

# Multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA)

This page is from APP, the official source of professional practice for policing.

First published 18 July 2017 Updated 26 March 2026

Written by College of Policing

8 mins read

Section 325 to 327B of the Criminal Justice Act 2003 (CJA) established multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) in each of the 42 criminal justice areas of England and Wales. These arrangements are designed to protect the public, including victims of crime, from serious harm by sexual or violent and other dangerous offenders.

MAPPA requires criminal justice agencies and other bodies to work together in partnership with these offenders.

## Legal framework

The [introduction to the MAPPA Guidance](#) details legislation and statutory responsibilities relevant to managing sexual, violent and other dangerous offenders. This is reinforced by the [Human Rights Act 1998 \(HRA\)](#) which incorporates Articles 2 and 3 of the [European Convention on Human Rights \(ECHR\)](#). Under these Articles, the police and other public authorities have a duty of care to the public.

The public has a right to expect the police and other agencies to exercise their powers to protect life (ECHR, Article 2) and protect individuals absolute right against torture, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (ECHR, Article 3). In addition, the rights of both offenders and victims to respect for private and family life (ECHR, Article 8) must be considered before the disclosure of information about them.

Action that infringes a person's rights must be justified, based on a legitimate aim. Any action must be lawful and proportionate to achieve that aim and based on the circumstances of each case.

The police service must ensure that the human rights of victims, the public and offenders are balanced, and that public protection responsibilities are not undermined by the human rights considerations of individual offenders or potentially dangerous persons.

## MAPPA structure

The responsible authorities (RAs) are the police and His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service. The RAs have a duty to ensure that the risks posed by a qualifying offender are assessed and managed appropriately.

The RA responsible for the management of the offender is also considered the 'lead agency' for MAPPA. This management will involve appropriate information sharing in order to properly identify risk.

The lead agency will have primary responsibility for referring the offender to level 2 or 3 MAPPA management or for continuing management at level 1. Go to [Identification of MOSOVO offenders](#) for detail regarding management, thresholds and duration of registration.

## Categories

Every MAPPA offender must qualify as one of the following three categories.

### Category 1

Registered sexual offender. This includes offenders required to comply with notification requirements under the Sexual Offence Act 2003, Part 2.

### Category 2

An offender who has been convicted of an offence under the CJA 2003, Schedule 15 and (one of the following):

- who has been sentenced to 12 months or more in custody
- who has been sentenced to 12 months or more in custody and is transferred to hospital under the Mental Health Act 1983 (MHA 1983) s47/s49
- who is detained in hospital under the MHA 1983 s37 with or without a restriction order under s41 of that Act

## Category 3

Other dangerous offender – a person who has been cautioned for or convicted of an offence that indicates he or she is capable of causing serious harm and that requires multi-agency management. This might not be for an offence under the CJA 2003 Schedule 15.

[Go to the full list of Schedule 15 offences for further information.](#)

## Category 4

An offender who is a terrorist or terrorist risk offender who:

- is required by law to notify the police of their name, address and other personal details and notify any subsequent changes
- has been sentenced to imprisonment or detention for a period of 12 months or more, or detained under hospital orders following being convicted for a terrorism offence
- has committed an offence and may be at risk of involvement in terrorism-related activity

## Lead agency

### Police

The police have statutory responsibilities to manage the notification requirements of sexual offenders in category 1 and will perform the role of lead agency when they are no longer subject to HMPPS statutory supervision.

The police must ensure that all breaches of notification requirements are promptly followed up and appropriate action taken.

## His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS)

HMPPS is responsible for the management of all MAPPA offenders aged 18 years or over subject to statutory supervision in the community. Those under 18 years are managed by youth offending teams.

HMPPS will ensure that all MAPPA category 2 qualifying offenders subject to statutory supervision are recorded on the Violent and Sex Offender Register (ViSOR), partnered to police and reviewed

and updated regularly in accordance with probation instructions.

Joint agency working between HMPPS and the police service is recognised to be good practice. This may include joint home visits and risk assessment, and other contacts with offenders to ensure a joined-up approach to management.

The prison service ensures all MAPPA offenders in custody are identified and will request being a partner to a ViSOR record.

Cases in general are managed by the prison's interdepartmental risk management team (IRMT). The prison service must ensure that IRMT is shared with the offender manager and is incorporated into the sentence planning process.

The prison service, as part of their responsibilities for populating their minimum data set on ViSOR, must provide the release date as soon as it is known. This is recorded in the custody attachment of a ViSOR nominal record and should be notified to police by using a ViSOR activity log. Any changes to these dates must be recorded and notified as soon as they are known. Police must ensure that the prison staff are granted partnership status to enable them to provide the information.

The prison service must also share information and actively engage in the MAPPA process in accordance with [MAPPA guidance](#) (GOV.UK).

## Levels of management

### Level 1 (ordinary agency management)

Ordinary agency management is where the risks posed by the offender can be managed by the lead agency. This does not mean that other agencies will not be involved, only that it is not necessary to refer the case to level 2 or 3.

It is essential that information sharing takes place, disclosure considered, and there are discussions between agencies as necessary.

### Level 2 (active multi-agency management)

Level 2 management is necessary in cases that have been:

- assessed as posing a high or very high risk of serious harm
- identified as a lower risk but active involvement, interventions and coordination are required from other agencies to manage the risks of serious harm
- lowered from level 3
- identified as ones where multi-agency management adds value to the lead agency's management of the risk of serious harm posed

## Level 3 (active enhanced multi-agency management)

Level 3 cases are those that meet level 2 criteria, but risk management requires senior representation from the RAs and duty to cooperate (DTC) agencies.

These cases are likely to require significant resource allocation, or have media scrutiny or public interest considerations.

## Other bodies

Other bodies have a duty to cooperate (DTC) with RAs in this task. They are specified in the [CJA 2003 s325\(6\)](#) and include those covering areas such as education, employment, housing and social care.

Representatives from associate agencies that do not have a statutory duty to cooperate may be included in part or all of the MAPPA meeting at the discretion of the meeting chair where that agency or individual can contribute to the risk assessment and management of a MAPPA offender. [CJA 2023 s.325\(4A\)\(c\)](#).

The supervision of this work is carried out by the strategic management board (SMB) in each area. Lay advisors provide the SMB with an independent perspective.

## ViSOR

ViSOR is the national computer offender management system. Its use is governed by the ViSOR National User Group which sets the national ViSOR standards, SyOPS and training standards.

## Approved premises

These are a national public protection resource. They allow increased residential supervision of offenders likely to pose a risk of serious harm to others. Offenders reside in an approved premises for assessment, supervision and management. This protects the public by reducing the likelihood of reoffending and promoting rehabilitation.

Approved premises are designed for adult offenders (aged 18 years and over) and are inappropriate for those aged 16 to 17 years.

For further information go to:

- [CJA 2003 statute ss325–327B](#)
- [MAPPA guidance \(GOV.UK\)](#)

## Tags

Sexual and violent offenders