



HM Inspectorate of Probation

AUDIT OF ACCREDITED PROGRAMMES

London Region of the
National Probation Service for
England and Wales

*Level 3 Follow-up Report on:
London Probation Area –
Think First and
Reasoning & Rehabilitation*

July 2003

Acknowledgements:

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

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Glossary

CAT	Community Assessment Team
CIT	Community Interventions Team
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
N/A	Criteria not assessed
NPD	National Probation Directorate
OGRS	Offender Group Reconviction Scale
PDA	Practice development assessor
PO	Probation officer
PSR	Pre-sentence report
R&R	Reasoning and Rehabilitation
SPO	Senior probation officer
TPO	Trainee probation officer

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Scoring Approach:

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

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

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

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

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

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

For this follow-up audit, those criteria that were fully met on the original audit have not been re-assessed. The marks awarded then have therefore been carried over. The only exception to this relates to those criteria that are informed by video monitoring scores (see C1.1-C1.3). Revised scores have been awarded for these criteria based on up-to-date video monitoring scores.

Overview:

- The original audit of Think First and R&R in London took place in June 2002.
- The follow-up audit comprised the following elements: video monitoring of 42 Think First and 15 R&R sessions; a case file read in which 103 Think First and 37 R&R files were assessed; interviews with senior managers, programme and treatment managers, tutors, case managers and PSR writers.
- Progress in relation to NPD recommendations in the original report has been discussed with the Directorate's Head of Offending Behaviour Programmes.
- Only those criteria not fully met at the original audit have been reassessed and new marks awarded. The bullet points under these criteria refer to the progress made since the original audit.
- Comments in the body of this report apply to both accredited programmes, unless otherwise specified.

Findings:

Following the original HMIP programme audit in 2002 a detailed action plan had been drawn up by the Head of Service Delivery (programmes) addressing the recommendations and areas for improvement outlined. However, tangible progress overall was extremely limited, with ten of the 15 audit recommendations not met, and five partly met. Particularly problematic was the continued lack of an implemented What Works strategy. A suggested framework for the strategy had gone out to staff for consultation only in April 2003, with anticipated implementation in 2004. This made progress on a holistic approach to programmes slow. Without an overarching structure, the area continued to struggle to bed in the component parts of an integrated What Works system. However, there were some positive points. Treatment managers were in place for both programmes and their role, if not yet their full effectiveness, was established for Think First now as well as R&R. 'Diversity Champions' had been appointed, one of whom was specifically charged to represent issues relating to accredited programmes. Many staff were able and committed, if frustrated that their own efforts were sometimes negated by the lack of an overall structure for delivering programmes to the highest standard.

2002/2003 had been a year of budgetary difficulties for LPA, necessitating a recruitment freeze and the loss of 120 posts area-wide. This had impeded the area's ability to deliver programmes at the required volume. There were significant concerns that the non-allocation of PSRs within the area had impacted negatively on sentencer confidence in probation disposals. Programme completions had been well below the NPD target. Senior managers recognised that resourcing constraints often cut across aspirations to best practice in programmes. This meant that staff had to live with the tensions of competing priorities. There were also high drop-out rates on programmes, but the area had not implemented an anti-attrition strategy to address this.

A comprehensive case management strategy had been written, parts of which were under implementation at the time of the audit. The area had undergone major organisational restructuring, locating practitioners into specialist functions such as CATs and CITs. In some boroughs this reorganisation was still ongoing. Whilst it was hoped that ultimately these changes would improve case management across London, such benefits were not yet apparent. Performance in relation to case management as part of the supporting context for accredited programme delivery had not improved.

Some progress had been made in relation to the assessment and selection of offenders. OGRS 2 scores were now being used, although staff needed further direction to exercise a more sophisticated consideration of other targeting factors such as criminogenic need and offender learning style. Some groups of staff also needed to have a broader programme knowledge, most particularly about R&R.

The area had gone part-way to clarifying the respective roles and inter-relationship of each of its general offending behaviour programmes. Moves to make R&R a more flexible resource had begun and steps had been taken to free it from only being a day centre resource. Sherborne House had closed and Camden Women's Centre was available for R&R delivery. Further expansion was needed if R&R were to be seen by staff as an all-London provision and if it were to have an equal status with the higher volume Think First programme. There continued to be negligible cross-fertilisation between the two programmes in terms of staff learning, reciprocal training on supporting skills for tutors, and benchmarking for treatment managers. This seemed to speak of the separation of the two programmes and restricted the ability of R&R to take a central place on London's menu of programme provision.

There had been only marginal improvements in tutor performance for adherence to the programme manual, treatment style and group work skills. This levelling off of performance, at a point in implementation when greater progress would be expected, was linked to the fact that London had a large number of experienced Think First tutors who had not been able to access any form of accreditation training. Their development and motivation was crucial to improved programme delivery over time.

Next Steps

LPA achieved a revised IQR of **34%** for Think First and **39%** for R&R.

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

SECTION A: COMMITTED LEADERSHIP

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

The CO should ensure that the area:

1. *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);*
2. *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);*
3. *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).*

1. **Not met:** London still lacked a What Works strategy.
2. **Not met:** Programme work and case management remained separate and offenders were not given a seamless experience of supervision.
3. **Partly met:** The area had made some progress towards building an allocation culture, but few licences and DTTO cases were accessing programmes.

TF
0

R&R
1

A1.1 Committed leadership

- The What Works strategy remained unimplemented and was set as an improvement objective in the Business Plan 2003/2004, with a deadline of March 2004. Staff were consulted about the likely contents of the strategy via a team briefing in April 2003. The lack of a strategy had severely hampered efforts to roll-out and deliver accredited programmes to a high standard.
- Senior managers had undertaken a major review of day centre provision and had taken positive action to prioritise R&R within LPA's accredited programmes menu. It had been freed up from the restrictions of the day centre setting and steps had been taken to increase its availability across London. This had been experienced as a positive step by R&R staff, although it was acknowledged that there remained a considerable amount of progress still to be made.
- In the period February to April 2003 a series of two-day training events were run entitled 'Accredited Programmes Training for Managers'. These were attended by the CO, the majority of Directors and Heads of Service Delivery, as well as by SPOs and PDAs. It was intended that this event would be delivered periodically for new managers.
- Matters concerning programmes had regularly featured as agenda items for Directors and Heads of Service Delivery. For example, the Head of Service Delivery (programmes) had delivered a presentation to the senior managers' meeting in March 2003, outlining the expansion and action needed to reach capacity delivery on accredited programmes.
- A case management implementation plan, incorporating work related to programmes, had been produced in March 2003, but implementation had yet to take place in all parts of London. It was hoped that LPA's restructuring would be completed by the end of June 2003.
- There were insufficient Think First tutor staff to deliver the number of programmes required to meet targets in 2002/2003. The area reported that they had lost approximately 30% of their

tutor staff during the year. The Director of Service Delivery had formulated a recruitment plan to address this and 100 staff had recently been offered jobs.

- The area’s workload prioritisation strategy (summary implementation plan, section 19) placed a low priority on offender supervision in the post-programme phase, and advocated revocation of orders at this point where appropriate. This impacted negatively on the provision of a supportive environment for programmes and did not provide the required follow-up work for offenders.

A1.2 Management structures

TF 1	R&R 1
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- The senior management resource allocated to London’s general offending behaviour programmes had been expended. There were now two Heads of Service Delivery; one was responsible for programmes including Think First, the other for programmes including R&R.
- LPA had produced an organisational chart for programme work, outlining lines of accountability.
- A Cross-Directorate Programme and Case Management Group had been established in August 2002, meeting bi-monthly at first, to progress the audit recommendations. Efforts had been made in this way to weave programme work and case management together, but tangible results had been limited.
- Programme and treatment managers were actively involved in the communication of R&R issues across the area.
- Treatment management was now broadly established for both programmes. There were, however, some outstanding training needs for Think First treatment managers in relation to accuracy of scoring. This limited the impact of their role considerably.
- Job descriptions existed for each role, but not all had competencies drawn from the National Management Manual or from the Community Justice Occupational Standards. Existing postholders had not been given copies of revised job descriptions.

A1.3 Staff ownership of the accredited programme

TF 0	R&R 0
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- LPA’s 2003/2004 programme target had been broken down by borough for starts and completions.
- The recent introduction of link officers from programmes to attend local team meetings in their designated boroughs was designed to increase awareness and ownership of R&R. Programme and treatment managers also attended management meetings across the functional divisions. It was felt that the profile of R&R had been raised to some extent, but that the programme delivery function was not integrated with the assessment and interventions.
- Staff knowledge and understanding of programmes remained variable.
- Case manager attendance at three-way meetings was unreliable (see D1.2).
- Practitioners, especially those writing PSRs, described very heavy pressure on them from the area to refer offenders to Think First and R&R. They believed that the issue of staff ownership was therefore meaningless against the backdrop of demanding targets.
- Senior managers had been working to try to agree a form of words for a programme requirement in licences but this piece of work had not been concluded. Of 103 Think First cases

sampled, only four (4%) were licencees. Managers acknowledged this area of work had not been progressed.

- Specific concerns were voiced by practitioners as to the suitability of either programme for female offenders, minority ethnic groups and those with literacy needs. They were not confident that sufficient support was provided to these offenders.

A1.4 Effective communication with sentencers

TF 1

R&R 1

- LPA had developed a ‘Communication with Sentencers’ initiative.
- Information folders had been sent to the justices’ clerks of each London magistrates’ court, giving details of accredited programmes.
- Booklets had also been produced for sentencers, covering both Think First and R&R.
- The Head of Service Delivery (programmes and case management) had recently delivered a comprehensive presentation on programmes to a London magistrates’ seminar.
- There were concerns about sentencer confidence in the community sentences managed by LPA. This was because of the area’s failure to supply the courts with all reports they requested. At the time of the follow-up audit 9% of all court reports remained unallocated.
- There was no pan-London monitoring of proposal/disposal concordance levels.

SECTION B: PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

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

The CO should ensure that the area:

1. *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);*
2. *provides improved information for potential tutors and implements a deselection policy in respect of poorly performing programme delivery staff (B3.1);*
3. *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);*
4. *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);*
5. *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);*
6. *implements a monitoring and evaluation strategy for programmes, to inform and improve practice (B7.1, B7.2).*

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).*

1. **Not met:** The area lacked an anti-attrition strategy and more offenders were facing delays to programme start than had been the case at the original audit.
2. **Partly met:** There had been improvements to the written information to potential tutors, but there was still no tutor deselection policy.
3. **Partly met:** The distinction between the programme manager and treatment manager role had been helpfully clarified. Job descriptions had been improved, but were not all sufficiently competency-linked.
4. **Partly met:** A draft targeting strategy had been circulated and there had been a slight improvement to targeting accuracy. However, monitoring arrangements were not in place to ensure the maximising of allocations.
5. **Partly met:** Guidance had been issued about the placement of minority ethnic offenders on programmes, but R&R's availability to employed offenders and women had yet to be established.
6. **Not met:** Although some improvements to the monitoring and evaluation of programmes were in hand, there was no overall strategy and no clear outcomes which could be used to inform practice.

B1.1 Resources and facilities TF
1 R&R
2

Criterion fully met for R&R at original audit.

- A small Think First group room at Highgate was no longer in use. It had been possible to stop using these unsatisfactory premises for programme work due to a new group room being made available in Tottenham.
- All sites had secure video storage facilities.
- Problems persisted at some Think First delivery sites, e.g. lack of ‘break out’ rooms, external noise, small room size and poor ventilation.

B1.2 Provision of information leaflets about the programme TF
1 R&R
1

- Leaflets for offenders contained a general outline of the aims, duration of the programme and attendance requirements. However, they did not address diversity issues or special needs and there was no reference to a complaints procedure.
- PSR writers and case managers described making use of the information leaflets in discussing programmes with offenders.
- Information for sentencers had become more comprehensive and was distributed in a systematic way. The sentencer booklet included a description of the programme models and of the methods used (see also A1.4).
- Course outlines for Think First were issued to offenders, outlining expectations, details of venue, dates of sessions, etc.

B2.1 Managing attendance TF
0 R&R
1

- Completion rates fell far short of target in 2002/2003, with only 647 offenders completing the programmes against the revised target of 1,508.
- The area had no anti-attrition strategy. Whilst there were some laudable small-scale initiatives driven by programme staff, the lack of an overall strategic approach meant these efforts were piecemeal and did not involve case management or other input to support them. Inevitably this limited their impact.
- A revised draft targeting strategy had been issued showing the inter-relation of both programmes, but there remained a proportion of offenders on Think First whose OGRS 2 score fell outside the required band.
- No data modelling had been done to forecast the proportionate split of offenders between the two programmes and a loose planning assumption was being used rather than firm targets.
- There remained a lack of clarity about the respective roles of tutors and case managers in monitoring attendance and staff were not aware of an area policy governing this.

- R&R managers had identified a problem with high levels of attrition in the early stages of the programme. They had introduced pre-programme three-way meetings in the hope of maximising commencements and had also increased the number of keyworker sessions.
- Senior managers were planning to introduce evening R&R groups for employed offenders and women-only groups in the hope of improving completion rates. At the time of the follow-up audit, neither of these had yet been rolled out.

B2.2 Avoidance of cancellation or disruption to sessions

TF
2

R&R
2

Criterion fully met for both programmes at original audit.

B2.3 Catch-up sessions/Attendance

TF
0

R&R
0

- Of 79 applicable Think First cases assessed in the file read, 48 (61%) showed evidence on the case file of whether they had attended catch-up sessions as instructed. The same was true for only five of 30 applicable R&R cases (17%).
- For R&R, all catch-ups were being video recorded and one in seven sessions was subject to treatment manager integrity checks.
- Think First treatment managers and tutors were unclear about the policy for recording and monitoring catch-up sessions and, as a result, there was variable practice across the area.
- A catch-up manual and an internally-devised catch-up monitoring form were being used in some parts of the area, but had not been made available to all tutors.
- There were some examples of Think First catch-up sessions being delivered out of sequence.

B2.4 Timeliness

TF
0

R&R
0

- Some efforts had been made recently to monitor timeliness of programme start, but area reports had not yet been produced. Staff and managers were not aware of average offender waiting times.
- Of 103 Think First cases sampled, just 11 (11%) started the programme within one calendar month of sentence/release. A further eight cases (8%) had acceptable offender-related reasons for delay. In the R&R sample, 12 offenders of 37 (32%) began within one month, and a further five (14%) had documented reasons for delay.
- Programme managers reported that the newly-formed CATs were not always notifying programme centres promptly when programme orders were made. There were also instances of administrative problems resulting in orders being lost. This had led, on occasions, to offenders being extremely late beginning a programme.
- Although schedules were being prepared, resource difficulties meant that insufficient programmes were being run to meet demand.
- The planned introduction of women-only R&R groups had resulted in delayed commencements for individual offenders. The low number of referrals made it difficult to compose viable groups and provide timely starts.

B3.1 Staff selection

TF
0

R&R
1

- A document had been compiled covering all aspects of the assessment centre process for prospective tutors.
- In general, improved written information was now provided to tutors about their core training. However, details of Think First were not being sent out in advance of assessment centres. This left tutors feeling that they would have been better informed if they had accessed programme-specific information earlier in the process.
- Some tutors felt that they had not been fully appraised of the expectations on them to do regular evening work.
- The area still had no deselection policy in respect of poorly performing tutors.

B3.2 Staff roles and competencies

TF
1

R&R
2

Criterion fully met for R&R at original audit.

- The division of duties between programme managers and treatment managers had been clearly defined and staff had made good use of the national treatment manager strategy to clarify their roles. However, blurring of the boundaries occasionally occurred due to resource constraints.
- A 'Protocol on Group Processes for Programme Tutors' had been written. This served to define the tutor role at every stage of the programme.
- Job descriptions, whilst improved, needed to be linked more precisely to the competencies set out in the National Management Manual and the Community Justice Occupational Standards.
- Revised job descriptions had not been distributed to existing staff.

B3.3 Preparation and debriefing time for tutors

TF
2

R&R
2

Criterion fully met for both programmes at original audit.

B3.4 Staff continuity

TF
2

R&R
2

Criterion fully met for Think First at original audit.

- R&R staff continuity was maintained throughout the duration of a course, aided by the routine allocation of three tutors to each programme.
- Programme schedules clearly showed which tutors had delivered each R&R session.

B4.1 Training arrangements for new staff

TF
1

R&R
1

- Tutors were receiving the required core training before delivering their first programme.
- A one-day event entitled 'Which Programme' had been rolled out to court staff, focusing on issues such as targeting and recording. The content had been thoughtfully compiled, had

reflected audit findings and had been well-received. However, not all relevant staff had attended, with pressure of work being the principal reason for non-attendance.

- Sessional PSR writers in particular were not accessing programme-specific training, leaving them ill-informed about Think First and R&R.
- Treatment managers had accessed national training and some had attended HMIP area assessor training.

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

TF
2

R&R
2

Criterion fully met for both programmes at original audit.

B4.3 Training arrangements for experienced staff

TF
0

R&R
2

Criterion fully met for R&R at original audit.

- There had been considerable difficulties assessing ongoing training needs, as there was no adequate centralised database recording the skills in which individual staff had been trained.
- Accreditation training had not been made available nationally to Think First tutors. This was having a detrimental effect on staff morale and on tutor development. The area had a large number of experienced Think First tutors, some of whom felt they were not progressing in the tutor role.

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

TF
1

R&R
1

- An R&R staff handbook had been issued to all tutors on the programme. This gave advice and guidance on staff responsibilities, co-working and specific sessions.
- London had recently hosted an R&R practitioners' day attended by programme tutors and staff from other probation areas.
- Despite case manager training having been delivered, these staff lacked a sufficiently detailed knowledge of the programme models and described themselves as better informed about Think First than about R&R. They were, however, enjoying using the R&R pre-programme material and felt this would improve their programme understanding over time.
- Although guidance on assessment for accredited programmes had been issued in April 2003, some PSR writers felt ill-informed about the referral process to programmes and about their relative targeting requirements.

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

TF
1

R&R
1

- TPOs, who routinely had to train and work as Think First tutors in order to qualify as POs, had a sophisticated level of knowledge, but were far less confident about R&R.
- PSR writers and case managers had a general basic understanding of cognitive-behavioural theory. However, awareness of the history of the two programmes, place within the What Works agenda and the evidence base was incomplete.
- R&R tutors were well versed in the theoretical basis of the programme.

- Think First tutors felt that refresher training would be helpful in strengthening their understanding of the links between theory and practice.

B4.6 Supporting skills necessary to run programmes

TF
2

R&R
2

Criterion fully met for Think First at original audit.

- R&R tutors reported that they had been able to access a range of supplementary training provision, including group work and communication skills.
- Training needs were identified and addressed in supervision sessions.
- Treatment managers had now attended HMIP area assessor training and supervision skills training.

B5.1 Staff supervision and quality of practice

TF
2

R&R
2

Criterion fully met for both programmes at original audit.

B5.2 Staff appraisal

TF
2

R&R
2

Criterion fully met for both programmes at original audit.

B6.1 Offender selection and assessment

TF
1

R&R
1

- The case file read showed that 73 of 103 Think First cases (71%) fell within the nationally set OGRS 2 target range of 31-74%, or were above the range with additional structured work identified.
- In the R&R sample, 36 of 37 cases (97%) fell within the national targeting band of 31-100%.
- Treatment managers were advising practitioners about suitable referrals at the pre-sentence stage and were also picking up inappropriate allocations post-sentence.
- OGRS 2 scores were now seen as paramount in targeting, but staff were insufficiently aware of other targeting factors which should be applied. The differences between R&R and Think First were not clearly understood and there was a number of instances of offenders being allocated to the wrong programme. The perception amongst some practitioners was that it was more important to get an offender on a programme than to get them on the *right* one.
- The LPA targeting strategy remained in draft form only.
- There was no systematic means of checking whether exclusion criteria were being applied correctly or of identifying possible missed referrals of suitable offenders. Whilst some boroughs were recording reasons for non-referral to programmes, this was as a result of a retrospective monitoring exercise rather than a pre-sentence screening process and did not take a common form across London.
- Licencees and DTTO cases were not accessing general offending behaviour programmes in large enough proportions.

B6.2 Offender knowledge and understanding of the programme requirementsTF
2R&R
2*Criterion fully met for Think First at original audit.*

- In 20 of the 37 R&R cases (54%), offenders had been given programme information both verbally and in writing. In another three cases (8%) offenders had been given information in one or other form.
- A pre-programme three-way meeting for R&R offenders aided the information-giving process and informed them of programme requirements.

B6.3 Group sizeTF
2R&R
2*Criterion fully met for both programmes at original audit.***B6.4 Accessibility of group work programmes**TF
1R&R
1

- Of the 103 Think First cases examined, 22 (21%) were women offenders. There were no women in the R&R sample. It was hoped that a women's R&R group would be run out of the Camden site; however, at the time of the follow-up audit, there had been insufficient numbers to constitute a viable group.
- There remained no option for women to do R&R in a mixed-gender group and so women were facing lengthy delays to programme starts.
- Staff running women-only Think First programmes in Willesden were reviewing their processes regularly and demonstrating considerable responsivity in relation to the individual circumstances of group members.
- Written guidance for staff in assessing and working with women offenders had been produced in April 2003.
- 'Diversity Champions' had been put in place in London following Diversity Week 2002. Their brief was to help meet the requirements of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and to help implement LPA's diversity strategy.
- There were concerns that offenders with literacy difficulties were not being provided with the necessary input in the pre-group phase to enable them to benefit fully from group participation.
- The perception of case managers and PSR writers was that issues of gender were given more consideration than race issues when the composition of groups and the staffing balance was arranged.
- There remained no contracted provision or accessible community resource for the mentoring of minority ethnic offenders on group work programmes. Tutors gave clear examples of having provided support arrangements for minority ethnic offenders.
- Of 89 applicable Think First cases examined, 23 (26%) showed evidence of diversity issues having been managed well before, during and after the programme. The same applied to eight of 29 applicable R&R cases (28%).

B7.1 Implementation of monitoring and evaluation design

TF
0

R&R
0

- There was no monitoring and evaluation strategy for programmes.
- Some case managers received programme information from their managers via team meetings and written summaries. The CO had sent data to staff via e-mail, updating them on referral and completion levels.
- Due to the ongoing reporting limitations of IAPS, LPA had devised new databases for the monitoring of Think First and R&R. Information had been inputted since January 2003 and data extracted, but there had been little evaluation of those data to date.
- In general, practitioners and managers alike perceived a lack of information and feedback on programme-related matters.
- PSR writers were getting no feedback on the progress of those offenders they had referred to programmes, but felt this would be useful in helping them to monitor their own assessment and targeting.

B7.2 Practice is informed by monitoring and evaluation evidence

TF
0

R&R
0

- As there was little area-wide monitoring and evaluation taking place, the impact of findings on practice was minimal.
- The only reports received at Director level were those drawn from NPD monitoring returns.
- A research strategy was devised early in 2003 and accredited programmes were given a high priority within this.
- There were some encouraging localised examples of Think First treatment managers using offender feedback at the session 14 review to improve the format of the remaining sessions.
- R&R staff, having identified high attrition rates in the early stages of the programme, had increased keyworker involvement and focused on making the material in early sessions as stimulating as possible (see B2.1).
- Programme staff were frustrated at the lack of psychometric data and acknowledged also that offender feedback was not being collated and evaluated.
- R&R tutors felt that more liaison with practitioners delivering the programme in other areas would have provided opportunities to share best practice and improve performance.

SECTION C: QUALITY OF PROGRAMME DELIVERY

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

The CO should ensure that the area:

- *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).*

The NPD should ensure that:

- *a revised end of programme report template is issued so as to prompt sections on risk and relapse scenarios. (C1.6).*

- **Not met:** No programme-specific training plan had been drawn up addressing the core aspects of good programme delivery. There had been little mutual sharing of skills between R&R and Think First staff.

C1.1 Adherence to programme manual

TF
1

R&R
1

- Programme material was covered in the correct order and no inappropriate extras were added.
- Insufficient attention was given to the checking out of offenders' learning.
- There continued to be some problems with the timing of Think First sessions and of exercises within them.
- Exercises in the R&R programme were not always set up and run correctly, with some elements omitted or cut short.

C1.2 Adherence to treatment style

TF
1

R&R
1

- There had been improvement in the ability of R&R tutors to make effective links between sessions and the overall aims of the programme.
- Learning points were effectively summarised and reflected back to the groups.
- Think First tutors were listening carefully to offenders and allowing them to give answers when questions were posed.
- More work was needed by tutors in challenging anti-social and offence-supporting views.
- Tutors were encouraging offenders to articulate their views and explain their ideas, but were not consistently eliciting self-motivating statements.

C1.3 Group work skills

TF
1

R&R
1

- Delivery staff were clearly spoken and used appropriate language.
- Tutors were doing well at involving all group members in programme sessions. They showed sensitivity to the needs of women and minority ethnic offenders, and described ways in which they would promote their inclusion within mixed groups.
- Co-working skills and handovers required further development. Greater effort was needed to make timely interventions where appropriate, to give mutual support when dealing with disruptive or difficult offenders, and to link one another’s input following a session break.

C1.4 Programme delivered addressing race equality and diversity issues

TF
1

R&R
0

- Treatment managers had run a workshop addressing diversity issues in programme delivery for some Think First tutors in October 2002. This was found to be very valuable and LPA staff had also delivered the same workshop at the national What Works Conference in March 2003.
- Diversity issues were a standard agenda item in the supervision of tutors and at treatment manager meetings.
- Delivery staff gave examples of how course material had been appropriately adapted to make it more relevant to particular group members.
- R&R tutors did not effectively challenge inappropriate offender comments on a consistent basis.
- No provision had been put in place for the mentoring of minority ethnic or women offenders.
- There was a great deal of concern about the accessibility of the programme and its learning to those offenders who did not have English as their first language.

C1.5 Programme integrity checklist

TF
2

R&R
2

Criterion fully met for both programmes at original audit.

C1.6 End of programme summary reports

TF
0

R&R
0

- Reports were produced routinely by tutors and made available to case managers either at the three-way meeting or in advance of it.
- Whilst the reports were generally described as ‘useful’ by case managers, some described them as over-long and repetitive.
- Reports were detailed, but still lacked the required standard sections on risk and relapse scenarios.

- R&R reports were supported by factual evidence from sessions. Objectives set were clear and relevant.
- The application of the reports to subsequent planning of offender supervision was not happening reliably. In part this was because there was sometimes little time to run on an order/licence once the programme had been completed. Practitioners also spoke of there being a considerable impetus to send offenders to reporting centres at this stage rather than engage in further work (see workload prioritisation strategy [summary implementation plan section19]).

SECTION D: CASE MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

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

The CO should ensure that the area:

1. *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);*
2. *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);*
3. *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);*
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);*
5. *implements a standard system for the retention of required programme-related documentation on case files (D1.6).*

1. **Not met:** The quality of supervision planning had not improved and post-programme reports were not being used to shape subsequent supervision.
2. **Not met:** The case management role was not established. Attendance at review meetings was unreliable, pre-programme work was not being delivered in every case and work in the post-programme phase had been deprioritised.
3. **Not met:** Some efforts had been made to inform case managers and PSR writers about programmes, but their levels of knowledge remained insufficient.
4. **Not met:** Some staff remained confused about their respective roles in monitoring attendance, and enforcement performance was poor.
5. **Not met:** Although a standard case file format had been introduced across the area, this had not ensured the retention of all relevant programme documents.

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

TF	R&R
0	0

- In 81 of 103 Think First cases sampled (79%) and in 32 of 37 R&R cases (86%), initial supervision plans failed to integrate programme work fully into overall supervision.
- The file read revealed that in 90 of 103 Think First cases (87%) and in 32 of 37 R&R cases (86%), programme-related objectives in initial supervision plans were assessed as not being fully SMART.
- Other assessments, such as OGRS 2, were not explicitly influencing the supervision planning of cases.

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

TF
0

R&R
0

- Case managers found end of programme three-way meetings helpful and informative. However, in respect of 42 completed Think First cases, case managers attended these in only 12 (29%). Of 14 completed R&R cases, case managers attended them in six (43%).
- The file read showed full liaison between case managers and Think First tutors in only 38 of 96 applicable cases (40%) and between case managers and R&R tutors in 13 of 34 cases (38%).

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

TF
0

R&R
0

- A useful set of pre-programme material had been designed for case managers to use with R&R offenders as part of their preparation for the programme.
- There was considerable confusion amongst case managers as to the scheduling of programme starts and when they should deliver pre-programme sessions to offenders waiting to begin Think First. This meant that these sessions were not always delivered in the most timely and effective way.
- Of the 103 Think First cases, only 29 (28%) showed clear evidence that all the required pre-programme work had been delivered on time.
- In the Think first sample, 29 of 92 applicable cases (32%) demonstrated that case managers had done all they could to minimise obstacles to offender attendance and encourage full participation in the programme. In the R&R sample this applied to nine of 32 cases (28%).
- Although TPOs were clear about their input as case managers, guidance had only very recently been circulated about the level and nature of the contact staff should have with offenders undergoing programmes. There remained a high level of uncertainty about this and some practitioners felt that workload issues had prevented them from proactively working with offenders during a group. Just one of 71 applicable cases (1%) showed that case managers had satisfactorily reinforced learning with offenders during their time on Think First. There were no such examples amongst 27 applicable R&R cases.
- A draft programmes process map failed to reference in any detail the ongoing work expected of case managers while offenders were on programmes.
- Workload prioritisation decisions had worked against significant input being given by case managers to offenders after they had completed a programme (see A1.1).

D1.4 Understanding and knowledge of programme methods

TF
0

R&R
0

- Case managers still lacked a detailed and thorough understanding of programme methods and were particularly lacking in confidence about R&R. This impacted on their ability to reinforce learning with offenders.
- Most staff had received case manager training for programmes at the point of implementation. This consisted of a three-day course, 2.5 days on Think First and 0.5 days on R&R. This training was also being made available to some of those moving into community intervention teams under London’s process of reorganisation. However, there were concerns that budgetary constraints were hindering the routine resourcing of this and some staff had not been able to access it.
- An assumption was made that TPOs, who trained as Think First tutors (incorporating case manager training) did not need specific training for managing R&R cases. This left them lacking in knowledge in their R&R role, by contrast with their confidence in relation to Think First.

D1.5 Monitoring of attendance and enforcement

TF
0

R&R
0

- The case file read revealed considerable shortcomings in relation to enforcement. Of 102 applicable Think First cases, only 48 (47%) showed that programme attendance had been monitored against other attendance in a fully consistent and integrated way. This applied to 15 of 36 R&R cases (42%).
- Of 83 Think First cases requiring some form of enforcement action, only 31 (37%) showed that this had all been taken within the required national standards timescales. For R&R enforcement action was timely in just 12 of 32 cases (38%).
- There were variable interpretations of the respective roles of case managers and tutors in monitoring attendance and enforcing orders. In some cases there were also difficulties in the communication links between different staff. This meant absences were not always recorded or fed back promptly, resulting in late enforcement decisions and action.
- Decisions about the acceptability of absences were not clearly documented and the recording of attendance at catch-ups was patchy (see B2.3).

D1.6 Documentation

TF
0

R&R
0

- A standardised case file format had been introduced across London from December 2002.
- Key documents were missing from the case file in 59 of 103 Think First cases (57%) and in 28 of 37 R&R cases (76%). Most commonly these were supervision plans and reviews, and targeting matrices.

D1.7 End of programme review

TF
0

R&R
0

- There were significant deficiencies in the supervision plan reviews conducted in the post-programme phase. Sometimes the documents simply were not present on the case file. In none of the 34 applicable Think First cases or the ten applicable R&R cases were the reviews sufficiently influenced by post-programme reports. One of 35 applicable Think First cases (3%) had fully SMART objectives linked to post-programme work. For the R&R sample this figure was zero of 11 cases.
- Of the 41 applicable Think First cases, four (10%) showed evidence of sufficient attention having been paid to community reintegration issues in the post-programme period. This applied to four of 13 R&R cases (31%).

D1.8 Reinforcement and relapse prevention work

TF
N/A

R&R
N/A

Criterion not assessed at original audit.