

The national picture

The Ministry of Justice and the National Offender Management Service are committed to delivering interventions that are 'evidence-based' and effective in reducing re-offending. This programme will be delivered across the Prison and Probation estate in England and Wales and is one of a suite of nationally accredited programmes designed to:

- reduce re-offending
- improve public protection
- promote greater public and sentencer confidence in community punishments

Tried and tested

The Thinking Skills Programme is a second generation cognitive skills programme based upon the most successful features of the Think First and Enhanced Thinking Skills programmes.

Evidence from the evaluation of the Thinking Skills Programme within the Prison Service shows that it can lead to a reduction in the reconviction rate of 15% to 20%.

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



Thinking Skills Programme

Information for Solicitors

If you need this information in another language or format, e.g. large-print, Braille, etc., please contact the Contracts Officer, telephone 01244 394500 / fax 01244 394507
Calls welcomed via Typetalk

Thinking Skills Programme

The Thinking Skills Programme is a cognitive skills programme that addresses thinking and behaviour associated with offending. This includes:

- problem solving
- goal setting
- emotional self management
- perspective taking, and
- developing positive relationships

Suitable offenders

The programme is aimed at offenders who have an Offender Group Reconviction Score (OGRS) of 50% which constitutes the core of Probation Service caseloads. Offenders must also demonstrate faulty thinking in the treatment areas targeted by the programme. Offenders' treatment needs will be assessed during the preparation of Standard and Fast Delivery Reports as there is evidence that putting low risk offenders on this programme can increase the likelihood that they will re-offend. Shift workers on variable shifts, those with serious mental health problems, sex offenders and domestic violence offenders are unsuitable for the programme.

Standard and Fast Delivery

Where appropriate, Standard and Fast Delivery Reports will contain proposals for an offender's attendance on the Thinking Skills Programme. This will be as part of a Community Order or Suspended Sentence Order in accordance with Section 202 of the Criminal Justice Act 2003.

The following wording should be used:

“To participate in the Thinking Skills Programme in accordance with the instructions of the Offender Manager”.

Solicitors should liaise with Probation Court Officers before suggesting adjournments for Standard Delivery Reports specifically for the Thinking Skills Programme assessments. This will avoid many cases being adjourned which could have been properly dealt with on the day.

Programme Content

The Thinking Skills Programme is an intensive programme, delivered to groups of up to twelve offenders. Evidence suggests that the programme is most effective with offenders who demonstrate faulty thinking. These thinking deficits are assessed in order that we can ensure that we get the right offenders on the right programmes and have confidence that the programme will make a difference.

It runs for 19 two and a half hour sessions, comprising 4 one-to-one sessions and 15 group sessions. Offenders also attend 2 sessions in which psychometric tests are administered and a review session with the Offender Manager.

Attendance

Offenders are expected to attend the programme fully and must catch up on any missed sessions. If they do not, they are dealt with in accordance with the Probation Service's National Standards and returned to Court after the second unacceptable absence. Programmes are delivered during the day and of an evening in order to meet an offender's availability.

Completion of the programme represents great commitment and motivation on the part of the offender.

Assessing individual progress

Offenders attend a total of 4 compulsory one-to-one sessions. These individual sessions are used to assess the offender's progress through the programme, to reinforce the skills acquisition and to keep them motivated. When the programme has been completed a formal report is written by programme staff for the Offender Manager.