particularly strong, although the benefits had yet to be realised. Sensitive and thorough consultation was being carried out with representatives of the local Asian community and the Race Equality Council to examine provision of programmes, specifically for the significant number of Asian males referred.
- Case managers and tutors were clear that minority ethnic and women offenders should not be placed in groups as singleton placements without their agreement.

Areas for improvement:

- There had been planning for the implementation of a mentoring scheme and in respect of Asian offenders efforts had clearly been made to recruit members of the community. Understanding of what support arrangements were required was varied and proposals for mentoring for both minority ethnic and women offenders were at an early stage of development.

- The composition of the tutor group did not reflect that of the local offender population. While consideration had been paid to using female tutors as support to female offenders, the implication of having one minority ethnic member of the tutor group across the area had rendered this as an impractical means to provide support for minority ethnic offenders in every group. The issue of appropriate staff recruitment was clearly acknowledged by senior management and ideas of, for example using sessional staff, were to be pursued.

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.

Strengths:

- Considerable progress had been made in developing a database to use as a precursor to IAPS and information was being made available to senior management for planning and monitoring.
- There was clear guidance for staff regarding how and in what form information should be collated.

Areas for improvement:

- The early stage in the implementation of the data system meant that this had not been fully used to evaluate and inform practice, although the ACO was working closely with the information section to ensure it could be used to its full potential.
- There was little in the way of feedback of data to staff for them to review their performance.

B7.2 Practice is informed by monitoring and evaluation evidence

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:

- Early data on attrition was being used by the management group to develop a strategy for improving the rate of retention at the pre-group stage of the programme, as this had been identified as the source of considerable drop-out.
- Data on the low number of referrals of minority ethnic offenders had been reviewed and consultations held on potential explanations and implications.

Areas for improvement:

- Whilst feedback on individuals' progress through programmes was given in a handover format, specific information from psychometric data was not passed to case managers. As programme tutors were not equipped to use the results of psychometric tests, the proposed appointment of a psychologist to the area should assist in the development and use of this information.
- There was little in the way of feedback of data to staff across the grades for them to review performance on Think First to date.

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.*

Strengths:

- The programme material was covered in the correct order.
- There was a satisfactory explanation of the exercises, linked to the aims and objectives of the session.

Areas for improvement:

- The use of personal anecdotes led to programme drift and provided examples of solutions without allowing the group to explore their own.
- Exercises and sessions were foreshortened. The published times for the sessions indicated a 2-hour period, which included a break, but the evidence from video monitoring was that one session lasted 1 hour 23 minutes. There was a tendency to pace and run exercises too quickly.

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.*

Strengths:

- Video monitoring showed fairly consistent use of open questions.
- Generally the groups were encouraged to make links between exercises and sessions and points were summarised and reflected back.

Areas for improvement:

- Some tutors showed a tendency to intervene before group members had sufficient time to develop their responses.
- The limiting effect of small group sizes could be seen to restrict the use of feedback by offenders, and inhibited tutors in using the offenders to either challenge or validate ideas.
- Challenging of pro-criminal attitudes was inconsistent.

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:

- Group work skills scored highest in the video observation results.
 - Exercises were generally introduced well and tutor delivery was clear and articulate.
-

- Groups were reasonably well managed and attention was paid to the quieter members, with good use of praise and positive statements.

Areas for improvement:

- Some disparity was evident in co-working arrangements. A number of issues had been picked up by the treatment manager, but these had not been fully addressed.

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:

- Staff groups indicated that this was an area to which much thought was being applied and efforts made to promote diversity.
- Attention was being paid to the cultural implications of certain aspects of exercises without compromising programme integrity.
- Two women only groups had been piloted and would be further reviewed. Where a female offender was included in a mixed group, the inclusion of at least one female tutor was used as a means of providing support.

C1.5 Programme integrity checklist

2

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

Strengths:

- There was clear evidence that programme tutors took time and effort to complete the integrity checklists.
- Assessments of offender engagement were made using supporting examples that were fed back to case managers.

Areas for improvement:

- Review of treatment managers' own monitoring showed that in some cases tutors exercised less objectivity in self-evaluation of performance. This disparity was not explicitly addressed through supervision and training.

C1.6 End of programme summary reports**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:

- There were few examples of post-programme reports, as the form was not used in the early programmes and in later files group work had not yet been completed. However, the samples of forms viewed were in a useful format. The collation of a post-programme folder at one centre provided additional useful material.
- Case managers reported that the forms were of great benefit in planning subsequent work.

Areas for improvement:

- Feedback from the psychometric testing had not been used to provide measured assessment of both changes and risk factor remaining. It was not clear whether staff who administered the tests were suitably qualified to provide interpretative data and it was accepted that the planned appointment of a psychologist to the area will be key to developing the use of the psychometric tests.

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.*

Areas for improvement:

- Where ACE assessments were contained within the body of case files, it was often apparent that they had not directly informed the supervision plan.
- SMART objectives were not widely used and objectives tended to be broad and generalised.

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

2

Description: *The case records show, and interviews with selected staff indicate, the existence of effective arrangements for liaison, handover and communication. This should include the 3-way meetings between the case manager, programme staff and the offender at the end of the programme.*

Strengths:

- Communication arrangements between case managers and tutors were reported as satisfactory.
- The Think First offender diary drawn up for every offender provided a useful aid for case managers regarding dates and required activities.
- Programme tutors provided immediate feedback to case managers which was then logged and recorded showing how the offender was progressing through the programme.
- There was consistent attendance by case managers at 3-way post-programme meetings.

Areas for improvement:

- Whilst attendance at group sessions 14 or 22 is not mandatory under national requirements the involvement of designated case managers as proposed by the working group would increase the level of case manager contact.

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

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:

- Case managers had a clear understanding of the required work to be undertaken with offenders prior to the programme, evidenced from case file results and interviews.
- Where there had been offender crises case managers' responses were immediate and supportive.

Areas for improvement:

- Although it was inferred from the contact log that the required pre-group work was being undertaken, it was not always clearly recorded with sessions 1-4 being labelled and accurately identified as having taken place in the prescribed format.

-
- In some cases contact with the offender was crisis-led and case managers had not routinely provided additional support. There was little pick-up on failing motivation or attitudinal difficulties, or use of feedback from the programme staff.
 - There was no structured work to reinforce learning whilst the offender was engaged in the programme. As with the degree of supportive contact it was likely that this would be improved by moving to the proposed designated case manager system.

D1.4 Understanding and knowledge of programme methods

2

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

Strengths:

- Interviews with case managers showed a high level of understanding of the aims, objectives and methodology of the programme.
- The area had provided both initial and refresher training for case managers that had been well attended.

Areas for improvement:

- Limited involvement of designated case managers during the programme separated their theoretical understanding with experience of what was happening in actual delivery and inhibited continuity in post-programme work.

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:

- The case file results scored most highly in the area of enforcement. Orders were enforced consistently and the recording of action taken indicated that this was both appropriate and within required timescales.
- Offenders interviewed were clear about what action would be taken if they failed to comply with requirements whilst subject to orders.

Areas for improvement:

- Some confusion was evident about the communication to offenders of arrangements for catch-up attendance.

D1.6 Documentation

1

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

Strengths:

- Although not available in all cases, the locally designed post-programme report was in use and informative.
- Copies of evaluation and monitoring forms were lodged with the programme team.

Areas for improvement:

- Additional copies of the evaluation and monitoring forms were not retained with the case file, although case managers should have used these to inform supervision planning.
- There were few examples in the case files of the feedback report that case managers should have received from the session 14 review.

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.*

Strengths:

- Supervision plan reviews generally took place within the prescribed time frame and drew upon programme attendance.

Areas for improvement:

- The quality of supervision plan reviews was the weakest aspect of the case file reading results. This was seen as partly structural with the style of the review form being unhelpful and also attributing to the lack of SMART objectives. With the implementation of OASys this issue will be addressed, but training in the use of SMART objectives will still be required.
- Community reintegration issues were not picked up consistently. Proposals to develop employment and basic skills work, and to train partnership agencies regarding the implications of Think First, had been discussed by managers but had not yet been fully addressed in individual cases by case managers.

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 evaluated in the absence of a national cognitive booster programme for relapse prevention.

Next Steps

HMIP will employ a 3-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 1-2 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 6 months of the audit report being received by the probation area.

Lancashire Probation Area has been assessed as a **level 2 area**, with an IQR of 59%. This will lead to a limited follow-up audit 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 were approved by the JAP at the beginning of October 2001.