



HIGHLANDS & ISLANDS  
MULTI-AGENCY PUBLIC PROTECTION  
ARRANGEMENTS

2024/25

# MAPPA ANNUAL REPORT

**Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements**

We are pleased to present the Annual Report 2024/25 on the operation of the Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) in the Highlands & Islands area.



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# Foreword

Welcome to the Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) Annual Report for the Highland and Islands area for 2024-25.

The fundamental purpose of MAPPA is public protection and managing the risk of serious harm posed by certain individuals who have committed sexual and violent offences. This is what everyone involved in MAPPA is striving to achieve.

This year has seen several developments designed to improve the delivery and outcomes of MAPPA. Following a development day, the Strategic Oversight Group completed a self-assessment of its performance which demonstrated significant strengths and some areas for improvement. This led to the development of a 3-year Improvement Strategy 2025-2027 which will be the focus for the group. A separate Operational Oversight Group was established, and this will lead to further improvements in training, performance and quality assurance. Additionally, training events – e.g. for police officers and social work managers chairing MAPPA meetings and on understanding online child sexual abuse – have improved the knowledge and skills of those managing the risk posed by offenders.

There are challenges, not least due to budgetary restraints and the housing crisis. This is in the context of a significant increase in the number of Registered Sex Offenders – In Police Scotland's N Division, which covers Highland & Islands, there has been a 30% increase over the past five years in the number of RSOs, slightly higher than the increase across Scotland (27%/c. 8,000). There has not been a concomitant increase in resources allocated to the Responsible Authorities (RAs) to manage this increase. In response, the RAs are continually evaluating performance to ensure that services are provided efficiently whilst continuing to maintain public safety.

However, I remain very confident that the collaborative efforts of all those involved in MAPPA continue to keep our communities safe.



Thank you

**James Maybee**

**Independent Chair**

**Highland & Islands Strategic Oversight Group**

# What is MAPPA?

Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) are a set of statutory arrangements of which the primary purpose is to maintain public protection and the reduction of serious harm. The protection of children, adults at risk and other members of the public are paramount. It is a structure by which registered sex offenders, mentally disordered restricted patients and other offenders who, by reason of their conviction, pose a risk of serious harm to the public are managed through the effective sharing of relevant information, and the assessment and management of that risk.

MAPPA was introduced in 2007 under the requirements of the Management of Offenders (Scotland) Act 2005 and is delivered under National Guidance. Legislation defines the Responsible Authorities and those with a Duty to Cooperate (DTC).

The MAPPA Guidance was updated and published on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022.



The Responsible Authorities within the Highlands & Islands are:

- The Highland Council
- Orkney Islands Council
- Western Isles Council
- Shetland Islands Council
- Police Scotland
- Scottish Prison Service
- NHS Highland
- NHS Orkney
- NHS Eilean Siar
- NHS Shetland
- The State Hospital for Scotland

These agencies are responsible for the assessment and management of risk presented by offenders who are subject to MAPPA. The NHS Boards and The State Hospital are Responsible Authorities in respect of Restricted Patients only and are deemed Duty to Cooperate Agencies in respect of Registered Sex Offenders.

The National Duty to Co-operate (DTC) agencies include:

- Scottish Children's Reporter Administration
- Department of Works & Pensions
- Electronic Monitoring Providers, e.g. G4S
- Registered Social Landlords
- any person/organisation providing services to, or on behalf of a Responsible Authority.

The DTC agencies are required to accept, provide and reciprocally share appropriate information to support the risk management planning of any offender subject of MAPPA.

# Who are the MAPPA offenders?

There are 3 categories of offender eligible for MAPPA:

Registered sexual offenders (RSO) (Category 1)	Violent offenders (Category 2)	Other Offenders (Category 3)
Sexual offenders who are required to notify the police of their name, address and other personal details and notify any changes subsequently under the Sex Offender Notification Requirements (SONR).	Offenders convicted on indictment of a crime inferring personal violence and who are on a community order or subject to licence following release. This Category is not enacted by the Scottish Government at this time.	Individuals who are not required to comply with the SONR or those who are not restricted patients. Those might be individuals who have been convicted of an offence, and by reason of that conviction are required to be subject to supervision in the community by any enactment, order or licence. Individuals who are assessed by the Responsible Authorities as posing a high or very high risk of <b>serious harm</b> to the public at large. Individuals whose risk is assessed as requiring active multi-agency management at MAPPA Level 2 or 3.

## Mentally disordered restricted patients (Category 3)

This category of offender comprises those subject to any of the following orders or directions:

- Patients who are detained following conviction under section 57A and section 59 of the Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1995.
- Patients who are detained under section 57(2)(a) and (b) of the Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1995 Compulsion Order with a Restriction Order (CORO) following a finding of unfitness for trial or acquittal by reason of mental disorder.
- Prisoners detained in hospital on a Hospital Direction under section 59A of the Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1995 or a transferred prisoner on a Transfer for Treatment Direction under section 136 of the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003.

# How do the Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements work?

MAPPA in Scotland has always been utilised to coordinate the management of those offenders in the community required to notify under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, commonly referred to as Registered Sex Offenders (RSOs), and those offenders deemed Restricted Patients under Mental Health legislation.

Offenders eligible for MAPPA are identified and relevant information is shared across those agencies involved, or likely to have a contribution in their management. The nature and level of the risk of harm they pose is assessed and actions are raised within a multi-agency risk management plan in order that those risks can be monitored and minimised to protect the public. Convicted sex offenders are now subject to more checks than ever before. The sex offenders register ensures monitoring is in place and agencies can continue to work together to protect the public from known sex offenders living in the community.

The practical operation of MAPPA is performed within pre-set meeting structures at local authority level. Offenders subject to MAPPA will be managed at one of the following 3 MAPPA Management Levels.

## MAPPA Level 1: Routine Risk Management

In the vast majority of cases, the offender will be managed under the routine arrangements applied by the agency or agencies with supervisory responsibility, i.e. by Police Scotland alone, or jointly with Justice Social Work Services. In the case of a Restricted Patient, the NHS will be lead agency. Level 1 is not applicable to MAPPA Category 3 Offenders, who once identified will only be managed under Level 2 or 3 Review processes.

## MAPPA Level 2: Multi Agency Risk Management

This process is implemented where Risk Management Planning requires the active involvement of multiple agencies required to manage and actively reduce the risk of serious harm posed by an offender or where that management is complex and resource intensive. A number of factors will be considered in determining if an offender requires Level 2 management, this decision being the responsibility of the MAPPA Coordinator on receipt of a Referral and in consultation with the Responsible Authorities who consider the risk of serious harm thresholds are met. Those managed at Level 2 will be the subject of regular MAPPA review meetings through which a Multi-Agency Risk Management Plan is formulated, implemented and monitored.

## **MAPPA Level 3: Multi Agency Public Protection Panel (MAPPP)**

From time to time, as with offenders managed at level 2, cases arise that present such a high level of risk to the public, or where the level of resources required to effectively manage the offender in the community are substantially beyond what could be considered normal. These offenders are often referred to as 'the critical few'. Although they are managed under the same processes as Level 2 cases, they require more frequent oversight and the active involvement of senior representatives from the relevant agencies in the development, implementation, and monitoring of risk management plans.

All prisoners released from prison subject to MAPPA will have an agreed and robust risk management plan to resettle, monitor and supervise them back into the community safely.

We work closely with offenders to ensure they gain access to help and support to tackle their criminal behaviours and the reasons and underlying causes why they have offended. This might be providing assistance with finding accommodation, helping with employment or offering treatment for drug, alcohol or mental health problems, including sex offender programmes to address their offending behaviour. This also means imposing tough controls. Offenders who are assessed as presenting a high risk of harm to the public are subject to very strict supervision and monitoring to help reduce that risk. This will inevitably mean that they have to

live in approved and manageable accommodation and may be subject to Electronic Monitoring (Tagging) for a period of time. They may also be restricted from visiting certain places, having contact with certain people and must report regularly to the Police Scotland Sex Offender Policing Unit (SOPU) or their supervising Justice Services Social Worker as well as receiving random unannounced visits to their home address. However, it is recognised that the vast majority of offenders do not receive custodial sentences and are instead dealt with through the court system by way of a community-based disposal/order under the supervision of Justice Social Work Services (JSWS).

MAPPA will strive to manage offenders at the lowest possible level relating to assessed risk; therefore, to reflect change in this level of risk offenders can move either up or down levels in order that resources are commensurate with that perceived risk.



# The oversight of MAPPA

The operation of MAPPA is directed and overseen by the Highlands & Islands MAPPA Strategic Oversight Group (HIMSOG). This Group consists of senior representatives from each of the Responsible Authorities, with representatives of the Duty to Co-operate agencies attending as appropriate or necessary. The group meets four times each year (or on an emergency basis) and has updated its Terms of Reference for the period 2024-2025. This has served to reinforce the remit of the group and provides a business structure, the key areas being:

- **Business Planning, management and resource allocation**
- **The Publication of an Annual Report**
- **Significant Case Review**
- **Training**
- **Adherence to updated National MAPPA Guidance and other relevant protocols**
- **Quality assurance and the Review of the Performance of MAPPA**
- **Oversight and monitoring of the Risk Register**

MAPPA remains well established across the Highlands & Islands area with the reporting year seeing continued refinement of the operation of MAPPA, with ongoing review of practice and process locally and nationally in an effort to improve our ways of working.

## Initial Case Reviews

The HIMSOG continues to build on national guidance and local review findings in its process for reviewing all Initial Case Reviews (ICRs). An ICR takes place when the following occur:

- When an offender managed under MAPPA at any level is charged with an offence that has resulted in the death or serious harm to another person, or an offence listed in Schedule 3 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003;
- Significant concern has been raised about professional and/or service involvement, or lack of involvement, in respect of the management of an offender under MAPPA at any level;
- Where it appears that a registered sex offender being managed under MAPPA is killed or seriously injured as a direct result of his/her status as a RSO; and
- Where an offender currently being managed under MAPPA has died or been seriously injured in circumstances likely to generate significant public concern.

# Environmental Risk Assessments (ERA)

The 2019 Role of Public Protection (Housing) The National Accommodation Strategy for Sex Offenders (NASSO) sets out parameters and minimum standards for conducting Environmental Risk Assessments. An Environmental Risk Assessment is carried out to ensure that an address is manageable for an individual to reside at and safe for those persons residing in the vicinity. The following are the various aspects of the work undertaken by Housing Services to keep the public safe as part of their remit:

- Housing advice is provided ensuring the individual's health and support needs are met. Any accommodation identified will have been assessed and approved or deemed manageable by the Lead Agency.
- Support required can either be provided on a short-term basis from the Public Protection Sex Offender Liaison Officer (Housing Services) or from Area Housing Teams or by commissioning support from external providers where long-term support is required.

- Temporary accommodation can also be provided where an individual is leaving custody and has no safe, secure, or appropriate accommodation to return to. Temporary accommodation locations are subject to regular change to ensure public safety and the needs of the individual's safety, and to ensure the safeguarding of the surrounding community.
- Home Leave facilities to reintegrate individuals back into the community in some areas are also available but very limited.
- Environmental Risk Assessments are completed and reviewed on an annual basis to ensure the accommodation continues to be manageable within the relevant neighbourhood and remain assessed as being approved and manageable by the lead agency.

# The Parole Board for Scotland

The parole process is a system that enables some offenders to be released on licence in the community under the supervision of a community-based social worker. If an offender is released on parole, they can be recalled to prison at any time if they breach the terms of their licence. Parole is only granted where the Parole Board is satisfied that the risk presented by the offender can be managed safely in the community.

The Parole Board for Scotland is a Non-Departmental Public Body whose members are appointed by the Scottish Ministers. The Board has a number of statutory functions but operates independently from the Scottish Government. Directions made to Scottish Ministers by the Board about early release of an offender are binding, with the exception of deportation cases and applications for compassionate release where the Board will offer advice only. The MAPPA process takes account of the parole position and plans for the potential release of "High Risk" offenders within our area by means of contingency planning should liberations occur.



## Case Study 1 - A real-life example of MAPPA in action

Mr R was convicted of voyeurism in 2022 and sentenced to a 3-year community payback order consisting of a supervision requirement and a Moving Forward Making Changes programme requirement. Furthermore, he was also placed on the Sex Offender Notification Requirements for the duration of his order.

While being placed on his community payback order (CPO), a MAPPA level 1 referral was submitted and a MAPPA level 1 meeting was convened to share information, assess the risks that Mr R posed and to develop a comprehensive multi-agency risk management plan to manage his identified presenting risks. Due to Mr R's chaotic lifestyle, health related concerns, sexual preoccupation and stress it was agreed after extensive debate that Mr R's level should increase, and he was placed under MAPPA level 2. Furthermore, Health representation was required to assist with MAPPA partners' concerns about Mr R's health related issues and learning disabilities and to assess if this had any impact on his risk of sexual harm.

Mr R had many written instructions to comply with as part of his risk management plan and MAPPA partners were in contact out with MAPPA meetings to discuss his case regularly. The MAPPA Coordinator contacted Health to highlight the need for health and Adult Social Work representation. A referral and discussions also took place with forensic psychology to discuss Mr R's case, and it was highlighted that the most effective practice was to provide techniques to assist with case management.

In 2024 Mr R was placed on a further CPO for Voyeurism offending, again to participate in a further sex offender programme, Moving Forward 2 Change. He case continued to be monitored by MAPPA. The views of Health representatives remained paramount in respect of decision making and the overall management of his case and his risk of sexual harm.

In early 2025 Mr R's MAPPA level was reduced to Level 1, after partners came to an agreement that Mr R no longer met the criteria for level 2. This decision was made on the basis that he could be managed under the 'routine' arrangements by those with supervisory responsibility, i.e. Police Scotland and Justice Social Work Services. He was assessed as a medium risk, to be reviewed on a 6 monthly basis.

There continues to be times where Mr R remains difficult to manage, and questions remain in relation to his health and support available and how or if this impacts on his risk of sexual offending. He continues to be discussed, monitored and concerns raised with the MAPPA Coordinator when further assistance is required to seek advice from partner agencies, especially in terms of his health. Mr R has many written instructions in place to manage and lower his likelihood of reoffending, taking into account his level of cognition. Any necessary steps to manage his risks will continue to be taken by the Responsible Authorities and duty to co-operate agencies while he is subject to MAPPA and residing in the community.

# Progress and Achievements 2024/25

- For the first time, an experienced Independent Chair was appointed by the Highland & Islands Strategic Oversight Group (HIMSOG) in 2024.
- A self-assessment exercise was completed by HIMSOG in January 2025 using an adapted Quality Indicator Framework model from the HMIPS/Care Inspectorate 2015 joint inspection of MAPPA.
- A HIMSOG development day was hosted by Emeritus Professor Hazel Kemshall in September 2024.
- An Improvement Strategy 2025–2027 was agreed by HIMSOG in spring 2025.
- A Highland & Islands Operational Group (HIMO) was established in May 2024.
- Training for police officers and justice social work managers chairing MAPPA meetings was delivered by Professor Kemshall in November 2024 and by the Risk Management Authority in February 2025.
- Terms of Reference were agreed for both the strategic and operational groups in 2024.
- Training on Understanding Online Child Sexual Abuse & Child Sexual Abuse Material was delivered by Professor Kieran McCartan in February 2025.
- An Annual Report 2023/24 was completed and submitted to Scottish Government in October 2024 as required under the 2005 Act.
- Two new orders, the Sexual Harm Prevention Order (SHPO) and Sexual Risk Order (SRO) have been introduced.
- The revised nationally accredited Moving Forward 2 Change (MF2C) sex offender programme has been implemented.
- On 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 there were 288 offenders in the community being managed under MAPPA (Level 1 – 274, Level 2 – 8, Level 3 – 0, restricted patients – 6).
- In the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025, all MAPPA key performance indicators were met 100%. Case file and MAPPA meeting audits supported the effective operation of MAPPA.
- In the same period, the number of registered sex offenders returned to custody for breaching their statutory conditions remains very low at 2.1% (8 offenders).
- No Significant Case Reviews were identified; 1 Initial Case Review was completed in March 2024 – key learning was identified and an action plan implemented and completed.
- A MAPPA Risk Register was agreed by HIMSOG and revised in June 2025.
- The MAPPA office has relocated from Police Scotland's regional headquarters to local authority accommodation. This establishes independence and a localised hub for representatives of the Responsible Authorities to connect, share information and address ongoing concerns.

## Impact

- The appointment of an independent chair recognised the significant competing demands on the Responsible Authorities. Strategic direction and improvement have been agreed and key strategic and operational risks identified.
- The separation of strategic and operational business has strengthened the oversight and delivery of MAPPA.
- The performance and quality assurance of MAPPA provides confidence that offenders are being effectively managed and held to account for their actions and that communities are being kept safe.
- The new SHPO and SRO strengthen the management of risk as they have a lower risk threshold than the previous orders, allowing both orders to be used to manage risk against adults and vulnerable adults abroad, as well as children.
- Training has improved the confidence of MAPPA chairs and provided insight into assessing the risk of contact and non-contact offenders – in very broad terms, approximately 10–13% of non-contact offenders will either be both or will move from non-contact to contact offending. This has implications for risk management and deploying scarce resources.

## Next Steps

- The focus in 2025/26 will be the implementation of the new Improvement Strategy. This will, for example, focus on the provision of forensic psychology, raising awareness of MAPPA and developing a more advanced Performance and Quality Assurance Framework to evidence the fundamental purpose of MAPPA in contributing to public protection and managing the risk of serious harm.
- Reviewing the HIMOG – it was agreed to undertake a thorough review 12 months after it was established.
- Considering the implications and planning for the likely inclusion of Registered Terrorism Offenders (RTOs) into MAPPA in 2027.
- Continuing to monitor the development and implications for the Responsible Authorities of the Multi-Agency Public Protection System (MAPPS) which will replace ViSOR (Violent and Sex Offender Register) c. 2027.
- A review of the Level 1 process for managing offenders subject to MAPPA – a revised, more streamlined process is being trialled in 2025 which it is hoped will lead to a more efficient process.
- Completion and submission of the Annual Report 2024/25 to Scottish Government in Autumn 2025.
- The MAPPA National Strategic Group will further consider the short-life working group's findings suggesting improvement in the way Significant Case Reviews (SCRs) are conducted. The findings cover: identification and

selection of lead reviewers, minimum baseline standards for what is included in a SCR, self-evaluation and implementation of recommendations and revision of the MAPPA National Guidance 2022 SCR Chapter.

- The Scottish Government's Electronic Monitoring (EM) Working Group (EMWG) published its recommendations in 2016. To date, only some of the recommendations have been implemented (e.g. EM bail). Currently, only radio frequency EM is available (typically, this means an offender is 'tagged' within their home for up to 12 hours/day). GPS tracking will shortly (likely early 2026) be trialled by Scottish Prison Service (SPS) for prisoners released subject to a Home Detention Curfew (HDC). This will enable SPS staff to include specific location monitoring as part of licence conditions. This trial will be evaluated by Scottish Government and inform the wider roll-out of GPS tracking which has significant potential to improve risk management of high-risk offenders. In addition, the EMWG recommended alcohol (sobriety) bracelets that detect alcohol use, and these will also be a useful tool in managing risk once available (no timescale).

The UK Crime and Policing Bill contains a number of legislative changes regarding the management of sex offenders, which will also apply to Scotland. The Bill is due to be introduced to the UK Parliament 2025 (date to be confirmed), although the coming into force date is not expected until towards the end of 2025 (date to be confirmed). The main provisions are:

1. Lowering the rank of authorisation for warrants – allows for an application for a warrant to search an RSO's home to be made by any Constable, once they have been authorised by an officer of Inspector rank or above.
2. Virtual notification - allows sex offenders to provide virtual notification to the police (other than initial notifications). Virtual notification can only take place once an invitation has been issued by a police officer.
3. Staying away from their residence for a period of 5 days or more – this requires RSOs to notify the police in advance if they intend to be absent from their home address for 5 days or more. The notification must be given no later than 12 hours in advance.
4. Advance notification of name change - this amendment provides that all RSOs must notify any new name to the police 7 days before using it or as far in advance as is reasonably practicable. If advance notification is not practicable, notification is required within 3 days of using the new name.
5. Restriction on applying for replacement identity documents in a new name – certain sex offenders will be

subject to a police notice which means that they cannot apply for official documents such as a passport or driving licence in a new name without first seeking authorisation from the police.

- 6.** Notice required if entering premises where children reside – RSOs convicted of child sex offences (to be defined) or those who in the police's view pose a risk of serious sexual harm to a particular child or children must give notice to the police if they are entering a premises where children reside.
- 7.** Police stations at which notifications may be given – this provision will enable the Chief Constable to update the list of police stations where RSOs can notify.

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The MAPPA National Strategic Group will meet to consider the SLWG findings around suggested improvement in the way Significant Case Reviews are conducted within existing MAPPA guidance. The findings cover the broad topics of the following:

- Identification and selection of lead reviewers
- Minimum baseline standard for inclusion in all SCR reports
- Self-Evaluation and implementation of SCR
- Scottish Government (SG) MAPPA National Guidance 2022 SCR Chapter revisions.

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Following the implementation of the Public Protection Accountability Assurance Framework (PPAAF) within NHS Highland in May 2024, a range of key areas of work were identified.

Specific to MAPPA was the decision to further enhance the Adult Support and Protection (ASP) capability and replace the interim MAPPA Health Lead with substantive appointments. The additions will comprise of 3 whole time equivalents, an ASP Lead and two ASP Advisors.

All three appointments will have MAPPA as part of their wider ASP remit providing sustainable cover although the prime responsibility for MAPPA policy and liaison will reside with the Lead. The recruitment for all three posts is underway with the appointment of the Lead role being complete by the end of August 2025.

Concurrently with this activity the Public Protection governance structure is under review including the internal reporting processes for MAPPA. The attendance at HIMOG and HIMSOG is also under review.

Other developments include the roll out of MAPPA notifications and safety alerts via the Medical Records Department (MRD) which has improved access for all staff. The notifications and alerts are also shared via Community Managers and Scottish Ambulance Service where required.

The MRD have also improved their targeted intelligence gathering of MAPPA nominals in support of the MAPPA reviews. The information is requested formally from within Medical Records and shared as appropriate with the MAPPA

review. The use of a dedicated team has greatly enhanced the turnaround and assures the security of information exchange and governance.

The provision of a forensic psychology service for MAPPA offenders in the Highland & Islands has been suspended. This is due to the pressures of funding from the MAPPA budget. MAPPA partners are actively engaged in discussions to identify a sustainable solution. The absence presents a significant gap, as this service is essential for delivering specialist risk assessments that inform both risk management plans and intervention strategies.

The NHS Highland Forensic Service continues to play a vital role in supporting the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) across the region. The team provides specialist input into the management of restricted patients and individuals who present a significant risk of sexual harm. Their work ensures robust risk assessment, therapeutic engagement, and ensuring safeguarding practices are in place. Working collaboratively with partner agencies—including Police Scotland, Social Work, and other statutory bodies—the team contributes to the development and delivery of coordinated care within comprehensive risk management plans. They are active participants in the HIMOG, and in addition are engaged in case discussions, contribute to the formulation of risk-reduction strategies, and share clinical insights to inform multi-agency decision-

making. Through this integrated and collaborative approach, the Highland Forensic Service helps uphold public protection while promoting recovery and rehabilitation for individuals within forensic care pathways.

There has been a continued pattern of unplanned relocations of RSOs into the Highland & Islands region from England and Wales. This includes individuals both subject to statutory supervision and those post-completion of supervision. This trend places significant pressure on local resources, raises risk management concerns, and generally necessitates a reactive rather than proactive response from local agencies.

The current housing crisis continues to impact the availability of accommodation for RSOs. This is particularly problematic upon release from custody, where limited housing options can contribute to:

- Difficulties in securing appropriate placements
- Clustering of offenders in specific areas, which may elevate community risk
- Strain on local resources and planning

The H&I MAPPA Strategic Group is prioritising the development of real-time oversight mechanisms for accommodation options and locations to improve planning, reduce clustering, and support effective risk management.

Recently, Scotland's prison population reached 8,228, placing it among the highest in Western Europe. This sustained increase is having a significant impact on the preparedness of prisoners for release, particularly those convicted of sexual and violent offences. Due to the strain on resources, the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) has made the decision to suspend certain intervention programmes. As a result, some long-term prisoners are being released without completing key rehabilitative programmes, including Moving Forward 2 Change (MF2C) and the Self-Change Programme (SCP).

While these programmes continue to operate, capacity limitations mean not all eligible individuals are able to participate prior to release. The early release of individuals without completion of essential interventions presents clear challenges for risk management in the community. It increases the burden on local services and may elevate the risk to public safety. Efforts to address this issue have been initiated at a national level, including:

- Emergency release measures to alleviate overcrowding.
- Establishment of the Independent Commission on Sentencing and Penal Policy by the Scottish Government in February 2025. The Commission is tasked with reviewing Scotland's current approach to sentencing and penal policy and will make recommendations by the end of 2025 aimed at creating a more effective, rehabilitative justice system that reduces crime and victimisation. The escalating prison population is a key driver behind these developments and will remain a central focus for MAPPA strategic planning. Continued engagement with national

partners and integration of the Commission's forthcoming recommendations will be essential to support safer reintegration and long-term public protection.

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The increasing number of offenders subject to MAPPA is a growing concern both locally and nationally. At the end of this reporting year there were in the region of 8,000 RSOs being managed across Scotland—this represents a 27% increase over the past five years. This rise has necessitated enforced changes in the management of RSOs, including:

- Prioritisation of resources based on risk by Police Scotland
- Streamlining of processes and procedures to maintain public protection
- Pilot implementation of a revised Level 1 process to improve efficiency.

The upward trend is expected to continue, driven by:

- Court backlogs
- Improved reporting mechanisms
- Increased support for and the willingness of victims to come forward
- Historical sex offending
- Enhanced media attention.

In addition to rising numbers, the aging demographic and complexity of the prison population are placing further strain

on community-based resources. This is particularly acute in the meeting of significant care needs of offenders post-release and accommodating high-risk offenders who require care home provision—an area facing extreme difficulty due to risk and resource constraints.

Despite the increasing number of offenders subject to MAPPA, there has been only one modest increase in the MAPPA budget since its introduction in Scotland in 2007. This funding—allocated to local authority justice social work services via the Scottish Government's annual grant—has not kept pace with the growing demands on the system. This issue has been formally raised at the MAPPA National Strategic Group (NSG) and is acknowledged by all 10 MAPPA areas across Scotland. The funding shortfall affects not only statutory services but also third sector providers, whose budgets are under increasing pressure. The cumulative effect is a system where agencies are expected to "do more with less" with a potential risk to public safety if this remains unaddressed, including the ability to effectively protect victims and communities. While the issue is often framed diplomatically, the reality is that resource limitations are directly impacting service delivery. Without a corresponding increase in funding, the sustainability of MAPPA operations—and the safety outcomes they are designed to achieve—may be compromised.

# Some Core Statistics

The following tables display the levels at which offenders across the Highlands & Islands have been managed during the reporting year:

<b>Registerable Sexual Offenders (RSOs)</b>	<b>In custody</b>	<b>At Liberty</b>	<b>Total</b>
a) The number of RSOs living in your Area on 31/03/25	102	279	381

<b>Civil Order Applied For and Granted in relation to RSOs</b>	<b>Number</b>
a) Sexual Offences Prevention Order (SOPOs) in force on 31/03/25	13
b) SOPOs imposed by courts between 01/04/24 and 31/03/25	0
c) Sexual Harm Prevention Orders (SHPOs) in force on 31/03/25	39
d) SHPOs imposed by courts between 01/04/24 and 31/03/25	7
e) Number of Sexual Offenders convicted of breaching SOPO/SHPO conditions between 01/04/24 and 31/03/25	1
f) Risk of Sexual Harm Orders (RSHOs) in force on 31/03/25	2
g) Sexual Risk Orders (SROs) in force on 31/03/25	0
h) Number of people convicted of breaches of RSHO/SRO between 01/04/24 and 31/03/25	1
i) Foreign Travel Orders imposed by the courts between 01/04/24 and 31/03/25	0
j) Notification Orders imposed by the courts between 01/04/24 and 31/03/25	1

<b>Statistical Information</b>	<b>In custody</b>	<b>At Liberty</b>	<b>Total</b>
a) Number of RSOs managed by MAPPA Category as at 31/03/25			
Level 1 – Routine Risk Management	81	274	355
Level 2 – Multi-agency Risk Management	13	5	18
Level 3 – MAPPP	7	0	7
b) Number of RSOs convicted of a further Group 1 or 2 crime			
MAPPA Level 1	14	18	32
MAPPA Level 2	1	1	2
MAPPA Level 3	0	0	0
c) Number of RSOs returned to custody for a breach of statutory conditions (including those returned to custody because of a conviction of Group 1 or 2 crime)			
	5	3	8
d) Number of indefinite sexual offenders reviewed under the terms of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (Remedial) (Scotland) Order 2011 between 01/04/24 and 31/03/25			
	0	0	0
e) Number of notification continuation orders issued under the terms of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (Remedial) (Scotland) Order 2011 between 01/04/24 and 31/03/25			
	0	0	0
f) Number of notifications made to the Jobcentre Plus under the terms of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (Remedial) (Scotland) Order 2011 between 01/04/24 and 31/03/25			
	4	31	35
g) Number of restricted patients accessing the community as at 31/3/25			
	n/a	6	6

<b>Delineation of RSOs by Age on 31/03/25</b>		<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
18 to 21		8	2.10
22 to 25		28	7.35
26 – 30		36	9.45
31 to 40		104	27.30
41 to 50		57	14.95
51 to 60		67	17.59
61 to 70		45	11.81
Older than 70		36	9.45
Data not held		0	0.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>381</b>	<b>100.00</b>

<b>Delineation of RSOs by Sex on 31/03/25</b>		<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
Male		376	98.69
Female		4	1.05
Data Not Held		1	0.26
<b>Total</b>		<b>381</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Delineation of RSOs by Ethnicity on  
31/03/25**

	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
White – Scottish	260	68.24
White – Other British	83	21.78
White – Irish	1	0.26
White – Polish	1	0.26
White – Other White Mixed Group	6	1.57
Mixed – Any Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups	1	0.26
Asian – Bangladeshi, Bangladeshi Scottish or Bangladeshi British	1	0.26
Other Ethnic Group – Arab, Arab Scottish or Arab British	1	0.26
Not Known	7	1.86
Data Not Held	20	5.25
<b>Total</b>	<b>381</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Managed under Statutory  
Supervision and/or Notification  
Requirements on 31/03/25**

	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
RSOs on Statutory Supervision	97	25.46
RSOs Subject to Notification Requirements only	284	74.54
<b>Total</b>	<b>381</b>	<b>100.00</b>

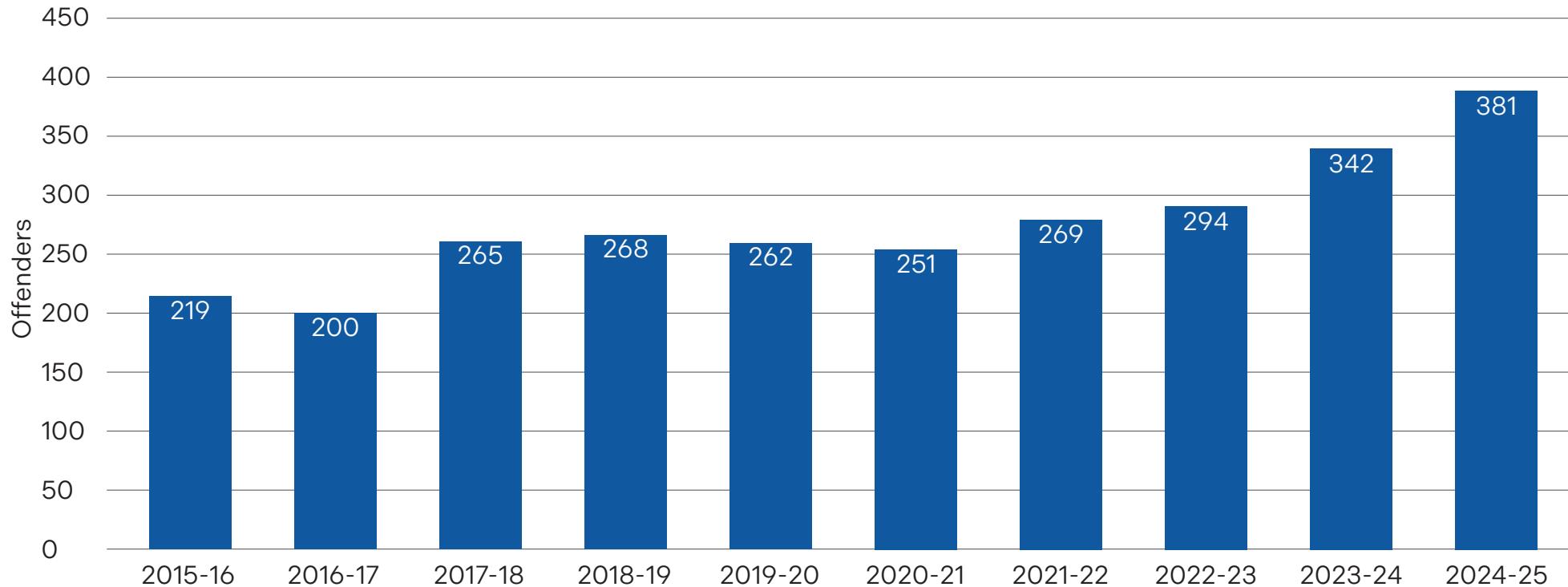


These statistics represent totals as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 and/or within the reporting year and it should be noted that all MAPPA offenders are assessed and reviewed regularly throughout the year in relation to their potential risk to cause serious harm to others. One of the principles of MAPPA is that offenders are managed commensurate to the risk they pose. This is a dynamic environment where effective risk assessment and information sharing is vital.

- The number of registered sex offenders per 100,000 population still remains within a comparative range across Scotland.
- The proactive identification of internet offenders by authorities ranging from online child sexual exploitation, possession of and distribution of indecent images of children, online grooming and live streaming has predominately led to a successive year on year increase in RSOs both locally and nationally.
- The Highlands & Islands have an ageing MAPPA offender demographic and are alive to the impacts this may have on adult care services.
- Further statistics and national information on the subject of MAPPA can be found on the Scottish Government:

**[www.bit.ly/mappa-national-overview-report](http://www.bit.ly/mappa-national-overview-report)**

## SONR Trend Chart



The above chart shows the year-on-year increase in offenders subject to sex offender notification registration within the Highlands & Islands.

# Explanations of terms used

**Breach of licence:** Offenders released into the community following a period of imprisonment for a registerable sexual offence will be subject to a licence with conditions (under Justice Services supervision). If these conditions are not complied with, breach action will be taken and the offender may be recalled to prison. It perhaps would be a mistake to see the number of breaches as "failed cases" – rather they reflect decisive action taken to protect the public when offenders are not complying with the requirements of their licence.

**Foreign Travel Orders:** Prevent offenders with convictions for sexual offences against children from travelling abroad where it is necessary to do so to protect children from the risk of sexual harm.

**Formal Disclosure:** If a decision is made to formally disclose, then a letter of disclosure will be drafted on behalf of the Divisional Commander of the relevant Police Division. This letter should be served by the police personally on the person to whom the disclosure is to be made. The disclosure should be limited to the information necessary to minimise the risk. Officers serving this letter should ensure that they do not disclose any further information other than what is stipulated in the letter. Although no further information should be disclosed, advice and guidance on how the individual should respond to the information in order to protect themselves or others and in particular whether any further action is

undertaken. This procedure will only be advanced as a last resort and will be completed in consultation with partner agencies. There are various other forms of disclosure available in the management of offenders.

**MARAC:** Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) is a local, multi-agency victim focused meeting where information is shared on the highest risk cases of domestic violence and abuse between different statutory and voluntary sector agencies.

**Missing Offenders:** An RSO should be considered as missing when the current whereabouts of the offender is unknown and police enquiries to establish their whereabouts have been unsuccessful and as a result the risk management process may not be achievable and there exists a requirement to trace the individual and address the risk he/she may pose and establish if further offences have been committed. Those offenders who have left the territorial jurisdiction of the United Kingdom and whose location abroad is known are not considered as missing. The requirement to comply with the registration process is suspended whilst offenders are out with the UK. Where appropriate, consideration should be given to establishing whether the offender has committed an offence relative to notification of his/her foreign travel. In this situation if an arrest warrant is issued relative to such an offence the offender should be regarded as Wanted.

**Notification Order:** Requires sexual offenders who have been convicted overseas to register with police, 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 in or intending to come to the UK.

**Order of Lifelong Restriction (OLR):** Is a sentence introduced in Scotland in June 2006. The OLR provides for the lifelong supervision of high risk violent and sexual offenders and allows for a greater degree of intensive supervision to manage the risk that those individuals pose.

**Registered Sexual Offenders (RSOs):** Those who are required to notify the police of their name, address and other personal details and notify any changes subsequently. Failure to comply with the notification requirements is a criminal offence which can carry a term of imprisonment.

**Restricted Patient:** This is an offender defined under the Management of Offenders etc. (Scotland) Act 2005 Section 10, 11 (a-d). [www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2005/14/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2005/14/contents)

**Sexual Harm Prevention Orders (SHPO):** Sexual Harm prevention orders replaced sexual offences prevention orders (SOPOs) in March 2023. Under an SHPO, offenders convicted of a sexual crime can be required to follow certain rules and can be prohibited from doing anything specified in the order. These orders are imposed to protect the public, or a particular person, and apply for a minimum of five years. Under an order an offender might, for example, be prohibited from visiting a place which is likely to have children, or their internet activity might be restricted in some way. Breaching

an order without reasonable excuse is a criminal offence.

**Wanted Offenders:** Where it is known that an offender is actively avoiding police in response to police enquiries to trace that individual relative to offences they may have committed, or in relation to other matters for which it is required that they be interviewed. This may include those occasions where an offender is the subject of an arrest warrant.

## Notes



A wide-angle photograph of a sunset over a calm sea. The sky is a gradient from deep blue at the top to warm orange and yellow near the horizon. The sun is a small, bright orange dot on the horizon line. The ocean is dark blue-grey, with gentle ripples. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and scenic.

# Thank You



HIGHLANDS & ISLANDS  
MULTI-AGENCY PUBLIC PROTECTION  
ARRANGEMENTS