



HM Inspectorate of Probation

AUDIT OF ACCREDITED PROGRAMMES

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

Report on:

North Yorkshire Probation Area – Think First

January 2002

Acknowledgements:

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

The audit team comprised:

Kate White	Alan MacDonald
Breda Leyne	<i>Audit Manager</i>
<i>Inspection and Audit Officers</i>	Frances Flaxington
Andy Bonny	HM <i>Deputy Chief Inspector of Probation</i>
<i>Deputy Audit Manager</i>	

Glossary

ACE	Assessment, Case Recording and Evaluation System
ACO	Assistant chief officer
CO	Chief officer
DTTO	Drug Treatment and Testing Order
HMIP	HM Inspectorate of Probation
IAPS	Interim Accredited Programmes Software
IQR	Implementation Quality Rating
LSI-R	Level of Service Inventory-Revised
N/A	Criteria not assessed
OASys	Offender Assessment System
OGRS 2	Offender Group Reconviction Scale
PSR	Pre-sentence report
SPO	Senior probation officer

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Context:

Programmes achieving accredited status have undergone a rigorous process of development and scrutiny to ensure they have maximum impact in terms of reducing reoffending. Selecting well-tested programmes is however only part of the picture – without effective implementation by probation areas much of the positive influence on offenders’ behaviour may be lost.

Establishing robust quality assurance systems and independent audit arrangements for accredited programmes is therefore crucial. HMIP is responsible for auditing accredited programmes on behalf of the Joint Accreditation Panel. Each probation area will be assessed against the delivery criteria given in the Performance Standards Manual June 2001, which also outlines how these criteria are to be met and evidenced.

Scoring Approach:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Overview:

- The audit comprised four main elements: assessment of advance information; observation of randomly selected videotaped programme sessions; case file reading; and interviews with staff and offenders.
- This audit report relates to one accredited general offending behaviour group work programme: Think First.
- North Yorkshire was running the programme from three sites – York, Scarborough and Harrogate. These were visited by HMIP and checks made on resources and facilities.
- Interviews were held with the ACO (programmes), information manager, effective practice and programme implementation manager and two treatment managers. Representatives of the following staff groups were also interviewed: programme tutors; case managers; and PSR writers. Three offenders at the Scarborough and four at the York sites were also interviewed.
- HMIP monitored a total of nine videos from three different Think First programmes, one programme from each of the three sites.
- Two of the audit criteria were not assessed: B4.3 was excluded because accreditation training for experienced tutors was not yet required by staff in North Yorkshire; and D1.8 because plans were awaited nationally for the accreditation of the Cognitive Skills Booster Programme to reinforce offender learning.

Findings:

The planning undertaken by the area for programme implementation had been thorough and thoughtful. It was noteworthy that North Yorkshire had accepted the challenge of an exacting What Works agenda and immersed itself in the implementation of accredited programmes as an area-wide priority. The involvement of all managers and staff in this was evident; there was a strong sense of ownership of the What Works agenda at all levels of the organisation, alongside a commitment to delivering a quality service to reduce reoffending.

Video observation of practice gave encouraging results at this stage, indicating a satisfactory standard of delivery with much promise for improvement in the future. There were some particularly pleasing results in the area of group work skills, testifying to the fact that North Yorkshire was fortunate to have some skilled practitioners who had already attained a high standard. An undoubted strength was that the principles of treatment management had built productively on pre-existing structures, especially the practice developer role. If the practice developer/treatment manager resource could be rolled out consistently across all the delivery sites, programme delivery would continue to be enhanced. Some further, more general, attention to developing a staff supervision and appraisal culture would also improve practice.

North Yorkshire had all the fundamental elements of sound programme work. However, there was some further effort needed to tighten role boundaries within the area's semi-specialist delivery and management model, and in refining the case manager role. Targeting needed to be more accurate, and monitoring and evaluation made more consistent.

Recommendations

The CO should ensure that the area:

- *draws up competency-based job descriptions which are programme specific and clarify roles and responsibilities of both managers and practitioners (A1.2);*
- *improves its written programme information for sentencers and liaison with judges in respect of Think First (A1.4);*
- *adopts a policy of delivering planned work to enhance programme-readiness amongst offenders who face delays to group work commencement (B2.4);*
- *improves the quality of its information for potential tutors, clarifies its procedures in relation to unsuccessful assessment centre candidates, and produces a tutor deselection policy (B3.1);*
- *provides required preparation and debriefing time for tutors (B3.3);*
- *gives additional input to case managers and PSR writers to further familiarise them with the model and content of the Think First programme (B4.4);*
- *effectively implements supervision and appraisal arrangements which include attention to the practice development of those involved in programmes (B5.1, B5.2);*
- *improves the accuracy and consistency of its targeting for Think First (B6.1);*
- *implements arrangements to commence evening and/or weekend programmes to make Think First accessible to employed offenders (B6.4);*
- *formulates a strategy for ongoing programme monitoring and evaluation (B7.1);*
- *improves the usage of end of programme reports by case managers supervising offenders, particularly their integration into supervision plan reviews (C1.6);*
- *produces a case management policy in relation to the case manager role of ongoing support and reinforcement of offender learning(D1.3).*

SECTION A: COMMITTED LEADERSHIP

A1.1 Committed leadership

2

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

Strengths:

- The Area Plan 2001/2004 contained clear statements prioritising the place of Think First.
- Three out of four senior managers had attended context setting events, and the CO had taken a lead role in presenting material to staff.
- Senior management business meeting minutes and What Works policy documentation evidenced a reasoned and planned approach to the holistic implementation of accredited programmes in the area.
- There was regular communication with the probation board about programme issues.
- Senior management commitment had been successfully communicated to staff at all levels and had done much to enhance wide ownership of Think First.

A1.2 Management structures

1

Description: *Effective line management structures exist for the proper operation of the programme integrating this within case management structures. Adequate time should be set aside for the effective management of the programme.*

Strengths:

- North Yorkshire had played to the strengths of its semi-specialist practitioner model and programme delivery had been integrated well into overall service delivery structures.
- The effective practice and programme implementation manager had carried out a comprehensive update of the Think First implementation plan in March 2001.
- Field division SPOs routinely had an appraisal objective relating to programme delivery.

Areas for improvement:

- Job descriptions existed for main programme-related staff roles, but they lacked a sufficient programme focus and were not all competency-based.
- The programme management task was divided between the effective practice and programme implementation manager, three unit SPOs, and the practice developers/treatment managers. The division of tasks was not always clear and some confusion had arisen in relation to shared areas of accountability.

A1.3 Staff ownership of the accredited programme

2

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

Strengths:

- Much laudable work had clearly been done in North Yorkshire, well in advance of programme implementation, to spread a whole-area ethos which gave priority and credence to the What Works agenda. This had encouraged staff commitment at all levels. Case managers routinely attended review sessions at the mid-way and end-points of the programme.
- The pattern of allocations to Think First was broadly consistent across the area.

Areas for improvement:

- Appropriate licence cases were not yet being actively and routinely considered as possible Think First allocations.

A1.4 Effective communication with sentencers

1

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

Strengths:

- On two occasions the area had been proactive in delivering training to every magistrates' bench in the area. This comprised general information about the What Works strategy, and more specific details of the Think First programme.
- What Works and programme issues had also been regularly included on the agenda of meetings with court clerks.

Areas for improvement:

- Plans to meet with judges had not materialised and there was therefore a potential lack of programme-specific knowledge amongst Crown Court sentencers.
- Whilst the benefits of offering input on programmes to advocates were recognised, this had not yet come to fruition.

SECTION B: PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

B1.1 Resources and facilities

2

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

Strengths:

- Delivery sites in Harrogate, Scarborough and York all had adequate facilities conforming to audit requirements.
- Group rooms were of sufficient size, with the smallest of them (Scarborough) designated as taking a maximum of ten group members.
- All the required equipment, such as suitable chairs, flipcharts and video cameras, had been provided.
- There were secure video storage facilities on each site.

Areas for improvement:

- The Harrogate premises were on the top floor and had no disabled access. There were also some concerns about security in view of the need for offender access up through the building.

B1.2 Provision of information leaflets about the programme

1

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

Strengths:

- Information sheets had been produced about Think First giving clear general information about the programme.
- There was evidence that these sheets were distributed to offenders, usually at the PSR stage, to staff in a training context, and to sentencers by being appended to reports.

Areas for improvement:

- The information sheet did not include details about diversity issues or complaints procedures. Separate leaflets covered these areas comprehensively, but offenders were not reliably receiving them.
- Written information was not customised for different audiences, but gave summary details for a generic readership including staff and sentencers. This meant issues specific to a particular group had not been highlighted or covered thoroughly.

B2.1 Managing attendance

1

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

Strengths:

- The management of attendance had been given considerable priority within the area and an awareness of issues relating to attrition had developed.
- The effective practice and programme implementation manager had carried out an exercise monitoring suitability of referrals between April and July 2001, and some scrutiny of OGRS 2 scores had arisen from this.
- A second PSR interview, with a tutor or treatment manager, had been introduced in some units in order to maximise offender commitment to Think First and reduce the likelihood of drop-out.

Areas for improvement:

- During early programmes some offenders had been offered more than two catch-up sessions, though the area had recently discontinued this practice, This was done in order to maintain offender numbers and group viability, but threatened programme integrity and was in contravention of the management manual.

B2.2 Avoidance of cancellation or disruption to sessions

2

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

Strengths:

- A calendar of dated sessions was routinely drawn up prior to the start of each programme, showing the running of sessions at the correct frequency.
- Tutors evidenced a strong understanding that issues such as offender crises had to be dealt with outside the confines of programme sessions, so as not to disrupt the group. HMIP observed this in videotaped sessions. This was especially commendable in view of a large number of drug misusing offenders, only some of whom had been stabilized by the input from a DTTO alongside their Think First provision.
- Treatment managers and unit SPOs often worked together to ensure reliable staffing levels and this had reduced the incidence of sessions having to be cancelled for reasons of staff non-availability.

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.*

Strengths:

- Adequate provision was made for catch-up sessions, with a named third tutor often delivering these at specified times.
- Offenders interviewed had a good level of awareness about the regulations relating to catch-ups, and about their operation.

Areas for improvement:

- The area had yet to begin routinely monitoring the integrity of catch-up sessions.

B2.4 Timeliness

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:

- Programme and treatment management staff demonstrated a clear understanding of the requirements for swift group commencement.

Areas for improvement:

- Whilst 74% (26 of 35) of applicable cases examined in the file read had psychometric tests administered within one month of order commencement, the group work element of Think First did not reliably follow quickly thereafter.
- During an early period of relatively low offender numbers, the area had operated a system of commissioning programmes once they had viable group size, rather than scheduling them on fixed dates well in advance. Inevitably this had led to delays for some offenders, as well as a lack of awareness on the part of staff and sentencers as to when subsequent programmes would begin.
- The case file read clearly showed that in 26% (9 of 35) of applicable cases which did not have timely commencements, none of them had records of any planned work being undertaken in the interim to enhance their programme readiness.
- There were no evening or weekend groups running, a clear additional restriction to timely group commencement.

B3.1 Staff selection

1

Description: *A staff selection procedure meeting the requirements of the programme manual is in place and only staff meeting the defined criteria are selected to deliver the programme.*

Strengths:

- The area had clearly stated its intention only to use trained staff for the programme delivery and case management tasks and had achieved this.
- Potential tutors were supplied with full written information about the application process and the requirements of the assessment centres. They were also invited to attend a coaching session to assist them with this.

Areas for improvement:

- Potential tutors received very little information, either verbally or in writing, informing them about Think First or about the tutor role.
- The area was not clear in its documentation about follow-up procedures in respect of candidates not selected to be tutors at the assessment centre.
- No written policy existed in relation to the deselection of tutors.

B3.2 Staff roles and competencies

0

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

Strengths:

- There was commitment on the part of semi-specialist staff holding a dual brief to sustaining a high standard of service delivery to offenders.

Areas for improvement:

- Job descriptions were not consistently competency-based, nor sufficiently related to the programme role.
- As noted above, semi-specialist staff were not always clear about defining and separating their core tasks in relation to Think First. This was especially true of tutors/case managers and tutors/treatment managers. This had led to confusion for some offenders and a dilution of treatment management input for programmes which had a treatment manager delivering in the tutor role.

B3.3 Preparation and debriefing time for tutors

0

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

Strengths:

- The recommended preparation and debriefing time was generally made available at the York site.

Areas for improvement:

- The dual role of tutor/case managers sometimes meant it was difficult for sufficient tutor time to be ring-fenced for this task, particularly at Harrogate and Scarborough. This was exacerbated by some tutors having to travel long distances and undertake preparation on the same day as delivery, requiring good time and workload management.
- Tutor time at the Harrogate and Scarborough sites was not always protected for preparation and debriefing.
- The role of unit SPOs and treatment managers in drawing up facilitative programme schedules was not uniform across the area and tutors were not always clear about the degree of their own autonomy in this area of work.

B3.4 Staff continuity

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:

- There was priority given to staff continuity, with sessions being delivered by two of three tutors and, where possible, at least one tutor leading each session who had been present at the previous one.
- At the York and Scarborough sites three named tutors were routinely scheduled when a programme was planned.

Areas for improvement:

- In Harrogate two tutors were named, with a general understanding that another Think First tutor would cover if needed. This was a more fragile arrangement, relying on availability and the goodwill of staff.
- Tutors were allocated to a specific site and there was little experience of mobility between delivery sites if this flexibility was required.

B4.1 Training arrangements for new staff

2

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

Strengths:

- All tutors had received the nationally recognised Think First training prior to running their first programme.
- The area had clear records of those reaching assessment centre and training stages.
- Practice developers/treatment managers were beginning to incorporate the individual training needs of staff into their ongoing supervision.

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

2

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

It was acknowledged that during year 1, all tutors nationally were deemed inexperienced in Think First. However, in North Yorkshire there were some tutors with valuable past experience of non-accredited programmes, as well as two members of staff who had become Think First trainers and therefore had an enhanced knowledge of the programme.

Strengths:

- Generally, tutors were paired appropriately according to their respective levels of experience of both Think First and also group work in general.

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.]*

There were no tutors in North Yorkshire who had reached the point of requiring accreditation training.

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

1

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

Strengths:

- All tutors had been trained and had also developed a high level of knowledge about the concepts and methods used in Think First.
- The area had produced a helpful pack for practitioners covering some of these areas.

Areas for improvement:

- The pack contained little specific information about Think First.
- Case managers and PSR writers conceded that they were less confident about their knowledge, in particular their lack of familiarity with programme content, which sometimes made them less able to carry out their respective roles.

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

2

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

Strengths:

- All staff involved in programme delivery in any capacity were well-versed in the theories underpinning Think First.
- Practitioners and managers were alert to the evidential base and demonstrated an awareness of the various areas of research which had informed this.
- It was to the area's credit that it had already collated, albeit from a small sample, some attitudinal change data from its own cases and had circulated these encouraging results to staff.

Areas for improvement:

- Some staff expressed concerns that their knowledge would quickly become outdated or stale without appropriate refresher training in this area.

B4.6 Supporting skills necessary to run programmes

1

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

Strengths:

- Some training in supporting skills, e.g motivational interviewing, was being made available.

Areas for improvement:

- As many tutors were new to programme delivery, they acknowledged a lack of core group work skills and believed their skill-base could usefully be expanded by further training in this area.
- The supervision and appraisal process did not always take training needs forward adequately.

B5.1 Staff supervision and quality of practice

0

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:

- Where supervision was delivered by treatment managers it was constructive, informed, and practice-focused, making good use of video material. Tutors receiving this were finding it helpful.

Areas for improvement:

- Regular supervision was not yet generally established in the area.
- Supervision was not always delivered at the required frequency by the programme and treatment managers.
- Unit SPOs were only just beginning to draw on information from the treatment management of their tutor/case manager staff, to inform their own supervision and appraisal work with those staff members.
- Tutors had no forum to meet in a group and discuss practice issues. Group/peer supervision amongst the area-wide tutor group had not been explored and was an untapped resource for practice development.

B5.2 Staff appraisal

0

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

Areas for improvement:

- A pattern of regular appraisal was not yet generally established in the area.
- Much work remained to be done in relation to the challenges of comprehensive appraisal of semi-specialist programme delivery staff. Sources of information about the development and progress of programme staff were not routinely collated to inform appraisal in a reliable way.
- Valuable information about staff practice and performance was being lost, rather than channelled to inform future developmental work. The area, therefore, lacked a reliable and complete profile of the training needs of its programme staff.

B6.1 Offender selection and assessment

0

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

Strengths:

- A PSR writers' pack included written information on exclusion criteria and a 'Think First Process Flowchart'. This was a helpful visual aid for staff, outlining the targeting and assessment stage of the process clearly.
- The area had latterly developed a database containing information on OGRS 2 scores to facilitate ongoing monitoring.
- Unit SPOs had developed an important role in sanctioning exceptional non-allocation of suitable cases to Think First, and the effective practice and programme implementation manager monitored this work.

Areas for improvement:

- Despite the use of the Think First targeting matrix, the profile of offenders undertaking the programme was not consistent with the requirements.
- Only 36% (13 of 36) of cases examined during the file read had OGRS 2 scores falling between the required 31-74%, or, if outside the target band, had a recorded explanation justifying allocation. 47% (17 of 36) of cases had OGRS 2 scores above 74%; 6% (2 of 36) fell below 31%. The remaining 11% (4 of 36) of cases had no OGRS 2 scores recorded.
- Although the area was latterly doing some monitoring of OGRS 2 scores, it had not yet put evaluation systems in place to analyse these data and inform changes to practice.

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.*

Strengths:

- Evidence from the file reading exercise showed that generally offenders were being informed about the programme, both verbally and in writing.
- Offender interviews showed a good level of knowledge about the programme model and attendance requirements.
- A statement of understanding was routinely signed by offenders prior to their participation on the group.
- An information sheet was distributed to offenders at the PSR stage.

B6.3 Group size

2

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

Strengths:

- Attendance registers showed that starting numbers were between four and 12 offenders.

- Any overbooking arrangements fell within appropriate parameters and did not risk over-large groups starting.

B6.4 Accessibility of group work programmes

1

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

Strengths:

- Accessibility to group work for minority ethnic and female offenders was established in North Yorkshire.
- Senior managers had made useful contacts in adjacent probation areas with a view to accessing all-women groups or groups for minority ethnic offenders if necessary.
- When the possible singleton placement of minority ethnic or female offenders was being considered, case managers and tutors shared an appropriate dialogue with each other and with the offenders concerned.
- There were examples of cases where supportive arrangements had been put in place to avoid offender isolation within groups.

Areas for improvement:

- It was a cause for concern that the lack of evening and weekend groups excluded many employed offenders from Think First.

B7.1 Implementation of monitoring and evaluation design

1

Description: *Interview and observation show that monitoring and evaluation arrangements are working as intended and are understood and supported by all staff involved. This should include both input and feedback of data to managers and practitioners at local level.*

Strengths:

- In the absence of IAPS, there had been some small-scale and focused attempts to monitor aspects of programme work, and latterly the establishment of a database to facilitate ongoing monitoring.

Areas for improvement:

- Staff were not receiving monitoring and evaluation data regularly. A feedback loop in relation to programme information had not yet been firmly established.

B7.2 Practice is informed by monitoring and evaluation evidence

1

Description: *Consistent use is made of evaluation information as it becomes available by those with most direct responsibility, e.g. managers giving regular consideration to attendance and completion information, practitioners to offender feedback and attitude/behaviour change scores. Awareness/knowledge about evaluation results from the same programme operating elsewhere will be relevant.*

Strengths:

- The ACO (programmes) was giving regular feedback to the board, although this was not always based on empirical data.

Areas for improvement:

- There was no established forum, as noted under B5.1, for tutors across the area to discuss issues of relevance arising from data collected, e.g. in relation to offender feedback and psychometric test results.

SECTION C: QUALITY OF PROGRAMME DELIVERY

C1.1 Adherence to programme manual

1

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

Strengths:

- Programme delivery staff had a theoretical understanding of programme integrity and the need for adherence to the programme manual.
- The component parts of sessions were delivered in the correct order.

Areas for improvement:

- In practice, some additional elements were added to sessions, which threatened programme integrity.
- Exercises were not always explained clearly.
- There was a loss of focus on the objectives of some sessions.

C1.2 Adherence to treatment style

1

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

Strengths:

- There was an impressive eliciting by tutors of self-motivating statements on the part of offenders.
- Tutors demonstrated a clear awareness of responsivity issues within the group setting.
- There was skilled use of video and role-play work to encourage some positive learning.

Areas for improvement:

- Tutors adopted an overly didactic style in places.
- Open questions were not sufficiently used and therefore tutors did not always draw out helpful responses.

C1.3 Group work skills

1

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

Strengths:

- There were encouraging examples of good co-working between tutors.
- Tutors successfully fostered a positive working atmosphere for offender learning within sessions.

Areas for improvement:

- There was insufficient use of praise.
-

- There were some group management problems posed by both resistant and quiet group members.

C1.4 Programme delivered addressing race equality and diversity issues

2

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

Strengths:

- Programme and treatment managers were alert to issues of diversity in programme management, e.g. attempts were made to schedule tutors so that there was a gender balance whenever possible.
- There were some examples of tutors firmly and effectively challenging racist and sexist comments made by offenders.
- Tutors were alert to issues of gender, race and cultural diversity, and gave examples of having appropriately adapted session material to reflect these.
- Group rules were drawn up with guidance from tutors to emphasise that sexist and racist behaviour were prohibited in sessions.

Areas for improvement:

- There was no policy in relation to diversity issues in their application to programme work.

C1.5 Programme integrity checklist

2

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

Strengths:

- Tutors were routinely completing programme integrity checklists as part of their debrief following each session. These were stored at each delivery site.

Areas for improvement:

- Tutors tended towards overgenerous scoring in their self-assessment.

C1.6 End of programme summary reports

1

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

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

Strengths:

- The small sample of reports seen contained all the required component elements and provided a comprehensive summary.

Areas for improvement:

- The end of programme report did not have an established place in North Yorkshire's programme work and had limited impact on shaping the supervision which followed. Case managers had not been consulted about the accessibility and user-friendliness of the report format.
- End of programme reports had not been completed on all cases.

SECTION D: CASE MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

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

2

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

Strengths:

- Programme-specific objectives were set in the case of most offenders.
- Initial supervision plans integrated programme work appropriately into the overall plan of work.
- Case managers made use of relevant assessment information to shape supervision plans appropriately.
- Plans were regularly reviewed, within the required national standards timescales.

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

1

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

Strengths:

- Records evidenced regular contact between case managers and tutors about attendance and engagement by offenders at programme sessions.
- Case managers were committed to attending not only the closing review at session 22 of Think First, but also the mid-way review at session 14.

Areas for improvement:

- The area had not always avoided allocating an offender to a case manager who was also tutoring the group of which the offender was part. This had led to a blurring of the boundary between the two roles, differential service being delivered to offenders and, on occasion, confusion on the part of offenders.
- Those staff in the dual role of tutor/case manager were not always fully recording details of offender progress on the case record.

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

0

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

Strengths:

- Case records and interviews with staff attested to helpful reactive intervention on the part of case managers in instances of offender crises or attendance problems.
- Pre-programme sessions were being delivered reliably by case managers.

Areas for improvement:

- The area did not have in place a policy relating to the frequency of contact and content of supervision by case managers during the group work element of Think First.

- There was little proactive work on the part of case managers to promote engagement and learning by offenders during their attendance at the group.
- There was no reinforcement of offender learning by case managers, because of the lack of a structure for supervision and limited familiarisation with the content and model of the programme.
- Case managers, including those with tutor responsibilities, expressed a lack of confidence about their delivery of *post-programme* sessions.

D1.4 Understanding and knowledge of programme methods

1

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

Strengths:

- Case manager/tutors demonstrated an enhanced level of programme knowledge and were confident about carrying out relevant follow-up work.

Areas for improvement:

- Those case managers who were not also tutors had less understanding of programme methods and content and many were not able confidently to undertake appropriate reinforcement or relapse prevention work.
- Case manager/tutors were not always explicit in their recording of follow-up work undertaken with offenders.

D1.5 Monitoring of attendance and enforcement

1

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

Strengths:

- There was much documentary and practice evidence of considerable input to the improvement of enforcement practice in the North Yorkshire area, particularly since mid-2001.
- Staff were clear about their responsibilities for enforcement and most cases were dealt with appropriately in respect of the recording of attendance and the timeliness of warning letters and breach action.

Areas for improvement:

- Area policy documentation on enforcement dated from 1999 and had not been revised to incorporate issues of programme attendance and non-compliance.

D1.6 Documentation

1

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

Strengths:

- Evidence from the file read showed that 67% (24 of 36) of case files contained all the relevant documentation for the stage of the programme reached by those offenders.

Areas for improvement:

- Statements of understanding were not always stored on the case file and/or were not always signed by offenders.
- Evaluation and monitoring forms were sometimes missing.
- Post-programme reports were not reliably on file for applicable cases.

D1.7 End of programme review

1

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

Strengths:

- Supervision plan reviews contained some SMART objectives linked to programme work.

Areas for improvement:

- Supervision plan reviews did not incorporate the post-programme report in pointing to subsequent work linked with Think First.
- In some cases, little attention was paid in the supervision plan review to work on community reintegration in the post-programme phase.

D1.8 Reinforcement and relapse prevention work

N/A

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

This criterion is assessed as not applicable due to the non-availability of booster programmes at this stage.

Next Steps

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

Level 1 follow-up

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

Level 2 follow-up

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

Level 3 follow-up

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

North Yorkshire Probation Area achieved an IQR of 60% and is a **level 2 area**. A limited follow-up audit will be carried out in one year's time. The area should pay particular attention to mandatory items, which have not been fully met.

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