



Ministry
of Justice

MAPPA Notes and Definitions

Ministry of Justice
Guidance Documentation

October 2025

Introduction

This document supplements the MAPPA Annual Report by providing definitions of terminology used in the MAPPA Annual Report.

What are MAPPA?

Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) are a set of statutory arrangements to assess and manage the risk posed by certain sexual and violent offenders. MAPPA were established by Sections 325 to 327 of the Criminal Justice Act 2003.

MAPPA bring together the Police, Probation and Prison Services to form the MAPPA Responsible Authority for each MAPPA Area. MAPPA Areas are coterminous with police force areas, as set out in the Police Act 1996.

Some other agencies are under a duty to co-operate with the Responsible Authority. These include Children's Services and Adult Social Care, Health Trusts and Authorities, Youth Offending Teams, Home Office Immigration Enforcement, local housing authorities and certain registered social landlords, the Department of Work and Pensions and electronic monitoring providers.

The agency with the primary responsibility for managing the offenders identifies whether they meet the criteria for MAPPA, as set out in the Criminal Justice Act 2003 and relevant agencies gather and share information about them. They assess the nature and level of the risk of harm the offenders pose and implement a risk management plan to protect the public. Although risk of harm can be managed, it cannot be eliminated.

The period an offender remains under MAPPA varies significantly. Some will be MAPPA offenders for life and some for less than 6 months. The period will be dependent upon the offence committed and the sentence imposed.

Categories of offenders under MAPPA

There are 4 categories of offender eligible for MAPPA. Category 4 was introduced by the Police, Crime Sentencing and Court Act 2022.

- **Category 1 - Offenders subject to notification requirements.** These are offenders who have been convicted of a specified sexual offence and/or to whom the notification requirements under Part 2 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 apply (and who are therefore required to notify the Police of their name, address and other personal details, and notify the Police of any subsequent changes).
- **Category 2 - Violent offenders.** These are offenders who have been convicted of a specified violent offence¹ and sentenced to imprisonment/detention for at least 12 months or detained under a hospital order. This category also includes a small number of sexual offenders who do not qualify for the notification requirements that apply to Category 1 offenders.
- **Category 3 - Other Dangerous Offenders.** These are offenders who do not qualify under Category 1 or 2 but have been assessed as currently posing a risk of serious

¹ See appendix 4, MAPPA Guidance, for qualifying offences:
<http://www.justice.gov.uk/offenders/multi-agency-public-protection-arrangements>

harm. The link between the offence they have perpetrated and the risk that they pose means that they require active multi-agency management.

- **Category 4 – Terrorist or terrorist risk offenders.** These are terrorism offenders who are required by law to notify the police of their name, address and other personal details and notify any subsequent changes; offenders 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; and those who have committed an offence and may be at risk of involvement in terrorism-related activity.

Management Levels

Under MAPPA, offenders are **managed at one of 3 levels**. These levels reflect the level of multi-agency co-operation required to implement the individual offender's risk management plan effectively. Offenders may be moved up or down the levels to reflect changes in the level of risk that they present or the action required to manage their risk. Every offender is assessed and management levels are set for each individual offender.

- **Level 1** – The agency that has the lead in supervising the offender applies their usual arrangements to manage the offender. In addition, all relevant agencies, especially the Police and Probation Services, will exchange information about these offenders to inform the level of management and the risk management plan. The agencies do not hold formal multi-agency meetings to discuss an offender's case. Offenders will be managed at Level 1 in most cases.
- **Level 2** – The risk management plans for these offenders require the active involvement of several agencies via regular formal multi-agency public protection meetings which oversee the implementation of a coordinated risk management plan.
- **Level 3** – As with offenders managed at Level 2, the active involvement of several agencies is required; however, the risks presented by offenders managed at this level are such that senior staff from the agencies involved are required to authorise the use of additional resources, such as specialised accommodation.

Breach of licence

Offenders who are aged 18 and over and released into the community following a period of imprisonment are supervised by the Probation Service subject to a licence with conditions. If the offender is found to have failed to comply or breached those conditions, action may be taken to recall the offender back to custody.

Foreign Travel Orders (FTO)

A restrictive order that could be applied to prevent offenders with convictions for sexual offences against children from travelling abroad, where it was considered necessary to protect children from the risk of sexual harm. The Order was granted by the Court on application from the Police. From 2015/16 onwards, FTOs have been replaced by Sexual Harm Prevention Orders with a foreign travel restriction.

MAPPA-eligible offenders

Offenders defined in law as eligible for MAPPA management, because they have committed specified sexual and violent offences, or have been assessed as presenting a serious risk of harm to the public.

MAPPA Serious Case Review (MAPPA SCR)

It is mandatory for a MAPPA SCR to be commissioned by the local MAPPA Strategic Management Board where a MAPPA offender managed at either Level 2 or 3 is charged with committing an offence of murder, manslaughter or rape, or attempting to commit murder or rape.

MAPPA SCRs may also be conducted on a discretionary basis in the following circumstances:

- where a MAPPA offender managed at Level 1 is charged with committing an offence of murder, manslaughter or rape, or attempting to commit murder or rape; or
- where a MAPPA offender managed at any level is charged with one of the serious offences listed in the Serious Further Offence Procedures Policy Framework⁶; or
- where it is assessed that it would be in the public interest to undertake a review.

The purpose of the review is to examine the activity of the agencies involved in the management of the offender and whether MAPPA guidance and policies were followed appropriately.

The MAPPA SCR should identify whether there are lessons to be learned from the way in which the case was managed and how they will be acted upon. A MAPPA SCR and Probation SFO review (see below) may be conducted simultaneously.

Notification Order

A restrictive order which requires an individual who has been convicted of a sexual offence overseas to notify the UK police and become subject to notification requirements on their return to the UK, in order to protect the public in the UK from the risks that they pose. Police may apply to the court for the order in relation to offenders living in, or intending to come to, the UK.

Restrictive Orders

Orders used to assist in managing the risks presented by an offender. These include Sexual Harm Prevention Orders and Sexual Risk Orders, which were introduced by the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014. They replaced the previous Sexual Offences Prevention Orders, Risk of Sexual Harm Orders and Foreign Travel Orders, which were introduced by the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (see individual definitions).

⁶ The Serious Further Offence Procedures Policy Framework supersedes Probation Instructions 06/2018, 15/2014 and 10/2011 and Probation Circular 22/2008. See <http://www.justice.gov.uk/offenders/probation/probation-instructions>

Serious Further Offence (SFO)

Under the Probation Serious Further Offence procedures, the Probation Service completes an internal management report, known as a SFO review when a supervised individual, subject to a court order or on licence after release from a custodial sentence or within 28 days of termination, appears in court charged a qualifying offence. An offence automatically triggers an SFO review in cases of murder, manslaughter, or another offence causing death, rape, or a sexual offence against a child under 13. An SFO review is also completed where a supervised individual has been charged with another offence listed in Serious Further Offence Procedures Policy Framework (this list is based on those offences in Schedule 15 to the Criminal Justice Act 2003 that are specified offences for the purpose of MAPPA, excluding s.18 Wounding with intent) **and** certain conditions are met: their risk of serious harm has been assessed as high or very high during the current sentence, or they have not been subject to a risk assessment during the current sentence.

A discretionary SFO Review may be completed where a supervised individual is charged with an offence outside the above eligibility criteria, but HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) consider that it is in the public interest to complete a review. This would apply regardless of whether the offence was on the SFO qualifying list or not.

A MAPPA SCR and Probation SFO review may be conducted simultaneously.

Sexual Offences Prevention Order (SOPO)

A restrictive order that could be made by a Court at the time of sentence for a sexual offence or following an application by the Police. The duration of a SOPO was variable, ranging from a minimum of 5 years to the remainder of an offender's life. A SOPO made the individual subject to notification requirements and could include conditions, such as preventing the offender from loitering near schools or playgrounds. If the offender failed to comply with the requirements of the order, he or she could be taken back to court and could be liable to up to 5 years' imprisonment. From 2015/16 onwards, SOPOs have been replaced by Sexual Harm Prevention Orders.

Sexual Harm Prevention Order (SHPO)

A restrictive order that replaced the Sexual Offences Prevention Order and Foreign Travel Order following the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. A SHPO can be applied to anyone convicted or cautioned for a specified sexual or violent offence, including offences committed overseas. The court needs to be satisfied that the order is necessary for protecting the public (or any particular members of the public) from sexual harm, or for protecting children from sexual harm outside of the United Kingdom. SHPOs make individuals subject to notification requirements and prohibit them from doing anything described in the SHPO. This can include a prohibition on foreign travel. Prohibitions have effect for a fixed period, specified in the Order, of at least 5 years, or until further Order. SHPOs may specify different periods for different prohibitions. Failure to comply with a requirement imposed under a SHPO is an offence punishable by a fine and/or imprisonment.

Sexual Risk Order (SRO)

A restrictive order that replaced the Risk of Sexual Harm Order following the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. An SRO can be made where a person has committed an act of a sexual nature and as a result there is reasonable cause to believe that

it is necessary for such an order to be made, even if they have never been convicted. The court needs to be satisfied that the order is necessary for protecting the public (or any particular members of the public) from sexual harm. SROs prohibit offenders from doing anything described in the Order and can include a prohibition on foreign travel. Prohibitions have effect for a fixed period of not less than 2 years, or until further Order. SROs may specify different periods for different prohibitions. An individual subject to an SRO is required to notify local police of their name and home address within three days of the order being made and to notify them of any changes to this information within three days. A breach of an SRO is a criminal offence punishable by a maximum of five years' imprisonment and being made subject to full notification requirements.

Contact points for further information

Press enquiries should be directed to the Ministry of Justice press office:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-justice/about/media-enquiries>

Other enquiries about these statistics should be directed to:

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HM Prison and Probation Service
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Next update: 29 October 2026

URL: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/offender-management-statistics-quarterly>



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