

Interventions News

SPECIAL - April 2006



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In this Special Edition of Interventions News, we wanted to take the opportunity to inform you of the work of the Offending Behaviour Programmes Team (OBPT) in the Interventions Unit, National Probation Directorate.

We have worked on several projects, and have still more projects currently underway, so this newsletter provides a brief précis, along with an up-to-date list of who we all are. If you would like any more information about any of the articles or items in this newsletter, then pick up the phone or email us here at OBPT to find out more.

Who's Who in the OBP Team

During the last few months, there have been a number of staff comings and goings, so we thought it would be helpful to provide a list of the current Offending Behaviour Programmes Team:

▪ Head of OBP Team	Danny Clark	020 7217 0675
Programme Implementation Managers		
Domestic Violence Programmes, Women's Programme	Sue Pearce	020 7217 8081
Substance Use Programmes & Drink Impaired Drivers	Diane Anderson	020 7217 8895
General Programmes (ETS, Think First, One to One, Cognitive Skills Booster)	Phil Mackin	020 7217 8044
Violence Programmes (ART & CALM), Prison/Community Programmes (CSCP Module)	Philip McNerney	020 7217 0674
▪ Head of Psychology	Liz Bird	To Start Soon
▪ Principal Psychologist	Jo Day	020 7217 8999

▪ Senior Psychologist	Karl Williams	020 7217 8991
▪ Senior Research Officer	Victoria Dawson-Wheeler	020 7217 8815
Psychological Assistants		
DID, ASRO, OSAP, IDAP & CDVP Psychometric evaluation	Sinead Bloomfield	020 7217 8813
ETS, TF, OTO, CSB, ART & CALM and Women's Programme Psychometric evaluation	Nina Marvan	020 7217 0676
▪ Executive Officer, Finance	Sophia Akram/ Ruth Taylor (Maternity Leave)	020 7217 0803
▪ Events Manager	Delroy Blake/	020 7217 0677
▪ Events Organiser (& contact for ordering psychometrics)	Ali Moghal	020 7217 0679
▪ Executive Officer	Lesley Smith	020 7217 8336
▪ National Training Manager	Tudor Williams	020 7217 8068

Training Development Advisors		
	Eileen Davis	020 7217 8211
	Alex Law	020 7217 8211
	Emma Myatt	020 7217 8211
	Karen Townend	020 7217 8211

Projects undertaken by the OBP Team

Research Audit

In August 2005, we sent out a Probation Circular (PC59/2005) asking areas to let us know what kinds of research projects they undertake, as well as the capacity they have for research. The ultimate aim of this audit is to form a more joined up research network across NP, RDS/NOMS and NPS. This would enable not only information and knowledge sharing, but would also mean that RDS/NOMS are aware of areas they could support in undertaking research projects on a larger scale.

From the 27 areas who responded to the PC, it appears that there is considerable variation in terms of staff capacity for research and the types of research projects currently underway:

Staff

- The number of staff undertaking research varied enormously. Some areas employ no staff specifically for research, whereas other areas reported having research teams of up to 9 people. [Mode = 1, Median = 2, Mean = 3].
- The majority of routine data analysis and performance monitoring is undertaken by Information Officers and

IT/Admin staff, with a greater proportion of Research Officers' time concerned with specific research projects.

Research

The research audit asked areas to provide details of different levels of research, as defined by RDS NOMS*. These 4 bands of research are described in the table below:

Band	Description	Examples / Types of use for Research
1	Individual case information	Seamless case management
2	Routine lists and aggregate reports	Data quality assurance Resource allocation Contract management
3	Small scale performance improvement projects	Implementation Contract management
4	Projects with national scope, outcome studies or larger scale [Cost more than £10,000, entail more than 30 days' staff time]	National policy decisions

- Of those who responded, 10 (37%) areas were carrying out routine performance monitoring and data analysis only, with no research projects. 14 (52%) areas reported undertaking band 3 (small scale) studies. Only 3 (11%) areas stated that they had band 4 studies in progress.
- **Band 3 Studies** in progress across areas fell into several different categories:
 - ⇒ **Performance Monitoring / Quality Assurance / Audit** (e.g. Quality of supervision & management of particular subgroups of offenders, internal inspection on BME court reports, analysis of local psychometric scores for accredited programme completers)

* As described in "Stimulating good quality local analysis; Implication of the new RDS NOMS research standards and procedures."

- ⇒ **Surveys** (e.g. Stakeholder surveys linked to Business Plans, staff surveys, offender surveys, magistrates' surveys, survey of 'customers' [i.e. victims, sentencers, community punishment beneficiaries])
- ⇒ **Support / facilitation of external research** (e.g. Support to CJB performance group, ad hoc facilitating of access to offenders / staff for external researchers associated with universities etc)
- ⇒ **Evaluation / Outcome studies** (e.g. Reconviction study, employment outcomes, EP2 / IDAP implementation evaluation, RMO evaluation etc.)
- ⇒ **Reviews** (e.g. Literature reviews, review of training evaluation, Guide to Stakeholder Surveys, review of common themes of research)
- ⇒ **Other Studies** (e.g. Hate crime research, offender profile analysis linked to National Action Plan for reducing re-offending)

- **Band 4 Studies** are being undertaken in 3 of the respondent areas:
Reconviction Studies (ETS, Employment Interventions, ECP), **Collaboration with universities** (case managing offenders through programmes), Study of **accredited programmes completions**, study of **Factors contributing to student learning**.

Many areas are undertaking research that will inform local practice, but its findings could also be of benefit to other probation areas. We hope that you will keep us informed of the findings of local research, which would enable us to strengthen communication channels between NPD, RDS NOMS and NPS. We intend to publish our research findings on a regular basis in similar special editions of the Interventions Newsletter. We are eager for areas to get in touch and let us know of any research they would like to feature in future newsletters.

If you would like any further information or would like to discuss any exciting new research in your area, please get in touch with us here at OBPT.

Men & Women on the Think First Programme

Using the old evaluation measures for the General Offending Behaviour Programmes (GOBPs), we looked at a sample of offenders who had completed the Think First programme. Compared with pre-programme scores, it seems that both men and women had more pro-social attitudes, increased ability to stop and think, and a greater sense of control over their own behaviour. Interestingly, the female group of offenders showed a greater improvement than males in their social problem solving skills. This suggests that women attending mixed gender general offending group programmes are gaining the same benefit from the interventions as males.

The Drink Impaired Drivers Programme: Reconviction Study

The Drink Impaired Driver Programme is an accredited Offending Behaviour programme for drink drivers run nationally in the National Probation Service of England and Wales. In order to determine the programme's effectiveness in reducing re-offending, the reconviction rates of the programme participants (both completers and non completers) were compared to a comparison group (drink drive offenders who had not been sentenced to attend the programme but were given a Community Rehabilitation Order – no programme group) from seven probation areas.

Data was obtained from Greater Manchester; Hampshire; Lancashire; Leicestershire and Rutland; Surrey; West Midlands; and West Yorkshire Probation areas for offenders who had been ordered to attend the Drink Impaired Drivers Programme between December 1999 and January 2004. A comparison group (offenders who had an OASys assessment for a drink driving offence but had not received an order to attend the Drink Impaired Drivers Programme from the same seven probation areas) was obtained from O-DEAT (OASys Data, Evaluation and Assessment Team). The

sample consisted of 382 programme completers, 144 programme non completers and 291 no programme.

Univariate and logistic regression analyses were carried out. 18.1% of the programme completers were reconvicted, with only 7.3% reconvicted with a drink drive offence, compared to 30.6% of the no programme group, with 15.8% reconvicted with a drink drive offence. The non completers had a higher reconviction rate than both completers and the no programme groups with 36.8% being reconvicted and 19.4% being reconvicted with a drink drive offence. Results showed that programme completers were significantly less likely to be reconvicted than both the no programme and non completers groups. No significant difference was found between the no programme and non completers groups.

Both the programme completers and non completers were then combined and compared to the no programme group. This resulted in 23.2% of the combined group being reconvicted with 10.6% being reconvicted for a drink drive offence compared to 30.6% of the no programme group with 15.8% being reconvicted for a drink drive offence. Results again showed that the programme group were significantly less likely to be reconvicted than the no programme group.

The results indicate that the programme may be having an impact on reducing re-offending. However the results should be viewed with caution due to the small sample size. A further caveat is that this is not a randomised control trial. Offenders were not randomly referred to either the control group or the programme group therefore it is possible the findings are due to other factors such as a selection effect.

Offender feedback on reasons for completing and not completing programmes - Exit Interviews

In order to shed further light on what determines whether or not offenders complete programmes, we decided to design an exit interview to get feedback from offenders themselves. Five areas took part in the scheme, and they provided information from 263 programme completers, and 74 programme non-completers. The programmes attended included One to One (OTO), Controlling Anger and Learning

to Manage it (CALM), the Cognitive Skills Booster (CSB), Drink Impaired Drivers (DID), Enhanced Thinking Skills (ETS), Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme (IDAP), Offender Substance Abuse Programme (OSAP) and Think First (TF).

What helped offenders to complete the programmes

The completers in the sample stated that there were a number of factors that helped them to finish the programme. These factors were the tutors, and the content and presentation of sessions.

What the offenders said about why they failed to complete programmes

71% of the group of non-completers reported being enthusiastic about the programme, but had experienced various difficulties to attend. 72% of the non-completers said that they had been unable to complete the programme due to personal issues. Such issues included relationship difficulties, child care issues and illness. 39% of the sample of non-completers stated that transport issues (e.g. lack of money for public transport, programme was held in an inaccessible location) were responsible for their attrition from the programme. Other offenders had experienced difficulties with the literacy elements of the course. One offender, for example, wrote that he 'didn't like writing in front of the group', as he wasn't able to 'read it back'. An important finding to note was that almost a quarter (24%) of the sample of completers reported that they *felt* like dropping out at some point during the programme. The reasons for feeling this way were largely connected to personal difficulties, similar to those mentioned by those who actually failed to complete.

Useful Elements of Programmes

Both completers and non-completers reported finding elements of the programmes useful. Components considered helpful to the offenders included 'Stop and Think', ABC exercises, problem solving skills, goal setting and planning, decision making, self talk, emotion recognition, relapse prevention and units monitoring (substance use programmes). Many of the offenders (both completers and non-completers) reported that they are now more able to

think about the consequences of their actions following the programme. Other offenders placed value on cost / benefit techniques, and reported using these methods in everyday life.

Not so Useful Elements of Programmes

Offenders perceived a number of aspects of the programmes to be unhelpful. These included role play exercises, relaxation, finding the material repetitive and patronising and feeling that unmotivated members of the group pulled the whole group down. Some non-completers also said they found the group sizes intimidatingly large.

Room for Improvement

When asked what they felt could be done to improve programmes, the sample of offenders came up with a number of suggestions. These included holding sessions during weekends for those in full time employment, including more 'real life' examples in the programme, providing assistance with travel, visits from ex-offenders who have succeeded in 'going straight' and ensuring that the language used is accessible and understandable.

Case Management Issues

There were a number of instances where offenders reported never having met their case/offender manager. In some cases, the offenders did not find this a problem, and felt supported while attending the programme. In other cases however, offenders felt that they would have benefited from some pre-programme work with their case manager. Some offenders also stated that they had had numerous case managers, which was not satisfactory. Another issue raised by some offenders, was the need for improved communication between programme tutors and case/offender managers.

What now?

So it seems that this sample of offenders who attended the OBPs found many aspects of the programmes helpful, and people reported applying their newly acquired skills in everyday situations. There are however, some areas for improvement, particularly around communication between programme staff and case management and where supporting offenders with personal difficulties is concerned.

We intend to take this forward and extend the scope of these studies by gaining further and more detailed feedback from offenders in the future, so watch this space!

The Quick Discrimination Index (QD) - A useful tool for assessing offenders' attitudes towards racial diversity?

The Quick Discrimination Index (QDI) (Ponterotto et al., 1995) was introduced to the violence and general programme evaluation measures in order to assess whether they are impacting on discriminatory attitudes and racially motivated offending. The QDI is a psychometric measure designed to capture people's attitudes towards racial diversity. The first subscale assesses an individual's receptivity to racial diversity and multiculturalism. The second subscale measures people's attitudes in relation to their personal comfort in interactions with minority ethnic groups.

For each of the subscales, higher scores reflect more accepting and tolerant attitudes towards race equality issues. Initial analyses from the prison service indicated that the QDI subscales were moving in the desired direction at the post programme evaluation, that is acceptance and tolerance of racial diversity had increased after offenders had attended a programme.

Results of psychometric data from the probation service however, were more ambiguous, with smaller changes in pre- and post programme scores, and with the racial intimacy scores moving in the wrong direction for the GOBPs. It was also uncertain whether offenders' self-reported attitudes, captured by the QDI, were related to other measures of racism / multiculturalism. In order to investigate this, we looked at how the QDI subscales matched up to the OASys variables related to racially motivated behaviour and discriminatory attitudes. If they are capturing the same attitudes, we would expect a positive relationship between the QDI and OASys variables.

The results however, did not indicate a positive relationship between the QDI and OASys. This brings into question the external validity of the QDI, that is, is it really measuring what it is supposed to measure? (attitudes towards racial diversity

and multiculturalism). Due to the ambiguity of the initial analyses, it has been decided that a better way forward may be to work towards developing a new bespoke measure to capture offenders' self-reported attitudes towards racial diversity and multiculturalism, as well as looking at racially motivated behaviours.

An Intermediate Evaluation of Aggression Replacement Training (ART)

Data from the evaluation measures of 1337 offenders who attended the ART programme was obtained from 14 probation areas. Of these, 807 (60%) started the programme, but did not complete, and 530 (40%) completed ART. The mean age of the offenders was 28 (ranging from 18-63 years), and 95% of the sample were male and 5% were female.

A comparison of the pre and post programme assessment scores (of the sample of programme completers) indicated that at the end of the intervention, there were positive changes on measures of hostility and aggression (as measured by the Buss Durkee Hostility Inventory), attitudes towards crime (as measured by a subscale of Crime Pics II), anger (as measured by the Novaco Anger Scale, short form) and social skills (as measured by the Skill Streaming Checklist). This suggests that the behavioural and emotional components of the ART programme are effecting the desired changes, and may be benefiting offenders.

The measure of moral reasoning (as measured by the Moral Judgement Test) however, did not show a change in the expected direction at the end of the programme. That is, the post programme scores were lower than the pre-programme scores. This has led to some questions about the suitability of the Moral Judgement Test to capture offenders' moral reasoning capabilities. After consulting with areas running ART however, it was apparent that many facilitators found it a challenge to deliver the moral reasoning sessions of the programme as directed in the manual. This led to an ART event to provide an avenue for programme staff to discuss any delivery issues and following on from this, a training event.

Journal Articles of interest

- Bowen, E., Gilchrist, E.A. & Beech, A.R. (2005). An examination of the impact of community-based rehabilitation on the offending behaviour of male domestic violence offenders and the characteristics associated with recidivism. *Legal and Criminological Psychology*, **10**, 189-209.
- Andrews, D.A. & Dowden, C. (2005). Managing correctional treatment for reduced recidivism: A meta-analytic review of programme integrity. *Legal and Criminological Psychology*, **10**, 173-187.
- Landenberger, N.A. & Lipsey, M.W. (2005). The positive effects of cognitive-behavioural programs for offenders: A meta-analysis of factors associated with effective treatment. *Journal of Experimental Criminology*, **1** (4), 451-476.
- Joy Tong, L.S. & Farrington, D.P. (2006). How effective is the "Reasoning & Rehabilitation" programme in reducing reoffending? A meta-analysis of evaluations in four countries. *Psychology, Crime & Law*, **12** (1), 3-24.

Projects in Progress

There are a number of projects currently in progress, so watch this space for more details about the below:

- There are plans in the pipeline for a substantial study to investigate the effectiveness of domestic violence programmes.
- Evaluation of the new substance misuse programmes (Low Intensity Alcohol Module- LIAM and Relapse Prevention module- RP).
- Evaluation of the Offender Learning and Skills Service (OLASS) – Does offenders' motivation to complete programmes increase if they receive a qualification for doing so?

- Work on developing a new measure of racially motivated offending in order to investigate whether OBPs impact on discriminatory attitudes and behaviours.
- A review of our current evaluation measures, and are looking at different ways of obtaining an intermediate measure of the impact of programmes, which is currently based on the psychometric measures.
- Market research to investigate the public's perceptions of OBPs. A telephone survey will be conducted in order to find out what people know about interventions for offenders and how best to market these interventions.
- GOBP, DID, ASRO & OSAP psychometric evaluation.

The data for these evaluation reports has been extracted from IAPS, after a lot of effort on the part of Areas to input the data, ***so a big thanks to everyone who has been involved in this.***

From this point onwards, we hope to have adequate quantities of psychometric data to be able to provide feedback at regular intervals about performance on programmes, as evidenced by the psychometric evaluation measures.