



effective practice

Where we see our standards delivered well, in practice.



Her Majesty's
Inspectorate of
Probation

AN HM INSPECTORATE OF PROBATION EFFECTIVE PRACTICE GUIDE



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Effective practice guide

MAPPA

Based on: **Twenty years on, is MAPPA achieving its objectives?**

A joint thematic inspection of Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements

July 2022

Acknowledgements

This effective practice guide is based on information sourced while undertaking the thematic inspection 'Twenty years on, is MAPPA achieving its objectives? A joint thematic inspection of Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements'. The inspection was led by HM Inspectorate of Probation's, Noreen Wallace, supported by a team of inspectors and operations, research, communications and corporate staff. Penal Reform Solutions (a company that facilitates organisational growth through research-informed, bespoke projects) interviewed people on probation, who shared valuable insights about their experience as a MAPPA nominal. The manager responsible for this inspection programme is Helen Davies.

In collaboration with Tammie Burroughs, effective practice lead, Noreen Wallace has drawn out examples of effective practice (where we see our standards delivered well in practice) across leadership and case supervision.

We would like to thank all those who participated in any way in this inspection, and especially those who have contributed to this guide. Without their help and cooperation, the inspection and effective practice guide would not have been possible.

Please note that, throughout the report, the names in the practice examples have been changed, to protect the individual's identity.

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Introduction

About this guide

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation has a duty to identify and disseminate effective practice.¹

We assure the quality of youth offending and probation provision and test its effectiveness. Critically, we make recommendations designed to highlight and disseminate effective practice, challenge poor performance and encourage providers to improve.

This guide highlights where we have seen our standards delivered well for MAPPA in the probation service. It is designed to help commissioners and providers improve this area of their work with people on probation.

I am grateful to all the areas that participated in our thematic inspection, and for their additional help in producing this effective practice guide. We publish these guides to complement our reports and the standards against which we inspect youth offending and probation.

I hope this effective practice guide will be of interest to everyone working in probation services and seeking to improve their practice. We welcome feedback on this and our other guides, to ensure that they are as useful as possible to future readers.



Justin Russell
HM Chief Inspector of Probation



Finding your way



Tools for practitioners



Useful links

Contact us



We would love to hear what you think of this guide. You can find our contact details on the [HM Inspectorate of Probation Effective Practice page](#).

¹ **For adult services** – Section 7 of the *Criminal Justice and Court Services Act (2000)*, as amended by the *Offender Management Act (2007)*, section 12(3)(a). **For youth services** – inspection and reporting on youth offending teams is established under section 39 of the *Crime and Disorder Act (1998)*.

Background

Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) have been part of the criminal justice landscape for 20 years. These arrangements were designed to promote effective information-sharing and collaboration between agencies to manage dangerous individuals. While criminal justice agencies can never eliminate risk, the public has a right to expect that they take all reasonable steps to reduce the potential for further harm by individuals who have committed serious violent or sexual offences. The existence of MAPPA formalises the duty of criminal justice and other agencies to work together. In addition, it has paved the way for better communication and joint working outside of the formal meeting structure.

MAPPA was introduced in 2001 under the *Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000* and subsequently strengthened by the *Criminal Justice Act 2003* as the statutory arrangement for managing sexual and violent offenders.² It provides a mechanism whereby the agencies involved can better discharge their responsibilities and protect the public in a coordinated way. However, it is not a statutory body, and each agency retains its full responsibilities and obligations. The *Criminal Justice Act 2003* provided for the establishment of MAPPA in each of the 42 criminal justice areas in England and Wales.

The responsible authority for MAPPA in each criminal justice area consists of the police, probation, and prisons collaborating to make arrangements for assessing and managing the risks posed by MAPPA-eligible offenders by forming a strategic management board (SMB) to oversee MAPPA in the area.

Other agencies have a 'duty to cooperate' with the responsible authority. They are:



- youth offending teams (YOTs)
- Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)
- Ministry of Defence
- education, social services, and health functions of local authorities
- NHS England
- the health authority
- the clinical commissioning group (CCG) or local health board
- the NHS trust
- the local housing authority
- providers of electronic monitoring services
- UK Visas and Immigration, UK Border Force, and UK Immigration Enforcement (Home Office)
- private registered providers of social housing and registered social landlords who provide or manage residential accommodation in which MAPPA offenders may reside.

MAPPA categories



Individuals become eligible for MAPPA management by falling into one of three categories. Eligibility for Categories 1 and 2 is automatic due to the sentence an individual has received.

² Please note, throughout this guide we use the term 'offender' when referencing specific guidance and legislation; the Inspectorate's preferred terminology is 'person on probation' or 'person in prison'.

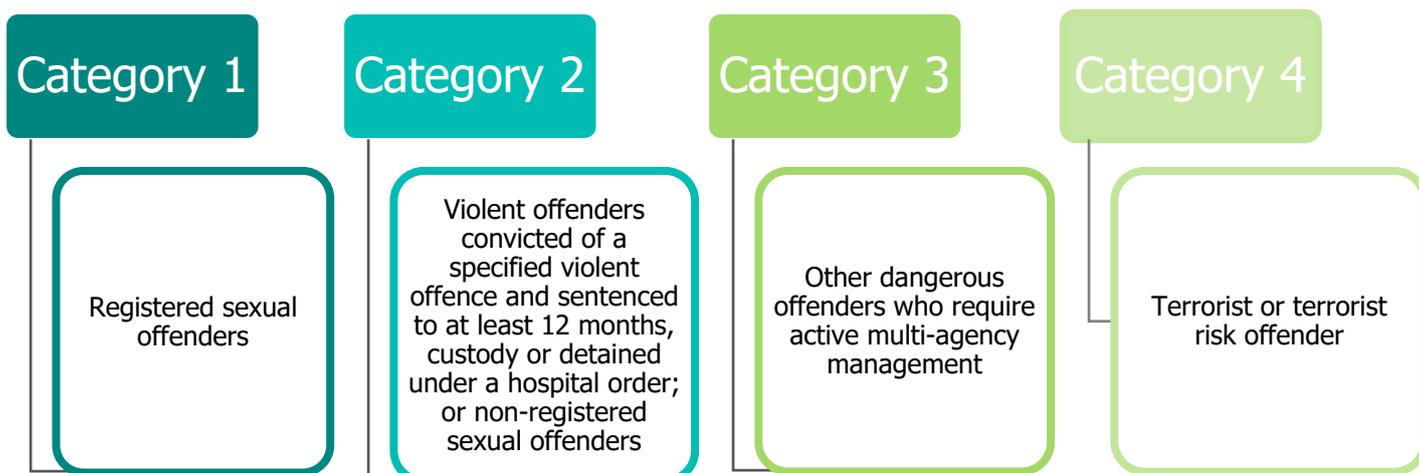


Figure 1: Definition of MAPPA categories

Category 1: Registered sexual offender is defined as an individual who is required to sign the sex offenders register according to the *Sexual Offences Act 2003*.

Category 2: This category includes violent offenders and other sexual offenders: offenders convicted of murder or an offence specified under Schedule 15³ or Section 327 (4A) of the *Criminal Justice Act 2003* who received a qualifying sentence or disposal (12 months or more in custody, or a hospital order or guardianship order under the *Mental Health Act 1963*) for that offence and who are not subject the notification requirements of Part 2 of the *Sexual Offences Act 2003*.

Category 3: This category is for those who do not meet the criteria for either Category 1 or Category 2 but who have committed an offence indicating that they are capable of causing serious harm and who require multi-agency management at Level 2 or 3. The offence does not have to be one specified in Schedule 15 of the *Criminal Justice Act 2003* and may have been committed abroad. It is also important to consider whether the pattern of offending behaviour indicates serious harm (e.g. domestic abuse or gang-related violence) or an escalation in the risk of serious harm (e.g. deterioration in mental health or escalation in alcohol misuse) that was not reflected in the charge on which they were convicted. In these circumstances, the individual should also be considered for Category 3.

Category 4: This category is for people who are required to comply with the notification requirements set out in Part 4 of the Counter-Terrorism Act 2008 (CTA 2008), been convicted of a relevant terrorist offence and received a qualifying sentence or disposal for that offence, have been found to be under a disability and to have done the act charged/found not guilty by reason of insanity (or equivalents in Scotland and Northern Ireland) of a relevant terrorist offence with a maximum sentence of more than 12 months and received a hospital order (with or without restrictions) or guardianship order under MHA

³ The full list of Schedule 15 offences is available at Appendix 4 and (in greater detail) at <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/44/schedule/15>.

1983 for that offence or they have committed an offence and may be at risk of involvement in terrorism-related activity (discretionary Category 4).

Whilst we reference MAPPA category 4 here, the thematic inspection focused solely on categories 1 to 3.

MAPPA levels



Once an individual is identified as eligible for MAPPA, a level of management needs to be determined. As Category 3 cases only exist at Levels 2 and 3, they are not automatically flagged as eligible and their risks and needs need to be considered carefully on an individual basis.

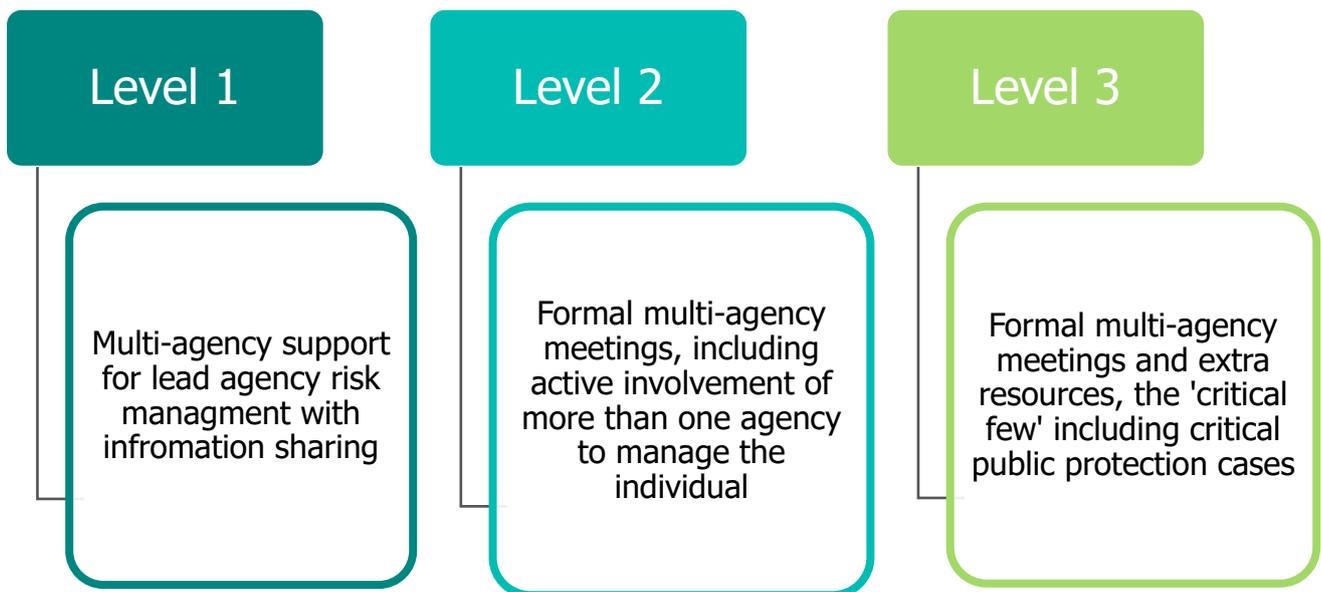


Figure 2: Definitions of MAPPA levels

Figure 3 below provides an overview of each category and level and the criteria for being adopted at Level 2 or 3.

Figure 3: Summary of MAPPA categories and levels

MAPPA cases should be managed at the right Level to provide a <i>defensible</i> and <i>robust</i> Risk Management Plan				
There are three categories of offenders that are MAPPA eligible	There are three Levels of management depending on what is needed to manage an individual's risk			
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	
	<p>Multi-agency support for Lead Agency risk management with information sharing.</p> <p>Most MAPPA cases are managed at Level 1.</p>	<p>Formal multi-agency meetings, including active involvement of more than one agency to manage the individual.</p>	<p>Formal multi-agency meeting and extra resources, the 'critical few' including Critical Public Protection Cases (CPPC).</p>	
<p>Category 1: Offenders subject to notification requirements: sexual offenders</p>	<p><u>Level 1 management does not mean the individual is low or medium risk.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level 1 cases can be high risk, providing the Lead Agency can sufficiently manage the risk multi-agency input is still required but there is no need for formal MAPPA meetings. <p>The lead agency will have sufficient powers to manage the case effectively, but:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> information sharing with other agencies is still required professional meetings can still take place. <p>The Risk Management Plan will be significantly robust enough to manage identified risks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> no barriers to the implementation of multi-agency actions that cannot be resolved via line management such barriers would require a referral to Level 2 or 3. <p><u>A referral can be made at any time.</u></p>	<p>Consider cases for level 2 management where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> formal multi-agency oversight at a more senior level would add value to the management of an individual's RoSH. <p><u>And at least one of the below:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the individual is assessed as posing a high or very high risk of serious harm the case requires active involvement and co-ordination of interventions from other agencies to manage RoSH the case was previously managed at Level 3 but no longer requires Level 3 management. 	<p>Cases must meet the criteria for level 2, and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> require senior oversight from Responsible Authority and Duty to Cooperate agencies. <p>This may be because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> there is a perceived need to commit significant resources at short notice high likelihood of media scrutiny or public interest a need to ensure public confidence in the criminal justice system is preserved. 	
<p>Category 2: <u>Violent offenders sentenced to 12 months or more in custody (immediate or suspended) or detained under a hospital order and other sexual offenders (non-registered)</u></p>				
<p>Category 3 Other dangerous offenders who pose a high risk of serious harm (RoSH) but do not qualify for category 1 or 2.</p>			<p><u>Category 3 cases can only be managed at level 2 or 3</u></p> <p>Responsible Officers must assess whether those convicted of offences outside the criteria for Category 1 or 2 require a multi-agency approach at Level 2 or 3 to manage RoSH. In these instances, a referral to category 3 should be considered.</p> <p>This includes <u>all non-MAPPA qualifying serial domestic abuse and stalking perpetrator</u>, as well as those convicted on non-MAPPA qualifying Terrorist Act or terrorism-related offences, or those involved with Serious Group Offending.</p>	

For the most current MAPPA guidance please follow this link: [Thresholding v1.0 - Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements - MAPPA \(justice.gov.uk\)](https://www.justice.gov.uk/mappa/thresholding-v1.0)

Figure 4: Number of MAPPA categories 1, 2 and 3

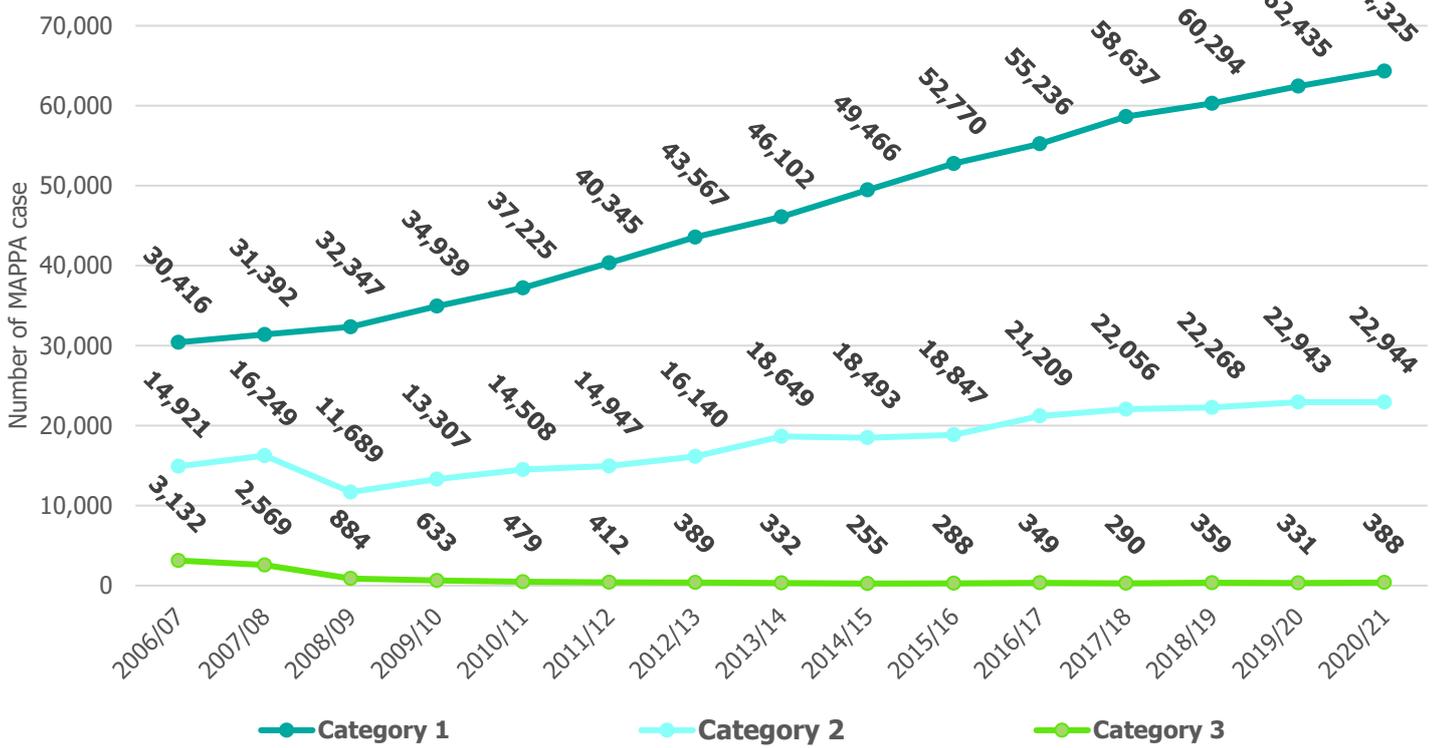
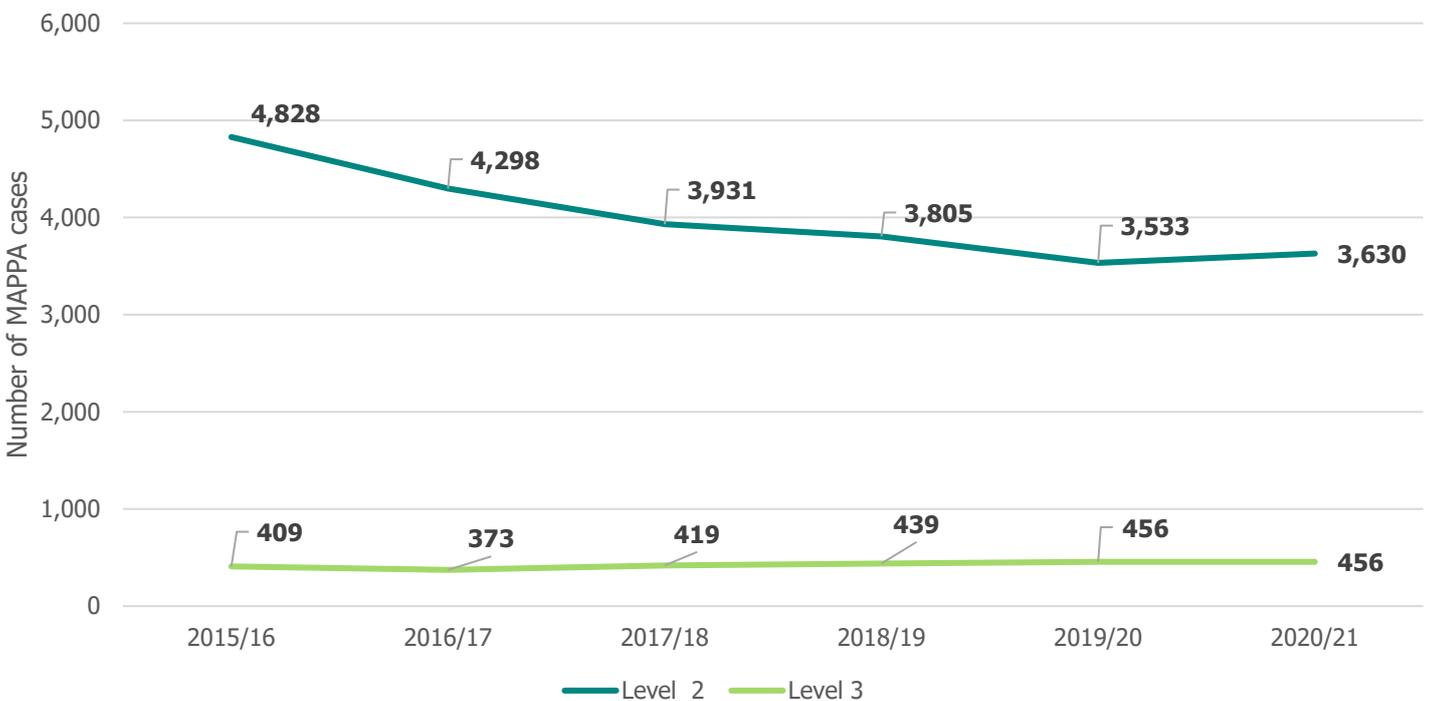


Figure 5: The number of Level 2 and 3 MAPPA cases (2015-2021)



The MAPPA population has continued to grow. This growth has largely been driven by an increase in the number of people convicted of sexual offending who are then subject to lengthy notification periods, and the length of prison sentences given for serious violent offences, which have a cumulative impact on the total MAPPA numbers.

In contrast to the overall numbers, the volume of individuals managed at Level 2 has reduced.⁴

As illustrated in figure 4, the great majority of MAPPA cases are managed at Level 1. Level 2 and 3 management requires more resources and thus needs to be carefully targeted to ensure that services and resources are used appropriately.

This guide seeks to share examples of effective practice that we observed while undertaking our thematic inspection of MAPPA. We define effective practice as:



“where we see our standards delivered well in practice, with our standards being based on established models and frameworks, and grounded in evidence, learning and experience.”

The examples are drawn from evidence of effective practice identified while undertaking community-based fieldwork for the thematic inspection in Cornwall, Cumbria, Harrow and Barnet, Leeds, South Manchester and North Wales, and prison-based fieldwork in HM Prison (HMP) New Hall, HM Young Offender Institution Feltham, HMP Highdown, HMP Hatfield, HMP Oakwood and HMP Drake Hall.

This guide is aimed at a range of audiences; it is intended to support practitioners, middle managers and strategic leaders to reflect on their own experiences and consider how they can apply the salient learning points in their own contexts. Therefore, please use the contents page to navigate directly to the sections pertinent to you.

⁴ The question given to MAPPA areas to gather this information was changed in 2015/2016 and so figures are not comparable with earlier years. Figures for 2015/2016 onwards only include offenders managed in the community, whereas in previous years some areas included those managed in prison.

Our standards: what we looked for and our expectations

For our thematic inspection, we inspected against the following standards:

Leadership, strategy and policy

In relation to leadership, we expect that:

The leadership supports and promotes the delivery of a high-quality, personalised and responsive approach to delivering MAPPA.

This includes the following expectations:

- There is effective leadership of MAPPA at a national level, with a well-defined vision and strategy in place.
- The MAPPA vision and strategy prioritise the quality of service and are grounded in evidence.
- There is an effective governance framework for MAPPA and clear delivery plans that ensure the vision and strategy are translated into practice.
- National and local policies are understood by all partner agencies involved in MAPPA.
- The processes for assigning MAPPA levels are working, i.e.:
 - guidance is applied consistently
 - resource constraints have not impacted on the number of cases managed at a higher level
 - individuals are managed at the right MAPPA level according to their risks and needs
 - decisions about downgrading MAPPA levels are appropriate and evidence-based.
 - the legislation is framed appropriately.
- There is effective leadership at a local level, with appropriate links to other multi-agency groups aimed at managing risk of harm.
- MAPPA are supported by sufficient resources.

In relation to staff, we expect that:

The skills of staff support the delivery of high-quality MAPPA.

This includes the following expectations:

- Chairs and standing panel members are enabled to deliver high-quality MAPPA.
- MAPPA cases are allocated to staff who are appropriately trained and experienced.
- All staff involved in MAPPA cases, from each of the relevant agencies, understand their own role and responsibilities and those of partner agencies within MAPPA.
- Management oversight is effective.

In relation to partnerships, we expect that:

arrangements with statutory partners, providers and other agencies are established, maintained and used effectively to deliver high-quality services.

This includes the following expectations:

- There is effective collaboration between responsible authority agencies and those duty to co-operate agencies both within and outside formal MAPPA meetings.
- For Level 1 cases, there is appropriate exchange of information between agencies and effective multi-agency working.
- Necessary support services are identified for individuals managed under MAPPA.
- Information, including sensitive information and intelligence, is routinely shared, where appropriate, between prison security, probation and, where applicable, the Parole Board.

MAPPA identification, level setting and information-sharing

In relation to information, we expect that:

Timely and relevant information is available to support high-quality MAPPA.

This includes the following expectations:

- The necessary guidance is in place to enable staff to deliver high-quality MAPPA.
- The procedures for reviewing risk levels are robust.
- There is a sufficiently comprehensive and up-to-date analysis of the profile of MAPPA cases, including by protected characteristics and personal circumstances.
- Areas monitor the reoffending rates or other measures of harm for their MAPPA populations to monitor the effectiveness of their arrangements and act to improve these.
- Eligible cases are identified in a timely way and flagged on case management systems.
- ICT systems, including ViSOR,⁵ support effective information exchange with partners, as necessary, and production of management information, including data on the needs and diversity factors of MAPPA cases.
- Performance targets and management information drive high-quality delivery of MAPPA.
- Analysis, evidence and learning, including MAPPA serious case reviews (SCRs) and serious further offence (SFO) reviews, are used effectively to drive improvements across all agencies.
- The criteria for undertaking MAPPA SCRs are sufficiently clear and sufficient multi-agency MAPPA SCRs are being carried out following SFOs.

⁵ ViSOR is a national database of all individuals with sexual offender registration conditions imposed on them following criminal conviction, and holds information on violent and potentially dangerous people.

Keeping people safe

In relation to safety, we expect that:

MAPPA are effective at keeping people safe.

This includes the following expectations:

- Referrals to MAPPA are of a high quality, and provide a thorough assessment and clear rationale for multi-agency management of the case.
- The needs of victims are given sufficient priority at a strategic and practice level.
- Sufficient focus and attention are given to the rehabilitation and resettlement needs of individuals managed under MAPPA, taking a protective integration approach.⁶
- There are appropriate links to other multi-agency arrangements, such as Integrated Offender Management (IOM) and multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARAC) (where relevant).
- Representatives at MAPPA meetings are of the right grade and equipped to fully participate.
- MAPPA risk management plans are of a high quality, and reviews and updates are completed as necessary.
- MAPPA pay sufficient attention to the protected characteristics and personal circumstances of individuals and the impact these have on their ability to engage and comply with supervision.
- Individuals whose cases fall under MAPPA:
 - understand its purpose and impact on their overall supervision.
 - are engaged in risk management planning and reviewing.



Reflection questions

Thinking about your practice as a leader or practitioner, alone or as part of a team discussion...

1. Reflecting on MAPPA practice in general, what is effective about MAPPA in your area and what is ineffective in your area?
2. How far does MAPPA work in your area align with the standards and the expectations above?
3. If there are any areas where these are not aligned, what actions could your area take to address this?
4. Where they are aligned, how can your area ensure this practice is sustained?

⁶ This is the approach described by Professor Hazel Kemshall as a balanced approach to risk management, focusing on desistance and rehabilitation; changing risky behaviours and meeting legitimate needs; reducing risks and reoffending behaviours; and avoiding over-intrusion on those whose level of risk does not justify it.

Learning from the people on probation: Penal Reform Solutions

Penal Reform Solutions (PRS), an expert lived experience organisation, was commissioned to undertake interviews as part of the MAPPA thematic inspection. They spoke with 41 individuals, who shared valuable insights about their experience of being managed under MAPPA.



This work aimed to explore, through the lens of MAPPA, the experiences of those who have been in contact with the criminal justice system and to critically examine the impact that the criminal justice system has had on them.

We are grateful for the insights of these individuals, whose feedback we have used to illustrate our findings and help inform the recommendations in the thematic inspection report.

A number of the participants did not initially know that they were being managed under MAPPA until they were contacted by PRS, which impacted on their ability to provide feedback. The majority of those who did contribute had a limited understanding of MAPPA, as distinct from probation, and how it impacted on them. Most participants did not know their MAPPA level, so it was not possible to draw out the impact of different management levels on individuals.

Themes that emerged from the research are summarised below:



Communication

55 per cent of participants did not know they were on MAPPA or what level they were until PRS contacted them.

The peer researchers found that there is a lack of communication and understanding about MAPPA at all stages of the process.

The majority of those interviewed said they felt they should have some involvement in the meetings held about them. One individual said that they thought it was 'unfair' for people to make decisions based on risk assessments alone, especially about those who have had a lengthy custodial sentence and feel they are completely different now. Their perception is that identity shifts and that changes are not necessarily fully appreciated or acknowledged by the current system.

Some participants felt that there is stigma around being labelled as 'MAPPA', especially from those who do not understand what MAPPA is or what it involves. They felt that a common assumption is that MAPPA is only put in place for the most serious offences, and that people do not realise that a multitude of different offences make a person eligible for MAPPA. Many participants used the term 'monster' when expressing how they felt they are viewed by the public and how the public's lack of awareness about MAPPA affects their lives.

"There is a lack of care. They're more focused on public protection than helping people mend their ways".

Support

41 per cent of participants said they were offered support services; 52 per cent said they were not; and 7 per cent said yes and no.

Relationships with probation practitioners were positive overall, with many supportive relationships being formed.

Some participants had support from a range of agencies, including charities. Other support was provided for housing, drug and alcohol addiction, domestic abuse, mental health, education and employment.

However, others had experienced challenges in accessing support, and felt that little was on offer beyond referrals or signposting. Some felt that workers were not consistent, and that, in some cases, if they said they needed support, this was taken as an increase in the risk of re-offending. The quotes below demonstrate some of the views expressed:

"over promised and under delivered"

"I was told the help I needed around mental health should be sought through my doctor independently"

"don't get me wrong they are good, but I have had four workers over the last couple of months, which has been quite unsettling for me, it has been a mess about"

"They disregarded the help I needed as an individual ... because I have support around me, so I'm pushed aside as I don't need as much support ... I was somewhat forgotten"

Meaning/purpose

Understanding of the purpose of MAPPA was mixed.

Some participants who knew they were subject to MAPPA felt that MAPPA status could have a positive impact; however, this was only the case for those at a place in their lives where they were ready for change.

Others felt it was difficult to assess the purpose and impact of MAPPA, because their involvement with it had been minimal.

"What is MAPPA designed for?"

Where the arrangements had been explained and incorporated into assessments and plans, participants felt it had been beneficial:

"I'm going places now, before I had no real future."

"helping me change my path."

Control

For those who knew they were being managed under MAPPA, there was a theme around feeling controlled:

"The controls placed on my life made me not trust anyone."

"I have a lack of control when it comes to the decisions made about my life."

"They are the ones in charge, so I can't really say anything."

"I feel like they manipulate me with MAPPA."



Relationships

Where MAPPA arrangements have worked in accordance with the guidance, some participants have built strong, meaningful relationships through MAPPA.

"110 per cent helped me with my mental health, they opened doors that were never open before".

"I can't explain how proud I am of my probation officer. People comment on how well I am now."

Participants who were involved with the police also mentioned positive relationships.

"I was nervous at first but over more time you get used to it. It is the same officers that come each time. Very nice, pleasant people."

In summary, while their level of understanding of MAPPA varied, the people on probation who contributed wanted clear communication about MAPPA processes and how MAPPA impacted on them specifically. Many expressed a need for clarity about the purpose of MAPPA and how it fits with their goals to keep themselves and others safe. In addition, they said that they needed to understand what controls were placed on them, what support was available, and how they could challenge these elements if they chose to. Finally, participants noted the importance of the quality of the relationships they had with the people involved in supporting them to manage their risks.

To address these themes, practitioners should:

- Explain MAPPA and its purpose to the person on probation; discuss how it works to support their plan and promote safety; and clarify their understanding.
- Explain the four pillars⁷ approach and ensure that people have been actively involved in developing their risk management plan so that it feels relevant to them and that they understand what is expected, how it will support them, the consequences of non-compliance and how they can progress.
- Actively involve the person on probation in their assessment, sentence plan and reviews so that these reflect their current circumstances and to ensure the planned work is personalised.
- Ensure the individual knows what support is available and how it can help them, and discuss any concerns that they may have, so that you can adjust the type and amount of support, as required.
- Openly discuss the dual role of the practitioner in supporting the person on probation to manage their risk and promote desistance.
- Discuss progress with the person on probation to ascertain the progress of the referral and work conducted.

⁷ The four pillars of risk management is an approach to planning and delivering risk management, developed by Professor Hazel Kemshall from De Montfort University. The four pillars are supervision; monitoring and control; interventions and treatment; and victim safety planning. You can read more about this approach in the HMPPS [Risk of Serious Harm Guidance March 2022.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

- Keep the person on probation updated; the MAPPA guidance says that their views on risk management should 'actively be sought and fed into the meeting by a written communication or via the probation practitioner or referring agency.'
- Blend risk management techniques with desistance approaches to strive for long-term, sustained desistance.
- Ensure that, when a change in worker is unavoidable, an effective handover takes place and there is clear communication.



[You can download a printable version of the PRS report themes here.](#)



[This report from Penal Reform Solutions explains their methodology and findings in full.](#)



Reflection questions

1. What do you think are the root causes of these themes and how can you address these, in your area and within your individual practice?
2. How do you consider your practice from the perspective of a person on probation?
3. Did any of the themes surprise you? If so, why was this a surprise?
4. Consider each theme and think about how you demonstrate this within your practice.
5. What could you do differently to strengthen your approach to each of these themes?
6. Are there any barriers to addressing these themes in your practice? If so, what actions can you put in place to overcome these barriers?
7. If you anticipate any challenges in discussing MAPPA with the person on probation, what strategies can you use to mitigate these?
8. If you addressed these themes, how might that promote meaningful engagement and what would that mean for risk management and desistance?

Leadership, strategy and policy

Key take-aways

Effective MAPPA leadership, strategy and policy require:

-  A clear vision for translating the national framework into the local arrangements
-  A culture that encourages reflective discussion, professional curiosity and multi-agency information-sharing that is open to challenge
-  Efficient processes to refer and screen cases to Level 2 and 3
-  An accurate understanding of the profile of those on MAPPA in the area and the implications for resources and partnerships
-  Mechanisms in place to gain assurance that cases are assigned to the right MAPPA level following a thorough assessment of the risks and needs in the case
-  Ensuring that all relevant staff are familiar with MAPPA criteria and processes

In this section, we share examples from services we inspected that demonstrated some of these key take-aways, and a range of other learning points, across organisational delivery.

Example of effectiveness: Leadership – the role of the Strategic Management Board in Cumbria

Each MAPPA area has to form a Strategic Management Board (SMB) to enable the responsible authority (consisting of prisons, probation and police) to manage MAPPA activity in its area. The SMB is responsible for ensuring that the MAPPA guidance is implemented in its area, in line with local initiatives and priorities.

It is essential that there is clear local leadership for MAPPA that delivers effective arrangements in line with national expectations in a way that is responsive to local needs. Processes and expectations need to be clear and understood by partner agencies and practitioners.

Inspectors noted a good example of this in the Cumbria SMB:

“There is clear leadership from the SMB, which has endured through changes in personnel. The engine room is well tuned.”

Careful thought and consideration had been given to the meeting structure for the SMB. Good use was made of a smaller MAPPA executive group (including the SMB chair and MAPPA coordinator), which met between full formal SMB meetings to allow ongoing monitoring of delivery and an opportunity to respond more swiftly to emerging issues and take executive decisions.

The SMB was served well by comprehensive management information reports, which included an overview of the number of current cases (including the number of meetings held

in each case), with lead agency information, referral rates and trends, attendance rates of agencies at MAPPA and SMB meetings and details of breaches of orders or licences. All data was analysed and used to shape the direction of MAPPA work. Referral rates were scrutinised and analysed to understand any fluctuations. The SMB took a proactive approach to addressing any concerns that arose; for example, it provided additional training to encourage referrals from agencies that were not doing so. Each section of the management information report had clear headlines to highlight the most important aspects for SMB members.

The SMB took a range of opportunities to share learning with other MAPPA areas, as evidenced by the insightful annual audit work and links with Lancashire. MAPPA coordinators, lay advisers, and staff from responsible authorities and 'duty to cooperate' agencies looked at a sample of MAPPA Level 2 and 3 cases. They evaluated a range of meetings, minutes and referrals, identified findings applicable to each area or both, and made recommendations. Their report also comments on the progress made since the last audit. Completing the audit jointly was an effective way to gain external scrutiny, share learning, and develop best practice. There was also a commitment to listening to the appointed lay advisers and responding to their feedback.

The 'four pillars' of risk management is an approach to planning and delivering risk management, developed by Professor Hazel Kemshall from De Montfort University (Kemshall, 2010). The four pillars are supervision; monitoring and control; interventions and treatment; and victim safety planning. For areas that adopt this model, it provides a structure for MAPPA meetings.

Cumbria SMB was an early adopter of the four pillars approach and fully embraced the model, which ensured that risk was considered thoroughly in MAPPA meetings. It further refined the approach by moving the victim pillar up the MAPPA meeting agenda. This meant that victims were at the heart of meetings, a decision that was welcomed by the victim liaison officers.

The culture of the SMB cascaded down to frontline practitioners, who had a clear understanding of the thresholds of the MAPPA levels and had confidence in the referral process. We see the Cumbria model as having a strong and effective process.

Like other areas, the chair of Cumbria SMB had changed on a regular basis; however, the board's focus continued to be on developing MAPPA, making good use of information and data, and improving services. We were interested to discuss how it had achieved this, and spoke to Detective Superintendent Dan St Quintin from Cumbria Police, the previous SMB chair, and Lisa Thornton, Head of the Probation Delivery Unit and current SMB chair, to find out.



[Video \(YouTube, 19:07\): Learning from stakeholders: MAPPA Strategic Management Board in Cumbria.](#)

In this video, they discuss MAPPA in Cumbria. Some highlights from the video include the quotes below:

SMB meeting structure:

"Having an executive structure that sits underneath SMB ... [is] really helpful in trying to enable us to keep traction of the work being done in SMB and the bits of work which come out of SMB as well ... [it provides] oversight of a different set of actions. So we have particular actions that are generated through the exec group as well but we also have that referenced back to the work we are doing within SMB so oversight of the delivery model, and business plan but also work we're kicking off through the SMB structure ... [this has] allowed us, I think, to have that traction as we've described on the work we're doing but also to be able to, where we're experiencing any challenges for example, we can resolve them and deal with them through the exec."

Core stakeholders

"We have a core group of senior stakeholders that come to the meetings but then they also support people from their agencies that may come either to the SMB but more to the operational MAPPA meetings in areas to support them with individual cases where that lack of knowledge and expertise around MAPPA is and that anxiety and worry about it is met by actually by having that core group of people coming to the meetings and supporting the individual case holder/case worker for that particular person so that they feel comfortable there and the right questions can get asked and the right information can be fed into that meeting."

Management information

"Having the right information improves our decision making at MAPPA SMB. Obviously, there has been continuous discussions and reviews of the information that's brought to SMB over a long period of time."

MAPPA SMB and wider forums

"One of the strengths in Cumbria of what we have, we have the MAPPA SMB and standing agenda item on there is the updates and interdependencies from the other safeguarding forums established."

"The value of information coming forwards and the wealth of the different expertise coming to MAPPA SMB is really helpful and then that is interconnected to the other forums we have in Cumbria."

Lay advisers

"Fabulously engaged and committed lay advisers ... [who are] well valued members of SMB."

"They bring an awful lot to us in terms of challenge and push back, and that we see as being really healthy ... we want to learn, and we want to grow, and we want to make sure that as a partnership we're really strong."

Quality assurance work with other MAPPA areas

"Involve people in the MAPPA coordinators roles, SPOs roles ... and colleagues from across other key organisations that we're working with, so it's worked really effectively for us and

what we get from that is a really tangible product at the end, so the assurance work is done, its completed and then what we get as an SMB is an overview of what that assurance work is telling us ...and that then feeds in and connects with the business plan."

Culture

"It might be different people steering the boat, but the actual people in the engine room are actually there continuously. They're dedicated. They deeply care about the MAPPA stuff and as a result of that we're performing really well and that's down to the credit and hard work of people in that engine room."

"Clear strategic and operational buy-in to the work we do around MAPPA. All staff working in the area engaged with MAPPA. It's a core part of what we do."

Example of effectiveness: Leadership – the benefits of lay advisers, Cumbria

Lay advisers are members of the public appointed by the Secretary of State who have no links to the business of managing MAPPA cases, and sit on MAPPA area SMBs as independent and informed observers. They should feel empowered to challenge and question those around the table to drive improvements in practice. It is important that they have an understanding of the needs and demographics of the local community to inform their position and, as such, they must be from the local area and have strong links within it.

During the inspection in Cumbria, we found dedicated lay advisers who were an integral part of the MAPPA structure and had supported positive changes to the arrangements. One area that had benefited from their input was the management information on MAPPA, which had been reformatted to provide easy access to the most relevant information. Observations from lay advisers had also led to a change in the MAPPA meeting agenda to prioritise input from the victim liaison officers. This put consideration of victims at the heart of the meeting. We found that the lay adviser role added value to the MAPPA arrangements.

We spoke to Mark Smith and David Savage, lay advisers for Cumbria, to find out more.



[Video \(YouTube, 7:56\): Learning from stakeholders: Mark Smith, Lay Adviser to the Strategic Management Board for the MAPPA.](#)

In this video, Mark discusses his application for the position, his induction, and the leadership within the Cumbria MAPPA structure.

In relation to his induction, he says that each area and partnership work differently, so the comprehensive visits and meetings arranged:

"... were very useful to me to meet the key people of the areas and to learn the language and what was particularly important in Cumbria. And to identify the key issues for those individuals in relation to delivering effective public protection services."

Mark talks about the value of their role as 'key members' of MAPPA, working on a range of activities and shares:

“... part of our work is to be a critical friend to those working full time in public protection arrangements ...[to] ensure the culture is fit for purpose, that the culture meets the needs of the public of Cumbria, notwithstanding its confidentiality, it is published properly so people understand what is happening and also have confidence in those arrangements.”



[Video \(YouTube, 11:26\): Learning from stakeholders: David Savage, Lay Adviser to the Strategic Management Board.](#)

In this video, David discusses what he felt he had to offer the role with experience external to the criminal justice system, the induction process and what he feels he has contributed to the role.

David highlights the fact that the lay advisers act as *“the voice of residents within Cumbria.”* He shared a number of contributions he has made around management information:

“We’ve been able to look at those reporting systems and make sure that they are not only telling us what actually happened, which is important, but it also starts to give trend information about what is happening within each of those substantive areas that MAPPA looks into.”

David also lobbied for victim safety and victim safety planning to be *“centre stage within the MAPPA conversations for Cumbria”* and challenged some of the language used around MAPPA.

He summarises the role by saying:

“You’re there because you really genuinely feel about the protection of your own community. You’re there to make sure that there is a voice in that room that reflects the residents of the area that you look after, and you’re there to challenge, where it’s appropriate to do so.

And it’s also to bring some new ways of thinking into the board itself, which I think is healthy for the board and it’s healthy for the process in terms of making sure that it keeps in touch with what it’s all about, and it is at the heart of it, about protecting and looking after our residents.”



[The lay advisers contribute to the MAPPA Annual report in Cumbria. You can read their contribution to the 2020/2021 report here.](#)

Example of effectiveness: Leadership – the significance of a well-defined vision and strategy, North Wales

In North Wales we found a positive culture around MAPPA. Staff at all levels were clear about the vision and strategy for MAPPA and understood the referral criteria and process. Practitioners felt positively about referring cases to MAPPA and about the support and accountability this gave to their case management. Staff had a strong focus on multi-agency working.

In some offices, probation staff are co-located with police offender managers, which supports collaborative information-sharing and joint working. Police and probation staff hold daily tasking meetings to review intelligence that comes to light on individuals they are managing across all MAPPA levels and to allocate any actions in response to new information.

We were particularly impressed with the attention that was paid to Level 1 cases through the well-established review process.



[Video \(YouTube, 25:05\): Learning from stakeholders: The significance of a well-defined vision and strategy, North Wales.](#)

We spoke to Andy Jones, Head of North Wales probation delivery unit and Lowri Owen, MAPPA coordinator, to find out more about how the process and culture have been developed.

Andy Jones discusses how the 'right mindset develops the right culture' and was very clear:

"The fundamental starting point for people is their understanding of what the MAPPA framework is at an operational level, and that includes our own practitioners in probation but also practitioners within the responsible authorities but also the range of duty to co-operate agencies ... Operationally, people need to see MAPPA as relevant, as helpful, and as a means of dealing with risk management of cases in the community."

Lowri discusses her role within MAPPA work, which includes the coordination of MAPPA work in North Wales, operationally and strategically; involvement in complex cases and professional meetings external to the formal processes; awareness-raising and supporting agencies to take responsibility; and exit strategies. The latter includes the exit plan for those subject to life and imprisonment for public protection (IPP) sentences, who are all registered as Level 2 or 3 minimum on their release, and then referred into the lifer panel as part of the step-down process. Lowri explains:

"I am involved with MAPPA processes for all levels in North Wales, so it's as if I've got all in my basket. I try and have an oversight of all of those cases, whether they be level 1, 2 or 3."

Example of effectiveness: Staffing – effective management oversight and Level 1 review supported by the case administrator for the senior probation officer role in North Wales

Oversight of risk of harm is different from regular staff supervision and the general oversight of practice, although it may sometimes be undertaken at the same time, and discussions in supervision may identify the need for management oversight.

Effective management oversight takes into account the unique demands of an individual case and the specific circumstances, skills, knowledge and experience of the case manager

or responsible officer.⁸ A skilled manager, taking a fresh look at a case and exercising professional curiosity, can encourage practitioners to exercise respectful uncertainty and critical thinking, address any misplaced professional optimism and take a balanced and informed view of a case. This promotes defensible decision-making and enables the case manager or responsible officer to feel confident and supported to manage risk and identify appropriate interventions and responses.

The role of the senior probation officer (SPO) is often stretched, with a range of competing demands and priorities. In North Wales, we found that senior leaders had given careful thought to how to support SPOs, particularly to enable them to undertake reviews of Level 1 MAPPA cases (of all risk levels) with practitioners and ensure that all relevant information resulting from the reviews is recorded on nDelius. The case administrator senior probation officer (CASPO) support role was developed using existing case administrator resources differently. CASPOs support SPOs in a number of ways; in relation to MAPPA, they track Level 1 reviews and ensure they take place. The CASPO also links with victim liaison officers to make them aware of reviews that are due to take place and provide an opportunity to include the victims' views in the process. The CASPO also has an important role in ensuring that all Level 1 review information is recorded correctly. SPOs in North Wales were very positive about this role, and we spoke to Marina Owen, SPO in North Wales, to find out more details.

Marina told us how the role had developed and the tasks and responsibilities in general and those specific to MAPPA. She said:

"They send the list of MAPPA 1 reviews to victim liaison officers, who will then provide an update prior to MAPPA 1 meeting, so that we can incorporate that into the MAPPA discussion itself when we review the victim safety pillar of the risk management plan, and anything additional we need to discuss during the review."



[Video \(YouTube, 7:23\): Learning from stakeholders: Effective management oversight and Level 1 Review, North Wales.](#)

You can listen to the full audio of Noreen Wallace, HM Inspector, interviewing Marina Owen, SPO North Wales, here.



[For further information on management oversight, please see HM Inspectorate of Probation's guidance.](#)

Example of effectiveness: Information – effective case management of all of those subject to MAPPA through ViSOR, North Wales

ViSOR is a national dangerous persons database, which holds information on all offenders who had sexual offender registration conditions imposed on them following criminal conviction, and violent and potentially dangerous persons. ViSOR was implemented across police forces in 2005. It was subsequently rolled out to the probation service in 2007 and the prison service in 2008.

⁸ Please note, we have used the terminology 'case manager or responsible officer' to be inclusive of probation, prison and police colleagues.

ViSOR aims to ensure that MAPPA agencies share intelligence and case information on MAPPA offenders in order to support effective risk management, public protection, and transfers. It is also the designated repository for MAPPA minutes.

ViSOR guidance requires that all registered sexual offenders and MAPPA Level 2 and 3 cases have a record created on the system; however, it is not mandated for Level 1, Category 2 (violent offenders).

In North Wales, probation and police had worked together to add all MAPPA cases, including Level 1, Category 2, to the system to aid information-sharing and accurate record-keeping.



"We see a benefit in terms of sharing information with probation regarding the Level 1, Category 2 cases. As we have ViSOR flags on all these cases, it enables us to track the violent offender cohort and flag any related intelligence to probation colleagues in a timely manner and vice versa. It assists in our joint risk management of such cases."

Simon Williams, Detective Superintendent
Protecting Vulnerable People Unit, North Wales Police



Reflection questions

1. Do all leaders and practitioners in your area understand the vision and strategy for MAPPA locally? Why do you draw this conclusion?
2. What are the strengths of the MAPPA culture in your areas and how can you sustain and build on these?
3. What are the areas for development of the culture around MAPPA? How can you address these?
4. What MAPPA data do you have? What have you learned in terms of the data?
5. How does your SMB take all opportunities to analyse and understand data and trends?
6. How are you quality assuring MAPPA in your area and within your caseload?
7. How do you ensure sufficient attention is paid to all Level 1 cases?
8. How could resources in your area be reconfigured to better support priority areas of work?
9. How well is ViSOR used and understood in your area?
10. What learning could you take from the above examples? How can you apply this learning?
11. How confident do you feel in working with MAPPA? What could you do to increase this further?
12. What policies and structures are in place to help you work effectively with all MAPPA cases?

Delivering effective case supervision to keep people safe

Key take-aways

Keeping people safe requires:

-  Robust reviewing processes informed by information from all relevant agencies and partners.
-  Managing the right cases at the right level.
-  Active pre-release work to create solid release plans.
-  Appropriate focus on MAPPA Level 1 cases.
-  Careful management of transfer of MAPPA cases.
-  Professional curiosity and the confidence to challenge other professionals and escalate issues when necessary.

Learning from the frontline and stakeholders: Keeping people safe

As previously stated, criminal justice agencies can never eliminate risk; conversely, it is important that all reasonable steps are taken to promote the safety of victims, the public and the individuals themselves.

HM Inspectorate of Probation highlights that a range of supervision skills for practitioners have been identified in the literature, which includes the following:

-  **relationship skills:** creating a 'working alliance' is a major challenge for those working with involuntary clients. Tackling 'reactance' (the feeling of being controlled) and building motivation are possible through emotional literacy, displaying optimism, setting boundaries, and clarifying roles and expectations
-  **role clarification:** ensuring that the service user understands that the practitioner is there to help but also to enforce the court order. The optimum relationship can be both challenging and supportive
-  **pro-social modelling:** practitioners need to act as a positive and motivating role model for those being supervised. Being reliable, punctual, fair, consistent and respectful in all interactions is associated with being perceived as legitimate and gaining compliance
-  **motivational interviewing:** the use of a person-centred communication style that addresses uncertainty about change. There is promising research that motivational interviewing techniques increase engagement and progress



problem-solving: improving both the person's orientation to problems and problem-solving skills themselves are associated with significant falls in reoffending. Practitioners should work together with service users to identify and prioritise problems. The five stages of problem-solving can be employed: definition, generating alternatives, decision-making, implementation, and reviewing/evaluating decisions



cognitive restructuring: there is powerful evidence that those who participate in cognitive behavioural interventions have significantly reduced reoffending. While these approaches are popularly associated with groupwork, cognitive restructuring can be of great value in one-to-one supervision. It helps service users to understand how their attitudes and beliefs direct their reaction to events, and to replace anti-social thinking styles with clearer and healthier cognitions.



[You can read more about 'Supervision Skills for Probation Practitioners' in the Academic Insight by Peter Raynor.](#)



You can read more about the research that underpins MAPPA on HM Inspectorate of Probation's research page, under the [evidence base for probation services, specific types of delivery section here.](#)

What follows are examples of the implementation of these skills, and the above key take-aways, in MAPPA practice in probation, to keep people safe.

Example of effectiveness: Meaningfully involve the person on probation in the MAPPA arrangements

'Correctional work is at its most effective when offenders are involved in their own assessment, engaged as 'active collaborators' in deciding and implementing their own plan, and come to see themselves as being able to control their own futures, rather than being the victim of circumstances. This is called 'agency'. Core correctional practice describes the staff behaviours which are most highly associated with securing the high level of engagement and collaboration necessary to help offenders achieve a sense of 'agency'. (Home Office, 2006)

Academic research has demonstrated the positive impact of involving people on probation in their risk assessment and planning, and this extends to MAPPA. Studies such as Wood and Kemshall (2007) have shown that high-risk individuals being managed under MAPPA are more likely to comply and engage with supervision if they are involved in their risk assessment. In line with principles of procedural justice,⁹ this research found that explaining the meaning of MAPPA and what it meant for the individual on probation increased their understanding and compliance. Many saw MAPPA as having a legitimate role in helping them to avoid future offending and reintegrate into the community.



[This video, produced by HM Prison and Probation Service, elaborates on the four key principles of procedural justice.](#)

⁹ For further info see: [Procedural justice \(justiceinspectorates.gov.uk\)](https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/procedural-justice/)



[Please also see the Inspectorate’s procedural justice infographic attached.](#)

Engaging individuals in their plans also helps them to develop internal controls, which is beneficial for sustaining changes in behaviour long after external restrictions end.

‘Thus, taking into account the kind of life that would be fulfilling and meaningful to the individual ... [the practitioner] notes the kinds of capabilities or competencies he or she requires to have a chance of putting that plan into action. A treatment plan is then developed.’ (Ward and Maruna, 2007)

Different areas have taken different approaches to ensure that people on probation are meaningfully engaged. In some of the cases we inspected, we saw evidence on case records of specific tools being used to assist and promote discussion about risk issues before MAPPA meetings. Two examples of these tools are:



[the four pillars thought map](#)



[Pattern, Seriousness, Nature, Likelihood, Imminence and Impact \(PSNLII\) and four pillars form.](#)

With thanks to Northamptonshire MAPPA for providing these and granting permission to share.

Example of effectiveness: Protective integration

Working with high-risk individuals requires a strong focus on risk management; however, to sustain long-term change, individuals need to develop their own internal controls and integrate into society.

Desistance and risk management can be understood as two sides of the same coin, and can work in tandem to achieve both non-offending and public safety. (Kemshall, 2021)



Figure 5: Protective integration



This concept is illustrated in figure 5 above, taken [from Professor Hazel Kemshall’s Academic Insight paper Risk and Desistance: A Blended Approach to Risk Management](#), published for the Inspectorate.

The aim is to reintegrate service users safely into the community, with a dual focus on:

- (i) protecting the individual from further failure, isolation and stigma; and
- (ii) protecting the community from further harm.

In essence, desistance and risk management operate in tandem to achieve both non-offending and public safety. The key task for practitioners is to act in transparent, defensible ways, based on evidence, and to seek an appropriate balance in each case between risk and rights, protection and integration, and desistance supportive work and control.

In order to achieve this balance, Professor Hazel Kemshall suggested the following:

- Ask whether something can be done safely (e.g. the service user joining a group or becoming a volunteer), and assess the answer to this question, with evidence.
- Ask what could be put into place to make it safer and thereby potentially acceptable.
- If you conclude that it is not safe, clearly articulate and record the reasons and evidence for this conclusion, and consider what alternatives might be better.
- Actions must be proportionate with a level that is commensurate with public safety; you can be precautionary up to a point, but this must be based on evidence, reasonable, and justified.
- Remember that all decisions potentially come under public scrutiny, including legal challenge. So be prepared, be explicit, and record well.



This builds on the earlier [Academic Insights paper from Shadd Maruna and Ruth Mann, entitled 'Reconciling 'Desistance' and 'What Works'.](#)

In the following example, the inspector commented:

"The practitioner worked hard with other agencies to balance public protection concerns with things that were important to the individual and may support desistance.

The practitioner and the MAPPA panel considered what was needed in this case and requested bespoke licence conditions to support the risk management plan."



Case illustration

Shakil was sentenced to a long period in custody for sexual offences committed over a protracted period while in a position of trust, teaching children in their own homes.

Planning for Shakil's management on release started early, while he was in custody. He was referred to MAPPA Level 2 to support the coordination of information-sharing, primarily from children's social care services, as he had a large number of grandchildren and a network of associates who also had children. Applications were made for bespoke and discretionary licence conditions. Shakil was restricted from contact with all children, a more stringent restriction than the more common restriction not to have unsupervised contact with children, due to concerns that family members would not adequately safeguard their children. A polygraph testing condition was also added to provide further monitoring around child contact. Safeguarding measures were put in place and disclosures were made to the appropriate individuals in places where Shakil intended to worship.

Despite the need for significant public protection measures in the case, the practitioner was able to use principles of protective integration. Shakil's attendance at a place of worship was risk assessed and permitted, with appropriate written agreements and disclosure in place.

Professional curiosity

During the Victoria Climbié inquiry in 2003, Lord Laming described professional curiosity as 'respectful uncertainty'. It describes the capacity to explore and understand what is happening within a family or with an individual rather than making assumptions or accepting things at face value, applying critical evaluation to any information received and maintaining an open mind.

Professional curiosity is defined by HMPPS as follows:

'Being professionally curious is a process of always questioning and seeking verification for the information you are given rather than making assumptions or accepting things at face value.' (HMPPS, 2020).

Professional curiosity, from both practitioners and managers, is an important part of effective management oversight.



Questions to consider are:

- How has the practitioner exercised professional curiosity?
- How has the line manager exercised professional curiosity?
- How has the presence/absence of professional curiosity impacted on the quality of work undertaken in the case?

Practitioners and line managers need to be self-aware in their practice and scrutinise their own assessments and analysis. This means looking for opportunities to triangulate or verify information and inform the weighting or importance placed on it. Seeking out all potential sources of information and assessing any discrepancies creates a robust assessment process. Throughout, it is vital that practitioners and managers are aware of their own values and the effect these may have on their analysis, assessments, and decision-making.

Practitioners and line managers need to feel comfortable having what may be perceived as challenging or awkward conversations about the issues affecting on the individual. Asking questions about why conclusions have been reached should prompt the practitioner to reflect and consider whether there are other angles that have not been considered, ultimately leading to a more robust assessment. It can be helpful to ground these discussions in the context of promoting safety and exploring long-term desistance.

Professional curiosity is not about trying to catch people out; it is about understanding what is really happening. Showing an interest and having exploratory discussions promote engagement. Getting a better understanding of an individual enables the practitioner to personalise their plan and make it relevant. For practitioners, this helps them to understand people on probation and where they are on their desistance pathway. In addition, for managers, it also means understanding and supporting staff development.

Many things can hinder professional curiosity, including workloads, and lack of experience, training, or understanding of different agencies' boundaries and responsibilities. Supportive line management should consider this, and look for ways to maximise opportunities to explore professional curiosity with staff.

There are a number of other barriers to professional curiosity:

Disguised compliance | If an individual cooperates, this often results in reduced professional involvement. Therefore, it is important to understand the difference between compliance and meaningful engagement: do the individual's actions match their words? Do all of the professionals involved have the same viewpoint?

The rule of optimism | Professionals can minimise risks, such as escalating illicit drug use or personal crisis, and rationalising behaviours despite evidence to the contrary.

Accumulating risk | Risk is not viewed within the context or pattern of behaviours.

Normalisation | Behaviour is viewed as 'normal' and, therefore, is not recognised as a potential risk or assessed as such.

Professional deference | Deferring to a perceived 'higher status' professional who views the risk as less significant, even if they do not have contact with the individual.

Confirmation bias | Actively seeking or preferring evidence that supports a pre-held view and not accepting evidence that supports the contrary viewpoint.

Knowing but not knowing | The gut feeling that something is not right but not knowing quite what.

Confidence in managing tension | Diversion and distraction from the professional planned exploration of points through disruption and/or aggression.

Dealing with uncertainty | If there is no evidence available to support or substantiate a hypothesis it can be discounted.

Time constraints | These can impact on the time required to be curious.

It is helpful for line managers to explore any organisational, personal and practice-based barriers that may impede professional curiosity in practice and support the case manager/responsible officer to mitigate these. Notwithstanding the challenge of resources, it is beneficial for line managers to model and encourage reflective practice. Although initially this can take more time, the investment will empower the practitioner and help to build practice based on solid principles, which can then be applied to future practice.



[Bias and error in risk assessment and management is discussed further in Professor Hazel Kemshall's Academic Insight paper.](#)



[HMPPS has helpfully provided the Bias Recognition Checklist 2021.](#)



[Reflect on your own practice using the self-scrutiny list](#), to help you to test your analysis of an individual's current circumstances that will impact on risk and desistance.

Example of effectiveness: Professional curiosity in assessing

The impact of this can be seen in the case illustration below. The inspector commented:

"Often the title of a conviction does not fully represent the behaviour that took place, due to plea-bargaining or issues of evidence in the prosecution process. The practitioner in this case took time to fully explore the detail of previous offending and behaviours, looking further than the conviction to understand the nature of what actually

happened. This was crucial to understanding the full history and extent of risky behaviours.”



Case illustration

Philip received a life sentence for a sexual assault on a female stranger. He was released to an adult social care home with 24-hour care and an escort when in the community, due to his risks and severe learning difficulties.

The practitioner completed a thorough assessment, informed by domestic abuse and safeguarding checks. The assessment identified risk paralleling behaviour identified in past offences, including a conviction for common assault against a child, which clearly had a sexual motivation. It also highlighted previous concerns about domestic abuse against his mother and sister. The assessment also considered the safety of the victim, who was in the same locality and potentially may have accessed some of the same support services as Philip.

MAPPA Level 2 added value to the case before and after Philip's release, by providing a forum for information to be shared by the many agencies involved in managing him. MAPPA also provided accountability to ensure agencies completed the actions agreed in the meetings.

MAPPA discussions highlighted the risk to female residents of the home he was living in, as well as risks to him. Appropriate disclosures were discussed and made to Philip's mother's friend, who was a vulnerable adult. Consideration of Philip's learning difficulties was central to the management of the case and careful work took place to ensure he understood the conditions of his licence.

Release planning was well coordinated between agencies due to the level of information-sharing that took place through the MAPPA meetings.

Example of effectiveness: Professional curiosity in delivery of the sentence

The impact of this can be seen in the case illustration below. Inspectors commented:

“The practitioner demonstrated a good level of curiosity in this case, seeking to understand Jeff's behaviours. They considered the influence of the relationships he had and made good use of the sources of information open to them, including the addition of polygraph testing, to continue to question the motives behind Jeff's actions.”



Case illustration

Jeff received a 36-month custodial sentence with an extended licence for attempting to arrange or facilitate the commission of a child for sexual offences and the making and possession of indecent images of children. The practitioner identified the need to gather further information about potential risks linked to his partner, who was potentially vulnerable, and referred the case to MAPPA Level 2. Jeff has a learning disability, and the practitioner also considered the effect this may have on his engagement with his licence.

There were concerns about whether Jeff's motivation to change was genuine or if there were other reasons for perceived changes in his behaviour. There were a lot of

inconsistencies in the accounts of his life, explanations of his sexual offending and how he could use interventions delivered so far to change his behaviour. The MAPPA meeting discussed a polygraph testing licence condition, which was subsequently approved and added to his licence. Two tests completed after his release were inconclusive, but these outcomes were discussed with Jeff and led him to disclose aspects of his behaviour that he had previously withheld. In turn, the new information enabled further risk monitoring and control measures to be put in place and allowed the practitioner to complete meaningful work with Jeff on his offending. Furthermore, when he disclosed the use of adult pornography, but an investigation of his device did not evidence this, it prompted the probation practitioner and the police to pursue this further to determine what else he may be trying to hide.

Example of effectiveness: Effective use of co-working in a challenging MAPPA case

Individuals subject to MAPPA oversight can often have complex and entrenched needs that have an adverse impact on their attitudes and behaviour; therefore, it is important to explore the underlying causes of this. This can be challenging, particularly when seen in the context of the barriers to professional curiosity explored in the section above. Some cases require tailored management strategies to respond to their specific risks and needs. In some instances, it may be appropriate to co-work a case to help alleviate some of the challenges, address barriers and share knowledge, or when a case appears to be stagnant, with limited progress being made. However, practitioners must also consider roles, responsibilities and accountability to ensure the co-working arrangement is mutually agreeable for those involved and the work is undertaken effectively.

During the inspection it was noted:

“Probation staff often have to work with extremely challenging individuals who attempt to manipulate or intimate them; this can take its toll on the welfare of the practitioner. In this case, the allocation of a co-worker relieved the pressure on an individual practitioner and helped set clear boundaries with the person on probation.”



Case illustration

Cody was sentenced to 27 months in prison for stalking and harassment of his wife. This was his first conviction but followed repeated breaches of a caution given for a pattern of similar behaviour. He was initially assessed as medium risk of harm; however, his level of preoccupation and complete denial that his actions were abusive led to the risk being escalated, and he was referred to MAPPA Level 2. The concerns were picked up by monitoring his communications while he was in prison, where he expressed that he still viewed the victim as his wife and had no intention of ceasing contact with her. There was good communication between the prison offender manager and the community offender manager, and they shared relevant information to enable a robust assessment and plan to be prepared for Cody's release. He was referred to approved premises outside his home area and then resettled away from his home town. Through MAPPA, additional conditions were proposed and added to his licence to allow his mobile telephone and internet use to be monitored.

Cody displayed high levels of manipulation and extremely challenging behaviour towards staff. In order to support the practitioner, a co-worker was allocated. This arrangement

worked well, as both gave consistent messages to Cody, which in turn reduced his constant challenges. Good communication between the two practitioners enabled reflection and discussion about the best ways to work with Cody. The original practitioner welcomed the arrangement, which reduced the pressure and stress that working with Cody brought. In addition, there was good management oversight recorded throughout the case.

MAPPA clearly added value in this case through oversight of a challenging case and access to additional monitoring opportunities, for example tracking his car through automatic number plate recognition cameras.

Multi-agency working

Individuals being managed under MAPPA are likely to have contact with a range of agencies that provide different elements of monitoring, control or support. The role of each must be understood to avoid duplication of work or contradictory messaging. Rehabilitation agencies must share information to maximise opportunities to take protective action or to support the individual. The MAPPA forum provides a formal opportunity for this through a structured meeting; however, collaborative working is just as important for cases at Level 1 or between formal meetings for cases at Level 2 and 3.

Example of effectiveness: Effective multi-agency working at Level 1

The great majority of eligible cases are managed at MAPPA Level 1. Level 1 cases are described in the MAPPA guidance as 'multi-agency support for lead agency risk management plan with information sharing'. Many individuals who are managed under Level 1, Category 1 are jointly managed by police and probation and will also have involvement with children's social care services, housing, substance misuse support or mental health services. While formal meetings are not needed at this level, multi-agency collaboration and information-sharing are required. In addition, good collaborative working and information-sharing at Level 1 can avoid the need to escalate cases to a higher management level by addressing issues at the earliest opportunity.

The impact of this can be seen in the case illustration below. Inspectors commented:

"This case demonstrates effective communication and collaborative multi-agency working at MAPPA Level 1. Regular reviewing, involving all relevant agencies, allowed the practitioner to manage the case, taking into account all relevant information, and support longer-term changes alongside monitoring adherence to the licence conditions."



Case illustration

Daniel was sentenced to an eight-year custodial sentence for a sexual offence. He was recalled for failing to disclose a new relationship and re-released eight months later.

During his recall, there was good communication between the probation practitioner and police offender manager. This ensured that home and employment checks were completed in a timely way and fed into the assessment, which allowed for planning pre-release.

Positively, the probation practitioner had a long-standing working relationship with Daniel, as well as with the police offender manager and other partnership workers, including children's social care services. The assessment clearly described Daniel's personal circumstances, his motive for offending and the breach of trust that resulted in his recall to prison. There was strong communication with all stakeholders before release, safeguarding checks were completed, and the resulting information was shared. This resulted in the decision to make disclosures to relevant people and fit Daniel with a tracking device on release. In addition, three-way meetings were held between Daniel and his prison offender manager to ensure he was informed and understood what was expected of him.

The plan for his re-release set out that he would be managed at MAPPA Level 1, as a workable, robust management plan was in place and possible without escalation to Level 2.

The plan included an initial stay in approved premises and had a strong focus on public protection. The plan set out restrictive factors to protect likely victims and stated his licence conditions and the role of other agencies, such as the police and children's social care services. There was also a robust contingency plan tailored to the specific needs in this case, which included what would trigger a referral to an increased MAPPA level.

All agencies involved in Daniel's management were kept informed of his progress and relevant events, such as moving on from the approved premises, gaining employment and failed drug tests. In addition, the probation practitioner had regular discussions about Daniel with their SPO.

The restrictive elements of management were balanced with interventions that supported resettlement and longer-term change. For example, employment support and disclosure about his offences to employers were provided in conjunction with the police offender manager.

Contact levels have been consistent with office appointments, telephone contact and home visits. During this period, Daniel gained employment, drew on family support, and engaged with one-on-one offence-focused work. He continued to have some substance-misuse problems, which were monitored by regular testing. A licence warning was issued in relation to a failed test. Licence conditions were regularly reviewed by checking on ongoing relationships or potential contact with other people covered by his licence.

A formal review was undertaken through an OASys review, which gave a balanced overview of Daniel's progress and resulted in a decision to reduce his risk of serious harm level; this was agreed upon through consultation with the SPO and discussions with the victim liaison officer and the management of sexual or violent offenders (MOSOVO) officer.

The MAPPA level was reviewed by the probation practitioner and their SPO, which revisited the MAPPA Q form and agreed that Level 1 management remained appropriate.

In the example below, inspectors indicated that:

"Despite being managed at Level 1, this case demonstrates effective information-sharing and joint working. There was no need to escalate the case to Level 2, as the risk management plan could be delivered at Level 1. Swift exchange of information in relation to emerging concerns allowed the probation practitioner to take appropriate action to enforce the licence and protect the public."



Case illustration

Carl is a 31-year-old male convicted of offences related to domestic abuse and sentenced to 16 months in prison. This was his first conviction of this nature, although he had a history of other convictions for violence. Carl was assessed as posing a medium risk of serious harm to known adults.

Pre-release, a screening was completed by the community offender manager and their SPO to determine the appropriate MAPPA level. Actions were set and it was agreed that Carl should be managed at Level 1, as the risk management plan could be delivered at this level. Post-release, there were concerns about his compliance, informed by information from partner agencies. Carl was recalled promptly in response to breaches of licence.

Level 1 reviews were well informed by information from the police, children's social care services and prison staff. Prison intelligence identified attempts by Carl to contact a new

partner, which prompted a review of his MAPPA level, liaison with MARAC and consideration of whether to make disclosures to the new partner about his convictions.

Example of effectiveness: Effective use of multi-agency working at Level 2

In some cases, Level 2 management is needed to ensure formal multi-agency oversight and scrutiny. In the case examples above at Level 1, no further value would have been added by managing the case at a higher level. In the following case, given the risks and concerns that previous risk management plans had not effectively contained the risks, management at Level 2 was appropriate.

The inspector commented:

"Individuals who persist with harmful behaviours over long periods are challenging and often exhausting for professionals working with them. There is little sign of progress or change for some, and the risk of further seriously harmful offending is almost constant. This case demonstrates highly effective joint working, appropriately overseen by MAPPA, to prevent further offending. Professionals working with this individual were active in their monitoring, did not become fatigued and continued looking for new ways to support the individual to move away from offending, appropriately using enforcement processes to protect the public when needed."



Case illustration

Arnold is a 33-year-old male sentenced to a six-month custodial sentence for breach of a Sexual Harm Prevention Order. He had been subject to probation supervision and continual MAPPA Level 2 management for a number of years, due to lack of compliance with external controls and repeated breaches of licence and statutory orders. There were also ongoing concerns about his sexual preoccupation and harmful behaviours. MAPPA meetings were convened before Arnold's release to ensure appropriate plans were in place to manage him.

On release, Arnold was assessed as posing a very high risk of serious harm and was carefully monitored, initially at an approved premise. During home visits, the probation practitioner and the police offender manager from the MOSOVO team uncovered that Arnold was being deceitful, had possession of internet-enabled devices, had accessed social media, had been associating with others convicted of sexual offences, had allowed a woman to stay at his accommodation overnight, had stayed overnight at non-approved addresses and was not taking his anti-libidinal medication as directed. These actions led to a breach of his sexual harm prevention order and he was eventually given a further custodial sentence.

Mental health professionals, including an occupational therapist and nursing staff, were also involved with Arnold and attended professionals' meetings outside the formal MAPPA meetings to coordinate their work with other professionals. While public protection concerns were paramount in this case, Arnold was also supported to gain practical skills in managing finances and other life skills. While Arnold has continued to reoffend by breaching the controls, the emerging risks have been identified and acted on, potentially preventing more serious offending.

Example of effectiveness: Early identification of MAPPA case

Cases that are automatically eligible for MAPPA (Category 1 and 2) were identified by court-based probation staff at the point of sentence via a well-established, efficient process in all the areas we visited. The Probation Service Court Team must identify and record all cases as MAPPA on the approved case management system within three days of sentencing. For community sentences, probation guidance requires the practitioner to set the MAPPA level no later than fifteen working days from the person on probation's attendance at their first appointment, in line with the initial OASys. For custody cases the level must be determined six months prior to release, first parole date, each subsequent parole review hearing, or tariff expiry date to allow for appropriate pre-release work.

Overall, we found that, where the right individuals are referred, MAPPA adds value. Cases at Level 2, and particularly at Level 3, are well managed and demonstrate that having the collective knowledge of agencies focused on a case can accelerate access to services and, in some cases, gain support that would not have been available otherwise. MAPPA management also brings oversight and scrutiny to the most complex cases, which in itself is of value. In cases where there seems little prospect of a dangerous individual making positive changes, it is essential to ensure that all information has been shared and agencies are doing all they can to contain the risks.

Thus, early identification is beneficial to support effective collaboration across the partnerships involved, provide some assurances to victims, and explore contingency planning to promote keeping people and the individual safe. It also enables practitioners to engage meaningfully with the person on probation, allowing them opportunities to explain what MAPPA is and any implications for the risk management plan, how to promote safety and notably the impact of this on the person on probation/in prison, and to promote timely referrals, which is especially important for resettlement cases to allow time for release planning.

In the following example, the inspector commented:

"This case demonstrates good work by the probation court officer in flagging up complex issues that would impact on supervision. In addition, an early meeting involving all agencies ensured that all workers were fully informed about the risks and needs and ready to provide support."



Case illustration

Lee was sentenced to a 24-month community order with a mental health treatment requirement for threatening to kill and assaulting an emergency worker. He had a diagnosis of paranoid schizophrenia. Before sentencing, probation staff based in the court referred Lee's case to MAPPA Level 2 under Category 3. A professionals' meeting was convened, chaired by the MAPPA coordinator, to inform the pre-sentence report. This concluded that Lee was not manageable in the community at that time. The court chose to give Lee a community order; however, due to the early activity, all agencies were already informed of the risk and needs in his case.

A formal MAPPA Level 2 meeting was held promptly after the sentence. Appropriate enquiries were made with statutory and non-statutory agencies, which included firearms enquiries with members of Lee's family. Lee was also discussed under the Prevent process,

due to concerns that he had expressed his intention to drive into a crowd of people. The enquiries and liaison enabled the probation practitioner to uncover wider concerns about Lee and ensure that all other agencies working with him were fully informed.

Example of effectiveness: Effective use of Category 3

For individuals who do not meet the criteria for Category 1 or Category 2, but who have committed an offence indicating that they are capable of causing serious harm and require multi-agency management at Level 2 or 3, a referral can be made for Category 3.

The Probation Service Level 1 Policy Framework, and recent additions to the MAPPA guidance, have sought to remind practitioners to consider Category 3 in cases where domestic abuse or stalking may be an issue. In London, there had been an increase in Category 3 cases, from 61 in March 2020 to 103 at the time of our interviews. At the outset of the pandemic, the Wales probation region completed some focused audit work on domestic abuse and asked all practitioners to consider whether MAPPA referrals were needed for high-risk domestic abuse perpetrators. Familiarity with use of Category 3 was greater there than in other areas. During our focus group with Level 2 chairs in North Wales, we heard that:

"MAPPA is seen as an open door to push on when you have complex short sentence cases that are high-risk domestic abuse and need multi-agency oversight."

The benefits of this can be seen in the case below. Inspectors noted:

"After a thorough pre-sentence assessment, this case was referred promptly to MAPPA Level 2, Category 3. The report writer ensured that the allocated probation practitioner was aware of the concerns and swift action was taken to convene a MAPPA meeting and ensure all relevant agencies were involved in pre-release planning."



Case illustration

Nathan received a 14-month prison sentence for controlling or coercive behaviour (against his mother) and possession of an offensive weapon. The pre-sentence report addendum was informed by a psychological report and highlighted a range of needs. As a result, Nathan's case was referred to MAPPA Level 2 soon after the sentence, and a pre-release Level 2 meeting was held to consider his risks, particularly the risk of non-compliance on release.

The MAPPA Level 2 meeting concluded that a referral to the Offender Personality Disorder Pathway was appropriate, due to Nathan's diagnosis of personality disorder. A formulation was completed, which provided professionals with ways to work with Nathan, informed by insight into his diagnosis. In addition, he was also referred to approved premises. The chair of the MAPPA meeting took steps to ensure that the prison-based mental health in-reach team provided information that had not been forthcoming.

The prison-based resettlement officer evidenced good partnership work with housing workers and substance misuse agencies. In addition, work was completed with Nathan while he was still in prison, to address his problematic relationships.

On release, when Nathan disengaged from supervision or it appeared that risk factors were increasing, there was a timely and robust response, including unplanned home visits, police checks and welfare visits. In addition, the probation practitioner contacted the victim liaison

officer to identify any concerns at various points, as risks emerged and when a reduction in risk level was being considered.

All relevant risk-related information was added to ViSOR by the police and probation, which provided clear records.

In a second example, the inspector stated:

“This case demonstrates the use of Category 3 to ensure all necessary information was gathered to ensure a fully informed risk assessment and risk management plan. This case was deregistered and then re-referred when circumstances changed, which provided an opportunity to all services to reassess their involvement and review plans to provide good-quality support and management.”



Case illustration

Oliver received a 24-month suspended sentence order with 35 rehabilitation activity requirement days for possession of an offensive weapon. His out-of-area pre-sentence report flagged up concerns about potentially extremist views. Despite efforts, the probation practitioner struggled to make progress in gathering the necessary information about his extremist views. They also had concerns about domestic abuse towards Oliver’s partner. As a result, the practitioner referred Oliver to MAPPA Level 2 as a Category 3 case. The referral was accepted, and MAPPA was used effectively to establish information-sharing and joint working arrangements.

Oliver had a history of childhood trauma and a personality disorder diagnosis. Assessments were informed by multi-agency collaboration and effective use of internal probation resources, including the offender personality disorder psychologist, who provided a formulation to aid effective engagement. In addition, the counter-terrorism probation officer provided oversight and advice on delivering the Developing Dialogues intervention to address Oliver’s extremist views. Initial positive progress and stability led to Oliver’s case being de-registered from MAPPA.

At the time of de-registration as a MAPPA case, Oliver’s risks were being managed in other multi-agency forums (Channel, Child in Need and health service processes), and interventions were being coordinated well by the probation practitioner, which negated the need for further formal meetings through MAPPA.

However, later in his supervision, his relationship broke down, and he moved out of the area. Professionals had concerns that he was becoming unstable due to deteriorating mental health. He was re-referred to MAPPA, due to his need for accommodation and mental health support that could not be provided without MAPPA support. This illustrates the dynamic nature of risk and how the plans responded to this.

Example of effectiveness: Reducing MAPPA level

MAPPA cases should be managed at the lowest level that allows the risk management plan to be delivered effectively. At each MAPPA Level 2 or 3 meeting, the panel should consider whether continued management is necessary, as holding cases at too high a level takes up valuable resources. When an individual has committed the most serious offences, it can be difficult to be confident in reducing the level of management. Conversely, reducing the level too quickly can be detrimental to risk management and lead to important actions not being completed.

In reviewing the case example below, inspectors indicated:

“The individual here was convicted of very serious offences that attracted media attention. Despite the horrific nature of the crimes, the careful approach taken by professionals from probation and partner agencies allowed them to assess the risks and understand the progress he had made. The evidence supported a reduction in MAPPA level.”



Case illustration

Malik was sentenced to a long prison term for sexual activity with a child under the age of 13. There were a large number of co-defendants and the case attracted media coverage.

A MAPPA Level 2 meeting was held before Malik’s release, which agreed that he should be released to an approved premise with strict licence conditions. Malik was carefully monitored during his time at the approved premises, and as progress was positive, he moved to supported accommodation three months after release. Malik had completed an offence-focused accredited programme in prison and the probation practitioner sequenced further offence-focused work effectively on release. They also supported Malik to develop protective factors and discussed his culture and religion and their importance to him. Malik was involved in his initial assessment and subsequent reviews, and given the opportunity to reflect on his offences and progress made throughout his sentence. Regular liaison between the police, probation and partner agencies took place and all reported that he had complied well with licence conditions and made positive progress.

Malik was reduced to Level 1 after four Level 2 meetings. The rationale was that the risk management plan was in place and being delivered effectively. The risk and complexity of the case were no longer at a level that required formal multi-agency meetings. The positive working relationships that had developed through MAPPA continued at Level 1 and active collaboration continued.

Example of effectiveness: Professional courage/professional challenge

On occasions, professionals will have different opinions on case management, such as conflicting views on risk levels and management, thresholds for MAPPA, child protection measures, or mental health interventions. Different agencies have different responsibilities and priorities, and it is essential to understand how this can lead to different approaches. It is critical that practitioners can resolve such issues and feel confident in challenging decisions they disagree with, using appropriate evidence and rationale to inform their professional challenge.

At times there will inevitably be professional disagreement between agencies; however, such differences must not affect the outcomes for people on probation.

If a resolution is not reached, it is vital to understand and follow any escalation processes. Practitioners should seek support from their manager when these situations occur.

The impact of this can be seen in the case illustration below. Inspectors commented:

“This case demonstrates good multi-agency working to ensure good outcomes for the person on probation. Despite challenges and professional disagreement, this case appropriately remained at MAPPA Level 1, due to the structured approach taken to involving all relevant agencies in problem-solving, working through professional disagreement. Police, housing and other services were supportive and took a collaborative approach. Recording in the case was clear and evidenced why decisions had been made, making clear what was evidence and what was professional judgement.”



Case illustration

Paul was sentenced to a 24-month suspended sentence order for sexual offences with a child. He had a previous similar conviction approximately 20 years before this conviction. Thanks to the coordinated approach adopted by the probation practitioner to ensure all relevant agencies worked together to address emerging issues, he was managed at MAPPA Level 1, which was appropriate despite some challenging elements in the case.

A comprehensive pre-sentence report, enhanced by further information gathered post-sentence, allowed the practitioner to complete a thorough assessment. The document explored Paul’s current and previous behaviour over a significant period. The practitioner noted a long gap in offending and discussed this with Paul. He disclosed that, while he was not convicted during this period, his behaviour during that time was nonetheless concerning. Paul was assessed as posing a high risk of serious harm, and the assessment set out who was at risk and analysed how imminent this was.

Planning balanced restrictions (protective factors within the sexual harm prevention order, such as no contact with children, a requirement to disclose relationships, and restrictions to internet access) with constructive interventions (alcohol treatment and accredited programmes). The practitioner considered how the plan would be delivered in light of Paul’s learning difficulties. In addition, there was a detailed contingency plan that addressed issues that could foreseeably occur and affect Paul’s risks and needs.

The practitioner recorded and reviewed the rationale for managing Paul at Level 1 at relevant points during the sentence, and set actions through the review process where needed. The focus on actively reviewing the MAPPA level added value, as the practitioner analysed whether the risk management plan was sufficient and whether a higher management level would add anything further.

Contact entries throughout the delivery period evidenced a balance between managing risk and supporting desistance. Effective joint working between the police, probation and other agencies has been consistent. For example, during this sentence, concerns were identified that Paul was potentially at risk due to social media coverage of his offending. The housing officer initially determined that Paul should move address due to these concerns. However, the probation practitioner and police offender manager assessed that moving could be counterproductive and detrimental to Paul, who wanted to stay at the address where he had lived for six years. The police offender manager and probation practitioner were able to challenge the view of the housing officer by working together to assess the risk and put measures in place to manage the situation, including increased home visits and police community support officer monitoring. As a result, through continued liaison with housing, Paul maintained his tenancy.

Despite the challenges, the order was delivered successfully, alcohol treatment was delivered, and adaptations were made to deliver accredited programmes in accordance with Paul's learning difficulties.

Example of effectiveness: Comprehensive pre-release work

To offer the best opportunity for an individual to have a successful release, work needs to start early to assess their risks and needs and formulate a plan.

Within prisons, individuals are monitored, and therefore there is a wealth of information that can identify emerging risks, evidence of good progress or patterns of behaviour. It is important that community practitioners receive this information and incorporate it into their assessments and plans for release.

Last-minute attempts to find accommodation can be time-consuming and frustrating. Furthermore, for the individual being released, suddenly being told they are subject to MAPPA and have multiple licence conditions imposed – without the opportunity to explore the rationale or why risk has been amended or why they are required to reside in an approved premise – is not conducive to meaningful engagement. Nor will it help the individual to keep themselves and others safe. Knowing where they are being released to and what is expected of them in good time to ask questions and adjust is essential.

The impact of this can be seen in the case illustration below. Inspectors commented:

“As the practitioner actively liaised with prison staff, she was able to provide a more comprehensive assessment. Timely development of risk management plans to address the risk factors led to positive arrangements being in place on release.”



Case illustration

Laura was sentenced to 18 months' imprisonment for an offence of threats to kill.

She was released on licence and spent over four months in the community before being recalled for committing a similar offence against the same victim. This case was managed at MAPPA Level 2.

A pre-release MAPPA meeting was held, which covered safeguarding and domestic abuse information. This informed the initial assessment and sentence plan, which focused on engaging Laura and clearly identified the risk factors, including the impact of her experience of trauma and how this may affect her compliance and engagement.

Before Laura's re-release there was good communication between the prison offender manager and community offender manager, and both prison and probation were represented in the MAPPA meeting. Integrated offender management police officers started contact with Laura in prison, and it was agreed that an allocated officer would escort Laura to the approved premises on release. All agencies were part of the plan and this was reflected in MAPPA minutes.

The effective communication before release supported a well-coordinated plan and the use of appropriate licence conditions.

Example of effectiveness: Transfer of MAPPA cases

It may sometimes be necessary to transfer those individuals subject to MAPPA oversight from one area to another within England and Wales, or between different jurisdictions. Changes of location and/or practitioner can be disruptive for people on probation, and may have an impact on risk management and sentence planning. Consequently, wherever possible, moves should be planned, and transfers managed to mitigate these risks as much as possible.

Conversely, a managed move can provide a new opportunity to engage the person on probation, within a different set of circumstances. Therefore, it is also important to help the individual to identify and build on any benefits, to help keep them and others safe from the move.

HMPPS transfer (HMPPS, 2021) guidance sets out:

'Regular themes arise from findings from various Serious Case Reviews and inspection reports that are pertinent in consideration of the transfer of cases. These include:



Sharing information – where information is not shared appropriately gaps in risk management arise



Handovers – clear lines of communication are needed to facilitate a good quality handover



Consistency – variation of approach in transferring of cases has created inconsistent practice in the management of case transfers across the regions.'

Inspectors identified an effective transfer in North Wales and noted that:

"This case demonstrates a well-managed transfer of a complex case between areas through the MAPPA process. The structured MAPPA process enabled a range of partner agencies to share large amounts of information effectively. Clear recording ensured information was retained and could be easily accessed. Three-way meetings and continued MAPPA management were used positively to smooth the transition between areas. At the appropriate time, the case was reduced to Level 1, and regular reviews ensure this remains appropriate."



Case illustration

Sylvia received 84 months in custody for offences linked to modern slavery. She was assessed as posing a high risk of serious harm to known adults and a medium risk to the public, children, staff and other prisoners. Sylvia had previous convictions, most of which were historical; however, their nature suggested a pattern of similar behaviours. The number of victims and co-defendants in the case required a significant amount of information from various agencies to understand the risks fully.

The case was initially managed at MAPPA Level 3, due to the seriousness, the complexity, the number of people involved and media interest. Sylvia was also a victim of domestic abuse. She remained in a relationship with her partner, who was also in custody. The impact of abuse was acknowledged throughout Sylvia's licence, and trauma-informed approaches were used to work with her. Children's social care services were involved due to child safeguarding issues within the family. Sylvia was released with strict licence

conditions, which restricted contact with her co-defendants and focused on reducing risks to the public and previous victims.

Disclosures were considered through the MAPPA meetings, and decisions were clearly recorded. The MAPPA meeting minutes documented the case history and recorded clear actions. Housing, children's social care services, probation and police all played an active role during MAPPA meetings and shared information between formal meetings. In addition, ViSOR records were maintained with relevant risk information.

After four months on licence, following good progress, Sylvia was reduced from MAPPA Level 3 to Level 2. Due to accommodation needs, Sylvia's licence needed to be transferred between areas. The original area considered further reducing the MAPPA level at this stage; however, the receiving area appropriately advocated that Level 2 should continue. Their rationale was to ensure integration and stability were achieved in the new location, recognising that change can be disruptive and have an impact on risks and needs. There was clear planning for transfer to the new area, with regular meetings between staff from probation and police in both areas. There were also three-way meetings with Sylvia to ensure she understood the expectations and could build a relationship with her new practitioner.

Since moving to the new area and settling well, the MAPPA level has been further reduced. Management oversight was recorded throughout, including discussions about potential recalls due to Sylvia's behaviour. The practitioner and their manager regularly reviewed Sylvia's case in supervision to ensure there was sufficient risk management.

Given the case's complexity, MAPPA played a vital role in drawing together a large volume of intelligence from partner agencies.

Example of effectiveness: Clear recording

Clear recording on case management systems is essential to ensure the rationale for any judgements is recorded and provides an account of why a particular course of action has been taken.

'Recording should cover anything that contributes to a decision and should be recorded by the person making the decision. How much is recorded depends on the complexity of the situation' (Nosowska and Series, 2013)

 Probation National Standards 2021 set out the requirement to keep accurate records in the first standard.

'Case notes should be a contemporaneous record of the contact between probation practitioner and person on probation. Timely completion of records reduces the risk of losing information that has been gathered, or decisions and professional judgements that may have been made.'

There should be an explicit record of what/when/where contact has or will take place. Records should distinguish between fact and opinion and contain sufficient information to support probation practitioner tasks. Additionally, where decisions such as recall are awaiting outcomes this should also be noted to inform others who may require this information.'

Records should be kept on all systems appropriate to the case. Where external systems such as ViSOR (the dangerous persons database managed by the Police) are used this must be in accordance with published requirements.'

The impact of this can be seen in the case illustration below. Inspectors commented:

"Complex cases require clear recording to allow managers, colleagues and anyone reviewing the case to understand what has happened, the practitioner's analysis and the rationale for decision making. This case made good use of the CRISSA 10 model to ensure each contact with the person on probation had sufficient detail recorded and was easily understood by the reader."



Case illustration

Leon was sentenced to a 24-month community order with unpaid work, rehabilitation activity requirement days and a requirement to complete the Horizon accredited programme. His offences were making indecent images of children and filming a female friend he met through a church Bible study group underneath tables in her home and in a restaurant, which he gained sexual gratification from. Some of the offences took place in his family home, where he lived with his mother, step-father and teenage daughter, who shared a bed with him. A number of his nephews and nieces had access to the property.

Leon was managed at MAPPA Level 1. Information-sharing was consistent between the police offender manager and the probation practitioner, who navigated challenging issues around safeguarding in the church Leon attended and risk issues in respect to employment and contact with family members.

There was effective joint working between the police and probation in this case, which balanced complex issues. Leon's faith and engagement with the church was assessed as a protective factor; however, it also provided opportunities to offend, as he was engaged as a camera man, filming services. Police and probation worked together to consider the appropriateness of these activities. A church risk assessment was agreed and recorded, which set out how risk to children would be managed.

There was a significant amount of information-sharing in the case. Recording was clear and effectively summarised the actions that were taken with a range of agencies, including support from national safeguarding advisers, and disclosures that were made. The CRISSA model was used to record contacts in nDelius, which encouraged constant review of the case and details of what action needed to be taken after each appointment. This structure ensured that issues were always followed up and actions were completed.



Reflection questions

Meaningfully involve the person on probation

1. How do you ensure that the voice of the person on probation is evident in your assessments, plans, delivery and review; and how do you feed this into MAPPA?

¹⁰ CRISSA is an acronym for a framework for supervision, which stands for check in, review, implement/intervention, summarise, set tasks, next appointment.

Protective integration

2. Have you heard of protective integration and do you take this approach in cases you manage or have oversight of?
3. What theories, concepts and skills will help you to blend risk management with desistance approaches? How will/do you apply the blend in your practice?

Multi-agency work

4. Within multi-agency work, what tasks/responsibilities do you feel confident about? How can you build on this?
5. Within multi-agency work, what tasks/responsibilities do you feel less confident or worried about? How can you address this?

MAPPA policies, processes

6. What do you feel you need to know more about to feel competent working with people subject to MAPPA? What is your plan to seek this knowledge?
7. Are you confident in determining MAPPA levels? What do you take into account in considering escalating a case to Level 2 or 3?
8. How familiar are you with using Category 3 to manage cases that are not automatically MAPPA-eligible but would benefit from being managed at MAPPA Level 2 or 3? What steps will you take to address this?
9. When reflecting on those on your caseload who are in custody, do you know who the MAPPA cases are? Do they know who you are? How up to date are you with their progress?
10. If you receive a MAPPA case under the transfer process, what is helpful for you and the person on probation to get off to a good start in keeping people safe and promoting desistance? On reflection, when you transfer a case do you do all of the things you considered would be helpful?

Professional curiosity

11. What does professional curiosity mean to you?
12. In reviewing the barriers to professional curiosity, which do you relate to? What will help you to mitigate against these?
13. How do you take advantage of all information-gathering opportunities open to you?

Professional challenge

14. How comfortable do you feel using professional challenge or escalating issues when you have a difference of opinion with colleagues, managers or other professionals? What could assist you further?

Recording

15. If you were not in work when a person subject to MAPPA attended the office or a professional involved in the case contacted the duty officer, would they know from your records what is happening with that individual?

Conclusions:

Overall, we identified that our standards are delivered effectively in relation to MAPPA when the following are in place:



Dynamic leadership that translates **national strategy** into clear local processes and understanding



A **vigorous analysis** and **use of management information and data** to inform service delivery



Robust information-exchange agreements and protocols between criminal justice partners



Multi-agency ownership and **responsibility** in contributing to the assessment, planning, delivery and review of case management



An **effective learning** and **development** offer to help practitioners better understand the aims of MAPPA and best practice



A **skilled practitioner group** who are confident in working with other agencies, **asking for information** and using this to inform assessments and plans



A **clear understanding** of which cases require formal multi-agency management and robust processes to **review decision-making**

We encourage readers to think of these as guiding principles, and to reflect on and consider how they may improve their practice as a result of reading this guide.

We would welcome feedback on this guide, including its impact and any suggested improvements.

Please send your comments and ideas to Tammie.Burroughs@hmiprobation.gov.uk.

Further reading and resources

HM Inspectorate of Probation publications

Thematic review: [Twenty years on, is MAPPA achieving its objectives? A joint thematic inspection of Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements.](#)

Tools and resources



[Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements - MAPPA \(justice.gov.uk\)](https://www.justice.gov.uk/mappa)

This site provides professionals and the public with information on how sexual and violent offenders are managed in the community.



[HMPPS MAPPA seven-minute briefing.](#)



[Risk of Serious Harm Guidance March 2022](#)

This guidance:

- reviews the 2009 and 2014 supplements, updating them into a single document
- emphasises the importance of actuarial risk assessment tools
- encourages staff to think about the impact of personal bias
- provides guidance on writing risk management plans
- provides visual summary documents for risk assessment in the field.

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