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Black and Asian offenders pathfinder: implementation report
Kate Stephens, Joanne Coombs and Mia Debidin

Executive summary
The pathfinders comprised three strands:

- A four session group work motivational module to be completed prior to Think First (known as ‘The Preparation Sessions’). This included two models for delivering Think First:
  - in Black and Asian only groups (Greater Manchester);
  - in ‘mixed’ groups in (West Midlands and Thames Valley).
- Volunteer mentors to support offenders through Think First (Avon and Somerset, Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, and Hertfordshire).
- Adaptation of the Drink Impaired Drivers (DID) programme for delivery to Asian offenders (Leicestershire).

The Preparation Sessions
Implementation of the Preparation Sessions was the most successful of the pathfinder strands. The work has generated an initial sample that would support some limited analysis, including comparison of attrition rates. The first year of implementation attracted some positive offender feedback. However a range of implementation issues emerged.

Capacity to deliver was hindered by:
- a shortage in supply of suitably trained Black and Asian staff;
- central constraint on the supply of training;
- staff movement (arising from positive career moves for some staff) and reluctance of some staff to take part (sometimes due to perceptions of career-limiting nature of the work).

It is recommended that a local decision (area or regional) on which model of delivery to continue in each area should follow an appraisal of the availability of suitable and willing staff. Some responsibility for training should be devolved from the centre, and the availability of appropriate professional development and management support for Black and Asian staff involved in this type of work should be kept under review.

Supply of eligible and suitable offenders
- Numbers achieved were lower than early estimates.
- Referral and assessment processes varied between areas rendering comparison difficult.
- Numbers may have been squeezed due to competing cash-linked targets.
- Some offenders were reluctant to take part.

It is recommended that a common model for sentencing, referral and assessment of suitability be developed centrally by the National Offender Management Service (NOMS). Projections for completions should be reviewed locally for each area. Decisions about whether to run Black and Asian only or mixed Think First groups should be made locally (by the area or region) with reference to viable numbers of motivated offenders and likely wait times. Future NOMS targets should be designed to support the testing of innovative interventions.
Quality of treatment

- Offender feedback from a small sample examined was largely positive.
- Transition from a cohesive Preparation Sessions group to mixed Think First required careful handling of group dynamics.
- The condition of treatment management for Think First sessions by an ethnically appropriate member of staff led to unacceptable lack of treatment management for some tutors.
- There was some confusion about the stage at which programme material was finalised.

It is recommended that a hard copy of Preparation Session material should be centrally produced. Either creative solutions must be found to the supply of ethnically appropriate trained treatment managers, or the ethnicity criterion should be removed. An aspect of future evaluation should focus on group dynamics and their role in offender motivation. This work would be helped by access to video material for research and development purposes, for which a policy regarding consent would need to be developed.

Diversity issues

- There was a lack of input on Asian cultures and conflicting perceptions of where the responsibility for providing this could be expected to lie.
- Bilingual and second language issues are likely to be important given the composition of some groups.

It is recommended that a national framework for standards of diversity awareness training to support work with offenders should be developed centrally by NOMS. Regions should be encouraged to research locally changing patterns of diversity and to support development of locally relevant training packages. Responsibility for this work should not rest disproportionately with Black and Asian staff. A language policy for group work should be developed, which takes account of the language competencies of group members and of staff.

Evaluation and monitoring issues

- Baseline management information broken down by ethnicity was not available.
- Data collection depended heavily on local research and information staff; demands on time were made from the centre but not fully locally resourced.

It is recommended that ethnic breakdown is included in management information reports on interventions, and that information systems are developed to enable this. Data collection requirements from the centre should be explicitly resourced at the point of information collection, analysis and report. A standards framework for roles and responsibilities for in-house research and information staff should be developed led by Research Development and Statistics Directorate (National Offender Management Service) - RDS (NOMS) -- in order to clarify role boundaries.

Throughput and viability of evaluation:

- A sufficient number of Preparation Session completers has been achieved to support some local analysis (particularly with respect to attrition) within the planned life of the pathfinder.
- Extension of the life of pathfinder will be needed if the original targets for Think First completion are to be achieved.
- Generalisation about effectiveness would be limited by different referral patterns; different levels of treatment management; as well as the inherent problem of demonstrating statistical significance for small effect sizes on small samples.

It is recommended that field testing of the Preparation Sessions should continue following a common monitoring template. An initial access and attrition study should be conducted as soon as possible on the relevant eligible and suitable cohort to date. This could be overseen by a group of in-house researchers and treatment managers from each of the participating areas, with RDS NOMS providing advice. The collection of offender feedback should continue, including arrangements already in place for individual offender interviews by staff not involved in programme delivery. Conclusions regarding staff and offender availability, attrition and access to accredited interventions, and offender feedback, should inform future decision making about model of delivery.

Mentoring

There were several obstacles to implementation of mentoring under the model provided by this pathfinder. Initial projections for throughput appear to have been unrealistic and the model is not capable of providing a test of
effectiveness. While it is recommended that this aspect of the pathfinder be discontinued, this should not be taken as a sign of the failure of mentoring in itself. Further investigation of up-and-running schemes is recommended.

Asian Drink Impaired Drivers

Obstacles to implementation included staff availability and few suitable referrals leading to long wait times to start a group. Numbers could not be expected to reach sufficient levels for reliable outcome testing in a realistic timescale. Adaptations made to programme material related to responsivity changes already in line with current policy and practice. It was concluded that these did not require specific outcome testing and could well provide a starting point for development of good practice guidelines for work with Asian Drink Impaired Drivers, whether in special or mixed groups. A further finding related to the implicit objective of influencing sentencing practice. Any further work on the evaluation of culturally responsive modes of intervention could well include impact on sentencer views and practice as an outcome measure.

General issues

The pathfinder evaluation was designed as a complex outcome test which appeared to assume that the interventions were ready for outcome/effectiveness evaluation. It was found that further field testing was required, and that the evaluation design could not reliably support the comparisons required. A process model (including ‘concept design’, ‘field testing’ and ‘outcome testing’) for research and development of innovative modes of intervention is proposed.

The lack of baseline monitoring data broken down by ethnicity, to underpin a rationale for motivational interventions for specific groups, was a flaw in the pathfinder design. The provision of national systems, which enable accurate inter-regional and inter-area comparisons, remains a challenge for NOMS.

Staff and offenders involved in these projects sometimes self-defined their ethnic group in ways that cut across the 2001 race ethnicity categories. Used on their own, these categories are not sufficient to capture the range of identities which should form the starting point for responsive and motivational service delivery.

1. Introduction

The purpose of this research was to determine effectiveness and implementation issues for a range of interventions to support Black and Asian offenders through offending behaviour programmes. This included: providing motivational preparatory group work; delivering programmes to Black and Asian only groups; providing mentoring support; and adapting programme materials for responsivity.

This report provides a brief background to the pathfinder, followed by a description of each of the pathfinder strands. Key qualitative findings from the first year of the research are set out, followed by discussion and recommendations for the future. Illustrative examples of good practice accompany the text in separate boxes. General issues for intervention research and development are discussed and a model is proposed. Research methodology is described in an appendix at the end of the report.

The research was commissioned by the National Probation Service (NPS), and started before the publication of the Carter Report. It is being published after the creation of the National Offender Management Service and before arrangements for transition to a regional structure (and the future of area arrangements) under NOMS are fully clear. It has therefore been difficult to determine where some of the recommendations would be most appropriately directed. Where recommendations involve devolution from the centre, these could be followed through by either the area or the region, depending on what new arrangements are put in place. Where the recommendations are for the centre, these are addressed to NOMS or RDS (NOMS) since they concern either general guidelines or frameworks, or the provision of information that should be available to all potential providers of interventions.
2. Background

Changing demographics

Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups made up eight percent of Britain’s population in 2001 (www.statistics.gov.uk). Overall Asian and Asian British groups comprised about half the population (excluding White groups); Black or Black British about a quarter; Mixed Heritage 15 percent; and Chinese five percent. These figures conceal large geographic variation, and consequently local differences in experience of service provision. For example while the population of Scotland and Wales was two percent BME in 2001, in a few residential areas of some cities ‘minorities’ were (for example, Newham in London) - or would soon become (for example, Leicester) - the majority, forming the core business for public service provision.

Census and Labour Force Survey data show that generalisations about needs of BME groups (and, consequently, generalisations about what works in reducing reoffending) are likely to be confounded by differences between groups. For example, while White people have higher rates of employment than other groups combined, this conceals differences between ethnic groups, between age groups, and between men and women. While Bangladeshi women are more likely than all other groups to be unemployed (and over 40% of young Bangladeshi men were unemployed), Indian men are only two percent more likely to be unemployed than White men. Also, some BME groups have the highest levels of professional qualifications (for example Indian, Black African and Chinese). Indian and Chinese boys do better than all groups at GCSE and Bangladeshi girls get more GCSEs than White boys.

However, generational differences mean that, overall, Bangladeshi and Pakistani people are most likely to have no educational qualifications and this is especially so for women. Differences in population age structure are important for criminology because of the strong association between age and criminality. There appears to be little evidence about the effectiveness of interventions that factors out the differential impact of other demographic factors (such as age and gender).

Racial discrimination and criminal justice

There is a great deal of public concern about racism within the criminal justice system, and the growth of the Black prison population. Bowling and Phillips (2002) and Phillips, Bowling and Annand (2003) summarise research into different experiences of crime among BME groups. Evidence suggests that BME groups are more likely to have confidence in the criminal justice system, are more likely to fall foul of it, and are less likely to be employed in it in senior grades (Home Office, 2002). Clancy, Hough, Aust and Kershaw (2001) reported that BME people were more likely to be victims of violent and property crime, and racist violence, than White people.

While demographic factors do not appear fully to account for differences, Home Office researchers are cautious about explaining the causes (Barclay and Mhlanga, 2000). Evidence about differential treatment is patchy, and the scene may be rapidly changing. Hood (1989) indicated direct discrimination by judges in imposing custodial sentences and Mhlanga (1997) supported the view that race was an important factor in police action and court sentencing. However, Mhlanga (1999) indicated that treatment by the Crown Prosecution Service did not discriminate against BME offenders. A recent study (Moorthy, Cahalin and Howard, 2004) found that parole decisions in prison (which are considered ‘blind’) were predicted by relevant factors such as behaviour during sentence, but not by ethnic group. A recent survey of defendants at the end of criminal proceedings (Hood, Shute and Seemungal, 2003) found that perception of unfairness among Black and Asian people were no greater than among White people, with lower than expected numbers complaining of racial bias.

Overt and institutional racism remain matters of concern for the criminal justice system. The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2001, following the MacPherson Report (1999), has put a responsibility on public services to measure outcomes by ethnicity. A recent Commission for Racial Equality survey (CRE, 2003) found that the criminal justice sector had paid better attention to outcomes than other sectors (such as education). Probation was reported to have achieved more than other sectors in outcome identification for representation of minority ethnic groups in the workforce. However, important weaknesses remained in defining outcomes for service provision.
Interventions in prisons and probation

There have been several recent and largely qualitative reports on experiences of BME prisoners. Akhtar’s (2000) survey indicated concern about the suitability of programme materials and tutor responsivity, recommending avoidance of singleton placement in groups. Hassan and Thiarra’s (2000) study was more concerned with access to rehabilitative programmes. They reported that establishments were satisfied with their own monitoring of take up, but few could provide detailed figures. They also reported that prisoners felt they were denied equal access to programmes and saw experience of racism and stereotyping by officers as a common problem.

Edgar and Martin (2004), in a recent qualitative Home Office report on prisoners’ experiences of prison in general, indicated a striking contrast between prisoner and staff perspectives: prisoner reports of racial discrimination were commonplace, while prison officers felt they risked being prevented from doing their job because of such allegations. They report that officers only understood discrimination in its blatant and overt forms, with limited understanding of institutional racism and stereotyping. There does not appear to be adequate quantitative evidence, broken down by ethnicity, regarding access to programmes or completion of programmes in prisons, or use of disciplinary report.

Before the creation of the National Probation Service and the introduction of accredited group work programmes, some probation areas had run programmes for Black and Asian offenders. These tended to involve an ‘empowerment’ element, acknowledging experiences of racism and discrimination and seeking to motivate offender reintegration or skill development. Powis and Walmsley (2002) provided a qualitative study of these programmes. They found that evidence of effectiveness was limited to a small number of probation in-house studies. Though small, these studies tended to be positive with respect to offender and practitioner views. Outcomes were only provided for small samples, typically without comparison groups, and focused on samples of group work completers. A limitation of the Powis and Walmsley study was that views of area service managers, who might have commented on feasibility and wider implementation issues, were not sought. More recently, Williams (2003) has conducted an in-house study comparing a cohort of Black and Asian offenders on a pre-pathfinder special programme, with a similar group ‘diverted’ to mixed groups. While completion rates were reported to be similar, offenders referred to special groups waited longer to start than offenders attending mixed groups.

The Offending Behaviour Programmes: Diversity Review Report (Home Office, 2002a) was produced as the major plank of the Prison and Probation Services’ joint response to new race equality legislation. It reported that the Correctional Services Accreditation Panel had agreed to a review of existing and new programmes with respect to diversity, and a ‘change control strategy’ to deal with diversity issues as they arose. The review clarified differences between adaptation and change. It concluded that treatment integrity could be maintained (that is, it could be claimed that essentially the same treatment was given) when scenarios were adapted for cultural relevance and appropriate language substituted if necessary.

Outcome monitoring

Among the criticisms made by the probation inspection report Towards Race Equality (HMIP, 2000) was the scarcity of work on concordance between sentence proposals and sentences received broken down by ethnicity. The report found that ethnic origin data was not effectively collected: this was a serious problem that had worsened since the mid-1990s. Equal opportunities policies tended to focus on employment, while neglecting other service outcomes (such as offender treatment). Race equality action plans usually did not have agreed outcome measures, and so could not be used to measure performance or assess change.

A follow-up report (HMIP, 2004) was positive about improvements made, but was still concerned about gaps in race and ethnicity monitoring. The report recommended the National Probation Directorate (NPD) include race/ethnic breakdown in performance reports. The nationally developed Interim Accredited Programmes Software (IAPS) was intended to provide reporting tools with race/ethnic breakdown, but developed reports were not yet in general use by the end of 2003.

Missing data has also been a problem for the publication of probation statistics. Statistics published in 2004 for 2002 (Home Office, 2002b) did not include tables for pre-sentence reports or orders started by ethnicity, due to missing data and use of incorrect codes. Calverley, et al. (2004) also note the problems incorrect data caused for sample identification for their research on criminogenic need. Probation Circular 09/2204 (Home Office, 2004) provided further guidance on the use of correct codes.
Criminogenic needs

Since the work reported here began a report on Black and Asian offender criminogenic needs became available. Calverley et al. (2004) reported results from a survey of 483 Black and Asian offenders on probation. They compared their findings with already available data on White offenders. Their report concluded that Black, Asian and Mixed Heritage offenders showed less crime-prone attitudes and beliefs, and lower levels of self-reported problems than White offenders, a result that was statistically significant. The authors concluded that the evidence did not support views about distinctly different criminogenic needs. They speculated that processes (including possible differences in pre-sentence report quality) leading to differential sentencing may account for lower levels of crime-prone attitudes. They noted the need for further research on this.

Calverley et al. also found that BME offender views about how they had been treated were broadly favourable. Of those who had experienced group based programmes, 54 percent thought they should be mixed: this was 87 percent of those who said they thought that group composition mattered. Only eight percent of those who thought group composition mattered would have preferred groups for minority ethnic offenders only. The sample included only a small number of offenders who had experience of Black or Asian groups (approximately 24). Calverley et al. state that this group was not significantly more likely to prefer groups for minority ethnic offenders than the remainder of the programme sample.

3. Description of the pathfinder research

The Black and Asian offenders pathfinder involved three strands of work:
- Preparation Sessions (a four session group work motivational module as preparation for Think First);
- volunteer mentors to support offenders through Think First;
- adaptation of Drink Impaired Drivers programme for delivery to Asian offenders.

In all, nine Probation areas were involved. Greater Manchester delivered the Preparation Sessions and Think First programme to groups of Black and Asian offenders. West Midlands and Thames Valley followed the Preparation Sessions with mixed Think First groups. The mentoring areas were: Avon and Somerset, Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, and Hertfordshire. Leicestershire and Rutland delivered the Drink Impaired Drivers programme to group of Asian offenders.

The Preparation Sessions were intended to provide motivational preparation for Think First. A broadly cognitive behavioural approach was taken to the development of strategies and responses to experiences of racism. The sessions were delivered by Black or Asian tutors. Mentoring materials provided a ‘developmental alliance’ approach in which offenders would be encouraged to increase awareness of costs and gains of their actions, identify alternative goals and take personal responsibility. The provision of Black or Asian mentors was intended to aid the support of offenders through mainly White Think First groups. The pathfinder projects were initially conceived as a complex quasi-experiment, to determine the added-value of each type of intervention. The DID ‘adaptations’ consisted of alterations/additions to programme scenarios; commentary on learner language issues; and commentary on tutor awareness issues.

The research was initially planned to take place over three years, with a reconviction study to follow. The main elements planned were:
- comparison of programme completion by ethnicity;
- implementation questionnaires;
- offender entry and exit questionnaires;
- offender interviews; and
- cohort tracking for attrition.

Key expected outcome measures were:
- programme completion rates;
- steps taken towards addressing offender problems;
- staff perceptions;
- offender experiences;
- reconviction.

This report covers implementation up to the end of 2003 (the first year). The findings presented are qualitative deriving from field visits and meeting notes (for all sites) and offender and staff questionnaire responses (for Preparation Session sites) conducted during the first year of implementation. Outcome findings are not reported here. Outcome/ effectiveness comparisons are likely to prove problematic due to implementation issues and sample size.
4. Preparation sessions

Capacity to deliver

Key findings

- The supply of Black and Asian staff, trained in both Think First delivery and the Preparation Sessions, was a constraint on implementation.
- Involvement in pathfinder development has provided good professional development opportunities for some enthusiastic staff, who in some cases then moved on to other responsibilities through promotion.
- Other staff felt more negative about their professional development, feeling typecast to do work with minority ethnic groups at the expense of their personal development.
- A central constraint on the supply of training had both benefits and costs for integrity of delivery.

Discussion and recommendations

Decisions to implement any pre-programme motivational group work must depend in the first instance on capacity to deliver. Are sufficient competent motivated and suitable staff available in the right locations? For this pathfinder, shortage of staff was a key implementation problem for all areas. Finding ethnically appropriate, suitably trained and enthusiastic staff (particularly sufficient numbers of Asian staff) was a constant problem. For the best part of a year Greater Manchester was unable to provide treatment management due to failure to find an ethnically appropriate person to fill the post.

- Local decisions, at area or regional level, should be made on whether there are sufficient ethnically appropriate and committed staff to continue with field testing Preparation Sessions.

While some staff gained professionally from their involvement in the pathfinder, this sometimes meant that they advanced to other roles and replacements with the same energy and commitment could not be found. Other staff felt typecast in being required to be involved in the pathfinder simply because of their ethnic identity: they felt that involvement restricted their development. While matching offender and staff ethnicity may be desirable, it can be seen as asking minority ethnic staff to carry the responsibility of responding to diversity, when this should really be a whole service responsibility.

- Professional development and management support for Black or Asian staff involved in any continuation of special provision should be carefully monitored.

Core Preparation Sessions training for accredited Think First tutors was centrally provided in the interests of maintaining programme integrity. This central provision meant that the supply of training could not always keep pace with tutor attrition, meaning that in a few cases untrained tutors were substituted with a likely negative impact on integrity of delivery. This suggests that there were both benefits and costs to treatment integrity following from the centralised provision of training.

- A balance between providing a centrally determined framework for training and responding to local need arising from tutor attrition needs to be struck; this may be best achieved by devolving some responsibility for Preparation Session training.

Supply of offenders

Key findings

- Implementation is limited by the supply of eligible and suitable offenders: experience did not match early expectations of numbers in all probation areas.
- Referral processes varied between areas and were not always clear and supported by well-informed case managers.
- Comparison of referrals between areas was difficult because of different local practices.
- Pathfinder targets were believed by some to conflict with cash-linked targets and may have led to a reduction in referrals.
- Offender perceptions of ethnic identity may have cut across the global categories used by the pathfinder, leading to offender reluctance to take part.
Discussion and recommendations

Earlier group work programmes which provided the background experience for development of the Preparation Sessions had been targeted at self-defined ‘Black’ offenders. The pathfinder interventions were initially targeted at Black and Asian offenders in the senses used in the 2001 census categories, and this may or may not have corresponded with offenders’ self-deictions. Some element of offender choice was expected, but the processes for determining eligibility and suitability were not common to all areas and were sometimes not clear. One area (Thames Valley) changed from an ‘opt in’ to an opt out’ approach to referral to try to increase numbers, while another (Greater Manchester) advocated the use of ‘assessors’ to work with offenders at the PSR stage, although clearly documented processes were not developed.

In Greater Manchester (but not in other areas) courts used a specific sentence condition to attend a ‘Think First Black and Asian’ programme. Because the network of assessors diminished once key staff moved on, this was believed to account for a drop in the number of appropriate sentences. Other areas referred offenders after sentence. In West Midlands, courts used a generic programme condition for all programmes, with PSRs recommending the particular nature of the programme to be attended. Thus referral to the Preparation Sessions occurred once the order was in place.

All participating areas were aware of the problem of some offenders not seeing the Preparation Sessions as relevant to them. Entry questionnaires confirmed that offenders did not always see racism as a problem for them, and that self-described ethnic identity varied, often foregrounding national identity (e.g. Pakistani or British) or religion (e.g. Muslim) over ‘race’ category. A common view seemed to be that acceptability of the intervention to offenders would depend on how it was ‘sold’ to them.

- A common model for sentencing, referral and determining eligibility and suitability needs to be made explicit, taking into account offenders self-perceptions of ethnicity.

The Preparation Sessions were tied to Think First completion. Therefore only Black and Asian offenders with appropriate programme conditions were eligible. Recent findings of research into Black and Asian offender criminogenic needs (Calverley, et al.) suggests less crime prone attitudes and lower levels of self-reported needs than for White offenders. This might have been expected to restrict the numbers of appropriate referrals.

- Projections for completions and targets for the pathfinder should be reviewed at the local area or regional level, in the light of experience.

- Local decisions on whether to run the whole of Think First for specific ethnic groups, or to run mixed groups should be made in the first instance on viable numbers of motivated offenders, and likely wait times.

Good practice:

One area initially planned to run the Preparation Sessions and Think First for groups of Black and Asian offenders. They found that waiting for a viable number to start a group led to unacceptable delays. They changed their model of delivery so that offenders could attend mixed groups once they had completed the Preparation Sessions.

Another area was concerned that offenders had been waiting too long to start a special group. A cohort was followed through from sentence onwards and compared to another relevant group. Wait times were found to be longer than expected. The programme was relaunched to spread case manager knowledge and increase referral. A further cohort follow-up is planned after which feasibility of running a special group will be reviewed.

Implementation of the pathfinder occurred at a time when areas were keen to meet national targets for Think First, and to reduce waiting times to starting Think First. Some staff in Greater Manchester believed this had led to suitable offenders bypassing Preparation Sessions.

- Appropriate adjustments should be made to national accredited programme targets for areas or regions participating in innovative intervention research and development.

- Separating the Preparation Sessions from Think First, to enable their use as motivational preparation for other interventions, should be considered.
Quality of treatment

Key findings
- Offender feedback from participants has been largely positive, with group process issues featuring strongly among the positive comments made in exit questionnaires in all participating areas.
- Careful attention to group management and dynamics was needed to ensure mixed Think First groups were cohesive.
- Black or Asian treatment managers were in short supply; this led to the absence of treatment management in at least one area, and thus effective support for programme staff.
- It was not clear at what stage the final programme material was implemented for outcome effectiveness testing.

Discussion and recommendations
Positive comments in exit questionnaires emphasise group processes and people. Typically, offenders enjoyed the experience of being in the group, valuing positively other offenders and tutors, and the opportunity for open discussion of issues that affected them. One treatment manager described the group work as ‘firing offenders up to achieve’. The Preparation Sessions group work was videotaped for treatment management, but access to this material could not be gained for this research. The view was taken that offender consent had not been obtained for this type of use.

- Future evaluations of group work should include observation of video material to investigate the interpersonal mechanisms of offender motivation.
- A policy on access to video material for research and development purposes (and offender and staff consent for this) should be drawn up and implemented.

Finding suitable treatment managers was an issue for all areas. In Greater Manchester there was no treatment management for the first year of implementation. Some tutor feedback suggested modifications to material were being made. There was also concern about the quantity of material to be covered in the time available. There was only an electronic copy of the Preparation Session material and some confusion about which draft was the definitive one.

- The production of a hard copy (professionally reproduced) of material should be a precondition for outcome testing.
- Ethnic constraints on suitability of treatment managers should not become an obstacle to providing adequate support for programme delivery staff.

Diversity issues

Key findings
- Bilingual and second language issues are likely to be a key aspect of diversity within Black and Asian groups, to which tutors will need to respond.
- There was a perceived lack of input in training and in the programme material specific to, or acknowledging, Asian cultures.
- There were conflicting perceptions of where the responsibility lay for input on aspects of diversity - nationally, locally, or with the individual - and also between whole service responsibility and Black and Asian staff responsibility.

Discussion and recommendations
Treatment manager comments, and offender entry questionnaires suggested that bilingual and second language use were important factors for some offenders in these groups. Multiple community language use was common, and sometimes offenders used languages other than English to explore group work content and issues. (This is a feature in other kinds of learning situation, where the language of instruction is additional to that which learners commonly use. Production of material in written minority community languages may be of largely symbolic value because competence is often restricted to the spoken form.) Tutors and treatment managers with competence in languages other than English were clearly advantaged. Monolingual tutors needed guidance on, for example, how to respond to use of a language in the group which they (or other group members) did not understand.

- A language policy for group work should be developed.
Anxiety among tutors about lack of diversity experience and knowledge was common. Some Black tutors felt they lacked knowledge about Asian communities. Some input on diversity issues was provided in the national training, but this was not considered to be fully adequate, for example with regard to understanding the changing local context for British Asian youth, and shifting patterns of cultural identity. Each area provided some local input. For example, Greater Manchester’s recently appointed Asian treatment manager designed local training based around real life cases.

- Regions should be encouraged to research changing local patterns of race/ethnic diversity and to develop findings into local training packages; responsibility for this should not rest disproportionately with minority ethnic staff.
- A national framework of standards for diversity awareness training to support work with offenders should be developed. This could take the form of a checklist with best practice examples.

Good practice:

Asian treatment manager drew on recent experience of working with local Asian youth to develop case study examples for use in local diversity responsivity training for programme tutors.

Treatment manager used working knowledge of a range of Asian languages in viewing videos to determine learning purposes for which offenders used their community language during sessions. Monolingual tutors were given guidance on developing respectful ground rules for language use during sessions.

Evaluation and monitoring issues

Key findings
- Effective data collection depended heavily on the involvement of local area research and information staff whose involvement could not always be assumed.
- There were important gaps in baseline management information reports available centrally, and in the participating areas, relevant to programme delivery.
- Data collection requirements made from the centre appeared not to be fully or clearly resourced and managed at the point of data collection and reporting.

Discussion and recommendations

One assumption of the pathfinder was that Black and Asian offenders may need additional support to complete Think First. To date there is no clear evidence how and if programme completion rates differ by ethnicity.

- Management information systems should supply intervention and order throughput reports broken down by ethnicity.
- Data collection requirements made from the centre should be explicitly resourced at the point of information collection and analysis.
- Roles, responsibilities and a standards framework for local and regional research and information staff should be developed. This would enable clarification of role boundaries with respect to national research and a range of performance management functions. RDS (NOMS) could take the lead in this, in collaboration with the National Probation Research and Information Exchange (NPRIE).

Throughput and viability of evaluation

Key findings
- There is a good chance that an analysable sample of Preparation Session completions can be achieved well within the planned life of the pathfinder.
- There is a reasonable chance that an analysable sample (200 under each condition) of Think First completions could be achieved towards the end of 2006; if rates accelerate this could be achieved sooner.
- However, generalisations about effectiveness will be limited by area differences in referral practices and levels of treatment management and the inherent difficulty of finding statistically significant treatment effects on small sample sizes when the effect size may be relatively small.
Discussion and recommendations
The sample size targeted looks set to be achievable within the planned life of the pathfinder. However, generalisation about effectiveness will be limited by differences of practice between the areas. Greater Manchester had different sentencing arrangements from West Midlands. Greater Manchester delivery also clearly lacked treatment management due to the requirement that the role be filled by a Black or Asian treatment manager. Work so far is better seen as field testing than outcome testing. Future outcome effectiveness testing seems unlikely to demonstrate statistically significant treatment effects. However, this does not mean that the intervention is ineffective and should be abandoned. There has been some promisingly positive offender feedback, and an attrition study on a relevant cohort needs to be conducted to determine impact on access to Think First and other effective interventions, and compliance with the order.

- Field testing of the Preparation Sessions by local area (or regional) researchers should continue, following a common monitoring template for the follow-up of cohorts for attrition and access to relevant interventions.
- A monitoring and offender feedback group (consisting of local in-house research and information staff, interviewers independent of delivery, and treatment managers) should be empowered to oversee this work.
- Offender feedback should continue to be monitored by local staff not involved in programme delivery.
- Continuation beyond this should proceed in the first instance on feasibility grounds (determined partly through attrition and access monitoring) and offender feedback.

5. Mentoring

Key findings
- Performance to date suggests that original estimates of sample size were based on relevant order starts and not completions.
- The planned test of the effectiveness of mentoring is not viable due to very low numbers of offenders referred and matched with mentors.
- This report finds no evidence for the failure of mentoring per se.
- There is a lack of basic monitoring data against which to check the need for special intervention, and equality of access to services relevant to need.
- The unit costs of mentoring provision are high when resources are not fully deployed.
- There was a perceived lack of clear role and responsibility boundaries between the centre and the areas, particularly with respect to mentor training and evaluation.

Discussion and recommendations
Due to failure to implement, this report does not present findings of either a quantitative or qualitative nature on the effectiveness of mentoring. Compared to the relatively successful implementation of the Preparation Sessions, the mentoring aspect of the pathfinders has barely started. By the end of December 2003 across all five participating areas, and despite recruitment and training of mentors having taken place, only three offenders had started mentoring. This is believed to be mainly due to over-estimation of numbers of eligible and suitable offenders in all areas. Managers reported reluctance of offenders to take part in some instances, due to a reported lack of perceived need on the part of offenders.

- Abandon the mentoring aspect of this pathfinder in its current form due to non-viability.

However, implementation failure should not be taken as failure of mentoring per se. Several other areas have up-and-running volunteer mentor schemes. Both Greater Manchester and West Midlands have general mentoring schemes, and Merseyside runs a scheme for Black and Asian offenders. It would remain a useful research undertaking to systematically review existing literature on effectiveness and implementation of volunteer mentoring schemes for ‘at risk’ groups, and also to undertake a qualitative review of all existing schemes in probation. This would be a useful contribution to concept design. To explore viability, fieldwork should include schemes for any group of offenders across a range of interventions. It is possible that participating areas could build on the experience of the pathfinder to deploy mentoring resources more widely.
6. Asian Drink Impaired Drivers Programme

Key findings

- The life of the pilot would have to extend at least to June 2008 at the current rate of completions for a reliable outcome test.
- A reliable test of outcomes is not possible under the present design within a timescale which is realistic for service management.
- ‘Adaptations’ made to the material are responsivity changes only and do not require a test of offending outcome in their own right.
- The scheduling of groups has been delayed by staff shortage and change of responsibility, as well as the availability of eligible and suitable offenders, leading to long wait times for some offenders to start a programme.
- Change in sentencing patterns was a relevant outcome measure for this pilot which was not taken into account in the evaluation plan.

Discussion and recommendations

As for the mentoring aspect of the pathfinder, targets for completion for the Asian DID programme have not been supported by experience. This may be due to initial projections not taking likely drop out into account. Offenders have been ‘stacked’ in queues waiting for a viable group number to start. Experience to date suggests that it would take until July 2008 to achieve a sample size, which might support a reliable outcome test. This is obviously not a realistic timescale for area or regional service management who are likely to need to make a decision on continuation of the groups on the basis of viability. In addition to limited supply of suitable offenders, staffing the group work has become a problem, with key personnel having extended service responsibilities.

- Abandon the idea of an outcome effectiveness study for Asian adapted DID.
- Empower local managers to decide on the viability of Asian DID in the light of offender wait times and current staff availability.
- Ensuring the availability of appropriate staff should be a pre-requisite to continuation.
- If continued, locally monitor the Asian DID programme (following a nationally determined template) for its impact on attrition, completion rates and wait times compared to Asian offenders in mixed groups and offenders from other ethnic groups.
- If continued, seek offender feedback in line with general area or regional arrangements across all programmes, to allow ongoing comparisons of offender views of specialist and mixed groups.

Changes made by Leicester staff to the programme material are responsivity changes only, which should not require an outcome test in their own right. Experience of delivery has highlighted the need for review of video material and the provision of certain programme documents in minority community languages.

- Review the content of the video material for DID and supplement or replace it, and provide key documents in minority community languages.

Tutor commentary on the material has suggested a range of elements of responsivity. These should be worked up into a training package for tutors.

- Commission additional diversity training material for DID group tutors, informed by up-to-date local ‘cultural audits’ and drawing on regional cross-agency experience and expertise.
7. General issues

Programme development

The evaluation was designed as a complex test of the impact of different patterns of intervention and delivery on outcomes and effectiveness. This was intended to run at the same time as a process evaluation of implementation. Plans were based on assumptions that materials were in a final stage of development and that the preconditions for implementation were already in place. In practice these assumptions were not justified. The materials were still in the process of development, and several obstacles to implementation emerged for all strands of the pathfinder. The underlying problem was one of not explicitly building in different phases of intervention development, with appropriate supporting research during each phase.

- A process model of research and development for effective interventions should be adopted.

Figure 1: Stages in intervention research and development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase 1</th>
<th>Phase 2</th>
<th>Phase 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concept design</td>
<td>Field testing</td>
<td>Outcome testing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theory and experience to</td>
<td>Design run and monitored. Refinements made in</td>
<td>Design frozen and systematically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>develop an initial design</td>
<td>the light of implementation</td>
<td>evaluated for impact on outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and model of change.</td>
<td>issues and feasibility.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formative evaluation</td>
<td>Formative evaluation</td>
<td>Summative evaluation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research can assist concept design in the following ways:

- systematic and traditional reviews of relevant literature;
- surveys of current practice and stakeholder views;
- consideration of ethical issues;
- elaboration of a model of change.

The concept design phase should not be considered complete until both a practice manual (describing the content of the intervention) and theory manual (with a model of how change is believed to be brought about by the intervention) have been drafted. Concept design may require external as well as internal expertise, to encourage innovation and multi-modal approaches.

Formal field testing should only start once theory and practice manuals are in place in first draft form. The field testing phase can be supported by research through:

- surveys of stakeholder views and experiences;
- throughput monitoring;
- tracking offender cohorts for completion and drop out;
- small-scale fine-grained qualitative research into group processes; and
- video observation.

Field testing is still a formative (or developmental) evaluation stage during which changes to both the practice and theory manuals should be expected. Figure 4.1 shows that there may be any number of revisions in the light of experience before the final version is ready for outcome testing. Once the final version is ready it should be produced in hard copy and distributed in such a manner that it is clearly distinguishable from earlier draft versions. An outcome test will need to be designed in such a way that it has the potential to statistically test effectiveness. For this, test conditions will need to be in place guided by lessons about effective implementation from the field testing phase. Research input at this stage will be essential in advance of the evaluation design. The feasibility of a randomised controlled design should be considered as this is the most effective way of ensuring comparability between groups.
Where an intervention is based on well-established and uncontroversial theory of change, or where sample and effect sizes are likely to be small or contaminated by the impact of other interventions, a reconviction outcome study may not be a priority. In such cases, once feasibility and costs of implementation have been established after field testing, full implementation might follow with appropriate monitoring arrangements in place.

Routine monitoring reports
The pathfinders were hampered by the lack of national data on programme throughput by ethnicity. To date there is no convincing evidence regarding one of the main assumption of the pathfinder; that Black and Asian offenders are less likely to complete programmes than White offenders. The origin of this assumption is not clear. While reporting tools for Interim Accredited Programme Software are in development, relevant national data are not yet available. Where such data become available, their accuracy will depend upon local systems, processes and personnel being in place for routine audit. Local data were provided by some areas through a variety of means including locally developed software (for example, the ‘Pathfinder’ system in Greater Manchester, and Excel spreadsheets in West Midlands). These data were often supplied by a functionally separate unit from that which delivered the programme and had been funded for the pathfinder.

- Provide clear funding for routine data collection and reporting requirements. The problem of incomplete data is discussed in the background to this report. While the NPS is committed to providing programme returns broken down by ethnicity, there will remain an accuracy and completeness issue until reporting and audit arrangements are in place.
- Develop standards for report and audit of ethnicity data.

Good practice:
Routine reports are provided on intervention and order throughput, broken down by broad 2001 Census race/ethnic categories. These are shared with operational staff on a team basis. Responsibility for filling gaps and checking accuracy is clear. There are documented standards for this process.

2001 Census race/ethnic categories
Offender entry questionnaires and a staff questionnaire asked open-ended questions about ethnicity. Responses showed that both offenders and staff may select ‘Asian British’ or ‘Black British’ as their preferred ethnic identity. The 2001 Census categories only provide for selection of a specifically British ethnic identity by White respondents. Black British or Asian British ethnic identity can only be selected as ‘Black or Black British’ or ‘Asian or Asian British’. A specifically Black British or Asian British choice cannot be made unless additional questions are asked which go beyond the standard questions. This may explain some of the resistance to the use of the categories.

- For monitoring and research purposes, use of the 2001 race/ethnic categories should be supplemented by additional questions about national identity, and self-definition.

8. Concluding discussion
The commissioning of the Home Office research reported by Calverley et al. raised expectations of findings related to racism as a criminogenic need. This was not supported in the research findings. The definition of a criminogenic need is open to interpretation. The view taken here is that it is confusing to apply this concept to experiences of offenders as victims of experiences for which they are not responsible. Thus, in contrast to Durrance and William’s (2003) argument, from this perspective Black and Asian offenders’ experiences as victims would not be seen as criminogenic (although they may be sentence-related).

However, acknowledgement of the reality of such experiences, and the feelings they may generate, could be a starting point for effective motivational work for some offenders. An appropriate treatment target for offenders who have experienced discrimination (and for whom there may be a link between these experiences and offending), would be their coping or problem solving skills and strategies. Rather than treating the victim of racism (which could be seen as blaming the victim), overt racism can be appropriately addressed by tackling perpetrators. A starting point for addressing institutional racism is the collection and reporting of accurate monitoring data.
Decisions about whether or not to continue with motivational preparatory group work, or mentoring schemes developed for this pathfinder will need to be made on feasibility grounds in the first instance. The experience of field testing has shown the importance of staff availability for capacity to deliver. More local, probably regional, decisions will be needed to assess also how far the likely numbers of offenders in relevant target groups would support either the preparatory motivational group work, or delivery of accredited programmes in special groups, or both. Following this, the impact of interventions for special groups on access to other relevant and effective interventions should be monitored. With the sample now available, an initial attrition study should now be possible. However, assumptions about the likely numbers of Think First completers made at the outset of the pathfinder did not seem to be borne out and may need to be reviewed. A precondition to this must be clarity about referral conditions and processes. Comparison between throughput and outcomes for interventions run in different parts of the country will only be meaningful where referral arrangements are common.

Whether motivational group work and/or special group delivery of offending behaviour programmes is implemented, continuing monitoring and evaluation should include collection of offender feedback and cohort tracking. The message needs to be clear that evaluation must include impact of a policy to intervene on all who are eligible, suitable and available for the intervention, not just those who in fact access it. While a national ‘template’ for this work could be provided, this work is best conducted at a local level, involving staff with access to and knowledge of local information systems. Standards, resourcing and role-boundaries for this work need to be clarified.

Conducting this work at a local level, and local decision making regarding feasibility, point to decentralisation of work on responsibility to ‘minority’ groups. The concept of a one-size-fits-all approach to work with Black or Asian offenders sits oddly with the idea of responding to diversity. Regions could well work independently from the centre in locally mapping (down to the district or neighbourhood level) the changing patterns of identity. At a regional level, high density areas could share expertise with low density areas. Local knowledge and expertise could be exploited through involvement in cross-agency Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs). Taking a regional cross-agency approach could make it easier to see the relevance of other Home Office aims (such as developing credible interventions that attract appropriate sentencing and thus reduce the size of the prison population, or encouraging active communities) to assessing effectiveness. It might also generate ideas about other forms that potentially effective motivational work with specific cultural groups could take, and how the energy of local communities could be better harnessed in reducing crime. In taking a more local focus, however, comparison of experiences between similarly populated neighbourhoods and across regions would still be needed.

While volunteer mentoring was an aspect of this pathfinder, it has not to date been given a fair test. In a sense, the test of mentoring was performed in the most unpromising circumstances. It was removed as an intervention in areas with a record of successful delivery, and implemented in probation areas with lower density ethnic minorities. The rationale for this was that these areas did not have the numbers to avoid singleton placements in groups. However, these areas might be expected to have the least experience and confidence in working with minority groups. In some cases their ethnic monitoring was not in place. There was also an eligibility tie-in to group work programmes for which Black and Asian offenders (with their lower levels of criminality and criminogenic needs) are less likely to have a condition of attendance. With the wisdom of hindsight, implementation failure seems to have been inevitable. Volunteer mentoring schemes should be field tested in more promising circumstances, with full exploitation of expertise from within and outside of the Probation Service.

Finally, design of future evaluation needs to take into account the process of intervention research and development. While progress straightforward to an outcome evaluation might work for ‘off the shelf’ products (although even here implementation will need to be tested), it is less helpful for more innovative work. Rush to an outcome evaluation may be premature, preventing the full exploitation of existing knowledge and expertise (both internal and external to the probation service) to work interventions up to a credible and promising version. During field testing, change in the light of experience should be expected. Where work is based on sound principles, clearly targeted, documented and monitored, and aimed at relevant service outcomes (such as order compliance, access to accredited interventions according to need, or improvement in criminogenic need) then separate reconviction outcome testing for individual interventions may not always be a priority.
Appendix: Note on methodology

Findings presented here are largely qualitative. They are derived from:

- notes taken at field visits to all of the participating areas;
- meeting notes and minutes taken at the pathfinder project group;
- meeting notes and minutes taken at working group meeting for the Preparation Session and mentoring aspects;
- an implementation issues log updated after each meeting or visit;
- an implementation questionnaire in the Preparation Session areas; and
- offender entry and exit questionnaires for the Preparation Sessions.

The implementation questionnaire was targeted at all tutors, managers, and treatment managers involved in programme delivery. Responses were also sought from programme team administrative staff and relevant area research and information staff. A request was sent to forward the survey form to a small number of case managers with experience of supervising offenders who had attended the Preparation Sessions (5 each from Greater Manchester and West Midlands, and 3 from Thames Valley). In all 31 responses were received, out of approximately 50 targeted. This represented examples of programme managers, tutors and treatment managers and staff involved in data collection from all 3 areas. There was minimal representation of case managers. The overall response rate out of the number targeted is estimated to be 62%, although it is not possible to be exact because additional copies were also distributed at meetings. Table 1 shows the numbers of offender questionnaires examined.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Entry</th>
<th>Exit</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greater Manchester</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thames Valley</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Midlands</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An RDS researcher attended all relevant steering group and working group meetings from February 2003 onwards. Narrative accounts were derived from meeting minutes and notes, and field visit notes. These narrative accounts, together with the Implementation Issues Log, staff questionnaire responses and the sample of offender entry and exit questionnaires provided the data from which the qualitative findings presented were derived.

Although an RDS researcher and research trainee have been largely responsible for design, fieldwork and administration, the research has only been possible with the assistance of key Probation Service staff, including local research officers, national and local programme managers, treatment managers, tutors and administrative staff. All of these have played some role in data collection. A Monitoring and Offender Feedback Group, involving local research officers, treatment managers and offender interviewers meets to support the ongoing research in areas running the Preparation Sessions.

The evidence presented here is limited to implementation issues. It is largely qualitative and draws on the limited amount of offender feedback currently available. Attrition studies, following relevant cohorts through for a fixed period after sentence, are still needed for the Preparation Sessions. Additionally, analysis of offender feedback, when this becomes available, should assist future decision making.
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