

Managing risk.

Multi-Agency Public
Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)
and the Housing of
Sex Offenders in Scotland.



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An introduction.

Thank you for picking up this leaflet. It has an important purpose. It aims to act as an introduction to the joint arrangements that have been made between responsible authorities (Local Authorities, Scottish Prison Service (SPS), the Police and the Health Service) to assess and manage the public risk posed by sex offenders in Scotland. It also deals with the housing of sex offenders in the community.

The Management of Offenders etc. (Scotland) Act 2005.

This Act of Parliament introduced a statutory function for responsible authorities – Local Authorities, Scottish Prison Service (SPS), the Police and the Health Service to establish joint arrangements for the assessment and management of the risks posed by sex offenders.

These arrangements have become known as Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (or MAPPA). The introduction of MAPPA across Scotland in April 2007 introduced a consistent approach to the management of offenders across all local authority and police force areas providing a framework for assessing and managing certain offenders. The fundamental purpose of MAPPA is public safety and the reduction of serious harm.

So what exactly is MAPPA?

The MAPPA is a set of arrangements established by the responsible authorities (Police, Local Authorities, the Scottish Prison Service and the Health Service) to assess and manage the risk posed by registered sex offenders. The responsible authorities oversee the arrangements locally.

A number of other agencies are placed under a duty to co-operate with these responsible authorities. They are commonly known as 'Duty to Co-operate' agencies and examples include housing providers, the voluntary sector and the Children's Reporter. The duty to co-operate includes the sharing of information and is reciprocal in that it is intended as a means of enabling different agencies to work together, within their legitimate or statutory role, whilst retaining responsibility for action.

How do the MAPPA work?

Information about registered sex offenders is gathered/shared across relevant agencies. The nature and level of the risk of harm they pose is assessed and a risk management plan is implemented to protect the public.

The majority of offenders will be assessed as presenting a low or medium risk of harm and will be managed by one agency without the significant or on-going involvement of others.

A number of offenders, will, however, require active multi-agency management and their risk management plans will be agreed via MAPPA meetings attended by various agencies.

Every Community Justice Authority (CJA) area in Scotland is supported by at least one MAPPA co-ordinator whose responsibilities include co-ordinating MAPPA arrangements, collating information and attendance at meetings for those offenders deemed to present the greatest risks.

Who are Registered Sex Offenders?

Sexual offenders who are required to notify the Police of their name, address and other personal details and notify any changes subsequently.

How are they managed?

There are 3 levels of management which are based upon the level of multi-agency co-operation required to implement the risk management plan effectively. Offenders will be moved up and down levels as appropriate.

Ordinary management (Level 1)

The identified risk can be managed by one agency without significant active involvement by other agencies. There is still an expectation that information will be shared and there will be joint working and collaboration between agencies.

Multi-agency management (Level 2)

The risk management plans for these offenders require the active involvement of several agencies via regular multi-agency public protection meetings.

Multi-agency Public Protection Panel (Level 3)

As with Level 2, but these cases additionally require the involvement of senior officers to authorise the use of special resources and/or to provide ongoing senior management oversight. These cases are generally assessed as presenting a high or very high risk of harm and are the critical few.

Housing.

Once sex offenders have served a sentence for their offence they, as with all offenders, need to be reintegrated within the community. Sex offenders may live in all forms of housing, including owner occupied, private and social rented housing. Wherever they live public safety is paramount. That is why there are arrangements in place to identify, manage and monitor the risks any sex offender may pose.

Everyone in Scotland aged 16 or over has a legal right to be admitted to a housing list. Sex offenders will not be given special housing treatment merely because they are sex offenders. But, unusual arrangements may be made to house a particular offender when it is required as a matter of public safety. Social housing providers – Local Authorities and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) – should ensure their housing allocations policy considers arrangements for housing sex offenders.

National Accommodation Strategy for Sex Offenders (NASSO).

When a sex offender has made a housing application, this needs to be dealt with in line with the NASSO. The NASSO is a clear national framework for housing sex offenders in the community with improved public safety at its heart. It applies to all known sex offenders, including:

Local authority.

Each local authority (including, a local authority which has transferred its housing stock to an RSL) has to develop a strategy for the housing of sex offenders. This includes assessing the need for and provision of accommodation for sex offenders.

However, in any local authority area there are likely to be many different housing providers and local authorities must involve and consult RSLs in their area in developing their strategy and clarify their contribution.

Sex Offender Liaison Officer.

Each local authority has a single point of contact for accommodation requests from responsible authorities.

This single point of contact is the Sex Offender Liaison Officer (SOLO) who:

- Identifies the most appropriate housing provider following the risk assessment carried out by the responsible authorities
- Ensures that the housing provider is included in liaison arrangements for identifying appropriate housing and managing risk
- Liaises pro-actively with responsible authorities and housing providers on ongoing risk management and community safety issues

Housing providers.

Individual housing providers should have in place policies and processes for housing sex offenders which are agreed with their governing bodies and conform to the NASSO.

They have to:

- Identify a Link Officer (or officers) to liaise with the SOLO and responsible authorities
- Provide information on housing stock to the SOLO at agreed intervals
- Respond to specific requests by the SOLO about the availability of housing for sex offenders prior to their release from custody
- Have in place processes for responding to requests from the SOLO to house sex offenders
- Assist responsible authorities in the management of risk by advising on the suitability of accommodation: its location and the make up of nearby households
- Keep the SOLO advised of any proposed house moves or house purchases by sex offenders
- Ensure Link Officers take part, where appropriate, in any relevant case conferences, including, MAPPA meetings
- Ensure processes are in place within the organisation to protect staff dealing with the sex offender, e.g. in the case of home visits

Criminal Justice Social Work (CJSW).

The primary role of the CJSW supervising officer in housing sex offenders is to:

- Work with prisons in arranging appropriate accommodation for prisoners on temporary home leave
- Identify, following the risk assessment process and liaison with the nominated SOLO, the housing needs of sex offenders on release
- Engage with the SOLO and identified housing provider, sharing relevant information to assist in the assessment of housing requirements of sex offenders before, and at the initial stage of, allocation of accommodation
- Engage in reviews of accommodation as required by either the housing provider or the responsible authorities
- Provide advice and assistance in respect of issues raised during the tenancy

The Police.

The primary role of the Police in housing sex offenders is to:

- Complete a community impact assessment in high profile cases
- Keep housing providers informed of any behavioural indications that would suggest enhanced risk either to the offender, e.g. through vigilantism, or to the public
- Collaborate with CJSW and housing providers over whether or not to act on information e.g. by moving the offender. The Police may, depending on the circumstances of the case, warn the offender of the need to seek alternative accommodation and liaise with the SOLO and housing providers to identify possible alternative accommodation
- Consult with partners to consider amendments to any pre-existing conditions attached, e.g. probation or supervision orders. The Police may engage with partners to ensure that licensing conditions reflect the need for the offender to reside only in accommodation approved by their supervising officer
- Engage with housing providers over any subsequent moves in and out of housing by the offender, e.g. through decant, transfer, mutual exchange, cross boundary transfers or eviction
- Ensure that offenders are aware of their obligations under the Sex Offenders Register
- Liaise pro-actively with Sex Offender Liaison Officers and housing providers on ongoing risk management and community safety issues

The Scottish Prison Service.

The primary role of the SPS in housing sex offenders is to:

- Engage with the responsible authorities and housing SOLOs to make suitable arrangements for the housing needs of the offender to be addressed at the earliest stage of the custodial sentence, where there is any indication that accommodation is an issue or potential issue
- Identify, in partnership with Responsible Authorities, appropriate accommodation for the prisoner on temporary home leave from custody
- Fund temporary home leave accommodation in accordance with practice guidance on home leave

Finding out more.

The National Accommodation Strategy for Sex Offenders (NASSO) was published in March as part of the MAPPA and came into force with those arrangements on 2 April 2007 and can be found at Part 6 of the MAPPA Circular on the Scottish Government website.

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/04/18144823/0>



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