

Think First Programme

Introduction

The Think First Programme is a nationally accredited programme for offenders which aims to develop their skills for thinking and problem solving. The programme also aims to challenge attitudes and thought processes associated with their offending to reduce the risk of future offending.

The Programme

This programme teaches the following skills aimed at reducing re-offending:

- Identifying, defining and recognising their problems
- Thinking through the effects of behaviour before they act, including its effect on victims and others
- Developing more self control over their feelings and behaviour
- Knowing what to do to reduce or stop offending.

Programme Length

The core groupwork component consists of 22 sessions of 2 hours duration. In addition there are pre and post programme psychometric tests. This is supported by individual sessions before the group begins and after it finishes. Offenders will normally attend at least two sessions per week. Sunday groups are available where necessary.

When is Think First Appropriate?

All offenders should be assessed for suitability by the Probation Service. The programme is best suited to offenders aged 18 years and over

- Who have a history of previous offending
- Whose offending is linked to deficits in their decision making and problem solving skills
- Who are convicted of offences of dishonesty, property offences and some public order/violent offences
- Who indicate some motivation to change their behaviour.

Exclusions

The programme is not suitable for the following offenders:

- Those with severe mental health and/or severe learning difficulties
- Sex offenders
- Domestic violence perpetrators
- Those who offend against children.

Other programmes are available for sex offenders, domestic abuse perpetrators and drink impaired drivers

The Legal Framework

Attendance on the programme is a requirement of a Community Order or Suspended Sentence as set out in Section 202 of the Criminal Justice Act 2003. The following words should be used:

“For the duration of the requirement, participate in the Think First programme, in premises approved by the South Yorkshire Probation Board, in accordance with the instructions of the responsible officer for not more than 30 days, and whilst participating, comply with the instructions given by, or under the authority of, the person in charge of the programme (Section 202 Criminal Justice Act 2003).”

This requirement will be enforced and the Order returned to court if the programme is not completed.