



HM Inspectorate of Probation

AUDIT OF ACCREDITED PROGRAMMES

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

*Report on:
Wiltshire Probation Area – Think First*

July 2002

Acknowledgements:

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

The audit team comprised:

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

Glossary

ACE	Assessment, Case Recording and Evaluation System
ACO	Assistant chief officer
ART	Aggression Replacement Training
CO	Chief officer
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
NPD	National Probation Directorate
OASys	Offender Assessment System
OGRS	Offender Group Reconviction Scale
PO	Probation officer
PSO	Probation service officer
PSR	Pre-sentence report
SPO	Senior probation officer
TPO	Trainee probation officer

Contents

	Page
Context:	4
Scoring Approach:	4
Overview:	5
Findings:	6
SECTION A: COMMITTED LEADERSHIP	7
SECTION B: PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES	9
SECTION C: QUALITY OF PROGRAMME DELIVERY	18
SECTION D: CASE MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES	21
Next Steps:	24
Scoring summary sheet:	25

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 2002, 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 visit to the Wiltshire Probation Area was conducted during May 2002.
- Wiltshire had run the Think First programme on two sites since April 2001. The area had a history of programme delivery and development having been the pathfinder area for the ART accredited programme and had run the McGuire Offending Behaviour Programme prior to the accreditation of Think First.
- The audit comprised four main stages: the provision of advance information; video monitoring; case file reading; and a visit to the area.
- A wide-range of staff involved in the support and delivery of Think First were interviewed including the ACO for What Works, the information manager, programme administrator, programme manager, treatment supervisor, tutors, case managers, court and supervision team managers and PSR writers. Visits were made to both delivery sites and interviews conducted with seven offenders.
- Nine videotapes from five programmes were assessed and 36 case files from three programmes examined.
- Two criteria were not assessed – B4.3 and D1.8. Most tutors were relatively new in post and booster training for Think First had not yet been made available in the region (B4.3); and accreditation of the Cognitive Skills Booster Programme was still awaited (D1.8).
- This audit focused entirely on Think First.

Findings:

The Wiltshire Probation Area had planned carefully for the implementation of Think First. Senior managers had paid close attention to staffing issues, resolving difficulties and generating their support for the programme in the process. Staff selection, training and supervision all reflected the priority given and there was evident respect and good liaison between staff groups and managers.

One of the most significant areas for improvement was the development and use of monitoring information to enhance performance. This had been delayed by the area's reliance on IAPS and managers were only just beginning to establish alternative information systems. Effective case management was also critical and Wiltshire needed to define more clearly the case manager's role in supporting offenders undertaking programmes, both during and after completion of the group work element. Further attention was also required to ensure the accessibility of Think First to all offenders and the development of staff skills in support of this.

Recommendations

The CO should ensure that the area:

- *reviews its Think First documentation so that current procedures are accessible to and understood by all staff (A1.1);*
- *schedules the programme to enable offenders to start within a month of the commencement of their orders or licences (B2.4);*
- *writes job descriptions for all programme staff linking them to a defined set of core competencies which meet national requirements (B3.2);*
- *informs relevant staff about the methods and evidential basis of the programme and provides training in supporting skills (B4.4, B4.5, B4.6);*
- *completes staff appraisals in line with its policy (B5.2);*
- *increases access to Think First for women and minority ethnic offenders (B6.4);*
- *develops its monitoring and evaluation systems to provide timely information for managers and staff (B7.1);*
- *gives greater attention to the delivery skills of tutors in order to enhance their performance (C1.1, C1.2, C1.3);*
- *provides opportunities for staff to develop their practice and share strategies which promote diversity and support programme delivery to women and minority ethnic offenders (C1.4);*
- *integrates case management with programme delivery so that offenders are fully supported throughout their supervision and provided with opportunities to reinforce learning during the programme (D1.3);*
- *makes full use of post-programme reports and sets SMART objectives in supervision plan reviews (D1.7).*

The NPD should ensure that:

- *a post-programme report format, which explicitly addresses the areas of risk assessment and likely scenarios for relapse, is provided (C1.6).*

SECTION A: COMMITTED LEADERSHIP

A1.1 Committed leadership

1

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

Strengths:

- Wiltshire's Business Plan for 2002/2003 identified the delivery of accredited programme completions as an improvement objective.
- Implementation plans published in January 2001 demonstrated that detailed attention had been given to planning and preparation for Think First.
- Senior managers had given appropriate attention to providing the necessary staffing and resources required by the programme.

Areas for improvement:

- The area's business plan referred to accredited programmes in general and did not specify Think First as its key general offending behaviour programme.
- Discussions with managers and staff revealed incremental changes and developments in the implementation of Think First which were not reflected in recent documentation.

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:

- An organisational chart set out the management structure for the programme and lines of accountability were evident.
- Staff roles and line management structures within the programmes team were clearly designated and understood.
- The area had embarked on a programme of change with a view to improving its organisational structures and achieving national requirements including those for accredited programmes.

Areas for improvement:

- The organisational structure at management level did not facilitate integration between all those with functional or divisional responsibilities which affected programme delivery.
- Job descriptions had not been developed for all staff involved in the delivery or support of the programme.

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:

- A cross-grade effective practice development group had recently been established to progress the integration of programme delivery throughout the area. Its first task had been to review Wiltshire's targeting matrix and develop guidelines for staff.
-

- The majority of staff interviewed expressed their commitment to the programme and the file reading exercise demonstrated 100% attendance by case managers at the post-programme review.
- Senior managers were beginning to aggregate data on individual staff performance in relation to programme proposals. They were aware of limited usage in one part of the area and described action taken to address this.
- Most middle managers and POs had attended a context setting day.

A1.4 Effective communication with sentencers

2

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

Strengths:

- The area had actively promoted Think First to magistrates through a one day conference and the Wiltshire Probation Area Bulletin. A leaflet for sentencers had also been distributed.
- Further attention to the programme was planned through regular presentations to bench meetings and at the next annual conference for magistrates.

Areas for improvement:

- The area had yet to fully evaluate whether information provided to magistrates had effectively informed sentencing practice.

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.*

Visits were made to the area's two programme delivery sites in Swindon and Trowbridge.

Strengths:

- Both sites provided group rooms of adequate size for 12 offenders, with access to break out facilities when necessary.
- The rooms contained all the equipment specified in the Performance Standards Manual.
- Secure video storage facilities were provided.

Areas for improvement:

- Some of the videotapes assessed were of poor sound quality but the area advised that this had now been remedied.

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:

- There was a set of information leaflets for offenders, sentencers and staff each describing Think First and its requirements.

Areas for improvement:

- The leaflet for offenders did not contain information about the complaints procedure or explain the consequences of failing to comply.
- Information for case managers contained inaccurate targeting scores.

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.*

Strengths:

- Wiltshire's enforcement and case management policies clearly set out the responsibilities of all operational staff in relation to programme attendance.
- The case file reading exercise and programme registers demonstrated strong levels of recording of programme attendance and enforcement in accordance with national standards timescales.
- Resources had been devoted to providing transport services to ensure that offenders could attend programme sessions.

Areas for improvement:

- Completion rates for the programme were insufficient to meet the national target and the area had yet to develop a strategy as to how these rates could be enhanced.

B2.2 Avoidance of cancellation or disruption to sessions

1

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 timetable had been produced and circulated to all staff, identifying the dates, venues and times of all new programmes up to May 2002. Additional planning was underway for the rest of the year.
- The frequency of sessions scheduled conformed to the requirements of the programme manual.
- Three tutors were allocated to each programme to provide contingency arrangements.

Areas for improvement:

- There was evidence from the case files of sessions being postponed in three programmes due, in some part, to staff training commitments.

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.*

The area had adopted a catch-up rather than a 'bus stop' approach to missed programme sessions.

Strengths:

- Catch-ups were scheduled to take place immediately prior to the next session. Occasionally these were provided individually to offenders whose employment made it difficult to attend immediately prior to the next session even though this required an extra time commitment from the tutor.
- Recording of catch-up sessions was excellent.
- All catch-up sessions were videotaped for review as required.

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:

- The programmes team draft plan for 2002/2003 required the SPO and programme coordinator to address the requirements of timeliness in Think First schedules.

Areas for improvement:

- Only four of the 36 cases reviewed started the programme within the first month of the order.
- Evidence of legitimate reasons for delaying programme commencement was minimal.

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.*

Strengths:

- Staff selection procedures were clearly set out in the Think First implementation plan and only those who had successfully completed the assessment centre and training were allowed to deliver the programme.
- Comprehensive information about selection was provided to candidates and all tutors interviewed were satisfied that they had been appropriately informed about what would be involved in running Think First.

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:

- Within the programmes team staff and managers understood their own role as well as those of others and were clear about their areas of responsibility.
- There was a job profile for the treatment supervisor which explicitly stated his key responsibilities and a draft job description for PSO programme tutors.

Areas for improvement:

- Job descriptions for most staff, including that of the programme manager, were generic and did not reflect their programme responsibilities.
- Core competencies relating to the programme had not been written.

B3.3 Preparation and debriefing time for tutors

1

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

Strengths:

- Programme tutors stated that they were allowed and took the required preparation and debriefing time for each session delivered. This was confirmed by the treatment supervisor.

Areas for improvement:

- There was limited recorded evidence of the amount of time spent by tutors on preparation and debriefing.

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:

- Three tutors were normally assigned to each programme and consideration was being given to adding a further member of staff for contingency purposes.

Areas for improvement:

- Information from one delivery site demonstrated that, although tutor continuity from one session to another was usually achieved, this had not always been the case and, in some instances, there had been five or six tutors involved in running a group.

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:

- Records showed that training had been provided for all grades of staff involved in programme delivery. Further events for Think First were being built into the current year's training plan.
- Tutors, case managers and PSR writers confirmed that they had received the appropriate training.

Areas for improvement:

- The area acknowledged the need to provide training for administrative staff and newly appointed PSOs.

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

1

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

Strengths:

- The need to pair new staff with experienced colleagues was recognised. When it had not been possible to do this, the treatment supervisor had taken a full part in planning and had monitored more programme delivery sessions to ensure programme integrity.
- New tutors confirmed that they were well supported in programme delivery.

Areas for improvement:

- Staffing shortages in the programmes team had meant that a number of new staff had recently joined the team and the area was beginning to plan for the inclusion of TPOs in programme delivery. This posed practical difficulties in scheduling new staff with experienced colleagues, which had not always been achieved.

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.]*

The majority of programme tutors in Wiltshire had not yet reached this stage. Furthermore booster training was not yet available in this region. Therefore this criterion has not been assessed.

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 staff interviewed had a satisfactory understanding of the programme objectives, model and the concepts used.
- All tutors had been assessed as competent to deliver the programme.
- The treatment supervisor had circulated to all staff a brief overview of each programme session.

Areas for improvement:

- Case managers had insufficient knowledge of the methods used in the programme and expressed their need to develop this.

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.*

Strengths:

- All staff interviewed were familiar with the theoretical base of the programme sufficient for their role in programme delivery.

Areas for improvement:

- The evidential basis of Think First did not appear to have been fully grasped by all staff. There was a clear need to build on this to ensure that staff understood the reasons for using this programme.

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:

- New PSOs were engaged in a three month general induction programme which included visits to different service delivery sites to familiarise themselves with the area and its work.
- Supervision notes for programme tutors showed that training needs and opportunities were discussed.
- Video monitoring observation forms set development objectives for tutors.
- The treatment supervisor's job description included the responsibility to assist the line manager in identifying the tutor's training and development needs.

Areas for improvement:

- Additional training in staff supervision skills had not been provided for the treatment supervisor.
- A number of tutors were new to their role and had not had the opportunity to access training in motivational interviewing, presentational or group work skills.

B5.1 Staff supervision and quality of practice

2

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

Strengths:

- Supervision of programme delivery was undertaken at the frequency required by the national management manual and more was provided for less experienced tutors.
- Notes from supervision and video monitoring forms demonstrated that attention was being paid to tutor development needs.
- In addition to regular supervision associated with the programme, fortnightly meetings for tutors and administrative staff had been established to develop and share good practice.
- Line management supervision took place at least monthly for all tutors and it was evident that programme delivery issues were appropriately integrated.

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.*

Strengths:

- There was an annual appraisal system in place for all staff and a standard performance planning document had been developed for PSO tutors. This established key functions and performance criteria, which were a close match to the competencies set out in the national management manual.

Areas for improvement:

- Whilst a number of programme staff, including the programme manager, were relatively new in post and appraisals had not yet been prepared, there was no evidence to show that these had been produced for more experienced staff in the previous year.
- There was no policy or written procedure for deselection of staff who failed to maintain the required standards or improve their performance.

B6.1 Offender selection and assessment

2

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:

- Of the case files examined 72% of offenders referred to the programme fell within the correct OGRS 2 banding.

- Written guidance on targeting and referral was included in the Think First implementation plan. A review of the targeting matrix and further development of practice guidelines were being undertaken by the effective practice development group at the time of the audit.
- The area had prioritised the need for PSR writers to record the OGRS 2 score on all referrals and this had been achieved by March 2002.
- It was evident that there were open channels of communication between members of the programmes team and those making referrals and a culture of consultation both ways.
- The treatment manager read all PSRs to ascertain the suitability of referrals and monitor those excluded.

Areas for improvement:

- Of those cases not within the OGRS 2 band (28%), the majority scored above 74% with no additional structured work identified.

B6.2 Offender knowledge and understanding of the programme requirements

1

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

Strengths:

- Most offenders (81% of the sample) had the requirements of Think First explained to them on at least one occasion.
- Case managers described how they used the programme information sheet and statement of understanding to communicate requirements to offenders and gave a full account of what would be expected of them.

Areas for improvement:

- Only seven of the 36 cases reviewed could show that these requirements had been communicated to the offender verbally and in writing on two separate occasions.

B6.3 Group size

1

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:

- Although there was a limited amount of overbooking, no groups had started with more than 12 offenders during the previous year.

Areas for improvement:

- Two groups had started with less than four offenders and one of these continued to completion.

B6.4 Accessibility of group work programmes

0

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

Strengths:

- The area had recently established an equal opportunities service delivery steering group with a remit to ensure the inclusion of black offenders in What Works developments.
- There was an understanding amongst staff that women and minority ethnic offenders should not be placed as singleton participants on the programme without their specific agreement.

Areas for improvement:

- There was no written policy on the placement of women or minority ethnic offenders on the Think First programme.
- Whilst the area had achieved a gender balance in the programmes team, it had not succeeded in attracting minority ethnic staff.
- Only six women and five offenders from a minority ethnic background had accessed the programme during the last year.

B7.1 Implementation of monitoring and evaluation design

0

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

Strengths:

- In the absence of reporting tools from IAPS senior managers had recently begun to gather information relating to programme performance. Following a drive to ensure full recording of OGRS 2 scores, the focus was moving towards individual disposals, accredited programme caseload by officer and concordance rates. This was just beginning to take effect.
- Systems were in place to collect the information required by the NPD.
- The area had set up an information database for staff on Lotus Notes.

Areas for improvement:

- The area had no written policy, guidelines or procedures for monitoring and evaluation.
- Senior managers recognised the need to aggregate and interrogate the available information to identify areas for further attention. This might include PSR proposals and concordance rates for Think First, as well as more detailed examination of programme attendance and drop-out, which could inform strategies to enhance completion.
- Discussions with programmes staff and case managers indicated that the information fed back to them on programme performance was limited and access to the feedback was not well 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:

- Senior managers had used the information available to amend targeting criteria and improve guidance.
- The timing and location of delivery of Think First had been influenced by programme monitoring.

Areas for improvement:

- Beyond referrals, commencements and completions there was limited aggregated information on programme performance, which could be used to inform practice.
- Evidence of considering programme evaluation results from other areas was not apparent.
- The area had no strategy to promote sharing and use of information to inform and improve practice.

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:

- Tutors delivered programme material in the correct order.
- Inappropriate extras were not added in the majority of videos.

Areas for improvement:

- Five of the nine videos monitored scored less than satisfactory in setting up and running exercises correctly and there were examples of exercises being slightly changed or abbreviated.
- The timing of exercises was not satisfactory, some were too long while others too short, occasionally resulting in insufficient time to complete the session. Three sessions were too short altogether.
- There was insufficient checking out of offenders' learning.

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:

- Open questioning scored well, with seven of the nine videos achieving a satisfactory or good standard.
- The majority of videos reached at least a satisfactory level in making links within and between sessions.

Areas for improvement:

- There were instances of tutors talking too much or being too ready to answer their own questions rather than listening and allowing for answers. This resulted in offenders being given insufficient opportunity to validate ideas for themselves or express self-motivating statements.
- Tutors did not always summarise exercises or the learning achieved.

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:

- Appropriate language, clarity of speech and judicious use of praise were evident.
- All offenders were involved and groups were managed well.
- Seven of the nine videos monitored demonstrated a satisfactory or good level of co-working.

Areas for improvement:

- There was room for improvement in the quality of introductions and endings to exercises.

C1.4 Programme delivered addressing race equality and diversity issues

0

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 operational staff appeared sensitive to diversity issues and described how they tried to address them on a case-by-case basis.

Areas for improvement:

- Staff had no shared strategies or practice guidance to help them in their delivery of Think First to women or minority ethnic offenders, or to promote diversity.
- Some guidance was needed on programme delivery to those with literacy difficulties and for travellers who resided in the area.
- Comments made on the case file monitoring forms indicated a lack of follow-through on issues raised relating to women offenders and sexist comments made by a male participant.

C1.5 Programme integrity checklist

1

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

Strengths:

- Tutors had completed session evaluation forms relating to their own performance.
- Session registers were filled in after each session and a full account of individual offender participation was entered directly onto the contact log by the programme tutor. If necessary this was also e-mailed to the case manager for early attention.

Areas for improvement:

- Tutors' self-assessments demonstrated little critical evaluation and a tendency to overestimate their own performance.

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:

- Post-programme reports were usually prepared within 15 days of programme completion and sent electronically to case managers.
- Reports were detailed, written in plain language and identified remaining treatment objectives for future supervision.
- Case managers valued the reports.

Areas for improvement:

- The reports did not include an assessment of risk or specifically identify likely scenarios for relapse.
- Tutors said that, on occasion, it had not been possible to provide the post-programme report in time for the three way meeting.

SECTION D: CASE MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

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.*

Strengths:

- Of the cases reviewed, 27 of the 36 cases demonstrated full or part integration of the programme within the overall plan of work in the initial supervision plan.
- There was some evidence of assessment using a recognised tool in 75% of case files read.

Areas for improvement:

- Despite the helpful format of the supervision plan, only nine cases were considered to have fully SMART objectives in relation to Think First.
- There was insufficient evidence of objectives being regularly reviewed.

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.*

Strengths:

- Case managers had attended the post-programme three-way meeting in all relevant cases reviewed.
- There were good communication channels between programmes staff, case managers and PSR writers.

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

0

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

Strengths:

- Case managers were clear about the requirements to conduct the pre-programme sessions and to undertake motivational work prior to offender participation on the programme. In some cases pre-programme work was being repeated to take account of time delays in starting the programme.

Areas for improvement:

- There was no formal requirement that case managers maintain contact with offenders during their attendance at group work sessions.
 - Only seven cases reviewed showed that the case manager had undertaken all of the pre-programme work with the offender.
 - There was insufficient ongoing work and only two cases in the sample recorded any evidence of attention to reinforcement of offender learning.
-

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:

- All case managers and PSR writers interviewed had received appropriate training for Think First and were able to identify concepts and the overall aims and objectives of the programme.

Areas for improvement:

- There was a need to provide case managers and PSR writers with more information on programme content and methods. This was identified by staff themselves.

D1.5 Monitoring of attendance and enforcement

2

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

Strengths:

- The case files demonstrated that programme attendance was monitored against other attendance requirements in a consistent and integrated way in all but a few cases.
- Enforcement action took place within the agreed national standards timescales in the majority of instances.
- The area's enforcement and case management policies provided clear guidelines for enforcement action and identified staff responsibilities.

D1.6 Documentation

1

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

Strengths:

- All but four case files reviewed had most of the relevant documentation on file.

Areas for improvement:

- Some case files were incomplete at the time of the audit. This was due mainly to staff pruning files, particularly those on multiple orders.
- The statement of understanding was not always present in the case file.

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.*

Areas for improvement:

- Despite the assertions of case managers that post-programme reports were invaluable, there was only limited evidence from case files that they influenced the supervision plan review.
- Only one relevant case demonstrated fully SMART objectives linked to post-programme work in the 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.*

This criterion has not been assessed. Wiltshire was awaiting the development of a Cognitive Skills Booster Programme to reinforce learning.

Next Steps

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

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

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

IQR score

The Wiltshire Probation Area achieved an IQR of **54%**.

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