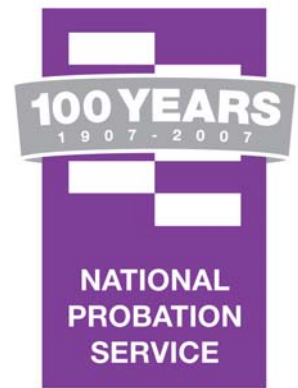


Probation Circular



PC03/2007 – OFFENDING BEHAVIOUR PROGRAMMES: REDUCTION OF PSYCHOMETRIC ASSESSMENTS

IMPLEMENTATION DATE: 1 April 2007

EXPIRY DATE: 1 April 2010

TO: Chairs of Probation Boards, Chief Officers of Probation, Secretaries of Probation Boards

CC: Board Treasures, Regional Managers

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ATTACHED: Annex A – The new reduced psychometric assessment battery for the DID Programme
Annex B – Equality Impact Assessment Form

RELEVANT PREVIOUS PROBATION CIRCULARS

PC123/2001 Psychometric Testing For GOBPs

PC52/2002 Psychometric Testing Strategy and Training

PC64/2002 Psychometric Test Review

PC23/2003 Review of Psychometric Tests

PC36/2004 IAPS Software

PC44/2004 Re-launch of Accredited programme evaluation measures

CONTACT FOR ENQUIRIES

NOMS Interventions and Substance Abuse Unit: NPD.OBP.Helpdesk@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

Requests for Psychometric Test Booklets, 0207 217 0679

IAPS: i2n helpdesk 0870 444 0574

PURPOSE

To reduce the number of psychometric assessments required for accredited General Offending Behaviour Programmes (GOBPs), Controlling Anger and Learning to Manage it (CALM) and the Drink Impaired Drivers Programme (DIDs).

ACTION

Chief Officers must ensure that:

1. The Area discontinues the use of the Quick Discrimination Index (QDI) as part of the General Offending Behaviour and CALM Programme psychometric assessment batteries by 1st April 2007.
2. The Area introduces the revised and reduced Drink Impaired Drivers psychometric assessment battery in line with guidance by 1st April 2007

SUMMARY

The circular announces the removal of the QDI (Quick Discrimination Index) from the General Offending Behaviour and CALM Programme psychometric assessment battery and a reduction in the number of assessments used with the Drink Impaired Drivers Programme. It gives reasons for the changes and describes the steps areas should take to implement this change.

Why make changes to the psychometric assessments?

The purpose of evaluation is to assess the impact of specific interventions upon groups of individuals who take part in accredited programmes. The 'what works' literature highlights the importance of having evaluation procedures built into programmes to ensure that they are meeting their stated aims and objectives, as part of a continuous process of review. Currently, the ultimate test effectiveness of programmes for offenders is determined by whether participants change their behaviour, measured via a reduction in the severity, type and number of re-convictions. Reconviction studies take a minimum of 2-3 years to complete and give little immediate feedback to staff and evaluators on changes in behaviour and attitudes. It is necessary to gain interim evaluation information and currently the main source of data used comes from the psychometric assessments (also referred to as Psychometric Tests and Test Battery). Psychometric assessments are standardised self-report measures generally completed by offenders before and after they have participated in a programme. The main purposes of these assessments are: to provide information on the quality of programme delivery; to measure the effectiveness of the programme in specific target areas¹; to evaluate the programme in accordance with accreditation criteria; and to inform the design and development of the programme

The Psychology and Evaluation section within the Interventions Unit at NPD review the type and number of assessments by:

1. Analysing the pre and post psychometric assessment measures which form part of the accredited programmes evaluation.
2. Analysing the usefulness of the psychometric assessments used to evaluate programmes to ensure those used are as reliable and valid as possible.

The section aims to assist areas by:

- Reducing the number of measures being used to an absolute minimum while ensuring that programmes are fully evaluated.
- Ensure that the measures we use are reliable, validated and linked to the programme treatment targets.
- Are appropriate for the offender population.
- Work to improve the consistency and quality of data collation
- Feedback the results of analysis of the evaluation measures

Therefore it is essential from time to time to update the psychometric assessment battery and remove measures which are no longer considered necessary or found to be inappropriate. This circular describes changes which are to be made to the assessment batteries for CALM, DID and GOBPs and must be implemented by probation areas by the 1st April 2007. An initial screening for an Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for instruction.

Discontinuing use of the Quick Discrimination Index (QDI)

The QDI assesses discriminatory attitudes. It was introduced into the evaluation measures for the GOBPs and CALM in 2004. It was included as part of the NPD commitment to identify provision of interventions for racially motivated offenders (RMOs). The Correctional Services Accreditation Panel has advised that RMOs should attend GOBPs with some additional structured work, because there is little evidence that they have different criminogenic needs from other offenders. There was a need to evaluate the effectiveness of GOBPs in addressing discriminatory and racist attitudes. The QDI is broader than

¹ To note that without a control group (i.e. a well matched group of offenders who have not participated in the programme) is not possible to infer that the programme or intervention has caused the changes demonstrated.

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most racial attitude scales: it was designed to apply across racial and ethnic groups and provide a general measure of receptivity to multiculturalism.

There are now over 2000 sets of pre and post programme completions of the QDI. A preliminary analysis of the data indicated that the QDI is a reasonably robust measure, and sensitive to change. Feedback indicated it is very unpopular with offenders and administrators. There is also a serious question over its utility given the failure to find any relationship between the QDI and other assessments of discriminatory attitudes and behaviour related to offending.

Given these findings we have re-considered how useful self-report measures are in evaluating work with RMOs and are currently considering alternative approaches. **Consequently it has been decided to remove the QDI from the GOBP and the CALM Programme Test Battery.**

Changes to the Drink Impaired Driver Programme assessment battery

A full analysis has been undertaken of the DID psychometric assessment battery. In general the results were positive. Most of the measures showed change in the right direction particularly those assessments which measure the educational component of the course. It is recognised that there is a great deal of overlap between the measures currently used and some of these could be removed without adversely affecting the robustness of the evaluation. **Annex A describes the new reduced psychometric assessment battery for the DID Programme.**

Guidance on the discontinuation of the psychometric assessments

Areas are encouraged to discontinue use of the redundant assessments as quickly as possible and no later than the 1st April 2007. There are a number of stages to this:

- Areas can stop using the QDI and the redundant DID psychometric assessments immediately by advising staff not to administer them to offenders and deleting them from their existing stock of booklets.
- Offenders who have completed the QDI and the redundant DID assessments as part of the pre-programme assessment package do not need to complete them again at the post programme stage.
- New booklets, which omit the redundant psychometric assessments, will be available for areas to order from 1st April 2007.
- There is no longer a requirement for areas to enter the discontinued assessments into IAPS.
- If offenders have already completed the redundant assessments pre and post programme there is no requirement for these to be entered onto IAPS if they are waiting to be entered.
- The discontinued assessments will be removed from IAPS as soon as possible.
- By the 1st April 2007 new booklets are used and the QDI and redundant DID assessments are no longer administered.

Future revisions

The changes explained in this circular are concerned only with the GOBPs, CALM and DID evaluation measures. The DID Evaluation Manual is currently being revised and will be disseminated once it is completed. The ATB Team in the NOMS Interventions and Substance Abuse Unit are currently reviewing their evaluation strategy and as a consequence of this there will remain a need to review the measures used for other programmes.

Annex A

A validation exercise was carried out by the Psychology and Evaluation Section, Offending Behaviour Programmes Team on the current Drink Impaired Drivers Programme psychometric test battery. The conclusions from this were that the following measures be dropped from the test battery:

- **Alcohol use questionnaire:** This scale has been problematic in terms of IAPS entry and the way offenders fill it out.
- **Attitudes to Alcohol (Ata-Quest):** This scale was not deemed reliable and valid for the drink drive offender population.
- **Problem Solving Inventory-Revised (SPSI-R) (Short Form): Negative Problem Orientation, Impulsivity/Carelessness Style and Avoidance Style Sub-scales:** These 3 sub-scales were not found to be reliable.
- **Locus of Control:** Even though this measure showed good pre to post change, it was not found to have good predictive utility and in order to reduce the test battery it was decided to discontinue the use of this measure.
- **Emotional Control Questionnaire (ECQ2):** This scale was not deemed reliable and valid for the drink drive offender population.

This will mean that the Drink Impaired Driver's Programme psychometric battery will now include the following:

- **Alcohol Knowledge Quiz**
- **Safe Driving Questionnaire**
- **Attitudes to Drinking & Driving**
- **Barratt Impulsivity Scale (BIS)**
- **Problem Solving Inventory-Revised (SPSI-R) (Short Form): Positive Problem Orientation & Rational Problem Solving sub-scales**

The new Drink Impaired Drivers Programme psychometric test booklets will be available from the 1st April 2007 to obtain please contact Razak Moghal, tel. 0207 217 0679. In the mean time it is recommended that lines are drawn through the redundant Measures and sub-scales until the new booklets are available.

A. INITIAL SCREENING**1. Title of function, policy or practice (including common practice)**

Is this a new policy under development or an existing one?

Amendment to the existing practice of administering psychometrics to participants of OPBs in NPS.

2. Aims, purpose and outcomes of function, policy or practice

What is the function, policy or practice addressing? What operational work or employment/HR activities are covered? What outcomes are expected?

Covers the administration of psychometrics by programme staff to offenders. The purpose of which is to reduce the number of DID psychometrics that need to be administered and inputted onto IAPS by OBP staff and completed by offenders. PC also instructs the removal of the QDI which has found to be not a meaningful and valid measure. Since the introduction of the QDI feedback has indicated that it is unpopular with administrators and offenders.

The outcome is that there will be a smaller number of more meaningful (i.e. reliable and valid) psychometrics for DID and the removal of an unsuitable measure the QDI from the CALM and GOBP test batteries. This again will reduce the number of psychometrics that need to be administered by OBP staff in probation areas and need to be completed by offenders and reduce the need to deal with an unpopular measure.

3. Target groups

Who is the policy aimed at? Which specific groups are likely to be affected by its implementation? This could be staff, service users, partners, contractors.

The PC is aimed at programme staff who administer the psychometrics and the offenders who have to participate in the programmes and complete the psychometric tests before and after the programme.

For each equality target group, think about possible positive or negative impact, benefits or disadvantages, and if negative impact is this at a high medium or low level. Give reasons for your assessment. This could be existing knowledge or monitoring, national research, through talking to the groups concerned, etc. If there is possible negative impact a full impact assessment is needed. The high, medium or low impact will indicate level of priority to give the full assessment. Please use the table below to do this.

Equality target group	Positive impact – could benefit	Negative impact - could disadvantage (High, medium, low)	Reason for assessment and explanation of possible impact
Women	Benefit as less questionnaires to complete Removes unsuitable measure of racially discriminatory attitudes	Low	Less questionnaires to complete will be favoured by service users and programme staff as well as the removal of a measure(s) that is unpopular.
Men	Benefit as less questionnaires to complete Removes unsuitable measure of racially	Low	Less questionnaires to complete will be favoured by service users and programme staff as well as the removal of a measure(s) that is unpopular.

	discriminatory attitudes		
Asian/Asian British people	Benefit as less questionnaires to complete Removes unsuitable measure of racially discriminatory attitudes	Low	Less questionnaires to complete will be favoured by service users and programme staff as well as the removal of a measure(s) that is unpopular.
Black/Black British people	Benefit as less questionnaires to complete Removes unsuitable measure of racially discriminatory attitudes	Low	Less questionnaires to complete will be favoured by service users and programme staff as well as the removal of a measure(s) that is unpopular.
Chinese people or other groups	Benefit as less questionnaires to complete Removes unsuitable measure of racially discriminatory attitudes	Low	Less questionnaires to complete will be favoured by service users and programme staff as well as the removal of a measure(s) that is unpopular.
People of mixed race	Benefit as less questionnaires to complete Removes unsuitable measure of racially discriminatory attitudes	Low	Less questionnaires to complete will be favoured by service users and programme staff as well as the removal of a measure(s) that is unpopular.
White people (including Irish people)	Benefit as less questionnaires to complete Removes unsuitable measure of racially discriminatory attitudes	Low	Less questionnaires to complete will be favoured by service users and programme staff as well as the removal of a measure(s) that is unpopular.
Travellers or Gypsies	Benefit as less questionnaires to complete Removes unsuitable measure of racially discriminatory attitudes	Low	Less questionnaires to complete will be favoured by service users and programme staff as well as the removal of a measure(s) that is unpopular.
Disabled people	Benefit as less questionnaires to complete Removes unsuitable measure of racially discriminatory attitudes	Low	Less questionnaires to complete will be favoured by service users and programme staff as well as the removal of a measure(s) that is unpopular.
Lesbians, gay men and bisexual people	Benefit as less questionnaires to complete	Low	Less questionnaires to complete will be favoured by service users and programme staff as well as

	Removes unsuitable measure of racially discriminatory attitudes		the removal of a measure(s) that is unpopular.
Transgender people	Benefit as less questionnaires to complete Removes unsuitable measure of racially discriminatory attitudes	Low	Less questionnaires to complete will be favoured by service users and programme staff as well as the removal of a measure(s) that is unpopular.
Older people over 60	Benefit as less questionnaires to complete Removes unsuitable measure of racially discriminatory attitudes	Low	Less questionnaires to complete will be favoured by service users and programme staff as well as the removal of a measure(s) that is unpopular.
Young people (17-25) and children	Benefit as less questionnaires to complete Removes unsuitable measure of racially discriminatory attitudes	Low	Less questionnaires to complete will be favoured by service users and programme staff as well as the removal of a measure(s) that is unpopular.
Faith groups	Benefit as less questionnaires to complete Removes unsuitable measure of racially discriminatory attitudes	Low	Less questionnaires to complete will be favoured by service users and programme staff as well as the removal of a measure(s) that is unpopular.

4. Further research/questions to answer

As a result of the above, indicate what questions might need to be answered in the full impact assessment and what additional research or evidence might be needed to do this.

At this stage there is none the changes will lead to benefits for the programme staff and the offenders as noted in the previous table.

There will be a need to complete a full impact assessment of the higher level policy of using psychometrics in OBPs in the NPS in the next business year.

Initial screening done by:

Name/position: Jo Day, Principal Psychologist

Date: 3rd Jan 2007