



HM Inspectorate of Probation

AUDIT OF ACCREDITED PROGRAMMES

London Region of the
National Probation Service for
England and Wales

*Report on:
London Probation Area – Think First and
Reasoning & Rehabilitation*

September 2002

Acknowledgements:

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

The audit team comprised:

Kate White	John Shine
Rosanna Heal	<i>Principal Psychologist</i>
Breda Leyne	Andy Bonny
Peter Carter	<i>Deputy Audit Manager</i>
Mary Barnish	Alan MacDonald
Eileen O'Sullivan	John Hutchings
Jackie McAvoy	Liz Calderbank
<i>Inspection and Audit Officers</i>	<i>HM Assistant Chief Inspectors of Probation</i>
Jean Hartington	Frances Flaxington
Cleve Garraway	<i>HM Deputy Chief Inspector of Probation</i>
Ejnar Sørensen	Rod Morgan
Toby Baldwin	<i>HM Chief Inspector of Probation</i>
<i>Administrative staff</i>	
Phil Lockett	
John Browne	
Jane Webb	
<i>HM Inspectors of Probation</i>	

Glossary

ACE	Assessment, Case Recording and Evaluation System
CO	Chief officer
DTTO	Drug Treatment and Testing Order
HMIP	HM Inspectorate of Probation
IAPS	Interim Accredited Programmes Software
IQR	Implementation Quality Rating
LPA	London Probation Area
LSI-R	Level of Service Inventory-Revised
N/A	Criteria not assessed
NPD	National Probation Directorate
OASys	Offender Assessment System
OGRS 2	Offender Group Reconviction Scale 2
PO	Probation officer
PSO	Probation service officer
PSR	Pre-sentence report
R&R	Reasoning and Rehabilitation
TF	Think First
YAT	Young Adult Team
YOT	Youth Offending Team

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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 sheets at the end of this report show the marks awarded for each criterion in each programme – for those criteria designated as Mandatory (see Performance Standards Manual) the mark given is doubled. This denotes the critical impact these criteria have on the effective delivery of programmes.

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

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

Overview:

- The audit site visit took place in June 2002.
- This report relates to two accredited general offending behaviour group work programmes: R&R and Think First. Throughout the report, comments relate to both programmes unless otherwise indicated.
- The audit comprised four main elements: assessment of advance information; observation of randomly selected videotaped programme sessions; a case file reading exercise; and interviews with staff and offenders.
- London was running Think First from 15 delivery sites of which HMIP visited 13; R&R was run from two sites, both of which were visited. Checks on resources and facilities were carried out at all sites visited.
- HMIP monitored ten R&R videos and 54 Think First videos, all randomly selected from a wide cross-section of delivery sites.
- Interviews were held with senior managers, information staff, programme and treatment managers. A representative selection of programme tutors, case managers and PSR writers were also interviewed. Thirty-one offenders were interviewed across both programmes.
- One audit criterion was not assessed – D1.8. This decision was taken because plans were awaited nationally for the accreditation of the Cognitive Skills Booster Programme to reinforce offender learning.

Findings:

As the largest probation area in England and Wales, and the only one to bring together five pre-existing probation services, London had faced particular challenges in the implementation of its accredited programmes. It had decommissioned a number of legacy programmes which carried with them considerable staff commitment. There remained considerable threats to reliable area-wide communication posed by having a variety of different information and case recording systems. High staff turnover and vacancy levels remained a problem and a general restructuring at all levels was still proceeding. These factors had distracted attention away from performance issues and effective programme delivery in LPA.

As an IAPS pilot area, LPA had suffered from an understandable over-reliance on provision which had not, to date, become fully operational. This had impeded London's particular potential to use data from its volume offending behaviour programmes to build its own research and evaluation base.

It had been the area's intention that Think First would be for offenders in the 31-74% OGRS 2 band, and that R&R would be for those scoring 75-100%, thus separating the targeting bands. However, insufficient strategic planning about the inter-relationship of the two offending behaviour programmes had led to some misinterpretation about assessment and to overlapping targeting bands. The programmes covered between them a wide range of offenders categorised as at medium to high risk of reoffending. Despite this potentially large catchment, LPA had an opt-in referral culture rather than an opt-out allocation system.

There had been unfortunate gaps in the resourcing of R&R. It was inflexible, available only within the context of day centre provision and consequently accessible only to unemployed males. These factors meant that R&R had an extremely low profile among staff, despite encouraging signs that they were succeeding in aspects of work such as reinforcement of learning and community reintegration. With regard to accessibility more generally, diverse interpretation about the guidance concerning the singleton placement of women on Think First had led to unacceptably lengthy delays to programme starts in some cases.

Overall, there was a low level of sharing and cross-fertilisation across the two programmes, a missed opportunity to share good practice and strengthen wider staff ownership and knowledge.

An holistic approach to What Works had yet to be established in LPA, especially in relation to a high quality and integrated delivery of case management as part of the vital supporting environment for effective group work delivery. The lack of a single case management model seemed to work against this, causing confusion for both staff and offenders.

Tutors, treatment and programme managers were committed to accredited programmes and, particularly since the separation of the programme and treatment management functions, were working well together. To their credit, tutors had already achieved a satisfactory standard of programme delivery. If this standard continues to rise, when combined with a more effective general environment for programmes, LPA could make significant progress in its programme work.

In conclusion, HMIP was encouraged by the positive way in which senior managers received the audit findings. This was characterised by the holding of a staff conference for programme-related action planning immediately after the close of the audit.

Recommendations

- *The CO should ensure that the area:*

Section A

- clarifies the purpose of having two offending behaviour programmes and the relative priority and resourcing of each as part of its What Works Strategy (A1.1);
- makes arrangements to integrate programmes and case management structures to ensure a more consistent approach to Think First and R&R, and provides offenders with a seamless experience of supervision (A1.2);
- strengthens staff ownership of the programmes across all geographical and functional divisions so as to promote consistent and comprehensive allocation, including resettlement and DTTO cases on Think First and R&R (A1.3);

Section B

- implements a strategy to combat attrition, improves completion rates and the timeliness of Think First programme starts, avoiding lengthy delays for offenders (B2.1, B2.4);
- provides improved information for potential tutors and implements a deselection policy in respect of poorly performing programme delivery staff (B3.1);
- draws up competency-based job descriptions for all programme staff, in particular clarifying the respective responsibilities of programme and treatment managers so as to improve delivery (B3.2);
- clarifies the selection and assessment process in relation to programmes, re-establishing the priority to be given to OGRS 2 scores so as to maximise appropriate allocations (B6.1);
- implements a clear policy in relation to the placement of female and minority ethnic offenders so as to maximise accessibility to group work programmes (B6.4);
- implements a monitoring and evaluation strategy for programmes, to inform and improve practice (B7.1, B7.2);

Section C

- draws up a training and development plan to enhance the standard of programme delivery, targeting programme adherence, treatment style and group work skills, and drawing on the reciprocal sharing of skills between R&R and Think First staff (C1.1, C1.2, C.1.3);

Section D

- improves the quality of supervision plans and reviews integrating programme work with other interventions and encourages case managers to make active use of end of programme reports to plan and deliver subsequent supervision (D1.1, D1.7);
- implements a case management model which encourages attendance at review meetings, ensures a high standard of delivery of the pre-programme work, the effective reinforcement of learning during and after the programme and relapse prevention work in the post-programme phase (D1.2, D1.3, D1.4);
- provides input on the theory, evidence base and methods used to PSR writers and case managers with a view to improving their understanding of the programme (D1.4);
- devises an enforcement policy in relation to programmes, clarifying and standardising the respective roles of staff in the process, so that the timeliness and effectiveness of enforcement action in programme cases is improved (D1.5);
- implements a standard system for the retention of required programme-related documentation on case files (D1.6).

The NPD should ensure that:

- treatment manager training in respect of both programmes, and accreditation training for Think First tutors, is made available to promote effective delivery (B4.1, B4.3);
- an urgent review of IAPS is undertaken, so that a viable monitoring and evaluation system can be made available in order to promote the collection and dissemination of accurate programme data (B7.1);
- a revised end of programme report template is issued so as to prompt sections on risk and relapse scenarios. (C1.6).

SECTION A: COMMITTED LEADERSHIP

A1.1 Committed leadership

TF 1

R&R 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:

- Senior managers had drawn up a joint plan for Think First and R&R in July 2000 and there had been London-wide collaboration in programme implementation, with much preparatory work being undertaken, prior to amalgamation, under the auspices of the Greater London Effective Practice Lead Officers' Group.
- Senior managers had been prominent in fronting context setting events and had communicated with middle managers and practitioners through formal presentations, team meetings, and via e-mail in support of effective implementation.
- R&R had originally been clearly identified as a programme for a smaller number of high-risk offenders in the draft LPA What Works Strategy (November 2001) and consideration had been given to an appropriate number of sites from which it could be run, given the target profile of offenders.
- The implementation plan gave clear targets for both programme completions and for reducing attrition over the three-year period 2001/2004. More recent documents also evidenced planning of the staffing levels needed to deliver the required number of programme completions.

Areas for improvement:

- Not all senior managers had attended context setting events.
- There was little evidence of discussion regarding the priority to be given to R&R following the unsuccessful attempt to run the programme from a third site (Ilford).
- Despite having helpful documents in draft form, the area had not implemented a What Works strategy and the business plan did not give detailed objectives demonstrating the importance assigned to LPA's chosen accredited programmes.

A1.2 Management structures

TF 0

R&R 0

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.*

Areas for improvement:

- Programme delivery was perceived by staff to be a separate activity, divorced from operational case management structures.
- Line management arrangements had not facilitated the integration of programme work within service delivery in London.
- It was not clear that adequate senior management time had been dedicated to programme implementation, which was a significant brief in such a large area. Responsibility was lodged with a small minority of senior managers, thus working against the development of an holistic approach to What Works.

- LPA did not have an organisational chart in relation to programme work.
- Senior management had not adequately resourced treatment management, but instead had initially combined programme and treatment management functions.

A1.3 Staff ownership of the accredited programme

TF
0

R&R
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 managers, treatment managers and tutors were enthusiastic and committed to the effective delivery of accredited programmes in London, e.g. efforts had been made by staff from R&R sites to promote the programme through training events and a newsletter.

Areas for improvement:

- Not all case managers and PSR writers were fully committed to both programmes.
- There was evidence of very limited use of R&R across the whole area, the main referrers being YATs and YOTs.
- While there was some case manager attendance at three-way meetings, this was not established practice.
- R&R tutors expressed mixed views as to the programme’s applicability to offenders in the UK, regarding it as insufficiently sensitive to cultural issues.
- Whilst there were a number of licence cases in the file reading exercise (6% for Think First, 5% for R&R), resettlement cases were under-represented on programmes and there were no DTTO cases in either of the programme samples.
- The area was not monitoring allocation levels by site or officer level across London. Work to address possible under-allocation was generally taking place at borough level, and data were lodged with individual programme managers.

A1.4 Effective communication with sentencers

TF
1

R&R
1

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

Strengths:

- Managers and court staff had given a number of presentations to magistrates, informing them about the What Works agenda generally, and accredited programmes in particular.
- There was a Think First information leaflet and an R&R leaflet in relation to Sherborne House available for sentencers.
- Information had been imparted to judges at an annual training event.

Areas for improvement:

- No systematic recent work with justices’ clerks had been undertaken and any work with advocates had been on an ad hoc basis.
- There was a lack of a strategic overview in liaising with sentencers about programmes, with much of the responsibility for this being lodged at local middle manager and practitioner levels.

- The effectiveness of liaison with sentencers in respect of programme work had not been monitored.

SECTION B: PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

B1.1 Resources and facilities

TF 1

R&R 2

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

Strengths:

- Video cameras were fitted at all sites and there were secure storage facilities for videotapes at all Think First sites.
- In general, rooms at both Think First and R&R sites were of an adequate size and appropriately resourced with overhead projectors and flipcharts.

Areas for improvement:

- Not all Think First delivery sites had 'break out' rooms available for small group work.
- R&R videos were being kept on open shelves in rooms which were not always locked.
- Lighting and ventilation were problematic at Stockwell Road, and ventilation caused problems at Sherborne House in the winter when the heating was used.
- At St John's Street, external noise caused considerable disruption.
- Rooms in Marsham Street and Highgate were not large enough to accommodate 12 offenders and two tutors.

B1.2 Provision of information leaflets about the programme

TF 1

R&R 0

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

Strengths:

- A helpful Think First leaflet had been produced for offenders, with their rights and the complaints procedure outlined separately.
- Leaflets on R&R at Sherborne House had been prepared for youth offending and probation teams, clearly setting out the purpose of the programme and process for assessment and referral. The conditions of the programme were fully described in the leaflet on the Camberwell Probation Centre.
- The R&R offender leaflet gave information about the programme in straightforward language.
- In addition to information about the programme itself, sentencer leaflets outlined the evidence base for R&R and the offender population for which it was designed.
- A 'Think First Starter Kit' had been produced for staff, including a useful programme outline and a set of frequently asked questions.

Areas for improvement:

- The Think First information leaflet was not always distributed to offenders prior to sentence.
 - The Think First leaflet for sentencers lacked reference to the theoretical base of the programme.
 - Some of the Think First literature, e.g. the Think First calendar and 'Little Book of Problem-Solving', were not uniformly available across all parts of the area.
-

- Although the R&R offender leaflets referred to an aim to treat all offenders fairly, equally, and with respect, there was insufficient emphasis on how the programme would be delivered to meet the requirements of cultural diversity.
- The Sherborne House R&R offender leaflet referred to rules of attendance but did not detail what these were.
- R&R information leaflets specific to the Camberwell Probation Centre were only just being printed.

B2.1 Managing attendance

TF
0

R&R
1

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

Strengths:

- Offenders were permitted only the statutory number of absences from programme sessions for Think First.
- Attendance registers were being maintained at all centres, as was information about attendance and completion rates for each offender.
- Letters to R&R offenders regarding their absence and the acceptability or otherwise of the absence were copied to case managers. This requirement was clearly outlined in the administrative practice manual.
- Efforts had been made to provide incentives for attendance by younger offenders on R&R at Sherborne House by providing toast in the morning and installing gym equipment.
- R&R offenders expressed positively their experience of staff encouraging their attendance and engagement with the programme.
- End of day meetings at both R&R centres enabled discussion to take place swiftly on the management of difficult offenders, or on decisions to breach.

Areas for improvement:

- Discussion with staff indicated that offenders attending both R&R programme centres were being given some extra leeway in relation to the number of catch-ups undertaken. This was borne out by several of the offenders interviewed who were not sure of the maximum number permitted.
- There was little programme-focus in LPA's enforcement policy documents.
- The number of programme completions had been disappointingly low in year one. There was no coordinated strategy to combat attrition and enhance completion rates over time.

B2.2 Avoidance of cancellation or disruption to sessions

TF
2

R&R
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:

- The frequency of sessions conformed to the requirements of the management manuals.

- Offender crises were, in general, dealt with outside of the sessions by referral to case managers or partnership provision.
- Where Think First tutors had a dual role with case management responsibilities, they did not usually manage offenders in their own programme group. This avoided confusion of role in relation to offender needs.
- There had been some disruption of sessions because of offender behaviour, particularly at Sherborne House. The centre's ability to deal with these effectively had improved, with a tightening of rules regarding unacceptable behaviour. A system of key worker roles had been put in place, whereby each tutor had responsibility for ensuring that any relevant issues were dealt with outside sessions by the case manager if appropriate.
- The introduction of a longer period of induction for offenders attending Sherborne House had been put in place in order to minimise disruption to the programme.
- At times of staff shortages there had been sharing of tutors between centres in order to ensure that programmes could continue to run.
- Tutors were extremely committed to delivering sessions as the published schedule dictated and had achieved a good record in this regard. Sessions were cancelled only in exceptional circumstances.

TF
1

R&R
0

B2.3 Catch-up sessions/Attendance

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:

- Think First catch-up sessions were being reliably offered and delivered to offenders prior to the next main programme session in order to preserve correct sequencing.
- R&R catch-ups were scheduled to take place once a week at Sherborne House and before the following session at Camberwell Green.
- At a number of Think First delivery sites the third tutor allocated to a programme was identified as having responsibility for catch-ups. This had proved a reliable system, enabling this tutor to retain some contact with offenders and at the same time relieving principal tutors of this additional workload.
- Identified R&R staff were scheduled to deliver catch-up sessions on both sites and a catch-up register was completed by R&R tutors.

Areas for improvement:

- Catch-up sessions were not all being video monitored or checked for programme integrity.
- The arrangements for catch-ups at Sherborne House meant that sessions were generally taking place out of sequence.
- The time allowed for catch-up at Camberwell Green (45 minutes at most) was not always sufficient to cover all the session material.

- It was not clear from case records whether or not an offender had attended catch-up sessions as instructed.

B2.4 Timeliness

TF
0

R&R
0

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

Strengths:

- R&R was scheduled to run every six weeks at each site. This limited potential delay to programme start. Twenty-one of 40 cases sampled (53%) either began the programme within one month or had a well-documented reason for a planned delay to programme start.

Areas for improvement:

- Some offenders on Think First faced significant delays to programme commencement. Of the 158 cases sampled, 46 (29%) had been offered a programme start within one month of sentence or release. In only 12 further cases (8%) was there a clearly recorded reason for a delayed programme start.
- It was of concern that some offenders, most particularly women, faced delays of several months before being allocated to a Think First programme.
- The area was not monitoring the timeliness of programme commencement.

B3.1 Staff selection

TF
0

R&R
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:

- The area was using only selected and trained tutors to deliver their general offending behaviour group work programmes.

Areas for improvement:

- Potential tutors had received insufficient written information in advance about the specific programmes.
- Several R&R tutors said that they had been inadequately briefed as to what was involved in undertaking tutor assessment and training.
- The area lacked a deselection process in respect of poorly performing tutors.
- Some Think First tutors recruited at PSO grade from outside the probation service had not been informed that their new job depended on successful completion of the assessment centre and tutor training process.

B3.2 Staff roles and competencies

TF 1

R&R 2

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

The dual role of case manager/programme tutor, which had operated in parts of LPA, was being phased out at the time of the audit.

Strengths:

- Job descriptions existed for all main programme roles.
- Both programme and treatment managers gave good accounts of the ways in which they ensured that staff under their supervision were clear about their own roles and functions. The R&R treatment manager was preparing a staff handbook for both centres which helpfully described the responsibilities of key members of staff in programme delivery.

Areas for improvement:

- The case management aspect of the combined Think First tutor/case manager role in some parts of London had not been clearly defined.
- There was confusion about the respective responsibilities of Think First programme and treatment managers now that the roles had been separated out.
- Not all job descriptions were competency based.

B3.3 Preparation and debriefing time for tutors

TF 2

R&R 2

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

Strengths:

- Managers demonstrated a commitment to ensuring that appropriate time was made available to tutors for preparation of sessions and debriefing afterwards, and tutors felt this aspect of their work was adequately resourced.
- There was evidence of careful preparation by some tutors, including the adaptation of materials and production of 'lesson plans' in parts of the area.
- Tutors were completing evaluation forms in respect of each offender attending the programmes.

Areas for improvement:

- Tutors said that their responsibilities outside R&R delivery sometimes ate into the time they had for debriefing; for example, delivery of the black self-development group at Camberwell Green or supervision of offenders at Sherborne House.
-

B3.4 Staff continuity

TF 2

R&R 1

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 routinely allocated to each programme.
- Session reports showed that, wherever possible, each session was delivered by two of the three allocated tutors.
- Offenders reported a high level of satisfaction with the continuity of tutors on their Think First programmes.

Areas for improvement:

- Interviews with offenders suggested that back-up arrangements had not always been sufficient to avoid additional tutors being drafted in at some stage in the R&R programme. The programme manager confirmed that it had not been possible to replace tutors who left because of delays in the scheduling of training for new tutors.

B4.1 Training arrangements for new staff

TF 1

R&R 1

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:

- Tutors had been trained according to the requirements of the programme training manuals.
- LPA had organised its own delivery of a one-day training course for PSR writers, covering both Think First and R&R.
- A number of case managers had undergone the three-day national Think First/R&R training.

Areas for improvement:

- Treatment manager training was not yet available to LPA staff.
- The records of training dates and outcomes for tutors were incomplete.

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

TF 2

R&R 2

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

Strengths:

- There was a clear area policy of pairing new tutors with experienced staff and this had been implemented despite problems with staff vacancies in some teams.
- At a number of Think First sites there was a structured system of tutor mentoring, whereby a newly appointed tutor would be linked with an experienced colleague for the first one to two months.

B4.3 Training arrangements for experienced staffTF
0R&R
2

Description: *Competency-based booster and developmental training arrangements exist for all staff experienced in delivering the programme. All programme delivery staff are required to attend such training when they have demonstrated their competence to do so. [This will include delivering a stipulated minimum number of courses.]*

Strengths:

- Four experienced R&R tutors were due to undertake booster training during the audit week.

Areas for improvement:

- Not all R&R tutors had been aware initially of the requirement for additional training for accreditation as tutors.
- Many Think First tutors and treatment managers had little or no knowledge about the arrangements for accreditation training. There was particular confusion amongst PO tutors, some of whom felt they were discouraged from pursuing their accreditation because of a plan to reduce the number of PO tutors overall.
- There were no centrally collated comprehensive records of which Think First tutors might be eligible for accreditation training, thus making it difficult for the area to plan training.
- This training had not yet been made available to Think First staff.

B4.4 Staff knowledge of the concepts and methods used in the programmeTF
1R&R
0

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

Strengths:

- The level of knowledge about programme concepts and methods was good amongst programme and treatment managers, tutors and case managers.
- The area had produced several examples of helpful literature outlining programme details, including some innovative Think First summaries.

Areas for improvement:

- There was a worryingly low level of knowledge amongst staff generally about all aspects of the R&R programme.
- PSR writers were not sufficiently familiar with the methods and concepts used in either programme and this adversely affected their ability to inform offenders about accredited programmes.

B4.5 Staff knowledge of the theoretical and evidential basis of the programmeTF
0R&R
0

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

Strengths:

- Both programme and treatment managers had some knowledge of the theoretical and evidential basis of the programmes for which they were responsible.

Areas for improvement:

- Tutors had difficulty in bringing to mind the evidence base of the programmes and were unaware of any UK research evidence as to their effectiveness.
- Case managers and PSR writers in particular lacked knowledge of the theory and evidence base and this led to a lack of confidence amongst some staff.
- A number of PSR writers felt they did not have the time to acquire this knowledge and that it was not important to their role in working with offenders in the pre-sentence stages.

B4.6 Supporting skills necessary to run programmes

TF
2

R&R
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:

- The area had been delivering a three-day basic group work skills course to Think First tutors.
- Staff were able to pass on their own training requests through the supervision and appraisal process. These were reviewed in the light of LPA's training priorities, as drawn up by the London Training Consortium.
- Tutors at Sherborne House had received training on learning styles and dealing with dyslexia.

Areas for improvement:

- Some PSOs recruited as Think First tutors from outside the probation service felt they had not received a comprehensive induction to general probation work and were not as familiar as they might have been with the core work of the area.
- The R&R programme manager had found that finding time for additional training of tutors was difficult because of the demands of the programme schedule and the limited pool of R&R tutors.
- Several R&R tutors said that training in, for example, presentation skills, which they might have had early in their probation careers, needed refreshing. Others felt that they would have benefited from training in the management of groups.

B5.1 Staff supervision and quality of practice

TF
2

R&R
2

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

Strengths:

- Following recent changes to treatment management arrangements, programme delivery staff were being supervised at the required frequency.
- Practice supervision had an appropriate focus on video monitoring and tutor performance was assessed and scored by treatment managers, who commented helpfully on areas for development.

- R&R tutors' meetings at the end of each programme day were usually attended either by the treatment or programme manager. This enabled them to have operational oversight on how the sessions were being managed.
- In some parts of LPA templates for supervision agenda and notes had been devised which offered useful prompts to the supervision process.

Areas for improvement:

- Although supervision notes were kept in most cases, this did not happen reliably across the area.
- Given there was only one R&R treatment manager in the area, it was not clear what the contingency arrangements would be in the event of his absence.

B5.2 Staff appraisal

TF
2

R&R
2

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

Strengths:

- Staff were familiar with the appraisal system and received quarterly reviews in most cases.
- Knowledge about tutor practice held by treatment managers was being fed into line managers' appraisal of tutors, often in a written form.
- Appraisal documents did not yet have a uniform structure across the area, but some of them were linked to staff competencies and prompted specific programme related objectives.

B6.1 Offender selection and assessment

TF
0

R&R
1

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

It should be noted that LPA's targeting instructions to staff outlined the following OGRS 2 bands: Think First: 31-74%; R&R: 75-100%. However, national guidance indicated an overlapping targeting band whereby offenders with OGRS 2 scores of 31-100% were considered suitable for R&R. HMIP's monitoring assumed the *national* targeting guidance.

Strengths:

- The programmes' targeting matrix was being used.
- Targeting for R&R was good, with 38 of 40 cases (95%) in the case file read coming within the correct banding for the programme.
- Strong arrangements were in place to identify offenders with dyslexia, so that arrangements could be made for their support through the programmes.
- Guidance to staff at the R&R programme centres outlined the suitability features they needed to cover in discussion with PSR authors or case managers.
- A number of important localised studies had been carried out into targeting, both before and after amalgamation.

Areas for improvement:

- Some staff gave a low priority to the calculation of OGRS 2 scores and their inclusion in the assessment process, seeing them as a late addition or optional extra.
- In the file read sample, 55 of 158 Think First cases (35%) were outside the target OGRS 2 band.
- The assessment of R&R programme readiness by case managers was often poor. A number of offenders coming onto the programme had unstable accommodation, substance misuse or language problems, which had not been properly resolved prior to commencement.
- There was no reliable system in place across London for the monitoring of the suitability of offenders coming onto programmes, or for identifying possible missed allocations of suitable offenders.
- A system of PSR tracking was not being used consistently and did not support the process of making appropriate allocations to programmes.
- Liaison between PSR writers and programme staff about suitability issues relied on the proactive good practice of individual staff and did not happen reliably.

B6.2 Offender knowledge and understanding of the programme requirements

TF 2

R&R 1

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

Strengths:

- Offenders interviewed showed a good understanding of the structure of the programmes and of the attendance requirements. All six R&R offenders interviewed could remember being told about programme requirements and methods by staff at the centres prior to commencement.
- Although records did not always reflect this, the induction of offenders onto the programme at both R&R centres was comprehensive and included a full explanation of all it entailed.
- Of the Think First cases sampled, 97 of 158 (61%) showed that programme information had been communicated to offenders both verbally and in writing.
- The statement of understanding, signed by offenders, was given considerable priority by staff.

Areas for improvement:

- In only 15 of the 40 R&R cases (38%) was there a record of offenders having been given information both verbally and in writing on the requirements of the programme.
- Offender interviews suggested that they were not always fully briefed by PSR authors or case managers.

B6.3 Group size

TF 2

R&R 2

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

Strengths:

- Groups were not being permitted to commence with fewer than four offenders.

- Programmes were not inappropriately oversubscribed and did not start with more than 12 participants.

B6.4 Accessibility of group work programmes

TF 0

R&R 0

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:

- Where mixed Think First programmes did run, attention was paid to staffing these appropriately to reflect the diversity of group members.
- Black self-development and white masculinity groups were run alongside the R&R programme. This was seen as a way of ensuring that experiences of racism and issues of empowerment were explored in that setting.
- R&R tutors said that offenders for whom English was not their first language received additional support during sessions.

Areas for improvement:

- The file read showed that consideration had not always been given to the needs of minority ethnic offenders.
- Offenders from a number of different ethnic minorities were included in the majority of groups but limited consideration had been given to their respective support needs.
- No examples were given of ways in which the work of the black self-development and white masculinity groups enriched the delivery of the R&R programme itself.
- R&R was not being made available to women or to any offenders in employment.
- Women who gave their informed consent to being singleton placements on Think First were not always enabled to join a mixed group. As the only female they sometimes were made to wait several months for another woman to be allocated to the programme.
- There was a disappointingly low level of partnership resource used for the mentoring and support of female and minority ethnic offenders.

B7.1 Implementation of monitoring and evaluation design

TF 0

R&R 0

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:

- Programme staff were conscientiously collecting the required information, with administrative staff playing a vital part in this in parts of the area.

Areas for improvement:

- LPA did not have a monitoring and evaluation strategy in relation to programmes. Although the R&R centres had guidelines for the completion of monitoring information, and some Think First programme managers had developed their own tracking spreadsheets, there was not a systematic approach on a pan-London basis.

- Monitoring and evaluation data were not reliably being fed back to managers and staff.
- As an IAPS pilot area, London's efforts had been hampered by the lack of a fully operational IAPS system.

B7.2 Practice is informed by monitoring and evaluation evidence

TF
0

R&R
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.*

Results suggested that the smaller-scale nature of R&R in London had enabled practice to be more influenced by emerging evaluation data than was the case for the much larger Think First operation.

Strengths:

- There were some localised and small-scale examples of practice having been informed by one-off monitoring exercises or research studies. For example:
 - the programme manager had undertaken some research into the average age and OGRS 2 profile of offenders completing R&R at Sherborne House in the first year
 - R&R key worker systems had been set up to ensure that enforcement issues were dealt with promptly and that liaison with case managers could take place efficiently
 - enforcement of the rules on lateness and unacceptable behaviour had been tightened in order to achieve better compliance by R&R group participants. The programme manager said that while attrition rates remained high, the experience of those remaining on the programme had improved as a result
 - suggested pre-programme sessions for case managers had been produced in order to increase their understanding of their role in relation to R&R. This information pack was sent to all case managers as sentence notification information came through.

Areas for improvement:

- The only consistently produced report was the quarterly summary of programme returns required by the NPD and adapted for use within LPA.
- The area had made no attempt to collate and use offender feedback or evaluation data to enhance programme delivery pan-London.
- No comparative work had been carried out in relation to the two general offending behaviour programmes running in London.
- There was insufficient all-area work steered from the centre and an over-reliance on piecemeal projects in local teams.

SECTION C: QUALITY OF PROGRAMME DELIVERY

C1.1 Adherence to programme manual

TF 1

R&R 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.*

Average scores from the monitoring of videoed sessions were marginally lower for R&R than for Think First in respect of this criterion.

Strengths:

- Session material was consistently sequenced correctly, with exercises being run in the prescribed order.
- Inappropriate extras were not added.

Areas for improvement:

- There were some problems with timing, with exercises overrunning and subsequent work being rushed as a result.
- Think First tutors were not paying close attention to the checking of offender learning.

C1.2 Adherence to treatment style

TF 1

R&R 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.*

Average scores from the monitoring of videoed sessions were marginally lower for Think First than for R&R in respect of this criterion.

Strengths:

- In relation to Think First, there was effective use of open questions and tutors allowed for offenders to answer, listening attentively to their responses.
- There was an encouraging awareness amongst Think First tutors about responsivity issues.
- In relation to R&R, offenders were actively encouraged to make links between exercises and sessions.
- R&R tutors showed particular skill in summarising key points and reflecting learning back.

Areas for improvement:

- Tutors did not enable group members to elicit self-motivating statements.
 - Think First tutors were not consistently giving attention to summarising and reflecting back learning to group members.
 - In R&R, the groups of offenders were not always encouraged to explain and validate ideas for themselves.
-

C1.3 Group work skills

TF 1

R&R 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.*

Average scores from the monitoring of videoed sessions were marginally lower for Think First than for R&R in respect of this criterion.

Strengths:

- Tutors were generally clearly spoken and used appropriate language.
- They succeeded in involving all group members in the session.
- Think First tutors praised offenders appropriately for their contributions to the work of the group.

Areas for improvement:

- Exercises were not introduced clearly or ended well.
- Tutors did not conduct handovers effectively, which detracted from good co-working.
- There were some group management challenges for Think First tutors, especially in dealing appropriately with disruptive offenders.
- R&R tutors needed to make more generous use of praise as a means of rewarding offenders and encouraging their participation.

C1.4 Programme delivered addressing race equality and diversity issues

TF 1

R&R 1

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

Strengths:

- Evidence from Think First staff meetings in September 2001 showed that tutors were asked to be alert to any diversity issues arising in the delivery of Think First sessions.
- In November 2001 a one day training course entitled 'Dyslexia, Offenders, and Think First' was delivered to tutors. Offenders with literacy problems had been actively and appropriately assisted by tutors to enable their full participation.
- The R&R induction period was used to stimulate discussion in respect of diversity.
- Tutors had experienced constructive co-working in addressing difficult diversity issues, and gave examples of good modelling and mutual support when tutors were paired with colleagues of a different gender, race or ethnic group.
- Programme tutors had creatively but appropriately customised material to reflect the racial and cultural make-up of groups.
- Staff gave a number of examples of situations where diversity issues had arisen in programme sessions and were able to relate how they had dealt with them constructively. R&R end of programme reports showed that racist attitudes were being tackled and challenged.

Areas for improvement:

- Tutors felt that LPA policy statements relating to diversity were not always helpful in programme delivery as they had not taken account of the group work setting.
- There was no clearly understood policy relating to the singleton placement of female offenders on Think First.
- Some tutors felt they lacked confidence in challenging sexist, racist, or homophobic comments by offenders and would benefit from training in this aspect of their work.

TF
2

R&R
2

C1.5 Programme integrity checklist

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

Strengths:

- Programme integrity checklists were being completed at the majority of sites visited.
- At some sites records of offender attendance and engagement formed the basis of tutor feedback to case managers. The R&R centres had devised forms which allowed tutors to comment on an offenders' progress in relation to the aims of each session. These were copied to the case manager and gave a clear account of the extent to which offenders were participating in and understanding the sessions.
- The completion of programme integrity checklists was seen by tutors as an important part of the debriefing task.

TF
0

R&R
1

C1.6 End of programme summary reports

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:

- Tutors were preparing end of programme summary reports on most offenders completing the programme.
- R&R end of programme reports addressed offender participation and progress in relation to each of the thinking deficits targeted by R&R. Assessments were supported by evidence from the programme sessions, and some course related objectives were helpfully specific.

Areas for improvement:

- End of programme reports were not consistently sent to case managers in advance of three-way meetings, and sometimes the meetings were held without a report having been produced.
- Case managers conceded that, although they found the three-way meetings informative, they did not make active use of the reports for future supervision planning.
- End of programme reports were structured around a template which did not routinely prompt sections on risk assessment or likely scenarios for relapse.

- Tutors received no feedback on how their reports were used by case managers.

SECTION D: CASE MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

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

TF 0

R&R 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:

- The file read revealed that there was insufficient integration of programme work into overall supervision. In 121 of the 158 Think First cases (77%) there was either no evidence of integration or it was deemed to have been done less than satisfactorily. For R&R this applied to 35 of 40 cases (88%).
- In 133 of the 158 Think First cases (84%) programme related objectives were felt not to be sufficiently SMART. This applied to 37 of 40 R&R cases (93%).
- There was little evidence of OGRS 2 assessments explicitly influencing the planning of supervision.
- There were few examples of other elements of supervision being sequenced with programme work.

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

TF 1

R&R 1

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

Strengths:

- Some tutors and case managers had developed efficient ways of liaising about offender progress, including the communication of session feedback by e-mail, telephone, etc.
- In seven of 12 applicable R&R cases (58%), a three-way meeting had taken place between the tutor, case manager and offender.
- In parts of London case managers were invited to attend the Think First review at session 14, and three-way meetings were being held in the pre-programme phase for a small number of cases.

Areas for improvement:

- The file read demonstrated that in 27 of 73 applicable Think First cases (37%) case managers failed to attend three-way meetings with programme staff and offenders.
- There was a need to enhance the timeliness of communication in some boroughs in respect of attendance and compliance issues so that appropriate and prompt enforcement action could be taken.

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

TF 0

R&R 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.*

Strengths:

- Think First case managers were doing some reactive work in dealing with offender motivation problems, often having been alerted by tutors to potential difficulties with attendance or engagement.
- The R&R programme team at Sherborne House had produced some excellent notes for case managers on motivational work to be carried out with offenders prior to the start of the programme. These, together with guidance on the case manager role, were sent out to case managers once an offender was allocated to the programme.
- The key worker roles undertaken by R&R programme staff allowed for some work in relation to offender difficulties to be undertaken by tutors outside the sessions.
- Discussions at Camberwell Probation Centre with the PO delivering the employment module, and with the photography workshop supervisor, showed that a good deal of effort was being put into practising and reinforcing the lessons of R&R in those settings. A number of the offenders interviewed made links between what they were learning on the programme, and the work they were undertaking outside sessions, suggesting the success of this approach.

Areas for improvement:

- Pre-programme work was not being delivered consistently or recorded clearly. In only 54 of 158 cases (34%) could it be seen that all the prescribed pre-programme sessions for Think First had been delivered.
- Case records did not consistently show that R&R case managers were dealing effectively with obstacles to offender attendance on the programme. In 11 of 34 R&R cases (32%) there was no evidence of any support offered by the case manager to offenders undertaking the programme.
- The case file read showed very little recorded evidence of work being done by Think First case managers in reinforcing offender learning. Of 126 applicable cases, 19 (15%) showed evidence of this work. In only one of these cases was this assessed as sufficient.

D1.4 Understanding and knowledge of programme methods

TF 0

R&R 0

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.*

LPA did not have a consistent model for the delivery of the case management component in relation to Think First. In some boroughs this work was done by practitioners who held caseloads but no programme delivery responsibilities. In others Think First tutors would case manage those going through the programme.

Strengths:

- Case managers who were also Think First tutors had a good understanding of the aims and objectives of the programme.

Areas for improvement:

- Not all case managers had attended the national joint training for R&R and Think First and some lacked confidence about their ability to work with offenders undertaking programmes. There was a view that the R&R element was ‘bolted-on’ in the three-day training course.
- The level of knowledge amongst case managers about R&R was very low, some explaining that they did not see its relevance to the offenders they were supervising.
- Case managers who were not also Think First tutors had considerably less knowledge about the programme than their tutor/case manager colleagues and were unable to undertake effectively reinforcement and relapse prevention work.

D1.5 Monitoring of attendance and enforcement

TF
0

R&R
0

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.*

Areas for improvement:

- Whilst the area had an enforcement policy this had not been adapted to apply to programme attendance.
- There was inconsistency across the area in relation to enforcement practice and systems, resulting in a lack of clarity for both staff and offenders.
- Warning and breach letters in parts of LPA seemed ‘unfit for the purpose’ in relation to offenders on accredited programmes.
- Case managers and tutors in some parts of the area were unclear as to their respective roles in the enforcement process and such uncertainty had led to delays in the sending of warning letters and a failure to comply with national standards requirements.

D1.6 Documentation

TF
0

R&R
0

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

Areas for improvement:

- The file read showed that in 30 of 40 cases (75%) key documents were missing from R&R files sampled.
- In 77 of 158 (49%) Think First cases key documents were not present.
- The documents most commonly absent from case files were end of programme reports and supervision plan reviews.

D1.7 End of programme review

TF
0

R&R
0

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

Strengths:

- In seven of 11 applicable R&R cases (64%), at least some attention was given to issues of community reintegration following the end of the programme.

Areas for improvement:

- The file read showed that the end of programme report fully influenced the supervision plan review in none of 12 applicable cases (0%) for R&R, and 11 of 71 cases (15%) for Think First.
- In one of 12 (8%) applicable R&R cases SMART objectives, linked to post-programme work, were set in the supervision plan review; this applied to three of 71 (4%) applicable Think First cases.
- Of the 75 applicable Think First cases sampled, 15 (20%) showed evidence of full attention having been paid to community reintegration issues following the end of the programme; there were four such R&R cases (36%) out of an applicable sample of 11.

D1.8 Reinforcement and relapse prevention work

TF
N/A

R&R
N/A

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

- This criterion was assessed as not applicable due to the non-availability of the Cognitive Skills Booster Programme at this stage.

Next Steps

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

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

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

IQR score

London Probation Area achieved IQRs of **37%** for **Think First** and **43%** for **R&R**. A full follow-up audit will be carried out in six month's time. The area should pay particular attention to mandatory items, which have not been fully met.

This audit report and the IQRs will be received by the Joint Accreditation Panel in September 2002.