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# Probation offending behaviour programmes – effective practice guide

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## Probation offending behaviour programmes – effective practice guide

The Home Office and the National Probation Directorate are aiding the development of accredited offending behaviour programmes to be administered both in prisons and by probation areas. These programmes are predominantly based on cognitive-behavioural principles, and are designed for both one-to-one and group work with offenders. A number of these programmes are being independently evaluated both before and after accreditation. From the initial stages of the evaluation evidence of good practice has been identified.

The general effective practice guide has been developed from a review of the elements of identified good practice and this information is presented here.

Individual effective practice guides are available for each programme and the following are general points drawn from the individual guides. It is suggested that the following should be read alongside the individual guide for the specific programme that is going to be implemented.

From the pilot projects, a number of important issues have emerged as being pertinent to effective practice implementation and delivery of programmes within areas. These are summarised below:

### Planning for implementation

- It is important to develop a coherent implementation plan at an early stage.
- The plan should cover major areas such as organisational structures, communication and feedback systems, staffing levels and training, staff support and supervision provisions, procedures to ensure effective referral and training, procedures to facilitate programme integrity, and the provision of appropriate accommodation.
- If there is a partnership arrangement with an external agency, the roles, responsibilities, skills and competencies of the two agencies should be clearly outlined within the structural plan.

### Good communication systems

- Good communication systems both within the areas and between partnership organisations and the areas are crucial.

- These should aim to inform all staff within the area and partnership agency about the programme, pass information quickly and on a regular basis, and inform staff of both local and national developments.
- It is particularly important to set up good communication pathways for partnership organisations that do not have a direct link to the Home Office or the National Probation Directorate.

### Staff supervision and support

- It is important to maintain a high level of staff support and supervision in order to deliver, monitor and evaluate the programmes effectively.
- Both middle and higher level managers need to offer appropriate, consistent and reliable methods of support and maintain a high level of responsibility for the accountability, monitoring and evaluation of the programme. Provisions need to be put in place for this support to work effectively both within the area and between the area and other partnership organisations.

### Staffing levels

- These should be decided at area level depending on the demand for the programme and how the area is implementing the programme.

### Staff training

- All tutors should be fully trained in the programme, as should those responsible for ensuring the integrity of the programme.
- Staff managing the programmes should attend context-setting days, which highlight the main aspects of the programme.
- All staff should subscribe fully to the model behind the programme and its methods.
- Further training needs of staff should be monitored.

### Administrative staff

- Tutors should be given adequate administrative support to prepare for the programme sessions and to collect monitoring data.

*Home Office Development and Practice Reports draw out from research the messages for practice development, implementation and operation. They are intended as guidance for practitioners in specific fields. The recommendations explain how and why changes could be made, based on the findings from research, which would lead to better practice.*

## Referral and targeting

- There are explicit targeting criteria for the programmes that should be strictly adhered to.
- All staff involved in the programme should be aware of these targets and processes put in place to ensure they are applied correctly.

## Programme integrity and monitoring

- Monitoring information needs to be routinely collected and used to inform programme integrity.
- All sessions should be videotaped or audio taped and the treatment manager should review at least 10 per cent of the tapes.
- A feedback mechanism should be put in place to provide constructive feedback to tutors on their sessions.

## Accommodation

- Appropriate accommodation for the programme sessions should be provided. This should take account of the need to videotape sessions.

## Programme summaries

### Aggression Replacement Training Programme

The *Aggression Replacement Training Programme* (ART) is an offending behaviour programme that is an adapted version of a programme initially developed in the United States of America. Wiltshire Probation Area has since modified the contents to be suitable for adult offenders after consultation with Professor Goldstein and Professor John Gibbs. Programme sessions are 'multi-modal' in combining three elements: social skills training, self-control training and training in moral reasoning, into an integrated design. There are ready-made structured learning exercises (e.g. role-play scenarios) for each aspect of the programme.

From the pilot projects, a number of important issues emerged as being pertinent to the effective implementation of the ART programme. These are summarised below:

- **Planning for implementation:** a coherent implementation plan should be developed that sets out how the programme will be incorporated into the area. This plan should consider such wide-ranging issues as those noted below.
- **Good communication systems:** Effective communication is vital to ensure the smooth running of the programme. Mechanisms of communication between all levels of staff within the area need to be established and adhered to.
- **Staffing levels:** The level of staffing should be determined within the area and will depend on demand for the programme and the chosen organisational structures.
- **Staff training:** All tutors, as a minimum, should have received the training provided by the Probation Unit for the effective running of the Aggression Replacement Training programme and staff should also attend Booster Training sessions throughout the delivery of the programme. A method of ongoing monitoring of staff training needs should be established and maintained.
- **Administrative staff:** Administrative staff should support the tutors in the preparation of programme sessions and the collection of monitoring information and staffing levels should be appropriate.
- **Referral and targeting:** The referral and targeting guidelines set out within the Aggression Replacement Training programme manuals should be strictly adhered to. Staff at all stages in the programme delivery should be aware of these guidelines. It should be clear that domestic violence offences raise issues other than those touched upon by the ART programme and consequently the perpetrators of such offences should be provided with alternative provision.
- **Programme integrity and monitoring:** The videotaping of all programme sessions should be ensured throughout the running of all programme blocks and these tapes should be routinely monitored in order to develop good practice. In addition, monitoring information including psychometrics, registers and feedback forms should be routinely completed, collected and recorded in the appropriate manner.
- **Accommodation and materials:** Appropriate accommodation should be provided for the running of the programme and should take account of the need to videotape sessions. Additional materials that are deemed to be necessary for the running of the programme (e.g. flipcharts and OHPs) should also be made readily available to tutors.

## ASRO

The ASRO (*Addressing Substance-Related Offending*) programme is an offending behaviour programme commissioned by the Pathfinder Unit and is a community-based group intervention for use with offenders who have a major problem of substance abuse linked to their pattern of offending behaviour. The theory manual sets out a rationale for the use of the methods and outlines the framework of the programme and is described as a *bio-psychosocial developmental* model and integrates findings from a wide range of background research. The programme consists of four stages of activity depicted in the manual as follows: (1) Motivation of offenders to change; (2) The personal scientist; (3) Relapse prevention; and (4) Lifestyle modification. These stages are used to address a range of targets including self-control, problem solving, and maintenance of change.

From the pilot projects, a number of important issues emerged as being pertinent to the effective implementation of the ASRO programme. These are summarised below:

- **Administrative staff:** Administrative staff should support the tutors in the preparation of programme sessions and the collection of monitoring information and staffing levels should be appropriate.
- **Referral and targeting:** The referral and targeting guidelines set out with the ASRO programme manuals should be strictly adhered to. All members of the area involved in the delivery of the programme should be made aware of these targeting guidelines and mechanisms to ensure correct usage of these should be established. Attention should also be paid to (a) the type of Order on which offenders are placed and how this may influence their suitability for the programme; and (b) their suitability for ASRO rather than the parallel individual version, PRISM.
- **Programme integrity and monitoring:** The videotaping of all programme sessions should be ensured throughout the running of all programme blocks and these tapes should be routinely monitored in order to develop good practice. In addition, monitoring information including psychometrics, registers and feedback forms should be routinely completed, collected and recorded in the appropriate manner.
- **Accommodation and materials:** Appropriate accommodation should be provided for the running of the programme and should take account of the need to videotape sessions. Additional materials that are deemed to be necessary for the running of the programme (e.g. flipcharts and OHPs) should also be made readily available to tutors.
- **Planning for implementation:** A coherent implementation plan should be developed which sets out how the programme will be incorporated. This plan should consider such wide ranging issues as those noted below. Consideration should also be given to assess whether there is a need to draw up a partnership with an external agency. If such an arrangement is planned, the roles and responsibilities should be clearly laid out within the implementation plan.
- **Good communication systems:** Effective communication is vital to ensure the smooth running of the programme. Mechanisms of communication between all levels of staff within the area need to be established and adhered to.
- **Staffing levels:** The level of staffing should be determined within the area and will depend on demand for the programme, and the chosen organisational structures.
- **Staff training:** All tutors, as a minimum, should have received the training provided by the Probation Unit for the effective running of the ASRO programme and staff should also attend Booster Training sessions throughout the delivery of the programme. A method of ongoing monitoring of staff training needs should be established and maintained.

## Drink-impaired drivers

The *Drink-impaired drivers programme* is an offending behaviour programme developed by Probation Officers within South Yorkshire Probation Area and employs a combined cognitive behavioural and educational approach. The objectives of the programme are to remedy a number of features thought to contribute to drink-impaired driving: lack of knowledge about alcohol and driving, lack of adequate planning, lack of ability to generate alternatives, and anti-social attitudes. This may be associated with other decision-making deficits and rationalisations prior to the decision to drink and drive. The targets for change in the programme therefore include problem-solving skills, anti-social attitudes, and knowledge deficits. In addition to direct training methods, use is also made of motivational enhancement approaches.

From the pilot projects, a number of important issues emerged as being pertinent to the effective implementation of the Drink-impaired Drivers programme. These are summarised below:

- **Planning for implementation:** A coherent implementation plan should be developed that sets out how the programme will be incorporated into the area. This plan should consider the wide-ranging issues noted below. Consideration should also be given to assess whether there is a need to draw up a partnership with an external agency. If such an arrangement is planned, the roles and responsibilities should be clearly laid out within the implementation plan.
- **Good communication systems:** Effective communication is vital to ensure the smooth running of the programme. Mechanisms of communication between all levels of staff within the area need to be established and adhered to.
- **Staffing levels:** The level of staffing should be determined within the area and will depend on demand for the programme and the chosen organisational structures. Occasionally sessions are run that involve other personnel, and these include police officers, magistrates and solicitors. Agreements between these personnel and the area will have to be arranged.
- **Staff training:** All tutors, as a minimum, should have received the training provided by the Probation Unit for the effective running of the programme and staff should also attend Booster Training sessions throughout the delivery of the programme. A method of ongoing monitoring of staff training needs should be established and maintained.
- **Administrative staff:** Administrative staff should support the tutors in the preparation of programme sessions and the collection of monitoring information and staffing levels should be appropriate.
- **Referral and targeting:** The referral and targeting guidelines set out with the Drink-impaired drivers programme manuals should be strictly adhered to. All members of staff involved in delivery should be made aware of these targeting guidelines and mechanisms to ensure the correct usage of these should be established.
- **Programme integrity and monitoring:** The videotaping of all programme sessions should be ensured throughout the running of all programme blocks and these tapes should be routinely monitored in order to develop good practice. In addition, monitoring information including psychometrics, registers and feedback forms should be routinely completed, collected and recorded in the appropriate manner.
- **Accommodation and materials:** Appropriate accommodation should be provided for the running of the programme and should take account of the need to videotape sessions. Additional materials that are deemed to be necessary for the running of the programme (e.g. flipcharts and OHPs) should also be made readily available to tutors.

## Focus on violence for men

The FOV (*Focus on violence*) programme is an offending behaviour programme developed by Probation Officers within Derbyshire Probation Area and an external consultant from Leicester University. The decision to devise the programme followed a review of existing programmes, from which a gap in provision was identified. The programme is based on cognitive behavioural theory and targets victim awareness, communication and social skills, social problem-solving skills, emotional control and behaviour management. It also addresses attitudes and beliefs concerning violent offending. Separate versions of the programme have been developed for male and female violent offenders respectively. The optimum group size for the programme is considered to be between six and eight people.

From the pilot projects, a number of important issues emerged as being pertinent to the effective implementation of the FOV programme. These are summarised below:

- **Planning for implementation:** A coherent implementation plan should be developed that sets out how the programme will be incorporated. This plan should consider the wide-ranging issues noted below. Consideration should also be given to assess whether there is a need to draw up a partnership with an external agency. If such an arrangement is planned, the roles and responsibilities should be clearly laid out within the implementation plan.
- **Good communication systems:** Effective communication is vital to ensure the smooth running of the programme. Mechanisms of communication between all levels of staff within the area need to be established and adhered to.
- **Staffing levels:** The level of staffing should be determined within the area and will depend on demand for the programme and the chosen organisational structures. Occasionally sessions are run that involve other personnel, and these include police officers, magistrates and solicitors. Agreements between these personnel and the area will have to be arranged.
- **Staff training:** All tutors, as a minimum, should have received the training provided by the Probation Unit for the effective running of the programme and staff should also attend Booster Training sessions throughout the delivery of the programme. A method of ongoing monitoring of staff training needs should be established and maintained.
- **Administrative staff:** Administrative staff should support the tutors in the preparation of programme sessions and the collection of monitoring information and staffing levels should be appropriate.
- **Referral and targeting:** The referral and targeting guidelines set out with the programme manuals should be strictly adhered to. All members of staff involved in delivery should be made aware of these targeting guidelines and mechanisms to ensure the correct usage of these should be established.
- **Programme integrity and monitoring:** The videotaping of all programme sessions should be ensured throughout the running of all programme blocks and these tapes should be routinely monitored in order to develop good practice. In addition, monitoring information including psychometrics, registers and feedback forms should be routinely completed, collected and recorded in the appropriate manner.
- **Accommodation and materials:** Appropriate accommodation should be provided for the running of the programme and should take account of the need to videotape sessions. Additional materials that are deemed to be necessary for the running of the programme (e.g. flipcharts and OHPs) should also be made readily available to tutors.

## Priestley one to one

The *Priestley 1:1 programme* is a general offending behaviour programme based on cognitive-behavioural principle, and designed for one-to-one with offenders. It involves exercises that are designed to teach and improve offenders' social skills, problem-solving, empathy, self-management, goal-setting, and attitudes and values about crime. These are assessed both before and after the programme in order to assess levels of change. The Priestley 1:1 Programme consists on 20 sessions lasting one hour, which are delivered once a week.

From the pilot projects, a number of important issues emerged as being pertinent to the effective implementation of the Priestley 1:1 Programme. These are summarised below:

- **Referral and targeting:** There are explicit targeting criteria for the Priestley 1:1 Programme and these should be strictly adhered to. All staff involved in the programme should be aware of these and processes put in place to ensure they are applied.
- **Programme integrity and monitoring:** Monitoring information needs to be carefully collected and used to inform programme integrity. All sessions should be videotaped and viewed by the Treatment Manager. Mechanisms to provide feedback to tutors should be built in.
- **Accommodation:** Appropriate accommodation for programme sessions should be made available. This should take account of the need to videotape sessions.
- **Planning for implementation:** It is important to develop a coherent Implementation Plan at an early stage. This plan should cover major areas such as communication systems, all issues concerning the staff who manage and deliver the programme, organisational structures to ensure effective referral and targeting, systems to facilitate programme integrity, and provision of appropriate accommodation.
- **Good communication systems:** It is crucial that there are good communication systems across all levels of staff in the area in order to inform a wider audience about the programme, pass information quickly and on a regular basis, and integrate the staff's knowledge and awareness of both local and national developments.
- **Staffing levels:** These should be decided at area level depending on the demand for the programme and how the programme is being implemented.
- **Staff training:** All tutors should be fully trained, as should those responsible for running the programme at management level. These staff should subscribe fully to the model behind the Priestley 1:1 Programme and its methods. Further training needs of staff should be monitored.
- **Administrative staff:** Tutors should be given adequate administrative support to prepare for the programme sessions and collect monitoring data.

## PRISM

The *PRISM programme* is an offending behaviour programme for substance abusing offenders based on cognitive-behavioural principles, and designed for one-to-one work with offenders. It involves exercises that are designed to reduce the use of substances, to promote a healthier lifestyle, and to teach and improve social problem-solving, self-management and goal-setting in the context of substance use, and the attitudes and values that support the use of substances and offending. These are assessed both before and after the programme in order to assess levels of change. The PRISM programme has 20 sessions lasting between one and two hours, which are delivered twice a week for the first four sessions and weekly thereafter.

From the pilot projects, a number of important issues emerged as being pertinent to the effective implementation of the PRISM programme. These are summarised below:

- **Planning for implementation:** It is important to develop a coherent implementation plan at an early stage. This plan should cover major areas such as organisational structures, communication and feedback systems, staffing levels and training, procedures to ensure effective referral and training, procedures to facilitate programme integrity, and the provision of appropriate accommodation. If there is a partnership arrangement with an external agency, the roles and responsibilities of the two agencies should be clearly outlined in this plan.
- **Good communication systems:** It is crucial that there are good communication systems within the area and between partnership organisations and the areas. These should aim to inform all staff within the area and partnership agency about the programme, pass information quickly and on a regular basis, and inform staff of both local and national developments. This is particularly important with respect to partnership organisations that do not have a direct link to the Home Office.
- **Staffing levels:** These should be decided at an area level depending on the demand for the programme and how the area is implementing the programme
- **Staff training:** All tutors should be fully trained in the programme, as should those responsible for running the programme. These staff should subscribe fully to the model behind the PRISM Programme and its methods. Further training needs of staff should be monitored.
- **Administrative staff:** Tutors should be given adequate administrative support to prepare for the programme sessions and collect monitoring data.
- **Referral and targeting:** There are explicit targeting criteria for the PRISM Programme and these should be strictly adhered to. All staff involved in the programme should be aware of these and processes put in place to ensure they are applied correctly.
- **Programme integrity and monitoring:** Monitoring information needs to be routinely collected and used to inform programme integrity. All sessions should be videotaped and viewed by the Treatment Manager. A feedback mechanism should be put in place to provide feedback to tutors on their sessions.
- **Accommodation:** Appropriate accommodation for the programme sessions should be provided. This should take account of the need to videotape sessions.

## West Midlands sex offender programme

The *West Midlands sex offender programme* is an offending behaviour programme for sex offenders that was developed in-house at the West Midlands Probation Area with some help received from a forensic clinical psychologist and other psychology services. The programme uses Finkelhor's model of dis-inhibitory factors for sexual offending against children and Hilary Eldridge's concept of assault cycles.

The programme itself comprises the following: an induction module lasting 50 hours, which is a 'closed' group, attended by all participating offenders. This commences with a one-week block; thereafter sessions take place weekly and last for 2\_ hours. Low risk/low deviance offenders attend a relapse prevention programme lasting 50 hours; others attend the full programme, which lasts 200 hours. The full programme following the induction module contains six other modules, respectively addressing cycles and cognitive distortions; self-esteem, intimacy and emotional loneliness; social and problem-solving skills; fantasy modification; victim awareness and empathy; and relapse prevention and lifestyle change. These modules run as a 'rolling' programme over approximately two years.

From the pilot projects, a number of important issues emerged as being pertinent to the effective implementation of the sex offender programme. These are summarised below:

- **Planning for implementation:** On recognition of the area's need for a programme such as the West Midlands sex offender programme, a coherent implementation plan should be developed that sets out how the programme will be incorporated. This plan should cover major areas such as organisational structures, communication and feedback systems, staffing levels and training, procedures to ensure effective referral and training, procedures to facilitate programme integrity, and the provision of appropriate accommodation. Dependent upon the size of area and other factors, consideration should also be given to whether or not assessment and pre-sentence report writing is to be concentrated in a single specialist team.
- **Good communication systems:** Mechanisms of communication between all levels of staff within the area need to be established and adhered to and these mechanisms should promote communication between all those that have contact with the programme. In addition, in working with sex offenders it is often seen as vital to have access to victim accounts, deposition statements and other such material in order to provide a clearer picture of the offenders' resistances and distortions. It would be useful to the programme and those participating in it to incorporate a mechanism for gaining access to such documents on a regular basis.
- **Staffing levels:** The level of staffing should be determined within the area and will depend on demand for the programme and the chosen organisational structures. Due to the nature of the programme and the issues that may arise during the sessions, systems of support for tutors (practical and emotional) should be established and maintained throughout the running of the programme.
- **Staff training:** All tutors, as a minimum, should have received the training provided by the Probation Unit for the effective running of the West Midlands sex offender programme. When the need is identified, staff should also attend booster training sessions. A method of ongoing monitoring of staff training needs should be established and maintained.
- **Administrative staff:** The programme should be supported by a level of administrative support that allows for the effective running of the programme. Administrative staff should support the tutors in the preparation of programme sessions and the collection of monitoring information.
- **Referral and targeting:** The referral and targeting guidelines set out with the West Midlands sex offender programme manuals should be strictly adhered to. All staff involved in the programme should be aware of these and processes put in place to ensure they are applied correctly.
- **Programme integrity and monitoring:** Monitoring information needs to be routinely collected and used to inform programme integrity. All sessions should be videotaped and viewed by the treatment manager. A feedback mechanism should be put in place to provide feedback to tutors on their sessions.
- **Accommodation:** Appropriate accommodation for the programme sessions should be provided. This should take account of the need to videotape sessions.

## Other RDS publications relating to Probation

Report on the Study into Forecasting the Prison and Probation Populations – consultation draft

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HORS 211 Risk and need assessment in probation services: an evaluation

HORS 218 Working their way out of offending: an evaluation of two probation employment schemes

HORS 231 Rates and causes of death among prisoners and offenders under community supervision

HOSB 13/97 Summary Probation Statistics, England and Wales, 1996

HOSB 12/98 Summary Probation Statistics, England and Wales, 1997

RF 135 – From offending to employment: a study of two probation schemes in Inner London and Surrey

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Probation Statistics, England and Wales 1999

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