



## **Added Value? HIMMAT in Halifax Evaluation Report**

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## Key Findings

### **Does HIMMAT help to improve order completions?**

- 21 offenders in the HIMMAT file read sample went on to complete their order or licence period successfully (88%). A further 10 (29%) had orders that were still ongoing and 3 (9%) failed to complete. This was a higher percentage than that for Calderdale (61%), Asian offenders across West Yorkshire (65%) and the overall area figure (61%). Chi square testing showed the comparisons between HIMMAT offenders, Calderdale and Area figures to be statistically significant.

### **Does HIMMAT help to improve offender compliance?**

- The file-read data showed that of 903 National Standards appointments arranged, a total of 801 were kept. This gives a compliance rate of 90% for the first 34 offenders to have had contact with HIMMAT.
- The performance data revealed a 90% compliance rate for all Asian offenders in Calderdale in 2006/7 (thus matching the figure reported for the file-read sample). Although performance in Calderdale in 2007/8 is not as noticeably different as in other districts, the high performance has been maintained over a two-year period (averaging at 93% for the second year), whilst other districts have had to drive their performance up.

### **Does HIMMAT help to reduce the likelihood of breach?**

- The file-read data showed that a total of 31 offenders (91%) had not had any breach action instigated in the first 26 weeks (6 months) of their order/licence.
- Breach data from Performance information packs revealed that compliance across the area had improved between 2006/7 and 2007/8. Asian offenders in Calderdale did not appear to be more compliant than those in other districts though the number of those with no breach in 26 weeks of an order/licence increased from 70% to 75% in 2007/8.
- However, the performance information data did reveal a significant difference across the two year time period when comparing results from the HIMMAT sample to area wide figures. When comparing the numbers of offenders who did not have breach action instigated, HIMMAT offenders had performed significantly better than the area as a whole in 2006/7 and 2007/8.

### **Does HIMMAT enable more appropriate proposals to be made in PSRs?**

- Offender Managers talked about the advantage of working with HIMMAT in terms of being able to challenge offenders on issues that they might not feel comfortable tackling by themselves due to a lack of confidence in working with Asian offenders. It was felt that being able to have HIMMAT staff present in PSR interviews allowed staff not only to challenge Asian offenders, but it also enabled the Offender Managers to get more out of the interview session itself.

### **Do offenders value the service?**

- Comments from both Offender Managers and offenders revealed that the value of HIMMAT to them is the way in which they assist Asian offenders in dealing with personal issues linked to relationships, employment, family and health, whilst taking into account the offender's culture and how this might affect them in trying to address these problems.
- Offenders spoke of the value of HIMMAT in terms of having flexibility around arranging appointments and how this had impacted positively on their compliance with probation supervision requirements.
- The value of having a service with an understanding of the Asian community was mentioned by both staff and offenders. Offenders felt it was easier to open up to someone from the same community and the same cultural background.

### **Other Findings**

- Comments around potential improvements were linked to the perceived value of HIMMAT in that respondents talked about possible expansion of the service. This expansion related to HIMMAT broadening the services it offers but also to a feeling that more offender management staff could make use of HIMMAT.

### **Recommendations Summary**

- The Probation Service should consider continuing the service in Halifax but also look into extending the service to other West Yorkshire districts where it could be of benefit. Any plans to extend the service would have to be mindful of a need for increased staffing and resources, though the added value of the service in terms of compliance may outweigh these costs.
- If the HIMMAT service continues to be offered in Halifax (and potentially wider), compliance data should consider to be monitored as 2007/8 data appeared to show that other districts have improved their performance in terms of National Standards appointments. However, monitoring activities should also take into account 'soft' outcomes in terms of how HIMMAT may assist Asian offenders and the overall value of the service (e.g. employment/training outcomes).
- The flexibility offered by HIMMAT in organising supervision appointments appears to be having a positive impact on compliance rates. It is therefore worth considering whether a similar flexibility could be given to offenders across the West Yorkshire caseload as a way of potentially increasing turn-up rates. One possible way of offering such flexibility might be to increase the number of home visits offered.
- Where the HIMMAT service is available (and similarly for UMMID in Bradford), all offender managers should be made aware of the organisation and its aims in terms of meeting the needs of Asian offenders as usage may be variable amongst probation staff at present.

## **Introduction**

In 1999 Probation Services were invited to submit proposals to develop effective programmes for particular groups of offenders or offences. Proposals for specialist projects such as those for black and Asian offenders were also invited. However, while the importance of developing interventions for black and Asian offenders was recognised, because of their over-representation in the criminal justice system, the lack of knowledge about effective practice made it harder to introduce new interventions for them. Indeed, the development of practice in relation to minority ethnic offenders has been somewhat inconsistent, often consisting of small local projects, sometimes accompanied by resource packs or training manuals.

Previous research on the needs and perceptions of ethnic minority individuals supervised by the probation service has tended to consist of small scale projects. A recent study of Pre-Sentence Reports (PSRs) on White and Asian defendants in the North of England found some differences in the style and content of reports (Hudson and Bramall, 2002). They found that reports on Asians tended to be 'thinner', in the sense that they gave less information, and they were more likely to use 'distancing' language when discussing information by the defendant. The study also found that Asian defendants' problems were more likely to be attributed to their individual characteristics than to external difficulties such as substance misuse. Reports on Asians were also more likely to make no positive proposal, or to present a custodial sentence as inevitable.

## **The HIMMAT Project in West Yorkshire**

The HIMMAT Project is funded by the Calderdale Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership to improve the outcomes for Asian offenders in Calderdale. The project is focused on complementing the work of Offender Managers to ensure that clients from South Asian cultural backgrounds have improved and relevant access to service provision. Two key aspects of the work carried out by the Project are providing cultural input to assist Offender Managers when writing Standard Delivery Reports and supervising offenders once they have been released from prison, or when they receive a community-based sentence. Services delivered by HIMMAT are:

- **Standard Delivery Report (SDR)**

Areas of work include looking at the impact of cultural issues, especially the mindset and motivation for offending.

- **Supervision of Offender and Throughcare/Licence**

Co-working with Offender Managers, to ensure that issues are addressed in a culturally specific and religiously sensitive way, and that this forms an integral part of the supervision plan.

Currently HIMMAT are contracted to work with South Asian offenders in Halifax for 2.5 days per week. The service they provide is in addition to that of the offender's offender manager and the HIMMAT worker has a caseload of

approximately 20 offenders as well as input into PSRs. They are also available to consult with offender managers with regards to particular cases and make some prison visits.

### **Research Questions**

As part of a best value review, the service is required to provide evidence that it provides added value. This research was commissioned to answer the following questions:

Over and above standard offender management practice,

1. Does HIMMAT help to improve order completions?
2. Does HIMMAT help to improve offender compliance?
3. Does HIMMAT help to reduce the likelihood of breach?
4. Does HIMMAT enable more appropriate proposals to be made in PSRs?
5. Do offenders value the service?

## Methodology

### Design and samples

This study used quantitative and qualitative approaches to address the research questions outlined in the introduction.

Quantitative data was obtained from the Case Records Administration Management System (CRAMS) to address questions 1-3. Data was extracted for cases who had been in contact with the HIMMAT service. Additional quantitative data on compliance and breach was obtained from West Yorkshire Performance Information packs for 2006/7 and 2007/8. The sample comprised the first 34 offenders to have had contact with the HIMMAT service in Halifax. A file-read tool was devised after consultation with the Performance Information Team in West Yorkshire to calculate the following for this sample:

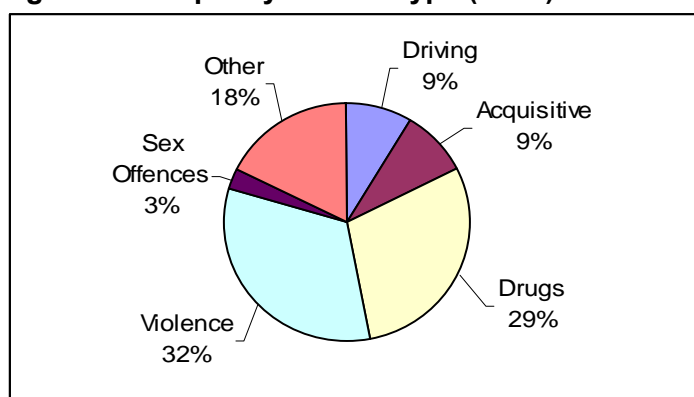
- The percentage of appointments kept
- The percentage of cases without breach
- The percentage whose order/licence had been successfully completed

Comparison data for Calderdale and for Asian Offenders in West Yorkshire was gathered from West Yorkshire Probation's performance report on these measures. The demographics for this sample are presented in the [Quantitative sample](#) section below.

### File-read sample

The file-read sample comprised of 34 Asian male offenders. The mean (average) age of the group was 29.4 years. The range was 42 (17-59). A total of 15 offenders (44%) were licence cases, a further 15 (44%) were on Community Orders and the remaining 4 (12%) were on suspended sentences. Figure 1 below gives a breakdown of cases by offence type:

**Figure 1: Sample by offence type (n=34)**



Comparison data was obtained from Performance Information packs for West Yorkshire for 2006/7 and 2007/8. This data relates to:

- Asian offender performance in Calderdale;
- All offender performance in Calderdale;
- Asian offender performance across West Yorkshire Probation Area;
- All offender performance across West Yorkshire Probation Area.

In particular, data pertaining to compliance and breach was extracted from the monthly NSMART returns and collated together for Calderdale and other districts for this time period. The NSMART returns are produced for auditing purposes and comprise a sample of the West Yorkshire caseload. Therefore, wherever this report refers to the 'total sample' or a percentage of the total sample, this should be read as the total number of cases in the sample extracted from NSMART audits, rather than the total caseload for West Yorkshire.

This sample comprised 4714 offenders, and from this sample compliance and breach rates have been calculated for Asian offenders, Asian offenders in Calderdale, and for the total sample.

### **Qualitative Sample**

The qualitative data collection comprised semi-structured interviews with 5 offenders who had been in contact with HIMMAT for at least 6 months, and 5 Offender Managers who had experience of working with HIMMAT in producing SDRs on Asian offenders. This information was used to address questions 4 and 5 as outlined above. All interviews were conducted on probation premises in Halifax. All interviews were digitally recorded to ensure the accuracy of the information gathered, and were later analysed by making notes of the emerging themes and the relationships between them.



## Quantitative Results

### 1. File-Read Results – HIMMAT sample

A percentage compliance rate for each of the offenders in the file-read sample was calculated by comparing the percentage of National Standards appointments arranged, with those that were kept for each individual. For the purposes of this research the compliance rate has been calculated in the same way as for the Performance Information 'NSmart' audits. This is to ensure that the research is comparing 'like with like', since the same method is used in the monthly performance reports for West Yorkshire. Compliance and breach is monitored for the first 26 weeks (6 months) of the order/licence. If there have been no instances of breach in this time period this is considered to be a 'pass'.

#### 1.1 Appointments Kept

A total of 903 National Standards appointments were arranged for the offenders in the file-read sample (n=34). This is an average of 26.5 appointments per offender. Of those appointments arranged, 801 were kept. This gives a compliance rate of 90% for the first 34 offenders to have had contact with HIMMAT.

**Table 1**

<b>Average Number of appointments arranged</b>	<b>Average Number of appointments kept</b>	<b>Average number of acceptable absences</b>	<b>Average number of unacceptable absences</b>	<b>Number with no breach in 26 weeks</b>	<b>Number who completed order/licence successfully</b>
26.5	23.5 (90%)	2	1	31 (91%)	21 (62%)

A total of 31 offenders (91%) did not have any breach action instigated in the first 26 weeks of their order/licence and 21 offenders went on to complete their order or licence period successfully. A further 10 (29%) had orders that were still ongoing and 3 (9%) failed to complete. Excluding those with orders still ongoing, this gives a compliance rate of 88% (21/24). The area figure for successful order/licence completions in 2007/8 was 61%, in Calderdale 61%, and the figure for Asian offenders was 65%. Comparisons between the HIMMAT sample, Calderdale and Area figures proved to be statistically significant (p=0.02 and p=0.009 respectively)

In order to compare these results to Asian offenders in other districts, and offenders across the area as a whole, data was obtained from Performance Information packs for West Yorkshire for 2006/7 and 2007/8. Several offenders in the file-read sample had orders that commenced in 2006 and so could have been in contact with HIMMAT during this time. Again, compliance has been calculated for the first 26 weeks of the order and the percentage figure relates to the percentage of National Standards appointments kept.

## 2. Quantitative Findings

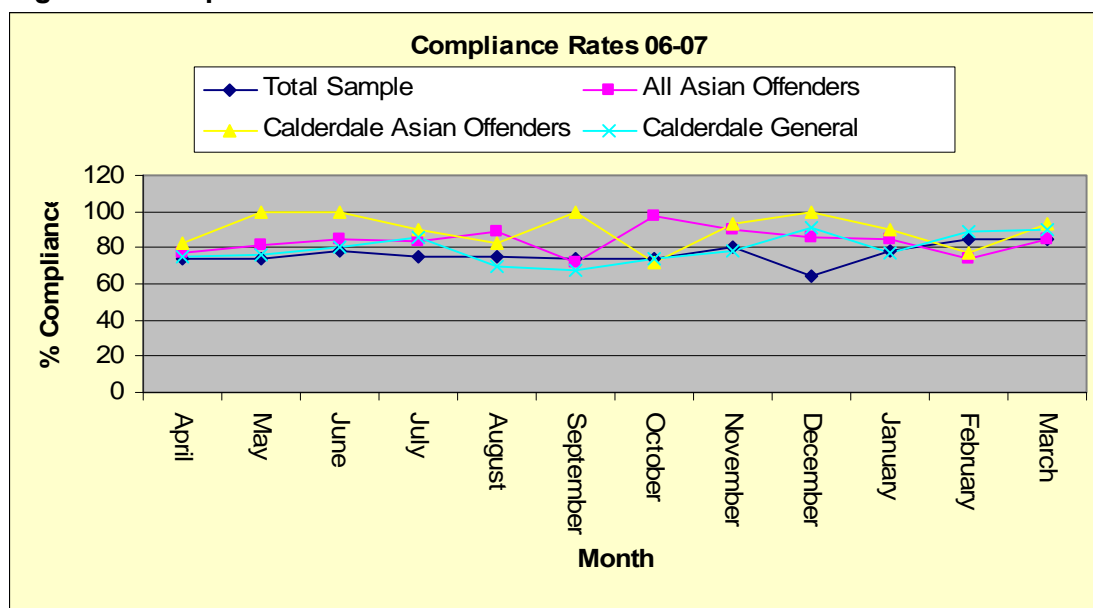
Compliance rates have been calculated for all West Yorkshire offenders, all Asian offenders and all Asian offenders in Calderdale for comparison to the HIMMAT sample in the file-read above.

### Calderdale Area 2006/7

Figure 1 shows the compliance rates for 2006/7 on a month-by-month basis for each of these three categories. The graph shows that overall, Asian offenders in Calderdale have performed better on compliance with National Standards both compared to all Asian offenders and the total probation caseload. The average compliance rate for Asian offenders in Calderdale is the same as that reported above for the file-read sample at 90% of appointments kept. There are some 'dips' in compliance in August and October but the average rate compares to 84% for all Asian offenders and 76% for the total sample.

The overall compliance rate for all offenders in Calderdale district was 79% for 2006-7. This suggests that offenders in Calderdale are slightly more compliant when compared to the total caseload and that Asian offenders in Calderdale are even more compliant still. However, the difference between Calderdale Asian offenders and those in other districts was not statistically significant ( $p=0.14$ ).

**Figure 1: Compliance rates 2006-7**

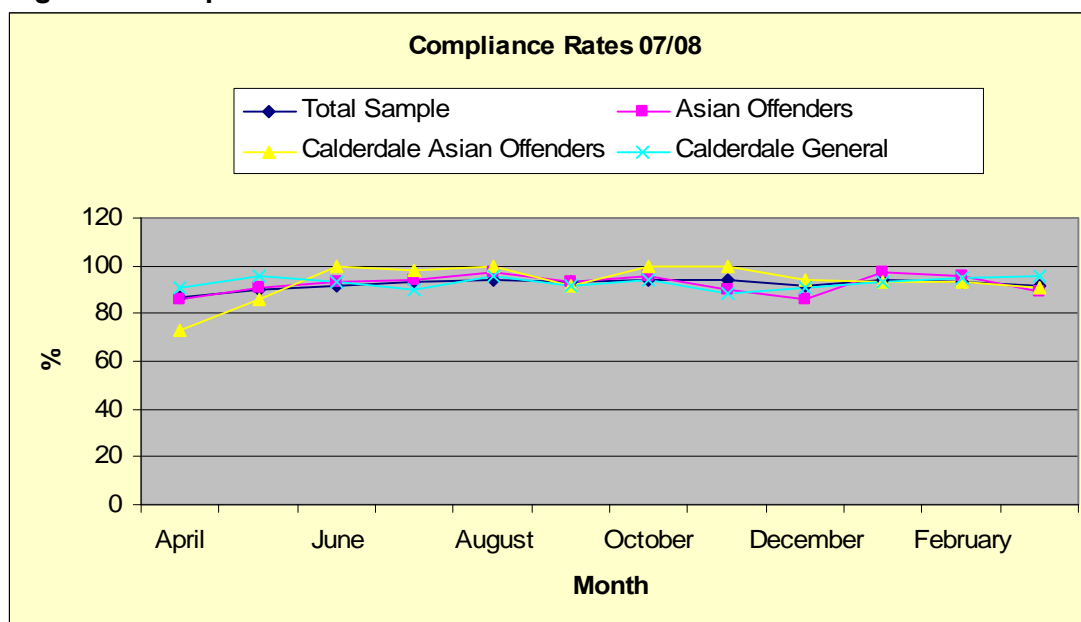


### Calderdale Area 2007/8

Figure 2 below displays the compliance rates for the 2007-8 period, again for these three categories. The figures are much closer for this period, and although Calderdale has maintained a high compliance rate, it appears that

the other districts have driven up their compliance during this period, thus resulting in them being more on a par with Calderdale.

**Figure 2: Compliance rates 2007-8**

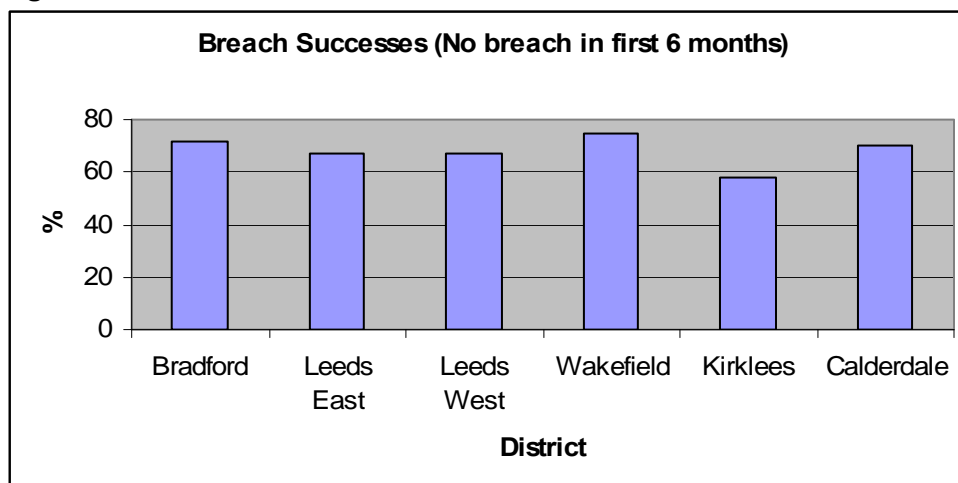


Results from the file-read and Performance Information data show some positive results for Calderdale area both in terms of compliance with National Standards appointments and the percentage of offenders with no breach. Although performance in Calderdale in 2007/8 is not as noticeably different as in other districts, the high performance has been maintained over a two-year period, whilst other districts have had to drive their performance up. The average compliance rate in 2007/8 for Asian offenders was 93%.

## 1.2 Breach

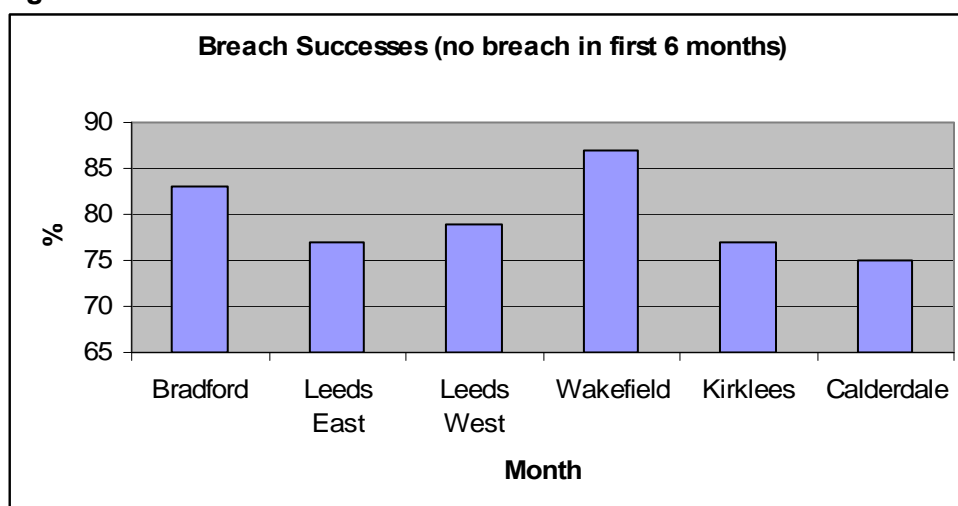
Breach is also monitored for the first 26 weeks of an offender's order/licence for performance monitoring purposes. Results are recorded by way of a 'pass' or 'fail' for each offender. Again, results have been calculated for 2006/7 and 2007/8. The percentage 'success' (number with a 'pass') rate has been calculated for each district for Asian offenders, and for the overall caseload. Figure 3 shows the year average for each district for Asian Offenders in 2006/7. The graph shows that the percentage success rate for Asian offenders is fairly consistent across the West Yorkshire districts (ranging from 67% to 75%), with the possible exception of Kirklees where the rate is slightly lower (58%). The average rate for Asian offenders across the districts was 68%.

**Figure 3 – 2006/7**



The average success rate for the total caseload in this time period was 65%, and so Asian offenders again have a slightly better rate of compliance. However, in terms of the breach data, Asian offenders in Calderdale do not appear to be more compliant than those in other districts.

**Figure 4 - 2007/8**



Again, the 2007/8 data reveals that compliance has improved across the area, as with the National Standards data above (ranging from 75% to 87%). Performance in Calderdale has improved by 5% to a total of 75% of Asian Offenders with no breach in the first 6 months. The average across all districts for Asian offenders 2007/8 was 80%, showing an improvement of 12% on the previous year. Again, this is likely to be, in part, a result of performance improvement projects running across West Yorkshire during this time period in order to drive up compliance rates, as the average for the total caseload had also improved slightly to a total of 67%.

Further analysis was undertaken to compare breach figures for the HIMMAT offenders in the file-read sample (n=34) to those for all offenders in Calderdale and also the area figures. Chi Square testing was undertaken to look for any significant differences between the samples.

The number of offenders who did not have any breach action instigated was calculated for each of the groups. As already reported 31 out of 34 offenders (91%) of the file read sample did not breach. In the first 6 months of their order licence. In comparison to Calderdale as a whole these results were not statistically significant in 2006/07 ( $p=0.05^1$ ) or 2007/8 ( $p=0.08$ ). However, there was a significant difference in comparison to the area figures. In 2006/7 the pass rate for breach was 65% for the area (1590/2447). When compared to the HIMMAT sample results, Chi Square testing showed the better performance of the HIMMAT sample to be a statistically significant result ( $p=0.003$ ). In 2007/8 the rate was 67% (1528/2267) for the area compared to the 91% for HIMMAT offenders. Again, this was a statistically significant result ( $p=0.007$ ).

It would be difficult to draw concrete conclusions from these results as sample sizes for both the file-read and the performance data are quite small. As the performance information data only looks at a sample of cases each month, it does reflect what is happening with the total caseload in each district. However, indicative findings do seem to show that although Asian offenders to seem to be slightly more compliant, the presence of HIMMAT in Halifax may have had an impact, at least on the number of National Standards appointments kept, but data is inconclusive on whether HIMMAT reduces the likelihood of breach.

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<sup>1</sup> A p value of  $>0.05$  denotes a statistically significant result

### 3. Qualitative Findings

#### Value of HIMMAT

All offenders interviewed spoke positively about the value of the HIMMAT service and how they felt this service had been beneficial alongside their probation supervision. Offenders talked about both the flexibility of the HIMMAT staff in terms of providing home visits but also about the way in which staff can help them to address often multiple issues which may have cultural implications. One offender commented that although he had been able to approach his Offender Manager for assistance, it was more beneficial to him to have support from someone from the same community who could be more flexible in meeting his needs. The following comments help to demonstrate these points:

'Sadat has done a home visit you know and looked at whether I need help with my C.V and looked at a CRB check and gave me the details of what's available in the community and helping me to choose the right path. I really appreciated that you know, having a young lad working with me in a way that was very professional, sometimes it helps for a person to show some empathy and be down to earth' (Offender 1).

'When you come out of prison you've got a lot of issues to deal with, you've got family issues, you've got work issues, you've got your health issues and Rahat and Sadat have looked at everything you know. They work in the way the Asian community works, they cater according to the community's needs. They are very flexible and that's the way the whole Asian community works you know?' (Offender 2).

'He asks me about my job and how things are at home, how my financial status is. He is very good because he knows people in the community and he has a good knowledge of everything' (Offender 3).

'With Rahat I don't feel like I'm coming here to talk to a probation officer. I'll come here and if I've got something to say I'll just say it to Rahat. I can just tell him what's on my mind and he'll always sit and talk to me even if it's something totally unrelated to probation he'll always sit and take 5 minutes for me' (Offender 5).

Some of the comments related particularly to how flexible the HIMMAT staff are in terms of arranging appointments with offenders and the perceived impact of this on compliance amongst this offender group:

'You see if I have a problem attending the probation office I can ring Rahat and he can come down to my house and do my appointment there. There is a lot of flexibility. As long as they are achieving what they wanted to achieve for that day with that client they will do anything to achieve that goal' (Offender 2).  
'It fits in with offering an equal and fair service for a growing number of Asian offenders and the outcomes in terms of compliance and effectiveness for the betterment of the service and offenders alike' (Offender Manager 5).

Offender Managers also talked about the value of the service to the offenders that they supervise:

'It is valued yes, and it basically shows what a lot of probation work is missing and that is the links with the communities. In Halifax there are three particular groups and each of them support different councillors and it comes out in their politics and relationships, all of which can be relevant to some offending' (Offender Manager 2).

'I had a lad who did one of the programmes, quite a difficult lad. I think he was suspended from the programme for causing a threatening incident. Rahat got him through the order really and I remember at one point we had a three-way with him at the end and it was very good and the lad was very positive about the service. Rahat did a lot of work with him around cultural stuff, around valuing other people, families and relationships and engaged him quite well' (Offender Manager 4).

Overall, comments from both Offender Managers and offenders revealed that HIMMAT can be of value because of the way in which they assist Asian offenders in dealing with personal issues linked to relationships, employment, family and health, whilst taking into account the offender's culture and how this might affect them in trying to address these problems. Indeed the added benefit of having probation staff with a good cultural understanding of the Asian community was highlighted by offenders in particular as something that was of great value to them. The section below looks at this in more detail.

### **Added value: cultural understanding**

The following comments from offenders and staff show how the HIMMAT service has been of great value to Asian offenders due to the added benefit of linking with a service that has an understanding of the local Asian community.

'I think people who are on licences and on probation find it easier to work with their own people because they understand their culture, religion and needs and stuff like that. It's not that other people don't, it's just a feeling that you have inside that they understand it more. You're not having to go through explaining things or thinking well this person doesn't know anything about my background' (Offender 2).

'It's just that it's easier to talk to him, any problems that I've had I've been able to tell him. I don't feel like I am talking to a complete stranger. It's a bit more helpful because he knows what is going on in the community' (Offender 3).

'With HIMMAT it was getting the background information about the person's family and general cultural things which was very useful' (Offender Manager 1).

'I think it's a good message from the service that we have that partnership. I mean in Bradford I think it's quite good, they have a group of workers who reflect the make-up of Bradford which is around 20% Asian. I don't know what the Asian make up of Halifax is but we have one worker off at the moment and a couple of Asian probation officers, so it would appear to anyone Asian that it's a hugely white dominated office, so I think it's important' (Offender Manager 2).

In addition to having contact with HIMMAT through their probation supervision, two offenders reported that they were also using the HIMMAT centre in Halifax and considered this a very useful resource:

'I've been down to the HIMMAT centre and spoken to a couple of the lads there, I've been working on my C.V and doing job searches. I've been doing that, going down to HIMMAT because if you need to use a computer or fill in an application the lads have helped me down there' (Offender 1).

'It's a good service definitely. A lot of the Asian lads go there, a lot of ex-offenders go there. It's a nice atmosphere in there' (Offender 3).

### **Challenging Offenders**

Offender Managers talked about the advantage of working with HIMMAT from the viewpoint of having staff on hand who can challenge offenders on issues that they might not feel comfortable dealing with themselves, either through lack of confidence or knowledge about working with this group or from a fear of being accused of being ignorant or racist upon challenging Asian offenders. The following comments are from staff who have involved HIMMAT with their cases for such a reason:

'Quite a bit of it is you get I don't drink because of my religion or I don't take drugs because of my religion and Rahat will be able to say to them quite often 'yes you do'. In another one which was a domestic violence case, the person said 'well in my religion we can hit our wives' and Rahat will say well it's nothing to do with your religion, that's your culture or your belief', which is something I couldn't say basically without being accused of being racist or ignorant. I certainly wouldn't have the confidence to say it even if I suspected it. He doesn't allow offenders to use cultural issues as a barrier to engagement' (Offender Manager 1).



'I've involved Rahat in the actual interview with some of my cases. There was one with a history of anger management and explosive rage, and his perception a lot of the time is that he's having racist comments directed at him all the time and being goaded. So I involved Rahat from the beginning of the interview and that was extremely useful because this lad came in and just literally ranted and raved for about 20 minutes and at one point Rahat said to him 'you know I'm Asian and I don't get this with people, do you think it might be something to do with your body language? And it was so useful because I could not have challenged him in that way. Actually he calmed down a lot in the interview and I was able to broach with him that he had actually got an anger issue after all. He wouldn't accept that but he could see there was something around body language. One of the TPOs here took on the case and he's done fantastic, he's done loads of work around anger management and he's very, very enthusiastic. So you know I do think that he's somebody we could have lost in the first ten minutes of the interview and it was very useful to have Rahat there' (Offender Manager 3).

'He's good at challenging people about things that I think people feel concerned about and worried that they might appear racist. I mean I don't feel able to if I ask somebody about being a Muslim and they say that they go to mosque regularly, I wouldn't feel able to challenge that, but Rahat will' (Offender Manager 4).

'I've had the experience where either through mistrust or whatever, I just haven't got anywhere with them. They have been perfectly polite but they won't engage or talk or anything. It's been fantastic to involve Rahat because they can just take over the case and work with them' (Offender Manager 5).

The above comments demonstrate the value to offender management staff of having HIMMAT as a supporting organisation, particularly in terms of engaging offenders in the supervision process. On the back of these comments Offender Managers were asked whether they felt that having support from HIMMAT had increased their confidence in working with Asian offenders. Three of the Offender Managers interviewed stated that for them this was definitely the case:

'Oh yes, without a doubt, I mean you can do things between you that you can't do by yourself. I mean you can't challenge someone who says 'this is my culture' even if it seems like it's clearly not' (Offender Manager 1)

'Yes definitely. There are some interviews I've done where he hasn't been involved in the interview but I've still talked to him about the case and it is useful to talk to him about things like religion and domestic violence in the community. He knows a lot about feuds in the area. He knows the undercurrent stuff and it's quite useful to know because it enables you to challenge things' (Offender Manager 2).

'I am already confident being an Asian myself but their input and knowledge of family dynamics locally was extremely useful. Gave an additional perspective and enhanced the work I was able to do' (Offender Manager 5).

### **Improvements**

There were not many suggestions from interview participants as to how the service provided by HIMMAT can be improved. One offender seemed unsure as to why he was having supervision appointments with HIMMAT rather than his Offender Manager. This appeared to have given him the perception that his Offender Manager had 'passed the buck' with regards to his supervision:

'When I got out of prison I came here on my first day and saw my probation officer, after that I've never seen her. I've been attending appointments with Rahat since April 2007 and he's done my supervision or if I've needed anything. I can ring him anytime or if I need to change an appointment' (Offender 4).

It is possible that the above offender may have misunderstood why HIMMAT came to be involved in his supervision and this might be attributed to whether his Offender Manager fully explained why he was being referred to the HIMMAT service. His comments might also be linked to the fact that for this particular offender, seeing someone from the same cultural background was not as much of a priority for him as getting some advice and assistance with some personal problems he was experiencing at the time:

'When I first came out of prison my grandfather was on kidney dialysis and they were trying to get a match for a kidney. I was going to go and get a biopsy to see if I was a match but it took probation over a month to make a decision as to whether I could go. When I was trying to sort out going to Pakistan and that I was communicating with Rahat as he was answering my calls. He's the person who spoke to the doctor in Pakistan, he made all the calls and was ringing me and keeping me updated.

### **Continuation (and expansion) of the service**

Other comments relating to improvements were linked to the perceived value of the service in that interviewees felt there was room for expansion. This expansion related to HIMMAT broadening the services it offers but also to more offender management staff making use of HIMMAT. The following comments help to demonstrate these points.

'Definitely yeah because at the end of the day he is there anytime you know. He should be given more power, more authority to actually be your probation officer' (Offender 5).

'It's a really positive service and would be even better if it was used more by all colleagues. HIMMAT can only provide what it is asked to provide. I feel that there is a variable level of usage amongst different colleagues. If this is the case then this in itself could be seen as being unfair as some offenders and workers, whatever their reasons could be, may be denied the opportunity of using such a positive service' (Offender Manager 5).

'For many reasons I think it's a good project, but I also feel that people like Rahat can make a very big difference in the community. To me life is not just about making sure that probation know what you are doing it's about helping you to do something that is constructive, that's morally right' (Offender 2).

'I personally think it's a very good idea and they can take it a long way. They can look at people not just on probation or licence, but also people who are using drink/drugs and things like that. Rather than having the substance misuse services that don't know anything about the Asian communities who say that Asians don't come and ask for help from us. Well, these people are facing barriers and that is why they are not coming to access their services. These people like Rahat and HIMMAT can easily get Asian people to access their services, so if they were providing something for the drugs as well' (Offender 2).

One Offender Manager also commented on how he misses the HIMMAT service now that he work in another West Yorkshire district:

I've got a case here in Leeds and I really miss that kind of input because again I am hearing 'it's my culture'. He was going to be transferred to Bradford at one point and we had a three-way with an UMMID worker and that was really useful because it brought out those issues. We just don't have anything like that in Leeds and it could really improve our work if we did. It's quite a different community in Leeds but I think there is still a need there.

## Summary

This study combined quantitative and qualitative approaches in order to address the question of whether the HIMMAT service adds value above that of standard offender management practice in Halifax. The aims of the research were to assess whether HIMMAT helps to improve order completions and compliance, whether it reduces instances of breach and whether the offenders themselves value the service.

Quantitative data was obtained from CRAMS and Performance Information packs for West Yorkshire. A file-read was also conducted on the first 34 cases who had contact with the HIMMAT service. Interviews were also conducted with Offender Management staff (n=5) who have worked with HIMMAT in producing SDRs on their cases, and offenders (n=5) who had been in contact with HIMMAT for at least 6 months. Compliance and breach figures were analysed for the first 6 months (26 weeks) of the order/licence for each offender, this matching the process which is used for area auditing on these measures. Data was obtained for 2006/7 and 2007/8 on the number of National Standards appointments kept and instances of breach.

The file-read results were very positive and revealed an average compliance rate of 90% for offenders in the sample. Only 3 cases (9%) had any breach action recorded in the first 26 weeks of their order. A total of 21 offenders (88%) went on to complete their order successfully. When compared to data for Calderdale (61%) and Area figures (61%), these results were statistically significant.

These results were compared to those for Asian offenders in other districts and offenders across the area as a whole by using Nsmart data held by the Performance Information team. The results for 2006/7 showed that overall, Asian offenders in Calderdale have performed better on compliance with National Standards appointments and matched the results from the file read with a 90% compliance rate.

The overall compliance rate for offenders in Calderdale was 79% in 2006/7, which showed that offenders in Calderdale are only slightly more compliant than the total caseload (76%), thus suggesting that there is indeed a high rate of compliance amongst Asian offenders in this district rather than the results being a product of Calderdale being a more compliant district in itself. The figures for 2007/8 were much closer between the districts. Although Calderdale has maintained a high compliance rate, it appears that the other districts have driven up their compliance during this period, thus they are now more on a par with Calderdale.

Breach is also monitored for the first 26 weeks of an offender's order/licence. Results are recorded by means of a 'pass' or 'fail' for each individual. The breach data was less conclusive with regards to the impact of HIMMAT when looking at results for Asian offenders in other districts. The percentage

success rate for Asian offenders was fairly consistent across West Yorkshire districts in 2006/7. Data for this year showed that the average success rate for Asian offenders was 68% (compared to 63%) for the total caseload, suggesting that Asian offenders performed better on breach measures. Data for 2007/8 showed that there had been improvements across the area on breach for Asian offenders (now ranging from 75% to 87%). The average rate for Asian offenders in this time period was 80%, an improvement of 12% on the previous year. This is likely to be, in part, a result of performance improvement projects that were implemented across the area in order to improve compliance figures.

However, there were some significant findings when comparing results for the HIMMAT offenders against area figures. In 2006/7 the pass rate for breach was 65% for the area (1590/2447). When compared to the HIMMAT sample results, Chi Square testing showed the better performance of the HIMMAT sample to be a statistically significant result ( $p=0.003$ ). In 2007/8 the rate was 67% (1528/2267) for the area compared to the 91% for HIMMAT offenders. Again, this was a statistically significant result ( $p=0.007$ ).

All offenders interviewed spoke positively about the value of HIMMAT both in terms of the flexibility offered around appointments and also the way in which HIMMAT staff can help them to address often multiple issues which may have cultural implications. Offender Managers also talked about the value of HIMMAT to the offenders they supervise. Overall comments appeared to be linked to the way in which HIMMAT can assist Asian offenders in dealing with issues linked to relationships, employment, family and health whilst taking into account the offenders culture.

Offender managers talked about the value of HIMMAT in terms of being able to have someone they can consult with regarding a case but also someone who can challenge offenders on things that they might not feel confident approaching themselves. Some staff members gave examples of where HIMMAT had challenged an individual in the early stages of their order and this had impacted positively on engaging that individual in supervision.

There were few suggestions as to how the service could be improved. Where suggestions were made these tended to relate to whether the service could be expanded out to other districts or whether HIMMAT could offer a wider range of services (i.e. whether HIMMAT could offer support to drug misusing offenders). Offender Management staff also felt that the service could be used more by their own colleagues as it was considered that use of the service could be variable at present.

## Recommendations

As there are some positive findings both in terms of compliance data, and within the feedback from staff and offenders about the value of HIMMAT, the Probation Service should consider continuing the service in Halifax but also look into extending the service to other West Yorkshire districts where it could be of benefit. Any plans to extend the service would have to be mindful of a need for increased staffing and resources, though the added value of the service in terms of compliance may outweigh these costs.

If the HIMMAT service continues to be offered in Halifax (and potentially wider), compliance data should continue to be monitored as 2007/8 data appeared to show that other districts have improved their performance in terms of National Standards appointments. It is suggested that data on National Standards compliance is monitored in particular as this is the area in which Calderdale has performed highly over the last two years. However, monitoring activities should also take into account 'soft' outcomes in terms of how HIMMAT may assist Asian offenders and the overall value of the service (e.g. employment/training outcomes).

The flexibility offered by HIMMAT in organising supervision appointments appears to be having a positive impact on compliance rates. It is something that was also mentioned by offender interviewees as being of real benefit in terms of helping them comply with their order. It is therefore worth considering whether a similar flexibility could be given to offenders across the West Yorkshire caseload as a way of potentially increasing turn-up rates. One possible way of offering such flexibility might be to increase the number of home visits offered.

Where the HIMMAT service is available (and similarly for UMMID in Bradford), all offender managers should be made aware of the organisation and its aims in terms of meeting the needs of Asian offenders as usage may be variable amongst probation staff at present. This may help to ensure that all Asian offenders are able to access the service in this area.

Overall, indicative findings from the file-read and performance data, and the positive feedback from staff and offenders engaged with the service, appear to suggest that HIMMAT has added value to standard offender management practice in Halifax. Although breach data was inconclusive, the file-read and performance data showed a high rate of compliance for Asian offenders in Calderdale, and positive results could be seen for order completion. Qualitative feedback showed that offenders perceive the service to be of value in terms of being able to engage with an organisation with an understanding of the Asian community. Offender Managers also reported that having HIMMAT in Halifax has increased their confidence in working with Asian offenders.

## Appendices – Appendix A

### Offender Interview Schedule

#### Introduction

- Ask them if they mind you tape-recording the interview to ensure that what they say is not misrepresented.
- Thank the individual for taking part. Tell them that their participation is voluntary and that they can stop the interview at any point.
- Inform them that the aim of the interview is to find out their views on the Enhanced Thinking Skills Programme (ETS).
- Tell them that the information they give will be anonymised and will not be passed on to their Offender Manager or anyone else.

#### Questions

- 1). Whilst on your order, have you been in contact with the HIMMAT service? Approximately how long have you been using this service?
- 2). What kind of contact have you had with HIMMAT? Have they attended your supervision sessions? Have they come out on home visits with your offender manager?
- 3). What have HIMMAT been able to offer/help you with whilst on your order? Has this been useful to you?
- 4). Has the presence of HIMMAT made it easier for you or made you more willing to comply with probation appointments?
- 5). Have you had appointments just with a worker from HIMMAT? What did you do in these appointments?
- 6). Have HIMMAT referred you onto any other agencies for advice/support?
- 7). Do you think that the HIMMAT service should continue to be offered to Asian offenders in Halifax? Is there anything else that you feel could be offered that would make the service more responsive to your needs?
- 8). Do you have any other comments you would like to make?

## **Appendix B**

### **PSR Authors – Interview schedule**

#### **Introduction**

1. The interview will be tape-recorded to ensure the accurate recording of what is said but the information will be kept strictly confidential.
2. The tapes will be listened to and key aspects noted down, quotes may be used but these will not be taken out of context and will be anonymised if included in the report.
3. A draft of the report will be made available to give you the opportunity to raise any objections about the content.

#### **Questions**

- 1). Have you worked with HIMMAT to produce a SDR on any of your cases?  
If so, how many?
- 2). How was this arranged? What led to you contacting HIMMAT for their input?
- 3). Was there something particular about the case(s) that led you to contact HIMMAT? (e.g. cultural or religious issues which might be linked to motivation for offending or the denial of an offence)
- 4). What sort of input did the HIMMAT worker give? Was it a joint SDR interview or just a consultation?
- 5). If a joint interview, did the HIMMAT worker pick up on any problems/issues related to cultural issues that had so far been overlooked?
- 6). Do you think that the presence of HIMMAT made the offender(s) more open in the SDR interview?
- 7). Did you find the HIMMAT input useful? If so, why? If not, what could have been done better?
- 8). Did the involvement of the HIMMAT worker in the interview allow a clearer



picture of events/offences to be developed and put in context?

- 9). Do you think that the presence of HIMMAT was valued by the offender(s).  
If so, why?
- 10). Did the input of the HIMMAT worker impact on the final proposal in the SDR? Do you think it helped to ensure the proposal was appropriate?
- 11). Do you feel that input/guidance from HIMMAT makes you feel more confident about working with Asian offenders?
- 12). Would you engage with HIMMAT again for future SDRs?
- 13). Do you think that the HIMMAT service has any impact on the offenders compliance and likelihood of completing the order?
- 14) Do you think the HIMMAT service provides added value?
- 15). Do you have any further comments about the HIMMAT service?

## Appendix C

### CRAMS File-Read Tool

#### Offender Details

Name: .....

Nationality: .....

Gender: Male  Female

Date of Birth:

Offence: .....

#### Order details

Order Commencement Date:

Order type:

Any requirements:

District:

#### National Standards Contacts

##### Up week 26 of the order:

How many National Standards appointments were arranged?

How many National Standards appointments were kept?

Number of acceptable absences?

Number of unacceptable absences

Were there any instances of breach? Yes  No

as the order/licence successfully completed? Yes  No







