Think First Programme

Common features of “What Works” Programmes include

- Reduced re-offending
- Improved public protection
- Seamless execution of the sentence of the Courts
- Greater public confidence in community punishments.

Tried and Tested

The Think First Programme is a Home Office accredited Programme.
The methods, principles and techniques applied have proved to be very effective in reducing Re-offending.

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This programme tackles the attitudes and behaviour of persistent offenders. Its aim is to teach offenders new skills and techniques:

- To stop them offending
- To control their thoughts, feelings and actions
- To change their attitudes and behaviours

The programme is aimed at repeat offenders who make up the core of probation caseloads.

Rigorous assessment of offenders during the preparation of Pre-Sentence Reports is essential. There is evidence that putting the wrong offenders on this programme can increase re-offending. Sex offenders and Domestic Violence offenders and those convicted of serious Violent offences are unsuitable for the programme.

Where appropriate, Pre-Sentence Reports will contain proposals for offenders’ attendance on the Think First Programme as an additional requirement to a Probation Order (minimum of 18 months). It is not appropriate for these Orders to be made as a result of a Specific Sentence Report.

The programme is an intensive Home Office Accredited programme, delivered to groups of up to ten offenders. Offenders seldom think about their victims, their families or the consequences for themselves before committing a crime. The programme tackles the way offenders think and behave and aims to change behaviour by teaching problem-solving skills.

It runs for 33 two hour sessions comprising four pre-group, 22 group and seven post-group sessions.

Tests are given throughout the programme to measure offenders’ skills and attitudes towards offending. The results of these contribute to regular review meetings and reports written by programme staff and the Case Manager.

"What works" is a Home Office policy to ensure all probation and prison practice is effective and based on properly researched evidence of success in reducing re-offending.