



HM Inspectorate of Probation

AUDIT OF ACCREDITED PROGRAMMES

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

*Level 2 Follow-up Report on:
Greater Manchester Probation Area –
Think First*

November 2002

Acknowledgements:

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

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Glossary

ACE	Assessment, Case Recording and Evaluation System
ACO	Assistant chief officer
CO	Chief officer
HMIP	HM Inspectorate of Probation
HQ	Headquarters
IQR	Implementation Quality Rating
LSI-R	Level of Service Inventory-Revised
N/A	Criteria not assessed
NPD	National Probation Directorate
OASys	Offender Assessment System
OGRS	Offender Group Reconviction Scale
PSO	Probation service officer
PSR	Pre-sentence report

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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.

Overview:

- The original audit of Think First in Greater Manchester took place in June 2001.
- The follow-up comprised: video monitoring of 20 Think First sessions; a case file read; interviews with the ACO, district, programme, treatment and implementation managers, tutors, case managers and PSR authors. Other staff interviewed included research and information officers, administrative staff and a compliance officer.
- Both the original and follow-up audit focused solely on Think First.
- Only those criteria not fully met at the original audit have been re-assessed and new marks awarded.

Findings:

Greater Manchester had been the first probation area to be audited and achieved a creditable IQR score of 62%. Since the audit the area had consolidated its progress by producing a detailed action plan outlining how recommendations would be addressed and this plan had been regularly reviewed and updated. The commitment of senior managers to the proper delivery of accredited programmes, and Think First in particular, was evident from its determination to promote an allocations culture and in its investment in additional staff to oversee and deliver the programme. Most recommendations had been addressed and the area achieved enhanced scores in all four sections of the audit report.

As with the original audit the main area for development was in case management. Limited progress had been made in the quality of initial supervision plans and supervision plan reviews were of a poor standard and in many cases had not been produced at all. This was a missed opportunity given the acknowledged value of post-programme reports that could have been used to inform supervision reviews. Case managers did demonstrate greater attention to monitoring attendance and the enforcement of Think First orders but failed to support consistently offenders through all phases of the programme. Senior managers acknowledged the importance of case management in improving completion rates and enhancing offender motivation and recognised the need to strengthen this role in supporting the delivery of Think First.

Next Steps

Greater Manchester Probation Area achieved a revised IQR of **78%**.

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

SECTION A: COMMITTED LEADERSHIP

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

The CO should ensure that the area:

- ***moves from a referral to an allocations culture and improves its targeting of offenders for Think First.***

- ▶ ***Largely met:*** Significant progress had been made in promoting an allocation culture. The area was achieving substantially increased referrals to the programme and the area-wide introduction of the targeting matrix in July 2002 was designed to ensure that only appropriate offenders were placed on Think First.

A1.1 Committed leadership

2

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

Criterion fully met at original audit.

A1.2 Management structures

2

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.*

Progress since the original audit:

- From 1 April 2002 the area had appointed full-time treatment managers in each of the clusters.
- The first implementation manager had been seconded to the NPD and since then his post had been replaced with two implementation managers which resulted in greater management oversight of Think First.

A1.3 Staff ownership of the accredited programme

1

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

Progress since the original audit:

- Whilst there remained geographical variations in referrals to Think First, targets had been broken down on a district basis and monthly reports were provided to district and programme managers and relevant HQ staff.
- District managers in particular had promoted a culture of automatic referrals of eligible/suitable offenders to the programme.
- The area had undertaken a large-scale initiative from July 2002 resulting in all offenders being assessed against the approved targeting matrix.

A1.4 Effective communication with sentencers

2

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

Criterion fully met at original audit.

SECTION B: PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

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

The CO should ensure that the area:

- *reviews training requirements for all staff involved in the delivery or managerial oversight of the programme so that staff competence is enhanced;*
- *uses video monitoring forms to differentiate the supervision needs of individual tutors and to explore practice issues;*
- *establishes a deselection procedure for tutors who fail to deliver the programme to the required standard;*
- *requires the prior approval of the district manager to cancel or postpone programmes;*
- *assigns three tutors to each programme to ensure staff continuity with all sessions being delivered by at least two of these tutors;*
- *routinely provides middle managers with the right performance information to enable them to positively influence practice.*

- ▶▶ **Fully met:** Staff training requirements had been regularly reviewed in What Works implementation and steering group meetings. The area had invested in a range of supporting skills for staff including motivational interviewing, presentation and group management skills.
- ▶▶ **Largely met:** There was some evidence of video monitoring forms being used to differentiate the individual supervision needs of tutors and stronger evidence that these had been used to explore practice issues.
- ▶▶ **Largely met:** A deselection procedure had been produced by the area and was in the final consultation phase with the relevant trade union.
- ▶▶ **Fully met:** A guidance note had been issued regarding decisions to cancel or postpone programmes. This notice made clear that such decisions required the prior approval of a programme or district manager.
- ▶▶ **Fully met:** Three tutors had been regularly assigned to each programme ensuring staff continuity.
- ▶▶ **Fully met:** District, programme and implementation managers were being routinely provided with performance management data to assist in improving referral and completion rates for Think First.

B1.1 Resources and facilities

2

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

Criterion fully met at original audit.

B1.2 Provision of information leaflets about the programme

2

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

Criterion fully met at original audit.

B2.1 Managing attendance

2

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.*

Progress since the original audit:

- In support of a strategy for maximising attendance compliance officers had been appointed in a number of the clusters and locally collected data indicated their positive impact.
- Monthly audit reports in respect of national standards enforcement demonstrated an incremental increase in area performance.
- A practice notice issued in June 2002 clearly set out attendance requirements and the number of permitted absences that were subject to catch-up arrangements.

B2.2 Avoidance of cancellation or disruption to sessions

2

Description: *Sessions are not cancelled or disrupted owing to offender crises, high workload or other pressures, and arrangements exist to deal with crises outside of the programme session. Sessions are delivered at the frequency defined in the programme manual.*

Progress since the original audit:

- Guidance regarding cancellation of groups was issued to staff in May 2002 which clearly stated the requirement of delivery staff to consult district or programme managers prior to a decision to cancel a programme.
- All clusters and the centralised programmes team had now produced local schedules of programmes that were widely distributed to staff.
- The area had developed the role of general supervisors to assist offenders attending out of hours delivery of the programme.

B2.3 Catch-up sessions/Attendance

2

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.*

Progress since the original audit:

- Treatment managers, in collaboration with another probation area, had developed a catch-up booklet that had contributed to the consistent delivery of programme material.
- In accordance with Probation Circular 92/2001 area instructions had recently been issued on catch-up sessions so as to aid their routine monitoring.
- Time allowed for catch-ups was limited to ½ hour for an individual session or one hour if an offender had missed two sessions. However, area guidance ensured that core material was delivered within this timescale.

B2.4 Timeliness

1

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

Progress since the original audit:

- Case recording had improved since the original audit so that the area could demonstrate that pre-programme work had been completed.
- Eight of the 35 cases inspected commenced Think First within the required timescale. Of the remaining participants who had delayed starts, there was a documented reason for this in only eight of the files read.

B3.1 Staff selection

2

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.*

Criterion fully met at original audit.

B3.2 Staff roles and competencies

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.*

Criterion fully met at original audit.

B3.3 Preparation and debriefing time for tutors

2

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

Criterion fully met at original audit.

B3.4 Staff continuity

2

Description: *Three leaders should normally be assigned to each accredited programme to allow for leave, sickness and other contingencies. All sessions of the programmes are delivered by at least two of the three assigned staff. Continuity is maintained by at least one of the staff members having run the previous session.*

Progress since the original audit:

- The area had ensured that three tutors were routinely assigned to each programme ensuring adequate staffing to cover absences.
- The role of reserve tutor had also been developed and many clusters had a pool of these people to select from in the event of unexpected circumstances.

B4.1 Training arrangements for new staff 2

Description: *Training courses exist for all grades and roles involved in delivering the programme and all staff newly assigned to the programme receive training before running their first programme. The training delivered follows that defined in the programme training manual.*

Criterion fully met at original audit.

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

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

Criterion not assessed at original audit.

B4.3 Training arrangements for experienced staff N/A

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

Criterion not assessed at original audit.

B4.4 Staff knowledge of the concepts and methods used in the programme 2

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

Criterion fully met at original audit.

B4.5 Staff knowledge of the theoretical and evidential basis of the programme 1

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

Progress since the original audit:

- Tutors displayed greater theoretical knowledge of the programme than in the original audit.
- In general, staff awareness of the evidence base as to the effectiveness of cognitive-behavioural programmes was limited.
- Based on the small number of case managers and PSR authors interviewed, there was a lack of professional curiosity about research evidence and these staff felt somewhat detached from the delivery of the programme.

B4.6 Supporting skills necessary to run programmes 2

Description: *From interview, observation, appraisal and training audits all relevant staff have supporting skills including core group work skills, presentation skills, case management, etc, sufficient for the effective delivery of the programme.*

Progress since the original audit:

- PSO generic training included group work skills.

- A number of staff had been trained in motivational interviewing.
- Some tutors had attended a 'Dealing with Violence/Aggression Course'.
- Managers acknowledged the need for additional training in cognitive-behavioural theory and had planned workshops for November 2002.

B5.1 Staff supervision and quality of practice

1

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

Progress since the original audit:

- Treatment manager training had still to be provided nationally, although staff were scheduled to attend this in October 2002.
- Frequency of supervision had varied across the area and one cluster had been without a treatment manager for a significant period of time.
- A guidance note had been issued to develop greater consistency regarding the supervision of tutors.
- There was evidence of detailed session review forms being used.

B5.2 Staff appraisal

1

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

Progress since the original audit:

- Programme managers wrote appraisal reports on all staff involved in the delivery of the programme and these identified training needs that informed the area's training strategy.
- A deselection policy had been written and was in the final stages of being agreed with the trade union.
- The area supplied evidence of an example of poor tutor practice and how the treatment and the programme manager had appropriately handled this situation.

B6.1 Offender selection and assessment

1

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

Progress since the original audit:

- The case file reading exercise confirmed that there were still problems with accurate OGRS 2 targeting of offenders for the programme. Only 11 offenders, out of 35 cases, fell within the band, although most others did conform to the ACE scores for Think First.

- The area had introduced a targeting matrix across all of the clusters that restated the criteria for selection and eligibility for Think First.

B6.2 Offender knowledge and understanding of the programme requirements

2

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

Criterion fully met at original audit.

B6.3 Group size

2

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

Progress since the original audit:

- Starting group size met the requirements of the Performance Standards Manual.
- The area had allowed a limited level of overbooking but records confirmed that no more than 12 offenders commenced each programme.

B6.4 Accessibility of group work programmes

2

Description: *If female or minority ethnic offenders are placed in mixed groups there are no singleton placements unless agreed to by the offender. Appropriate support arrangements should be evidenced for these programme participants.*

Progress since the original audit:

- Considerable progress had been made since the original audit in terms of specialist provision of Think First for women and minority ethnic offenders in the centralised team.
- The area actively promoted access to this specialist provision but those offenders assessed as not suitable were accommodated at 'cluster level' in mixed programmes. This had resulted in reduced waiting times for offenders.

B7.1 Implementation of monitoring and evaluation design

2

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.*

Progress since the original audit:

- The pathfinder database was being used to provide monthly reports for operational managers to support the implementation of the programme.
- The new targeting matrix was expected to provide the facility for managers to disseminate performance information down to the level of individual staff.

B7.2 Practice is informed by monitoring and evaluation evidence

2

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.*

Progress since the original audit:

- Interviews with programme and district managers attested to the value they placed in pathfinder database information.
- The area had commissioned research into psychometric test results and had examined reasons for programme attrition.
- Practitioners had been supplied with offender feedback both during and following completion of Think First.

SECTION C: QUALITY OF PROGRAMME DELIVERY

C1.1 Adherence to programme manual

1

Description: *All sessions of the programme should be delivered in line with the instructions of the programme manual and demonstrate close adherence to the aims and objectives. There should be evident commitment to follow the intention/purpose of the exercises used, including repetition/reinforcement, where these are designed parts of the programme.*

Progress since the original audit:

- Programme staff had consolidated the strengths identified in the original audit, particularly in ensuring that the aims and objectives of observed sessions were met.
- Programme tutors were still paying insufficient attention as to whether offenders had assimilated the learning from a programme session. Treatment manager supervision notes confirmed that this was a skill issue that was being actively addressed.
- Timings of exercises remained an area for improvement as some sessions were rushed, whilst in others participants were not being encouraged to rehearse and consolidate problem solving skills.

C1.2 Adherence to treatment style

1

Description: *From direct observation or video evidence, programme tutors make competent and appropriate use of the techniques specified. There will be evidence of effective communication of the material, offender understanding and engagement. Pro-social attitudes are skilfully modelled by workers and are predominant in the group. This includes challenging pro-criminal or anti-social attitudes and behaviour.*

Progress since the original audit:

- Tutors showed continued evidence of linking sessions and exercises together so as to assist participants' understanding of the programme.
- Whilst there was greater use of open questioning, tutors still needed to give more space for offenders to explain and validate ideas for themselves.
- There was insufficient evidence of tutors eliciting self-motivating statements from participants.

C1.3 Group work skills

2

Description: *Programme tutors demonstrate effective management of the group, including effective co-working to facilitate learning by offenders and modelling pro-social behaviour. Disruption by participants is minimised.*

Progress since the original audit:

- Tutors were observed to have modelled effective co-working and a pro-social approach in delivering the programme.
- Handovers were assessed as an area for improvement scoring least well in this section.
- Significant progress had been made in the quality of treatment management supervision, despite the delay in national training provision. Treatment managers were reviewing sessions to ensure that co-working arrangements were effective and that the level of offender engagement was enhanced.

C1.4 Programme delivered addressing race equality and diversity issues

2

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

Criterion fully met at original audit.

C1.5 Programme integrity checklist

2

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

Progress since the original audit:

- Tutors completed programme registers and session review forms on a routine basis following delivery of the programme.
- Information on the level of offender participation was also e-mailed to case managers using the pathfinder database system.

C1.6 End of programme summary reports

2

Description: *The case record shows that at the end of the programme delivery staff prepare a summary for the case manager indicating:*

- *participation in the programme*
- *progress made*
- *an assessment of risk, including the identification of factors relevant to the individual concerned*
- *an assessment of the offender's coping skills*
- *likely scenarios for relapse, including immediate precursors and triggers which might give prior warning*
- *identification of remaining treatment needs.*

Progress since the original audit:

- Post-programme reports had been written using the standard template produced by the NPD which ensured greater consistency across the area.
- Case managers confirmed that these reports were very valuable to them, although they failed to utilise these in their subsequent supervision reviews.

SECTION D: CASE MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

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

The CO should ensure that the area:

- *establishes a consistent framework and approach to supporting the delivery of Think First in each of the clusters, e.g. by standardising documentation such as post-programme reports;*
- *reviews case management arrangements so that offenders are supported at all stages of the programme and issue guidance on how case managers can reinforce the learning of offenders undertaking the programme;*
- *clearly records all pre-programme work with offenders to ensure that participants are fully prepared;*
- *sets SMART objectives in supervision plans and reviews.*

- ▶▶ **Fully met:** Standardised post-programme reports had been introduced across the area utilising the NPD template.
- ▶▶ **Largely met:** Area guidance had been issued to case managers in May 2002 outlining their core responsibilities in respect of the programme.
- ▶▶ **Fully met:** There had been a notable improvement in recording pre-programme work and offenders were consistently receiving this input.
- ▶▶ **Not met:** The area had invested significant management attention to this issue but the case files demonstrated that this remained an important area for improvement. Supervision plans generally lacked SMART objectives and reviews failed to link objectives to post-programme reports.

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

1

Description: *The supervision plan integrates the programme into the overall plan of work for each offender. Specific objectives are set in a sequence appropriate for the offender and are recorded in the initial supervision plan and regularly reviewed. Assessments should be based on OASys when available, or ACE or LSI-R before then.*

Progress since the original audit:

- The case file reading results revealed modest progress in terms of improved initial supervision plans.
- SMART objectives were still absent in most assessments.
- There was very limited evidence of programme participation being integrated into an overall supervision plan.

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

2

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

Progress since the original audit:

- Interviews with case managers and programme tutors confirmed that there was a good working relationship between these staff.
- Case managers were attending the three-way post-programme review on a regular basis.
- Guidance had been issued to case managers concerning following up contact with offenders after session 14 and emphasising the requirement of attendance at session 22.

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

1

Description: *The case manager is responsible for preparing and motivating the offender prior to their participation on an accredited programme and for reinforcing learning during the programme.*

Progress since the original audit:

- The case files confirmed that case managers were attending to issues that might have prevented offenders' attendance at the programme, e.g. accommodation difficulties, benefit problems, etc.
- There was a lack of evidence of case managers reinforcing learning from the programme either by discussing an offender's progress or by assisting with any homework assignments.

D1.4 Understanding and knowledge of programme methods

1

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

Progress since the original audit:

- Case managers had a satisfactory level of understanding of the programme and its methods.
- The area had provided refresher training to some staff and written information about the content of sessions.
- Case files failed to demonstrate that supervisors were reinforcing offender learning on a consistent basis.

D1.5 Monitoring of attendance and enforcement

2

Description: *Responsibility for the monitoring of attendance and the enforcement of orders is clearly defined with appropriate systems in place. There is evidence of effective enforcement in all cases.*

Progress since the original audit:

- Senior managers had given a high priority to enforcement of orders generally since the original audit and this was the strongest result of the case file reading exercise.
- The pathfinder database enabled programme attendance to be carefully monitored.
- Offender absences were routinely recorded on the area's pathfinder system and effective enforcement practice was evident.

D1.6 Documentation

2

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

Progress since the original audit:

- The case files were well ordered and all relevant documentation had been completed.

D1.7 End of programme review

0

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

Progress since the original audit:

- This was the weakest aspect of the case file results.
- In interview case managers spoke positively about the value of post-programme reports but failed to use this information in formulating SMART objectives in supervision plan reviews.
- In a number of cases there was no supervision plan review.

D1.8 Reinforcement and relapse prevention work

N/A

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

Criterion not assessed at original audit.