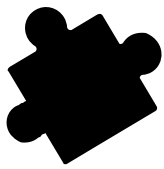


The National MAPPA Research: Process Effectiveness Report

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April 2023





Acknowledgements

Our thanks go to the Dawes Trust for their funding of this research. It would not have been possible without their support.

Our thanks also go to the members of the MAPPA Research Governance Group: Doug Naden, Becky Canning, Sharni Ecott and Richard Richardson. We are grateful for their support and valuable advice throughout the project. We would also like to thank the MAPPA Coordinators/managers, administrators and Strategic Management Board chairs in our five sample areas who so helpfully met our data requests. Finally, thank you to the expert peer reviewer of the report, Dr Andrea Darling, whose comments were immensely valuable.

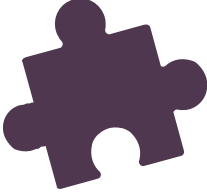
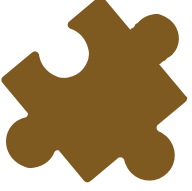
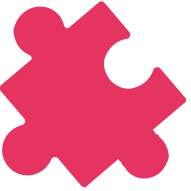
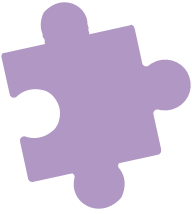
Dedication

This research is dedicated to the memory of Saskia Jones (12.02.96 – 29.11.19), our former Criminology student who was determined to make the world a better and safer place through her studies. We hope that our findings may, in some way, contribute to that ambition.

PIER

The Policing Institute for the Eastern Region (PIER) is a research institute within ARU. Since its formation in 2016, PIER has been committed to delivering high-quality collaborative research for the improvement of policing practice, particularly in relation to public protection and the prevention of sexual and violent offending.

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Executive Summary

The National MAPPA Research was a 26-month study conducted by the Policing Institute for the Eastern Region, to examine the effectiveness of Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) in England and Wales.



The research was made up of three components, 1) proven reoffending analysis (Lundrigan, Mann & Specht, 2023); 2) process effectiveness analysis (current report) and 3) serious case review analysis (Mann, Lundrigan & Kerss, 2023).

MAPPA was placed on a statutory footing in 2003, under the Criminal Justice Act, with the aim of strengthening the monitoring of community-based individuals convicted of sexual and violent offences. Under MAPPA, the Police, the Probation Service, and the Prison Service, along with other agencies who have a 'duty to cooperate', are legally required to work together to monitor and manage the risk posed by such individuals (Ministry of Justice, 2021).

Aim and method

The aim of this phase of the National MAPPA Research was to examine the process effectiveness of MAPPA. To do this, we:

- Asked practitioners about their perceptions and experiences of the MAPPA process, including, the use of rehabilitative tools and interventions in risk management, and the skills and knowledge required to make the best use of MAPPA
- Examined a sample of Category 3 referrals to investigate the use of discretion by MAPPA screening panels
- Examined a sample of panel meeting minutes and risk management plans (RMPs) to investigate how closely they aligned with the guidance for completion (MAPPA, 2021) and where information relevant to risk may have been missed

Five MAPPA areas participated in the research between April and October 2021. Together, they represented a wide geographical spread, with both rural and urban areas, and small and large numbers of MAPPA-managed individuals. In total 105 practitioners took part in 18 focus groups; 40 referrals and 48 panel meeting minutes and RMPs were examined.

Findings

How effective is MAPPA?

Practitioners recognised that MAPPA is a complex, resource-intensive framework but felt that it is the right approach to the management of risk and safeguarding public protection. The effectiveness of the framework is reliant on consistent representation by the most informed practitioners at panel meetings, and good information sharing within and across agencies. When this practice occurs effectively, the arrangements have the best possible chance of succeeding in preventing serious further harm. However, when this does not occur, practitioners felt that risk can remain unmanaged.

Two critical points were perceived by practitioners as being 'cliff edge' moments in the management of an individual. These related to the role of MAPPA during transfer of management: firstly, from Youth Offending Service (YOS hereafter) to Probation Service supervision, and secondly, from one MAPPA area to another. The processes in place to manage risk at these points were perceived to be insufficient, with communication and an overstretched Probation Service adding to practitioner concerns. These transitional points were highlighted in the Serious Case Review report (Mann, Lundrigan & Kerss, 2023) as contributing to occurrences of serious further harm. The MAPPA proven reoffending analysis (Lundrigan, Mann & Specht, 2023) also found that the peak age of offending for MAPPA managed individuals was 18 years and so it is even more important that the youth to adult transition is managed effectively by MAPPA to reduce the risk posed by those who are near the height of their offending careers.

How is MAPPA utilising rehabilitative tools and interventions as part of an individual's risk management?

Offender management was perceived to be increasingly complex as MAPPA managed individuals reportedly presented with progressively more vulnerabilities that directly affected their risk. Despite this perceived increase in presenting risk factors, practitioners discussed a lack of consideration of treatment or interventions utilised within discussions at panel meetings. Whilst all

areas were using RMPs structured under the Four Pillars model, which included sections relating to interventions and treatment, under-resourcing and oversubscription of programmes was felt to be a barrier to an individual's opportunities for support. Findings from a sample of 40 declined Category 3 referrals also indicated that the 'safeguarding and desistance' of the proposed MAPPA managed individual was one of the main reasons why agencies were making referrals; something which demonstrates practitioner's appreciation of the importance of protective factors, and perhaps the changing needs of individuals managed under MAPPA. It seems that as MAPPA managed individuals experience increasingly complex risk related needs, MAPPA areas must be as capable of operationalising interventions and treatment, as they are to operationalising monitoring and supervision.

What skills and knowledge do practitioners need to make best use of MAPPA, and what is the best approach to equipping practitioners with those skills and that knowledge?

Practitioners identified key knowledge considered essential to making best use of MAPPA; this included a clear understanding of the aims and purposes of MAPPA and what is expected of practitioners attending panel meetings; an understanding of the role and responsibilities of all MAPPA agencies, and a basic knowledge of MAPPA relevant legislation. Despite some useful resources being available on the MAPPA website, none of the practitioners in this study discussed using this. They did, however, feel that opportunities to engage in training and share best practice are insufficient, as is the communication of learning from SCRs. By introducing a training package, new panel members would be better equipped and better prepared for their role. This would also encourage the standardisation of practice across MAPPA areas.

How is Category 3 used for discretionary referrals?

Analysis of 40 declined Category 3 referrals suggested that, in three out of the five sample areas, individuals who the research team considered good candidates for Category 3 management, based on the MAPPA guidance (2021), were not currently being managed under MAPPA. Of these, 52% were for individuals who had committed domestic abuse offences; 13% were for individuals who had demonstrated sexual motivations for offending or had disclosed the commission of undetected sexual offences; and 22% were for those whose offences encompassed both of these. Whilst the research team acknowledge that they are not MAPPA practitioners, the analysis does suggest that certain groups of individuals who should be managed under MAPPA, are not. This was often because they did not meet the threshold requirement for Level 2 management. Whilst the research team often agreed with reviewers' decisions, this analysis highlights the limitations created by the absence of Level 1 management in Category 3, which, if introduced, would formalise the requirement for agencies to meet and share information.

How closely do panel meeting minutes and RMPs align with the guidance for completion (MAPPA, 2021) and are there sections where information relevant to risk is missed?

Analysis of a sample of 48 MAPPA B (meeting minutes and RMPs) forms found that in nearly a third of cases (31%, 15 cases), updated information on risk was not documented in the RMP. In 27% (13 cases) of cases, additional actions discussed in the meeting minutes were not documented in the additional actions section, or agreed actions were not completed or progressed. In 35% (17 cases) of cases, there was no documented detail on what would increase an individual's risk within the contingency planning section. This suggests that information on risk is sometimes missed and not carried through to the day-to-day management of an individual managed under MAPPA.

Recommendations

Two primary recommendations and 15 secondary recommendations are made.

The primary recommendations are:

1. Level 1 management should be introduced within Category 3 to ensure the risk posed by domestic abuse perpetrators and those whose offending is sexually motivated can be managed under MAPPA
2. A MAPPA training package should be developed which addresses the deficits and lack of accessibility of current training and CPD which have been identified within this research



Introduction

This report presents the findings from the process effectiveness component of the National MAPPA Research. The National MAPPA Research was a 26-month study conducted by the Policing Institute for the Eastern Region to examine the effectiveness of MAPPA in England and Wales.



The research was made up of three components,

- 1) proven reoffending analysis (Lundrigan, Mann & Specht, 2023);
- 2) process effectiveness analysis (current report)
- 3) serious case review analysis (Mann, Lundrigan & Kerss, 2023).¹

MAPPA was placed on a statutory footing in 2003, under the Criminal Justice Act, with the aim of strengthening the monitoring of community-based individuals convicted of sexual and violent offences. Under MAPPA, the Police, the Probation Service² and the Prison Service, along with other agencies who have a 'duty to cooperate'³ (DTC hereafter), are legally required to work together to monitor and manage the risk posed by such Individuals (Ministry of Justice, 2021). There are three categories of MAPPA management, as shown in Table 1.

Category 1	Offenders Subject to Notification Requirements: Sexual Offenders
Category 2	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)
Category 3	Other Dangerous Offenders who pose a high risk of serious harm (RoSH) but do not qualify for Category 1 or 2

Table 1: MAPPA Categories. Note: In April 2022 a fourth MAPPA category was introduced for terrorist or terrorist risk individuals.

Under MAPPA, individuals are managed at one of three levels, which reflects the level of multi-agency cooperation required to implement their risk management plan effectively. Individuals may move between the levels, reflecting changes in the level of risk they are deemed to present.

Level 1	Multi-agency support for Lead Agency risk management with information sharing
Level 2	Formal multi-agency meetings, including active involvement of more than one agency to manage the individual
Level 3	Formal multi-agency meetings and extra resources, the ' Critical Few ' including Critical Public Protection Cases (CPPC)

Table 2: MAPPA Levels

As of 31st March 2021, the number of individuals subject to MAPPA management in England and Wales, stood at 87,657 (64,325 were Category 1, 22,944 were Category 2 and 388 were Category 3). This represents a 2% increase from 2020 and a 70% increase from 2011 (Ministry of Justice, 2021).



¹ The National MAPPA Research was distinct but complementary to other work being undertaken between 2020 and 2022, including the Independent Review of Statutory Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (Hall, 2022), the HMPPS Review of MAPPA Level 1, VKPP's analysis of MAPPA Serious Case Reviews and the Criminal Justice Joint Thematic Inspection of MAPPA (2022).

² The research was conducted prior to the unification of the Probation Service in June 2021

³ These duty-to-cooperate agencies include youth offending teams, health and social care, housing, victim support and the Home Office.

1.1. MAPPA organisation

There are 42 MAPPA areas in England and Wales⁴. The largest MAPPA area is London, which is subdivided into 32 separate MAPPA areas across the 32 London boroughs. The Police, the Prison Service and the Probation Service make up the MAPPA responsible authority in each area and work in conjunction with the DTC agencies that are involved in an individual's management. The frequency of meetings and attendance is dependent on the complexities involved in implementing the risk management plan. Each MAPPA area has several roles central to the coordination and maintenance of the arrangements. These include:

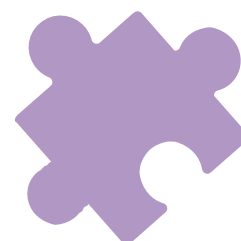
- A coordinator or a manager, drawn from either Probation or the Police. They are the single point of contact for MAPPA and have responsibility for the oversight of MAPPA arrangements in their area
- Panel meeting chairs, whose role it is to chair the MAPPA Level 2 and 3 meetings. MAPPA guidance (2022) states that chairs must be drawn from the Police or Probation Service
- The MAPPA Strategic Management Board (SMB) is made up of representatives from responsible-authority and DTC agencies. Their role is to manage MAPPA activity in the area, including the ongoing review of quality and effectiveness and the accommodation of any changes in legislation, national guidance or wider criminal justice policy. A chair sits as head of the SMB
- Lay advisors who sit on the SMB and represent the public in the monitoring and evaluation of MAPPA

MAPPA is overseen on a national level by the Responsible Authority National Steering Group (RANSNG) at the Ministry of Justice.

1.2. Previous MAPPA research

Past research into the efficacy of MAPPA is both limited in scope and somewhat outdated. Of the few studies available in this area, research has focused on one or two of three main areas of enquiry: the MAPPA process and practitioners' experiences of it (i.e., Kemshall et al., 2005; Maguire et al., 2001; Wood et al., 2007); the effect of MAPPA on reducing reoffending (Bryant et al., 2015; Peck, 2011); and service users' experiences of MAPPA (i.e., Weaver, 2014; Weaver and Barry, 2014; Wood et al., 2007).

Maguire et al., (2001) examined practitioners' perspectives of the pre-MAPPA model of Public Protection Panels and sought to investigate the convergence and disparity in practice between six different force areas. Their findings were based on 147 qualitative interviews with the Police, Probation Service, Prison Service and other DTC practitioners, as well as observations of 59 public protection panels. Apart from the strains created by under-resourcing of panels, Maguire et al., (2001) found there was wide variation in joint agency working and a lack of standardised practice. Kemshall et al.'s (2005) later study sought to investigate progress since Maguire et al., (2001) and assess the implementation of MAPPA that was introduced as a result of the findings. Kemshall et al., (2002) collected questionnaire data from the 42 MAPPAs and conducted in-depth fieldwork with six MAPPA case study areas, including meeting observations, focus groups and case file reviews. They found that the more formal MAPPA process had introduced a clearly defined system to manage different levels of risk and standardisation had also improved.

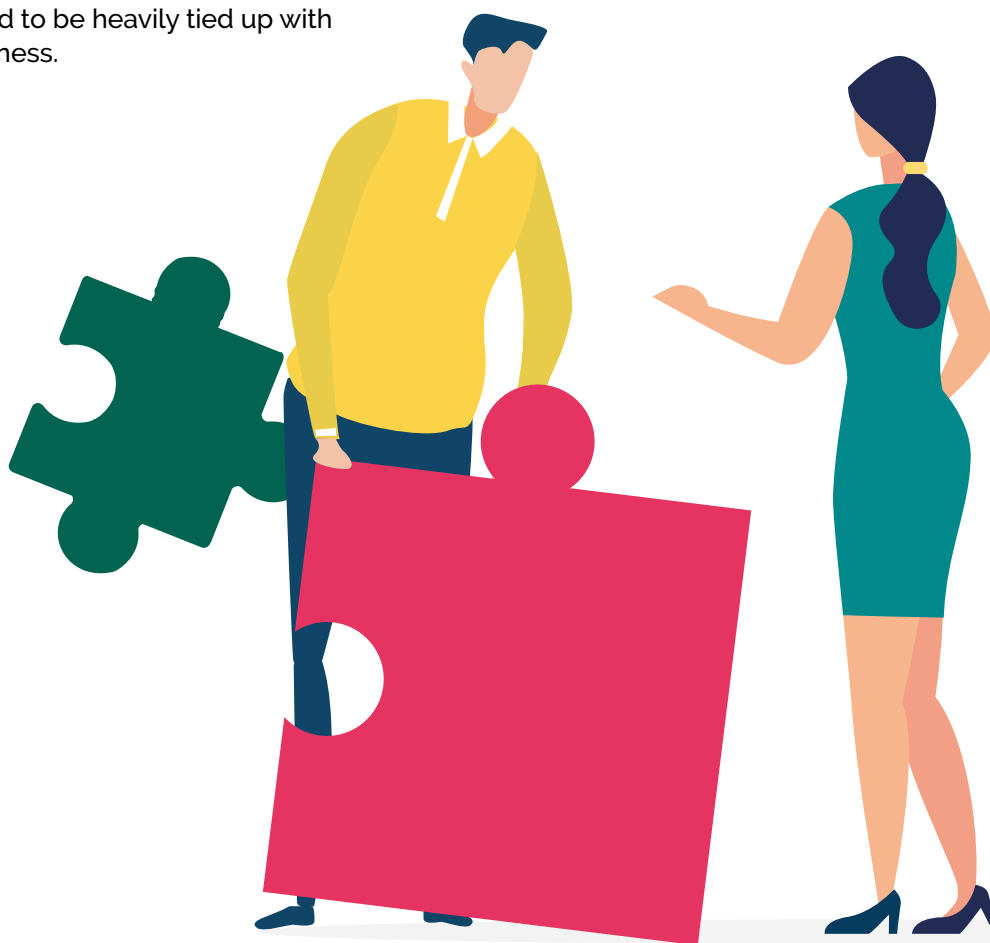


⁴ The MAPPA areas align with the 42 police services in England and Wales except for the City of London which is amalgamated with the London Metropolitan Police Service area.

In 2007, Wood et al., assessed MAPPA in relation to its management of RSOs and conducted focus groups and interviews with MAPPA practitioners and individuals managed under the arrangements in three MAPPA areas. They found practitioners perceived that MAPPA increased accountability and interagency working and provided access to key resources required for the management of high-risk individuals. They also noted that an absence of key performance indicators may have led to inconsistent practice and a lack of appreciation by the general public, of the effectiveness of MAPPA.

Alongside research into the process effectiveness of MAPPA, there is a small body of research that has examined the perception of those managed under MAPPA. Wood et al. (2007) explored the perceptions of MAPPA managed individuals and found that many felt they benefited from MAPPA management, particularly in relation to supporting their personal goals. Paradoxically, others considered these external controls intrusive but acknowledged their necessity in the management of their behaviour, an attitude that resulted in increased acceptance and compliance. Individual's perceptions of their MAPPA management were found to be heavily tied up with legitimacy and effectiveness.

In the most recent MAPPA research, Weaver and Barry (2014) conducted interviews with MAPPA practitioners and MAPPA managed individuals in one Probation Trust⁵. They found that where the role of MAPPA and supervision arrangements were properly explained, individuals displayed an increased willingness to comply with supervision and were more able to identify techniques to change behaviours. This participatory approach to management emphasised self-efficacy and agency on the part of the individual, increasing trust in the legitimacy of MAPPA management.



⁵ Prior to privatisation in 2014, Probation was made up of separate Trusts.

1.3. Statutory reports

In addition to the academic research, there are a number of statutory reports which have been conducted into MAPPA. In 2011, a joint inspection (HM Inspectorate of Probation and HMI Constabulary, 2011) found that there was a willingness to share information and good cooperation from DTC agencies. There, there were however, a number of issues that required improvement. These issues included an overemphasis on information exchange rather than active management, the Probation Service's poor access to and use of ViSOR, ineffective meeting minutes, and the poor identification and completion of an agreed RMP. This joint inspection concluded that there was significant scope for improvement in the way MAPPA operates if it was to fulfil its potential (HM Inspectorate of Probation and Constabulary, 2011).

A second joint inspection (HM Inspectorate of Probation and HMI Constabulary, 2015) found that there had been improvement in MAPPA practice in some key areas, including better identification of the lead agency, improved management at Levels 2 and 3, improvements in the identification of actions and good practice in the Four Pillars⁶ areas. However, there were several areas that had not improved, including: poor practice in relation to disclosures; inconsistent and confused practice in relation to risk management; poor cooperation from some DTC agencies; poor contribution by HM Prison Service; and a lack of training for MAPPA practitioners. The inspection report concluded that if the recommendations were actioned, there should be further improvement in the quality of MAPPA work (HM Inspectorate of Probation and HMI Constabulary, 2015).

In 2020, Jonathan Hall QC conducted an independent review of the use of MAPPA in the management of those convicted of terrorism offences (Hall, 2020). This review reinforced many of the issues identified by the two previous joint inspections of MAPPA. Most notably, recommendations were made in relation to information sharing, risk management, and the assessment of risk and the active management of individuals subject to the arrangements.

Most recently, in 2022, the Criminal Justice Joint Inspectorate conducted a thematic inspection of MAPPA (CJJI, 2022), which examined whether the arrangements were meeting their objectives 20 years after their inception. This inspection noted that improvements had been made to the MAPPA structure, such as the introduction of the Four Pillars model of risk management. They concluded that whilst Level 2 and Level 3 management were largely successful in managing the risk posed by individuals, improvements needed to be made at Level 1, particularly in relation to pre-release planning, domestic abuse and child safeguarding checks and the consideration of the victim. Interestingly, the report also noted that whilst some MAPPA managed individuals felt stigmatised by the MAPPA 'label' and were frustrated by their inability to contribute to MAPPA meetings, many felt well supported by practitioners and were grateful for the increased oversight and involvement of multiple agencies.

The findings of the joint thematic inspection, closely align with those of this research project. As such, it is referred to throughout this report.



⁶ The Four Pillars of risk management is a model developed by Professor Hazel Kemshall, in response to the recommendations of the 2011 joint inspection of MAPPA (HM Inspectorate of Probation and Constabulary, 2011). Originally this model was adopted by a small number of MAPPA areas across the country but more recently, the Four Pillars RMP template has been utilised by all 42 MAPPAs. The Four Pillars approach prioritises risk management by addressing four essential elements that are detailed in the RMP of MAPPA managed individuals: 1) Supervision; 2) Monitoring and Control; 3) Interventions and Treatment; and 4) Victim Safety Planning.

1.4. Aims and objectives

The aim of this phase of the National MAPPA Research was to examine the process effectiveness of MAPPA. Specifically, we investigated the following research questions:

- How effective is MAPPA?
- How is MAPPA utilising rehabilitative tools and interventions as part of an individual's risk management?
- What skills and knowledge do practitioners need to make best use of MAPPA, and what is the best approach to equipping practitioners with those skills and that knowledge?
- How is Category 3 used for discretionary referrals?
- How closely do panel meeting minutes and RMPs align with the guidance for completion (MAPPA, 2021) and are there sections where information relevant to risk is missed?

To answer these research questions, we:

- Conducted **focus groups** with practitioners in order to investigate their perceptions and experiences of the MAPPA process, including, the use of rehabilitative tools and interventions in risk management and the skills and knowledge required to make the best use of MAPPA
- Examined a sample of **Category 3** referrals in order to investigate the use of discretion by MAPPA screening panels
- Examined a sample of **panel meeting minutes and RMPs** in order to investigate how closely they aligned with the guidance for completion (MAPPA, 2021) and where information relevant to risk may be missed





Methodology

2.1. Ethics

Full approval from both the Anglia Ruskin University Faculty Research Ethics Panel and the HMPPS National Research Committee was secured (Ref: 2020-102). Separate permission was also provided by the Parole Board. All ethical issues pertinent to this study, such as informed consent and confidentiality, were identified and managed accordingly. Throughout the report, any information regarding the identity of the MAPPA areas and the practitioners who took part in the study has been removed.



2.2. Data collection

Five MAPPA areas selected from the 42 regions across England and Wales participated in the research. Together, they represented a wide geographical spread, with both rural and urban areas, and small and large numbers of MAPPA-managed individuals. In total 105 practitioners took part in **18 focus groups**, and **40 referrals** and **48 panel meeting minutes** and **RMPs** were examined. Each area participated in all components of the research and data was collected in three ways:

2.2.1 Focus groups

MAPPA coordinators in each of the five areas provided contact details for panel members from responsible authority and all DTC agencies. These panel members were contacted via email and asked to participate in an online focus group. MAPPA SMB chairs, managers, coordinators and lay advisors were also contacted and invited to participate. Where the individuals themselves could not take part, they nominated another practitioner who was then contacted.

Focus groups were agency specific and depending on the number of total participants for that agency, one or more focus groups were held. Focus groups were made up of between three and nine practitioners and lasted 90 minutes. The discussions were based on seven thematic areas identified in advance, from existing literature, MAPPA guidance and inspection reports. These thematic areas were: 1) purpose and practice, 2) identification and management of individual, 3) operational delivery, 4) structure and representation, 5) information sharing, 6) risk management and 7) defensive practice, review procedure. The research team encouraged a natural conversation between practitioners and provided prompts only when necessary to keep on topic or manage time. Sessions were recorded and automatically transcribed using the MS Teams function. The transcripts were then checked against the recorded material and any errors corrected. The final transcripts were analysed thematically, via the identification of common themes and topics, which arose repeatedly. In total, 105 practitioners took part in 18 focus groups (see Table 4 for breakdown of participating agencies).

Agency	Number of focus groups
Social care	2
Health	2
Housing	2
YOS	1
SMB chairs	1
Coordinators and managers	1
Lay advisors	1
Probation Service	2
Prison Service	2
Police	2
Victim Liaison (Probation Service)	1
Parole Board	2

Table 4: Focus group participation

At the time focus groups were held, practitioners had been in their current role for an average duration of six years (SD = 3.9). The average duration of their length of service was 17 years (SD = 11.2).

2.2.2. Category 3 referrals

The SMBs in the five sample areas were asked to provide all Category 3 referrals from the previous two years (January 2019 to December 2020). Of the 186 referrals provided, 146 had been accepted and 40 had been declined (21.5%). Only those referrals which had not been accepted were analysed. The declined referrals came from three of the five sample areas (see Table 5).

Area	Number of successful referrals	Number of unsuccessful referrals	Total number of Referrals focus groups
1	11	2	13
2	15	0	15
3	30	28	58
4	30	10	40
5	60	0	60
TOTAL	146	40	186

Table 5: Category 3 referrals data

The declined referrals were examined in relation to the alignment of decision making with MAPPA guidance (2021). Specifically, we focussed on:

- Reasons for the referral being made
- Reasons for the referral being declined
- Rationality of the declined referral (i.e., whether the reasons for decline were in line with guidance)
- Trends in the types of individuals being declined (i.e., committed certain offences)

2.2.3. Panel meeting minutes and RMPs

Each SMB in the five areas were asked to provide meeting minutes and RMPs (MAPPA B) for individuals representing every MAPPA category and level combination. The purpose of meeting minutes is to contemporaneously record information discussed at panel meetings, including updates from agencies and information relevant to risk. The agreed MAPPA RMP is situated within these meeting minutes, and this is informed by discussions or new information resulting from the meeting. A total of 151 meeting minutes and RMPs were received by the research team. To arrive at a manageable sample, two cases from each category and management level combinations from each of the five areas was selected. Where areas had not submitted more than one case, single cases were

analysed. The final sample comprised 48 MAPPA Bs from the five sample areas (see Table 6 for sample breakdown).

Category/Level	N
1, 2	9
1, 3	9
2, 2	8
2, 3	8
3, 2	6
3, 3	8
TOTAL	48

Table 6: Panel meeting minutes sample

Each set of meeting minutes and RMPs were cross-referenced with the MAPPA guidance (2021) in order to examine the alignment of the decision making with the guidance. This process was conducted by two independent researchers. A sample of analysed documents from each researcher was selected and checked for inter-rater consistency by a third researcher.



Findings

The findings emerged from the three components of the process effectiveness analysis and are discussed under the key research questions.



3.1 How effective is MAPPA?

This section details practitioners' experiences and perceptions of MAPPA and its perceived effectiveness⁷. Findings are organised under the six themes and eight sub-themes which emerged during the analysis as in the summary table below (Table 7). Recommendations are presented at the end of each theme.

Theme	Subtheme
1. Perceptions of risk and the classification of individuals	1. Management level thresholds 2. Risk versus the 'critical few' 3. Eligibility for Category 3
2. Collaborative working	-
3. Information sharing	-
4. Agency representation at panel meetings	4. Role of HM Prison Service
5. An increase in MAPPA managed individuals	5. MAPPA resourcing 6. Accommodation
6. Points of increased risk	7. Transfer from YOS to probation 8. Transfer of lead agency

Table 7: Themes and subthemes

Theme 1: Perceptions of risk and the classification of individuals

Risk was understood by practitioners to be an unavoidable part of MAPPA management, and whilst it was agreed that risk was defined differently by different agencies, practitioners felt that the assessment and management of risk was reasonably well achieved within MAPPA⁸:



'I'm maybe looking at it through rose-tinted spectacles, but I think overall within the MAPPA context, there is understanding that the risks and perception of risks to it do vary between all agencies, but MAPPA brings them together to discuss risk of harm'. (SMB chair)

The multi-agency nature of MAPPA produces differing aims, priorities and risk assessments, and for practitioners, panel meetings were seen as essential to the establishment of shared agreement on risk:



'I think this is the value of MAPPA, because each agency has its own culture and its own agenda, and it's about resolving that to come to a common goal of managing their risk...it is about resolving those cultural differences and perhaps understanding each other and each other's processes a bit better'. (Probation Practitioner)



⁷ The MAPPA Guidance being used by practitioners at the time of the research was last updated in 2021.

⁸ Each theme was discussed by multiple practitioners from different agencies. Quotations which best highlight the issue being discussed have been selected for inclusion in the report.

Despite a sense that there was common ground in relation to risk, the risk assessments produced by the Prison Service were often discussed as being problematic:



'There's a tendency for prisons or prison officers to concentrate on physical risks. So, does somebody bang up on time? Do they collect their food? Do they go behind their door? And if they do those things, they're a good prisoner...they might be locking somebody up who's actually a very high-risk CPPC MAPPA Level 3 case, and they wouldn't know, it's just a prisoner who goes behind his door. But actually, the concerns, should this man be released into the community, are gigantic. The way in which the prison sort of identifies and understands risk is more about physical behaviour, as opposed to the risks that somebody might really present should they be released into the world'. (Probation Practitioner)

Practitioners outside of the Prison Service, felt that there was a tendency to class compliant prisoners as low risk because within the prison setting many of the factors that increase risk, such as accommodation problems, financial concerns and relationship issues, are not present. As a result, there were concerns that the potential risk posed by MAPPA managed individuals on release in the community, was not being recognised within the prison. This is discussed in the recent joint thematic inspection (CJJI, 2022), which found that despite improvements in the information supplied by Prisons, sufficient information on the individual's behaviour throughout their sentence, is still not being provided. This was in part attributed to Prison staff's lack of understanding regarding what information may be significant to the assessment of an individual's risk, particularly if staff worked outside the offender management unit (OMU).

The Offender Management in Custody (OMiC) model was introduced in 2018 as a framework for managing an individual's journey through custody and back into the community. The purpose of the framework is to reduce reoffending by providing the prisoner with key workers who support them during their transition from custody to community. This includes Prison Offender Managers (POMs) for longer term sentenced prisoners and an increased probation presence in prisons, including at least one senior Probation Officer (SPO) who jointly manages the offender management unit (OMU). Despite being in place for two years at the time of the research, OMiC was not perceived to be having any effect on prison service risk judgements. This is echoed by the joint thematic inspection which commented that the OMiC model was 'not yet effective in supporting the management of risk' (CJJI, 2022: 21).

Management level thresholds

The three levels of MAPPA management are there to ensure resources are concentrated on those that require the greatest level of multi-agency cooperation (MAPPA, 2022). However, practitioners identified a need for greater clarity between Level 1 and Level 2 management. MAPPA Level 1 used to be referred to as 'single agency' but practitioners report that the change in terminology to 'ordinary management' (MAPPA, 2021) has created confusion and a lack of consistent interpretation.

The MAPPA Guidance (2021) being used by practitioners at the time of the research, stated that more than one agency may be involved in Level 1 management but that the implementation of the RMP should not require formal multi-agency meetings. However, despite this guidance, it was felt that because professionals' meetings were a poorly used resource, cases were being raised to Level 2 to ensure that multi-agency collaboration was secured:



'One...underlying assumption was that Level 1 didn't really mean multi-agency, and therefore, people just sort of saw it as being their own agency management and didn't always necessarily take responsibility for... actually driving the case forward on a multi-agency basis without meetings'. (MAPPA Coordinator)

The 2021 guidance further stated that Levels 2 and 3 should apply if higher risk is posed by the offender, or the risk level is lower but 'the case requires active involvement and co-ordination of interventions from other agencies' (MAPPA, 2021). This is reportedly where further confusion lies; some practitioners assign levels based on the number of agencies involved in the individual's management, rather than the level of multi-agency collaboration required:



'It's more about those agencies who are not doing their part to assist with the rehabilitation and safe risk management of that person, as opposed to, 'we've hit the magic three so it's a MAPPA Level 2'. I think there is a lot of 'if it's three or more, it has to be a Level 2', and that sees it remain for ever more at a Level 2, even if everybody's working and doing their part'. (Probation Practitioner)

Many practitioners identified a need for clarity on Level 1 management, which they felt was not being utilised effectively. This is something echoed in the findings of the Operational and System Assurance Group (OSAG) thematic review of Probation Service cases managed under MAPPA Level 1 (unpublished), the 'Management and supervision of men convicted of sexual offences' report by HM Inspectorate of Prisons and Probation (2019) and the joint thematic inspection (CJJI, 2022), which all identified areas for improvement in the management of Level 1 individuals. In response to these reviews, a policy framework document was updated for Probation Service practitioners in October 2021 (Ministry of Justice & HMPPS, 2021). Practitioners in this research called for better guidance on the thresholds between Level 1 and 2; this is something the MAPPA national team addressed in December 2021 via the release of a thresholding document (MAPPA, 2022a). These two documents were not available to practitioners during the fieldwork period; however, it is hoped that their release may have provided some much needed clarity.



Risk versus *'the critical few'*

Alongside confusion over MAPPA level thresholds, practitioners from all areas discussed how perceived increases in referrals to MAPPA Level 2, could also be explained by the adoption of risk-averse practice, particularly within the Probation Service:



'I've had a similar thing, insofar as inappropriate referrals coming in from probation mainly and it's almost a bit of a culture that I think has recently developed around offender managers perhaps feeling they need that support... Because, like we've discussed earlier, it's, it can be a very well-managed, Level 1, it doesn't need necessarily that Level 2. And they should be for the critical cases, but it can be a culture that develops within teams'. (MAPPA manager)

In relation to risk management, practitioners discussed how a 'culture of blame', arising from a number of high-profile serious case reviews, had encouraged decision-making based on fear of accountability and risk aversion, rather than the effective functioning of the MAPPA framework:

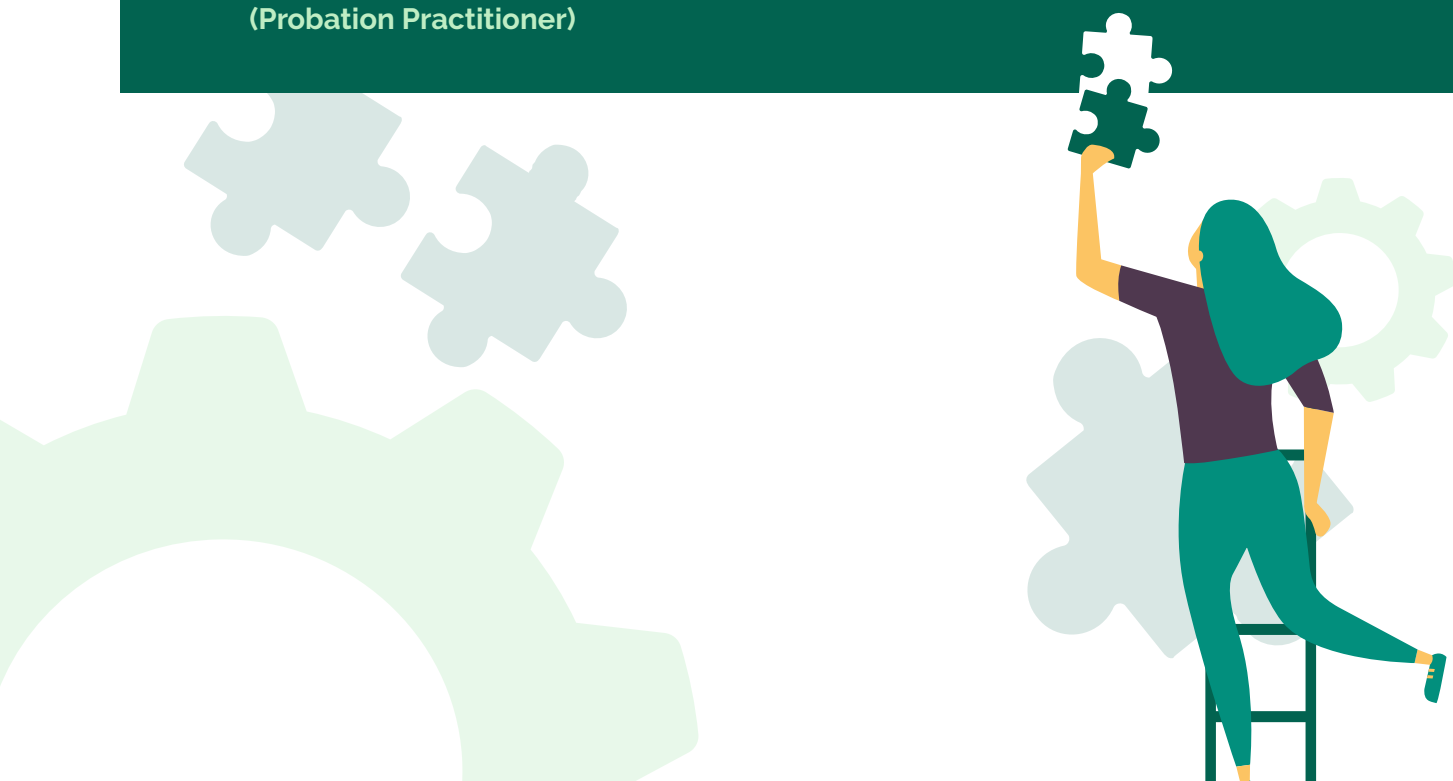
'I'm afraid, my concern is that it's about back covering. You know if I refer it to Level 2 then if anything goes wrong, it's not my fault, it's on the agencies. Yeah...that's how it feels to me'. (Police Practitioner)



There was a widespread perception that practitioners were increasingly referring cases to Level 2 as a way of averting risk and sharing responsibility across multiple agencies:



'They want MAPPA to either verify their decisions or to... cover themselves; 'well it's been discussed at Level 2, that exonerates me from any responsibility'. And the question that I always come back to is, if we're not clear, why do you want this case to be discussed at Level 2 because, to be clear, we can manage cases safely at Level 1?...I think we have to really guard against that because what you will find is people trying to get them (offenders) in for discussion as a cover all really'. (Probation Practitioner)



Practitioners were aware of an increase in their own risk averse or 'defensive practice' and some Probation practitioners attributed this to a lack of confidence in their own decision-making, demonstrated by Probation Service management. An example of this, was the introduction of a blanket policy which saw all those managed for TACT (Terrorism Act) and terrorism risk offences raised to Level 3 management, as a result of the Usman Kahn and Sudesh Amman SCRs. This policy was viewed as undermining to both practitioner autonomy and professionalism:



'I can remember feeling acutely uncomfortable by the other reaction at the time (of a high-profile terrorist case) where we were all instructed that any case that we had that was TACT must be put back to MAPPA Level 3'. (Probation Practitioner)

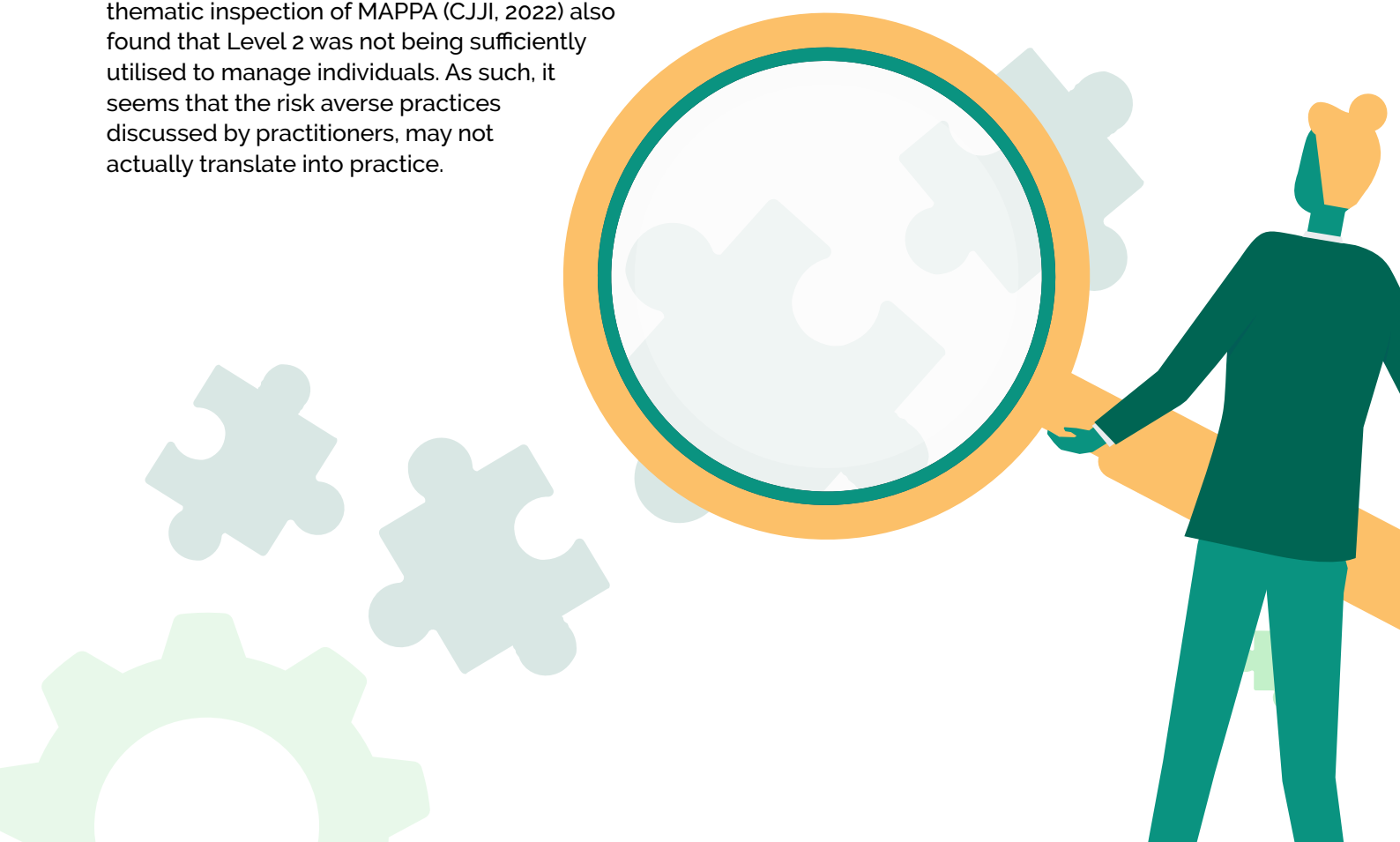
Whilst this may only have applied to a small number of individuals, this instruction was significant to practitioner's perceptions of their own ability to make risk-based judgements.

The perceived increase in the number of Probation referrals to Level 2, was considered symptomatic of an agency that had received much criticism in recent times:

'What I see as an increasingly risk-averse National Probation Service, ever more detailed scrutiny of probation practice with second-tier assessments rather than manager oversights...and that seems to be increasingly going on, as the pressure from afar seems to be quite knee-jerk reactions to high-profile cases'. (Probation Practitioner)



However, despite this perception, the number of individuals being managed at Level 2 increased by just 3% in 2020/21, to a figure which is 34% lower than in 2014 (MAPPA, 2021a). The joint thematic inspection of MAPPA (CJJI, 2022) also found that Level 2 was not being sufficiently utilised to manage individuals. As such, it seems that the risk averse practices discussed by practitioners, may not actually translate into practice.



Eligibility for Category 3

TMAPPA Category 3 was perceived as somewhat of a grey area by many. Whilst some identified this category as being vital to the ongoing management of certain groups, including gang members and those who are on post-licence supervision, others felt there was a lack of understanding around the eligibility of individuals for this category:



'Category 3 and stuff, I'm still extremely confused about who is/isn't eligible for that'. (Health Practitioner)

The latest MAPPA guidance (2022) and the thresholding document (MAPPA, 2022a) provides a little more clarity on those individuals who would be eligible for Category 3 management and also states that all individuals with domestic abuse offences who are not managed under Category 1 or 2 should automatically be considered. However, whilst it is hoped that this may assist practitioners to refer those individuals who are eligible in the future, at the time of the fieldwork this guidance was not available.



A number of police practitioners recognised that Category 3 could be useful in supporting the management of dangerous individuals, such as those convicted of domestic abuse. However, it was recognised that the general lack of awareness of MAPPA amongst practitioners who had had no prior involvement with the framework meant that this was an underused resource:

'Cat 3s are the concerning one because those are the sort of otherwise dangerous issues and often they've not had any involvement from somebody within the MAPPA world and the person who doesn't have any knowledge of the MAPPA world isn't gonna know the first thing about how to refer somebody into MAPPA Level 3...somebody within the MAPPA world would say 'well actually this guy is eligible because of the caution, conviction, whatever'. But the wider force...wouldn't even have a clue what the referral to MAPPA meant, not a clue'. (Police Practitioner)



This is something also discussed in the joint thematic review (CJJI, 2022) which found that knowledge of MAPPA was lacking amongst Police practitioners outside of those units which specialise in the management of those with convictions for sexual offending.

Police practitioners also noted that the workload involved, and the Police protocol in place for making MAPPA referrals, did little to encourage use of this MAPPA category:



'Making a referral from a police perspective is very difficult...I suppose it's due to our management structure not having the awareness, we've had a lot of management changes...They're not au fait with MAPPA, you have to sort of explain it all first...a lot of people to convince and explain to'. (Police Practitioner)



**'It's definitely getting missed, it's definitely a missed trick'.
(Police Practitioner)**

Practitioners agreed that panel meetings provide the right forum within which to forge an agreement on risk. There was, however, a perception that such agreement does become problematic when practitioners' perceptions of risk are skewed by defensive practice, a lack of clarity on thresholds and a lack of understanding around the eligibility of individuals.

Recommendations

- The National MAPPA team should provide greater clarity on the use of Level 2 management and Category 3 eligibility



Theme 2: Collaborative working

A jigsaw analogy was commonly used by practitioners to explain how MAPPA functions as a collective resource. Individual agencies hold information, like puzzle pieces, but the picture is incomplete until these pieces are shared and put together. MAPPA was considered to be vital in safeguarding good sharing of these 'pieces' of information and provided the ultimate conduit through which a complete picture of risk could be formulated. Practitioners recognised that collaboration and information sharing was central to MAPPA's effectiveness and that this was heavily reliant on good, well-established relationships both within one's own agency and, more fundamentally, across other agencies. It was felt that these relationships, which had often developed over years of collaborative working, provided the trust necessary to access information held by agencies, which might not otherwise be readily available:



**'My experience, in terms of MAPPA, has not been as a result of organisational structures, but as a result of personal relationships, and knowing who it is that will get something done in an organisation that you don't fully understand'.
(Probation Practitioner)**

For those experienced panel members who had developed such relationships, regular communication and information sharing with colleagues was reasonably efficient. However, for newer panel members, obtaining information from other agencies, was often more difficult:



**'I think it depends on who you know... I think I can get the information for a report really, really quickly. One of the newer staff in my team, even though I can direct them to the people, might not get the information because people won't trust them.... It's about who you are, what you know and who you ask'.
(Prison Service Practitioner)**

Practitioners new to MAPPA raised concerns around this issue and reported feeling that their position outside of established communication networks prevented effective collaborative practice. Practitioners who were more experienced in working within MAPPA, also raised concerns. They felt that high rates of staff turnover, a characteristic identified predominantly within the police, put collaboration and thus information sharing at risk. Whilst this may not be an issue distinct to MAPPA, it seems that when effective collaborative practice and information sharing is so dependent on established relationships, the loss of regular or experienced staff members has the potential to, at worst, derail the process, and at best create delays or omissions in the sharing of information.

Practitioners also agreed that experience and well-established relationships were essential in securing the confidence necessary to challenge panel members and hold them to account at panel meetings. It was commonly reported that meetings can be 'intense' and at times 'confrontational'; this was considered a difficult environment for new or less confident practitioners, who reportedly felt obliged to agree to actions that were not necessarily achievable:



'Yeah, it comes down to the fact that because there is no real training then we don't always know what our responsibilities are and what the others are. That just comes from experience... if you've got someone who's less experienced, they're not going to then challenge that and say well actually no, that's not for us to take away and do...it's for you to do'. (Police Practitioner)

With the majority of work taking place outside panel meetings, practitioners discussed how these well-established relationships were central to effective communication:



'Because people have good relationships...probably (that) makes a difference as well... there's lots of facilitation of contact outside the meeting.' (Health Practitioner)

When this communication was not so effective, practitioners reported that very often the result was unnecessary MAPPA referrals:



'They don't actually need to be brought to MAPPA, and I think it just goes back to that sort of joint working relationship. And actually, you know, a lot of these cases, we could have conversations outside of MAPPA, and if it was brought to our attention earlier, we would just resolve it there and then.' (Housing Practitioner)

It was widely accepted that cases are brought to Level 2 and 3 panel meetings in order to formalise the sharing of key information when this is not happening organically. Practitioners recognised that if agencies were more cooperative and proactive in offering information at professionals' meetings, fewer cases would need to be brought to Level 2 and 3:



'MAPPA is quite useful for getting people who won't speak to you on a single agency basis, and you can't get hold of...to get them to actually attend and answer questions...people tend to take MAPPA quite seriously'. (Probation Practitioner)

It was clear from practitioner responses that the development of good working relationships undoubtedly enhances the effectiveness of MAPPA. However, when the successful operational delivery of MAPPA is overly reliant on these relationships, it becomes a model vulnerable to staff changes and inexperience.



Theme 3: Information sharing

Practitioners recognised that good information sharing is key to the multi-agency approach. However, information discussed at panel meetings is highly sensitive and must be protected from unauthorised access, to safeguard the privacy and security of an individual or an agency. Practitioners discussed how, all too often, information sharing was hampered by the obscurity around what can legally be shared, with whom and for what purpose. In part, the perceived lack of clarity was attributed to the unhelpfulness of the 2021 MAPPA guidance. Where this was unclear, practitioners tended to err on the side of caution:



'There's something about having the confidence around information sharing that I think is particularly important... having I guess the green light from your seniors or some kind of understanding from your service about what's okay, what's not...there's that question – what is it okay for me to share?' (Health Practitioner).

In the Independent Review of Statutory Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (2020), Jonathan Hall QC noted on numerous occasions that issues around confidentiality stood in the way of information sharing. Whilst Hall's finding was in relation to those managed for TACT or terrorism risk offences, this was an issue discussed by many and was a cause for grave concern. Practitioners discussed situations where they were 'sitting on' information that could aid the case being discussed but a fear of data protection and confidentiality prevented this information being shared. This was an issue raised most frequently by health and HM Prison Service practitioners.

Parole Board practitioners discussed how decisions made at hearings are only as good as the information they have at the time, and it was repeatedly noted that this information was often insufficient:



**'We're not getting the intelligence through...they don't know what we want and we don't know what they can provide us half the time... what I think a lot of the agencies don't realise is that if a case gets dropped at court for whatever reason... we can still use the information...there's a distinct failing on the part of agencies, and again, particularly the police in regard to understanding how well we can use that information if it's provided to us'.
(Parole Board Practitioner)**

The MAPPA guidance on information sharing with the Parole Board was considered unhelpful by Parole Board members and lacking in clarity. Parole Board practitioners reported that information sharing is inconsistent across agencies and across areas and that, very often, requests for meeting notes, summaries or minutes are met with hostility. There was concern that this lack of accessible information and collaborative working encourages erroneous decision-making or multiple adjournments to hearings in the hope that information will eventually come through:



**'When we got the information ... he'd got a string of domestic violence assaults preceding the index offence and the information was all there ... I think one of the real takeaway messages from this should be that agencies need to share information and they need to have an understanding of what is relevant in making decisions about risk, which is slightly different to taking prosecutions to court.'
(Parole Board Practitioner)**



'It was frightening that that information had not been put before the panel when it was available within MAPPA circles. It goes back to the basics of, what information are we being given? We can only make a decision on the information that we're given.'
(Parole Board Practitioner)

Parole Board practitioners were frustrated by the misalignment of panel meetings and Parole Board hearings and felt that if the two could not be better aligned, then information sharing, and the quality of that information, must be improved in order to safeguard public protection:



'We need it (information) before we come to the hearing. One of our biggest problems at the moment is the quality of dossiers and the quality of information that we have... in an ideal world we should have all the information put before us so we can make that evaluation of risk. What is risk and the risk management plan?'
(Parole Board Practitioner)

It seems that the Parole Board's processes should be fully informed by all relevant information known to MAPPA agencies. However, this is difficult due to the judicial purpose they serve. Any information shared with Parole Board practitioners could also be shared with the MAPPA managed individual and the victim, as both can make representations at hearings. It does, however, seem that a lack of awareness of what information the Parole

Board can legally have access to, prevents even minimal information being shared.

Practitioners from DTC agencies also discussed concerns around not knowing where MAPPA documentation, such as minutes, should be saved on their respective databases, or whether in fact they should be saved at all:



'There's a lot of scaremongering about it – 'this is highly sensitive, don't, don't, don't share this with anyone'. So therefore, you don't... And in terms of putting minutes, I don't think I've ever uploaded a set of minutes to our database because I just feel that that would be inappropriate information governance, because it's got to be restricted, then it's kind of like, well, what do I actually put on here (database)?' (Health Practitioner).

Practitioners were clear that good information sharing was key to the effectiveness of MAPPA. However, a lack of information and clarity on the rules on information sharing had created a lack of confidence and defensive practice; practice that was preventing MAPPA from being fully effective. The MAPPA guidance, which was updated in May 2022, seeks to clarify the rules and procedures around information sharing. The Police Crime Sentencing and Courts Act (PCSCA) 2022, has also provided clarity by including all agencies which 'may contribute to the assessment and management of the risk presented by MAPPA offenders' (MAPPA, 2022:6) within its guidance on information sharing. It is hoped that greater clarity will empower practitioners to make more informed and appropriate decisions regarding the sharing of information.

Recommendations

- The National MAPPA Team should provide clear guidance on agencies' powers to share information under MAPPA, in light of the new legislation

Theme 4: Agency representation at panel meetings

The consensus amongst practitioners was that MAPPA is the right approach to fulfilling the aims of managing risk and protecting the public:



'I'm a strong believer in MAPPA. I think that MAPPA can save lives and I do genuinely believe that'. (Housing Practitioner)

It was, however, also agreed that there was room for improvement, particularly in relation to representation and attendance at panel meetings. It was recognised that for panel meetings to be successful, the right people needed to bring the right information to the discussion. However, practitioners felt that limited resourcing can make attendance difficult for DTC agency practitioners. Attendance was broadly described as 'hit and miss', with the same agencies being consistently absent from meetings⁹.



'I mean I think in terms of attendance. We usually have the same people attending and the same kind of people perhaps not attending. So, I think that probably reflects in some ways the resourcing within their services' (Health Practitioner)

Practitioners consistently raised concerns around the representation of Children's Services, Adult Social Care and Mental Health at meetings and some referred to such absences being documented in the KPI data pertaining to agency attendance in their area. A reported lack of resources and a perceived lack of appreciation of the importance of MAPPA were felt by practitioners to explain disengagement by these agencies. The MAPPA guidance (2021) states that it is good practice for Children's Services, Adult Social Care and Mental Health Services to have a standing member with the relevant experience and authority present at

meetings. For Mental Health, in addition to the standing member, there should be a representative from the patients' clinical team who can provide specific details on an individual's case. This was, however, not the practitioners' experience of these agencies' engagement:

'It has been an... issue or matter that we've had to try and resolve... our Mental Health Trust have not been in a position to resource both a panel member and case-related staff attending Level 2s basically... you can either have a panel member or you can have people who are actually managing the case. You can't have both'. (SMB chair)



The 2022 guidance has changed the above requirements for Children's Services and Adult Social Care; it now states that it is good practice to have a mental health representative as a standing member of panel meetings and that a member of the clinical team needs to be 'invited'. Such changes to the guidance, which practitioners were working to at the time of the research, is important in terms of the expectations of DTC agencies. However, the new guidance does still make clear that the right level of representation, with the relevant operational knowledge, as well as the authority to allocate resources, needs to be present. This was something often said to be lacking at meetings. It was felt by practitioners that attendance by members who did not have the necessary authority was creating delays as cases rolled over or were maintained at the wrong level:

'What that tends to do (non-attendance) is the cases then keep rolling over and over and take months and months to try and resolve, which is really frustrating and adds to the amount of cases that we have'. (Police Practitioner)



⁹ This is based on practitioner perception and not MAPPA Key Performance Indicator data, which did not form part of the research

Some practitioners discussed leaving meetings with a vast number of queries to make and information to collate, actions that could have been resolved within the meeting had the right level of representation been in attendance.

Under MAPPA Guidance (2021: 7), agency representatives in attendance at meetings should 'be able to make decisions that commit their agencies' resources' and have 'delegated authority'. It was clear from practitioners' discussions that this implies the need for a senior practitioner. However, it was recognised that the requirement for seniority, particularly at Level 3, often resulted in a lack of case knowledge being brought to the meeting.



**'Seniority does not mean an increase of knowledge and expertise... you're dealing with the kind of cases because they (senior staff) don't have the time to look into a case in that depth. Well, they may not have done so for many years because of the nature of their job'.
(Health Practitioner)**

This was particularly true of police representation at Level 3. Whilst the requirement for Superintendent-level rank to be in attendance was dropped from the guidance some years ago, this was still perceived to be a requirement amongst practitioners who felt this was ineffectual. They discussed how a lack of practical and case-level knowledge at Level 3 often resulted in police practitioners being tasked with actions that were not achievable.



**'Operationally, the people who are making the decisions and attending Level 3, they don't know how it works on the ground, it's not effective...Level 3 is very frustrating, it isn't operationally effective, and it is putting people at risk'.
(Police Practitioner)**

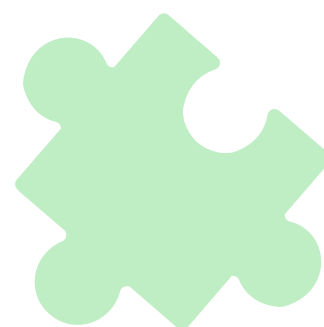
Whilst MAPPA guidance (2021) does state that operational staff should also be in attendance at Level 3 meetings, staff shortages and a lack of understanding of the guidance, meant that this was not common practice.

Practitioners also stressed that having consistent members at panel meetings (standing members) increased productivity and was seen as key to the effectiveness of MAPPA. Guidance (MAPPA, 2021) states that 'continuity of personnel' enhances the effectiveness of Level 2 and Level 3 MAPPA meetings by establishing good working relationships across agencies and this was reflected in discussions:



'Getting them to understand Level 2, having a consistent panel member that's able to make decisions at the right level, rather than just a senior practitioner of their case, quite a senior person, but that's only there for that case, dipping in at Level 2. And they just weren't really understanding or accepting of our rationale for wanting consistency of panel membership'. (SMB chair)

Consistency of panel membership was often considered to be compromised by the high turnover of staff (referred to as 'churn' by the practitioners) in some agencies. Practitioners felt that the frequent change of panel members representing agencies created disruption to MAPPA at an operational level:





'At one point sometimes the turnover would almost be monthly. Poor MAPPA managers had just about got somebody under their wing and understanding the process and then they'd be on to the next job, and they'd have to start all over again... and that can be really draining'. (MAPPA Coordinator)

Parole Board members discussed the importance of having the right representation at hearings. They recognised that because the information they received from MAPPA was not first-hand, there would be merit in having the MAPPA chair attend Parole Board hearings to relay information in a more efficient and effective way. It is currently permitted for Parole Board members to do this; however, practitioners did not seem to be aware of this:



'We need to have MAPPA chairs coming to Parole Board hearings... what would certainly be great is to have a mechanism where what goes on at MAPPA is produced and relayed to Parole Boards in a more efficient way'. (Parole Board Practitioner)

Interestingly, the findings on representation at panel meetings, are in contrast with those of the joint thematic inspection (CJJI, 2022), which found that the move to an online format meant that panel meetings were now well attended by a consistent number of key representatives.

The role of HM Prison Service

Practitioners from other MAPPA agencies reported that the Prison Service did not always engage with MAPPA on the same level as other responsible authority agencies:



'I think from my experience, I've always had a bit of a difficulty with the prison, and not turning up. I think there's been times where either a MAPPA F won't be completed or there's nobody from the prison represented. And I think that, from my point of view, my head would be on a stick if I didn't turn up to MAPPA, it's mandatory'. (Probation Practitioner)

One of the reasons cited by probation practitioners for this lack of engagement was that the Prison Service's management of individuals stops once they leave the prison:



'I do feel that a lot of it is because once they leave the prison, 'it's not our problem'. I do think there's that sort of cut-off point from the prison staff that then it's not their problem, so they don't really need to get that involved'. (Probation Practitioner)

Interestingly, Prison Service practitioners recognised that they were viewed as 'difficult to engage' and felt this was a consequence of the lack of 'buy in' to MAPPA at a senior level:

'Prisons may not be being valued. I think that ends up being kind of cyclical because I find, certainly amongst prison senior management, they view MAPPA as a thing that's nice to engage with, rather than something that is an absolute must to engage with. MAPPA haven't valued prison input as much as they should. I do think that there are so many overriding priorities within the prison walls that MAPPA just isn't part of their individual agendas'. (Prison Service Practitioner)



Whilst there was a perceived divide between the Prison Service and the other responsible authority agencies, some practitioners felt that this was because prisons simply did not have the capacity or the resources to engage with MAPPA on the same level as other responsible authority agencies:

'I think every prison is different but I do think they, they're completely different in the way they operate, and I think sometimes staff are trying their best, but people do physically try to join meetings who couldn't do it, because they didn't have a laptop, they didn't have Teams...there's all these practical issues as well which I think prison colleagues are coming up against'. (Police Practitioner)



Despite the implementation of the Prison Technology Transformation Programme in 2021/22, which included the improved provision of digital capability for prison practitioners, at the time of the research in May 2021, IT issues and access to equipment were creating issues.

Practitioners remarked that MAPPA is only as effective as its component parts. When agencies fail to attend panel meetings, fail to send the right representation or fail to appreciate the importance of the meetings, MAPPA's effectiveness can be greatly affected and cases stall at unnecessarily high levels of management.

Recommendations

- The National MAPPA team should consider how best they can support SMBs to encourage and safeguard consistent and appropriate level attendance by all agencies at panel meetings
- HM Prison Service should be supported to make the best use of MAPPA

Theme 5: An increase in MAPPA managed individuals

Over the last decade, there has been a steady increase in the number of individuals managed under MAPPA (Ministry of Justice, 2021). This increase is primarily a result of a greater number of Category 1 individuals, due to increases in people being sentenced for historic sexual offences and the notification requirement for those convicted of sex offences for increasingly longer terms. This increase was very often referred to by practitioners, who felt that a number of other factors had added to this (i.e., MAPPA resourcing and a shortage of accommodation).

MAPPA resourcing

One potential cause discussed by practitioners was the gradual but significant increase in the complexities of the individuals they were managing:



'Every single case is hugely complex and very different... I mean there seems to be increasing mental health-related crime issues, domestic violence issues'. (Probation Practitioner).

This increasing complexity was also considered to be a significant factor in the increased number of meetings, or increased length of meetings, that were being held. Practitioners stated that MAPPA was becoming increasingly more resource intensive as a result, and the need for sufficient funding was more important than ever:



'It seems like the frequency of meetings is increasing within my area, which does create issues, 'cause I can't be going to meetings as regularly as they may be required'. (Health Practitioner)

One of the difficulties expressed by practitioners regarding complex cases was the increased need for information sharing and collaboration with DTC agencies. However, it was recognised that these agencies did not always have the resources needed to send the right practitioners to panel meetings, something which in turn affected the progress of meetings.

SMB chairs raised significant concerns about the general resourcing of the MAPPA framework. It was agreed that an absence of a clear resource formula prevented SMBs from justifying the need for a greater investment from other agencies. Funding models were considered outdated and in need of revision, particularly as the number of MAPPA-managed individuals continues to rise each year. SMB chairs discussed how MAPPA was still able to be effective despite its historic under-resourcing:



'It does feel like it's working because of, you know, the goodwill of people working together and wanting to make something work rather than it actually being properly resourced and with the proper formula'. (SMB chair)

This is supported by the joint thematic inspection (CJJI, 2022) which found, in some areas, dedicated MAPPA resources were insufficient and placed an increased strain on operational staff, with already high workloads. One under-resourced area of MAPPA, often discussed by practitioners, was the role of the administrator. Practitioners recognised that MAPPA administration is key to the smooth running of the MAPPA framework. However, many discussed how an overstretched and under-resourced administration negatively affected the MAPPA process. Within the largest MAPPA in the sample, administration was considered particularly problematic as administrators were often shared between different areas:



'I don't currently have a MAPPA admin so I've been relying on resources across other areas... I've had to work with having four separate administrators, during the course of a meeting, popping in, taking over, some doing a few cases and then leaving and another one coming...it's very difficult to know who to speak to about what and that's been really challenging'. (Probation Practitioner)

Under-resourcing of this key role was perceived by practitioners as creating inconsistency in practice and delays in receipt of meeting invites and minutes, something that, at times, prevented the right representation at meetings:



'I'm not sure about all the other areas but our MAPPA administrator is part-time, so it might be that the invite needed to go out on a Monday, but she doesn't work until the Wednesday, so simple things like that'. (Probation Practitioner)

Resourcing was also regularly discussed in relation to Probation practitioners' use of, and access to, ViSOR. Despite this being raised as an issue in the Independent Inquiry (Hall, 2020) and in the National ARMS Evaluation (Mann and Lundrigan, 2020), it was abundantly clear from practitioner concerns that this remains a crucial problem that continues to negatively affect an individual's management.

Despite steps over the past three years to roll out ViSOR to an increasing number of Probation practitioners, limited, 'read only' access has made it incredibly difficult to utilise. To date, the updating

of Probation held information on ViSOR has reportedly fallen to administrators who are often an overstretched resource, something which the pandemic has exacerbated in some cases:



'COVID has really put this (ViSOR) to the test, because they've (Probation) only ever had one person trained, and she's had to shield... And because she's got no ViSOR on her home laptop... we've ended up with ridiculous backlogs (of risk assessments and intel)'. (Police Practitioner)

The ongoing issues of the Probation Service's use of ViSOR is incredibly frustrating for police practitioners and has the potential to create serious consequences in the management of an individual:



'Probation, other than OASys getting uploaded now and again and the occasional bits of intel put on by the ViSOR administrator, don't use it (ViSOR). And so when something does go wrong and they look at the ViSOR record and they see that perhaps there's a risk in the information from probation which didn't go on...it just leaves us open, we're on a hiding to nothing'. (Police Practitioner)

Poor access to, and use of, ViSOR was also discussed in the joint thematic inspection (CJJI, 2022), which found that issues relating to information sharing were further compounded by the slow progress made in embedding ViSOR.

Accommodation

Homelessness was also discussed by practitioners as being another fundamental reason why cases 'stalled' at Level 2 and 3. There was frustration that a lack of appropriate accommodation in certain parts of the country meant that individuals' risk levels remained high:



'The frustration I'm getting on the 2s and 3s and also Level 1s is that they've become a Level 2 because of accommodation'. (MAPPA manager)

It was, however, recognised that housing was a difficult problem to solve:

'I'm not unsympathetic to either the local authorities or the housing providers because stock is challenging...sometimes it's because they perhaps don't want a particular individual, but sometimes it's not for want of trying...they do have a very challenging ask, sometimes around the more complex cases'. (SMB chair)



Frustrations regarding accommodation were also felt by housing practitioners themselves. They discussed the unreasonable expectation to place MAPPA managed individuals in any housing available:



'When there's a pressure to place someone, they will sometimes look at our stock... they'll say, well, you advertised that property. What about that for this person? And when speaking to the probation officer, I'll say 'that is a family estate, he's a registered sex offender' and they'll say, 'well, we can manage the risk', and I'll say, 'no, you can't...you're not gonna be given the opportunity to', and then we will clash over that...if that estate found out that we as an organisation, we decided 'oh well, that's alright, we'll put an RSO in there', their trust in us as an organisation drops to the floor, and our reputation is out the window'. (Housing Practitioner)

Some practitioners revealed that Level 3 cases were often raised to Level 3 simply because that level of management can provide the authority to overcome the issue of accommodation:

'I think housing is one of the issues, one of the reasons that some patients are reaching MAPPA 3 because it has more, it holds more sway with housing, if they're under MAPPA 3'. (Health Practitioner)



This is consistent with findings from the joint thematic review (2022:9) which states, 'Cases at Level 2, and particularly at Level 3...can accelerate access to services and, in some cases, gain support that would not have been available otherwise'. However, when housing could be found, it often meant the relocation of MAPPA managed individuals to other areas, which created concern for practitioners:



'We also have the whole issue, particularly up north, about the housing being cheaper and then getting, you know, companies from the south buying up housing in the north and suddenly having a lot of people finding accommodation through these agencies which they've got no local connections or links to at all, which again isn't kind of good for the person, but it also presents a challenge'. (SMB chair)

Relocation out of area for accommodation purposes was considered as 'high risk' by practitioners who discussed concerns around having MAPPA managed individuals isolated in areas where they have no connection or support. The maintenance of prosocial relationships is key to the reduction of risk (McNeill and Weaver, 2010; Farmer et al., 2012; de

Vries Robbé et al., 2015), and moving individuals away from these relationships serves to increase risk and may possibly exceed the risk posed by them remaining homeless:



'We used to all have that bit of 'is there a local connection' and I think that does make sense in terms of case work, because it is much, much better for people to be near people they know and have a bit of a network. But that seems to have gone now...in terms of National Probation Service, we're being told, 'well, actually if the person can't be managed wherever it is they've been before, and there's no house, if they can get a house where you are, that's better than not having a house, even where they don't know people'. (MAPPA Coordinator)

Practitioners' commitment to MAPPA is, at times, frustrated by a lack of basic administration support and by colleagues whose information-sharing ability is hampered by the systems in place within their own agency. Increasing levels of homelessness are creating additional risk and this is perceived as influencing the number of individuals being managed at Level 2 and 3.

Recommendations

- MAPPA funding models should be reviewed



Theme 6: Points of increased risk

Practitioners discussed points in the MAPPA process, which were important to understand in terms of the potential effect they have on increasing an individual's risk. The first of these was the MAPPA management of individuals transitioning from YOS to Probation Service supervision once they turn 18.

Transfer from YOS to probation supervision

The issue of transfer from YOS to Probation supervision was perceived as concerning by many YOS practitioners who recognised that this transition period represented a critical point in management of a young person, where risk was often greatly increased. Whilst this transition is not in itself a MAPPA process, practitioners recognised that MAPPA was essential to the management of the risk posed at this critical point¹⁰.

The transfer of management from YOS to Probation was felt to be characterised by a rapid withdrawal of the wrap-around support that had previously been the nature of their management. Concerns were raised around the heightened risk that the withdrawal of so many protective factors could create. This was often referred to as a 'cliff edge' moment:

YOS practitioners felt that a review of the age threshold for transfer from YOS to Probation was required. Eighteen years of age was considered to be an arbitrary figure that failed to account for the vulnerabilities that these young people still experience:

'Somebody needs to look at this, actually, these kids are still kids at 18. All of a sudden, they're in this different world'. (YOS Practitioner)

'Like we have seconded probation in our team, they should have seconded YOS practitioners in their team, almost like a transition team...so it's kind of a step, but it's not full probation management'. (YOS Practitioner)

'Risk reduction is still very highly linked to relationships and probation are, sadly and woefully, not able, in my opinion, to form those relationships.' (YOS Practitioner)

YOS practitioners expressed feeling a sense of guilt for supporting the young people to such an extent that transfer of management to Probation felt like an abandonment with inevitable consequences of increased risk and reoffending:

'We often do well with bringing these children in, slowly, slowly. And then before you know it, you've got a relationship with them and with their parents. A doorstep visit doesn't cut it, does it?' (YOS Practitioner)

'I sometimes think wow, did we actually set that kid up to fail by giving him all that resource and intervention and that relationship? Or actually is the system now getting it wrong with these young people when they transfer them over and then not giving probation the resource to do that with young people? Or should they be keeping them where they were when they were managing?'. (YOS Practitioner)



¹⁰ It is important to note that the Joint National Protocol for Transitions in England, which provides guidance for managing the cases of children moving from Youth Offending Teams to the Probation Service, was implemented in June 2021, and was not in place at the time of the fieldwork-

Transfer of MAPPA area

The second potentially risk-increasing process identified by practitioners from different agencies, was when a MAPPA managed individual transfers to a different MAPPA area. This created much concern for police and probation practitioners in particular, who felt that all too often MAPPA managed individuals would arrive in their area without prior knowledge and without any processes in place to manage their risk:



'I've had, quite shockingly, two cases transferred in, both of which have arrived on the day they arrived in the area, both of which were managed at MAPPA Level 3. We weren't involved at all in any of the Level 3 discussions'. (Probation Practitioner)

Transfers were also considered high risk for the community receiving the individual. Without necessary planning, risk could not be managed appropriately and the local knowledge provided by practitioners in the receiving area could not be considered:



'I don't think that consideration about the risk management, consideration about the impact on the community is really considered...an [offender] was going to be placed in a shared accommodation... but it's right next door to where a few years ago there was a particularly horrible [offence] attack, and as a result a whole family perished. That is really significant for that community'. (MAPPA manager).

When managing such high levels of risk, practitioners discussed how prior planning both within and outside of MAPPA meetings and continuous communication with the transferring area are essential; when these things do not happen, the consequences can be devastating:



'We had a tragic case... there hadn't really been very much communication even between police forces about this particular individual. He was put in a shared property, there were clear risks that came out after the SFO (serious further offence), and unfortunately, he murdered another person in the house...In an ideal world, I would want to see MAPPA guidance being much more clear about this sort of transitional process. But unfortunately, you still get...areas or cases, in my experience anyway, they just want to say 'out of sight out of mind'. (MAPPA manager)

It was widely felt that a national transfer mechanism or additional guidance on the retention and handover of ownership of MAPPA managed individuals would be highly beneficial. This would reduce the risks that arise from the conflicting approaches that different agencies and different MAPPA areas take to transfers. The latest guidance (MAPPA, 2022) however, remains unchanged from that which practitioners were adhering to at the time of the fieldwork.



'I think this goes to the heart of a perennial problem that MAPPA has always faced, in that the MAPPA guidance is not particularly very clear, I think, about transfer. And what you're then left with is a range of agencies who view transfer from a different perspective, and often have different policies'. (MAPPA Coordinator)

Recommendations

- MAPPA should be used more effectively to manage young people transitioning from youth to adult services.
- MAPPA guidance relating to the transfer of an individual to a different area should be more effectively communicated to, and operationalised by, practitioners.

3.2 How is MAPPA utilising rehabilitative tools and interventions as part of an individual's risk management?

There was a noticeable absence of any discussion during the focus groups of policy and practice around the utilisation of rehabilitative tools and interventions. Whilst practitioners felt that MAPPA managed individuals were adequately considered at panel meetings, this seemed to relate almost exclusively to the consideration of the risk they were considered to pose, and not to the development of protective factors. On the single occasion when this was mentioned, it was in relation to a lack of rehabilitative opportunities for MAPPA managed individuals, which was perceived to be the result of the underfunding and oversubscription of such interventions.

The range of MAPPA documentation analysed for this research project evidenced completion of, or referrals to, HMPPS accredited programmes such as the new sex offending behaviour programmes Horizon and Kaizen, and those that aim to develop prosocial identities, such as Becoming New Me and Living as New Me (Ministry of Justice and HMPPS, 2021a). However, aside from these programmes which are targeted towards specific types of offences, there was a noticeable lack of focus on helping the MAPPA managed individual to develop protective factors within their daily lives which would impact positively on the risk they posed.

The Four Pillars model of RMP has an entire pillar dedicated to treatment and interventions, and whilst all areas were using this template, there was some disagreement as to whether appropriate consideration was given to the needs of the individual in terms of their desistance.



'Is the resettlement and the offender sufficiently addressed in panel meetings? I would say yes, that is one of the primary focuses of every single panel meeting, you know, what arrangements are in place to ensure this'. (Lay advisor)

However, practitioners from non-Four Pillar model areas disagreed:



'One thing I've noticed is often missing is an explicit discussion of the offender, about their priorities and their motivation'. (Lay advisor)

For many of these practitioners, places on training programmes or in interventions were so scarce that no meaningful discussions could be had or decisions made:



'I suppose the challenge that there is...it's about managing expectations. Yeah, I suppose, you know, because of the limited...resources and availability of programmes and all of that kind of stuff on the priority and how those programmes are prioritised and targeted. You know that sometimes does get in the way of being able to sort of rehabilitate as quickly or as fully or as appropriately as possible'.
(Probation Practitioner)

Whilst a distinct section, 'Interventions and Treatment', can be found in the MAPPA RMP, it seems that this is not always given sufficient focus. As individuals managed under MAPPA increasingly present with complex problems and needs, panels will inevitably be forced to place a much greater focus on rehabilitative tools and interventions as a standard part of an individual's management.

Recommendation

- Rehabilitative tools and interventions should become an essential part of an individual's management in all MAPPA areas

3.3. What skills and knowledge do practitioners need to make best use of MAPPA, and what is the best approach to equipping practitioners with those skills and that knowledge?

Practitioners recognised that certain knowledge and a competency in key skills were required to make best use of MAPPA and improve consistency and effective practice. However, it was observed that opportunities to engage in training that would equip practitioners with this knowledge and skill set were lacking, as were any opportunities to discuss and share best practice. This is something highlighted by the latest joint thematic inspection which found that practitioners in prisons, probation, and policing in a range of roles reportedly wanted more training in relation to MAPPA (CJJI, 2022).

Best practice is highlighted in the MAPPA Guidance (2021) with Strategic Management Boards and the Responsible Authority National Steering Group required to promote the effective implementation of best practice across agencies. Despite this, practitioners felt that training and sharing best practice were not prioritised. Indeed, there was generally felt to be limited opportunities for this available to MAPPA practitioners, particularly around the capabilities of different agencies, something that was considered key to effective collaboration:



'I do think it would be helpful if police and probation could understand sometimes some of the things that go on in housing, 'cause I think a lot of police officers think you could just walk into property and say 'right, you're out, get your bags'... So, I think a bit of understanding on both sides would help when it comes to that'.
(Housing Practitioner).

Expectations of MAPPA agencies

From the practitioners' discussions it was apparent that MAPPA panel members would benefit from a better understanding of each other's roles, as well as their remit and limitations within the MAPPA framework. This perceived lack of understanding created tensions at meetings, and this was primarily due to unrealistic expectations regarding what different agencies can provide in terms of service:

'What I find ...is the lack of understanding around what we can do as a service and then action points are made, which is completely out of our remit and basically their expectations of what we can do, especially when trying to manage difficult offenders and managing that risk'. (Social Care Practitioner)

Health practitioners were particularly concerned about the lack of understanding that other agencies had of their role. They discussed how there was an expectation of them to provide a diagnosis that would explain an individual's behaviour and offer a solution. Mental health practitioners felt particularly misunderstood in terms of what they could bring to MAPPA management and discussed how mental health assessments had become a standard action following a panel meeting, and if these were not conducted or did not provide evidence of an individual's perceived mental health, the case was escalated to the SMB:

'There is sometimes an expectation that mental health services have a magic wand, and you can kind of offer any service because the person is, you know, not behaving themselves...I think... 'we're escalating up to MAPPA SMB because we haven't got the answer we want' possibly...It seems almost like a threat'. (Health Practitioner)

A lack of understanding of the roles and responsibilities of other MAPPA agencies, by panel members, perpetuated unrealistic expectations and training was seen as key to resolving this issue. This is something which was also highlighted in the joint thematic inspection which found,

'Some staff also felt a need for multi-agency MAPPA training to help them understand the roles and responsibilities of other agencies involved in MAPPA delivery, particularly mental health agencies and adult social care' (CJJI, 2022:25).

YOS practitioners stressed how important it is that MAPPA practitioners prioritise the vulnerability of young people and promote the voice of both the child and their family in MAPPA meetings. MAPPA was considered an adult-focused forum where young people were treated as 'mini adults', an approach which YOS practitioners felt was not conducive to good management and failed to take account of the child's vulnerabilities:

'Some of these kids are really broken, they've had horrendous upbringings. There's a balance between risk management and seeing them as children and I think that's the issue, they are children... children first and offender second. What we find (at MAPPA meetings) is the questions are adult led or the agencies are adult focused...it won't be CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service) round the table, it will be mental health and they may bring information, but they don't know the child'. (YOS Practitioner)

Parole Board practitioners expressed concerns around the lack of understanding that MAPPA practitioners tended to have of their role and purpose. MAPPA was discussed as an important element of the overall risk assessment of an individual on release, and a better understanding of each other's respective roles was seen as key to more successful collaborative working and information sharing:



**'Increased understanding on the part of MAPPA as to what the Parole Board does and increased understanding on the part of the Parole Board as to what MAPPA actually deals and can do, and what the constraints are operationally on MAPPA'.
(Parole Board Practitioner)**

This was identified as a key training need for practitioners:



**'I think, from a training point of view, for members..., I didn't come from a particular criminal justice background, so you kind of absorbed the MAPPA process organically over time, and I think it's something that, that you know, we definitely could benefit from more training on'.
(Parole Board Practitioner)**

The role or purpose of the SMB was also one that very few practitioners could explain, despite its inclusion in MAPPA guidance. For those who had experienced interaction with the board, their perception of its role was one of authority. It was seen as the last resort when agencies were not collaborating sufficiently. Without clearly communicating the SMB remit in a way that is clear and accessible to MAPPA practitioners, the governance, oversight and support that the SMB could provide was lost. Practitioners highlighted a need for clarity around the role of the board and whom it represents, and that this is essential to the development of a two-way relationship between the SMB and MAPPA practitioners.

Understanding of MAPPA relevant legislation

Practitioners reported how some of the misunderstanding or unrealistic expectations around their roles are sometimes due to a lack of understanding and awareness of MAPPA relevant legislation:



'There's a bit of a lack of understanding about the Mental Health Act and the limitations that we have with that, that we can't assess people for no reason, just on a whim, because they think somebody might have a mental illness'. (Health Practitioner)

**'You do need to know all the categories and actually what the legislation is, like the disclosure legislation'.
(Police Practitioner)**



It was felt that clarification and education on legislation-related issues during MAPPA meetings prevented cases from progressing. This was reportedly very frustrating and many practitioners suggested that MAPPA chairs in particular would benefit from a greater awareness of relevant legislation:



'The MAPPA chair...should be somebody with experience, who has that knowledge ...and an awareness of the housing legislation... And you know about what can and can't be done... So, I do think it works better if the MAPPA chair has that relevant information, knows the information before they are asking that question. So, the meeting isn't used for sort of, you know, teasing out those things'. (Housing Practitioner)

An understanding of housing legislation was considered to be particularly lacking within panel meetings, despite some practitioners offering to run information sessions or informal training:

'In terms of the housing legislation, I've offered several times to deliver training on the housing legislation to our local probation service and to the resettlement officer...and that's just been flatly refused... So, I found that quite frustrating'. (Housing Practitioner)

'Unless you have an established relationship, anybody new coming in to do the MAPPA routine, they will find it quite daunting. I went on leave and we had a MAPPA meeting... so I wanted to send somebody there from the service, but honestly, we've got a massive service but nobody wanted to attend. It's so difficult to try and get someone to go...that confidence wasn't there'. (Housing Practitioner)

New and less experienced panel members

Those who had no previous experience of MAPPA, as well as those who had been part of the MAPPA arena for many years, discussed how daunting MAPPA meetings can be for new members and how that anxiety that many feel only erodes with time and experience:

'Experience does come...if agencies are new MAPPA, they kind of follow the lead of the more experienced individuals at times, sometimes MAPPA is viewed as ... something scary'. (MAPPA Coordinator)

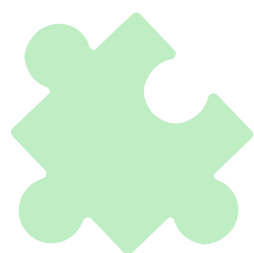
'I found an online training resource, just by Googling it and I looked that up, 'cause I needed something.... Otherwise (the lack of training), I think it could have been quite anxiety provoking' (Health Practitioner)

It was felt by some DTC practitioners that the daunting nature of meetings and the requirement to talk in front of other people potentially deterred some practitioners from attending:

'Other agencies coming to MAPPA, not having a clue. Even with those that are invited to MAPPA, until they participate, if you've got someone new, half of them don't have a clue themselves. So, I think there's a great lack of awareness and understanding, not only within ourselves, but also with our partners about what MAPPA is about'. (Probation Practitioner)

Whilst this is not unique to the MAPPA setting, many discussed how the introduction of training which would equip practitioners with experience of MAPPA meetings and clearer guidance around expectations, would be beneficial:

It was widely recognised that newer panel members tended to participate less than those who had experience, and this was primarily considered to be the result of a general lack of understanding about MAPPA, again due to insufficient training:



The wide-ranging roles, responsibilities and legalities of different agencies within MAPPA were often cited as a reason why no training could ever be sufficient:



'There is no manual that you could ever have because MAPPA is so different day to day on cases. No matter how experienced you are, you're always faced with new challenges, especially when nationally each guidance changes and there's this new sort of thinking around issues. That's really hard'. (Police Practitioner)

Overall, however, the majority felt that practitioners new to panel meetings were too poorly equipped to confidently participate in a meaningful way and this was something more experienced colleagues had identified and taken steps to address:



'Just having a word with new panel members, no matter who they are and just say that you know. Your voice is valued, you know... just reassuring them... Maybe also having that included in, you know, supervision with your managers, and having that as a discussion, building yourself up. Making yourself more experienced and knowledgeable in what you're doing... Some people take a while to speak up and what you don't want to be doing is losing that early on, and not being able to participate how you would like to participate'. (Victim Liaison Practitioner)

Learning from Serious Case Reviews

SCRs are undertaken on a mandatory basis when an individual being managed at Level 2 or 3 commits a serious further offence of murder, attempted murder, manslaughter, rape, or attempted rape. SCRs may also be conducted on a discretionary basis where the individual committed one of the above offences whilst being managed at Level 1; committed a serious further offence included in the PI 10/2011 (see Appendix 6 of MAPPA Guidance, 2022); or it is in the public's interest. The number of SCRs has been increasing since 2016/17. Fifteen SCRs were carried out last year (2020/21. This rise is primarily due to more discretionary cases being reviewed (Ministry of Justice, 2021).

SCRs provide an important resource for practitioner learning. A retrospective appreciation of how things could have worked better is essential to increasing effective practice and avoiding repeated mistakes. Unfortunately, practitioners recognised that the cost, both financially to the SMB and personally to the practitioners involved in the case, far outweighed the benefits of opportunities for learning, which simply weren't being realised:

'I know there have been some serious case reviews, and I've not had any learning for any one of them... We should know the outcomes and it shouldn't necessarily be something that we're frightened of hearing. We make the decisions with the best intention and with the best information we have. The lessons learned need to be shared across the board. I get the sensitivity around them because they are really quite hot, hot stuff, serious case reviews and they might have a different outcome. But definitely lessons learned need to be shared really wide, not just with the panel'. (Prison Service Practitioner)



The MAPPA SCR should establish learning and provide guidance for the future development of MAPPA policies and procedures in order to better protect the public. However, practitioners felt that the communication of learning following SCRs was severely lacking. The only change to practice being realised as a result, was the move towards more risk-averse management:



**'We have to question the extent to which we are creating a risk-averse culture with overly tight oversights that in turn actually create vicious cycles of control and drive down the quality of practice and the confidence of practitioners. We are far too quick to try and point the finger at the individual...and find the scapegoats...rather than to genuinely take an organisational responsibility for driving future performance'.
(Probation Practitioner)**

Practitioners felt that a culture of individual accountability had detracted from the important learning which can stem from SCRs. It was argued that if this imbalance could be addressed, front-line practitioners could be instrumental in effecting positive change. One thing that was apparent throughout this research is the poor availability of SCR reports and the lack of a central repository where these could be held. The national MAPPA team cite the need to protect sensitive information that is contained in the reviews as the reason why no repository has been established. It was hoped that the publication of annual SCR summaries, and the MAPPA practitioner website might encourage learning to be shared. However, from discussions with practitioners, this does not seem to have been the case.

The absence of a national training package

In the absence of any regional or national training packages, some practitioners were resorting to the development of their own materials for training purposes (often sourced from Internet research, something that may potentially add to inconsistent practice across the country:

'I would suggest we're moving away from a position where we're trying to learn lessons a lot of the time ... to one where we're looking for where blame can be attributed...it's great to have a dissection with the intention of learning from a mistake, but we need to absolutely move away from a situation where any blame is attributed'. (Parole Board Practitioner)

**'I was thrown in at the deep end back five years ago, without any training, without any availability of training and that wasn't great. But since then, we have acquired a sort of online package, designed by one of the constabularies and that is good enough to get someone started on MAPPA, but in general we need to have a greater culture of training'.
(Lay advisor)**



Other MAPPA areas seemed to have identified the need for training and had developed comprehensive packages for practitioners as a result:






'I was very keen to get people involved, not necessarily in training, but in information giving. I was very keen on sessions that really drill home the strategic importance of practical implications of MAPPA and the responsibilities of local authorities to sort of cut across. We do get additional training put on. In fact, I'm attending some training next week to do with autism, which is great. We've also talked about training trainers within organisations'. (Lay advisor)

Where areas were offering their own training, there were concerns that this may add to inconsistencies in practice across the country. Practitioners felt that training events and opportunities to network and share best practice should be organised on a national level via the delivery of a training package:



'There would be added value... maybe an annual MAPPA conference or something... Yeah, training, where you can maybe share some lessons learned, some high-profile cases where a serious case review identified that agencies could have worked better together'. (Prison Service Practitioner)




'The opportunity to share about issues I think is what's lacking, and you do learn there's something different happening all the time and you don't know; doesn't matter how long you've been around. Everything changes... and you don't know the answer to everything'. (SMB chair)

The recent joint thematic inspection (CJJI, 2022:25) found that 45% of MAPPA practitioners spoken to, felt that their organisation had not provided them with adequate MAPPA training, again highlighting the need for a more coordinated approach to the issue. A training package should seek to prepare new panel members via training on the aims, purposes and processes of the MAPPA framework, as well as practical input on preparing and presenting cases (CJJI, 2022: 25). It should support the continued learning of existing members via training on common processes such as making referrals, managing and sharing information, maximising collaborative working, and the roles and responsibilities of DTC agencies. It should also seek to share best practice and the learning communicated via the examination of SCR findings, which, at present, can only be shared via the MAPPA Improvement Group (MIG), the MAPPA website or via SMBs; routes which practitioners do not seem to be sufficiently aware of.

Both initial and ongoing training are essential to consistent and informed practice, and whilst any training package developed for practitioners new to MAPPA should be introduced on a national level, with consistent delivery across the country, SMBs should be responsible for the dissemination of continued professional development training within their local area in order to ensure greater engagement between SMBs and MAPPA practitioners.

Recommendations

- A MAPPA training package should be developed which addresses the deficits in current training and CPD needs, which have been identified in this research
- The MAPPA Improvement Group and SMB boards need to more effectively communicate [the learning obtained from SCRs to frontline practitioners
- Parole Board practitioners should be provided with opportunities to learn about MAPPA and its relevance for parole hearings
- Practitioners from all agencies need to be better informed about the information and resources available to them via the MAPPA website

3.4. How is Category 3 used for discretionary referrals?

Referrals for Category 3 management can be made by any responsible authority or duty to cooperate agency and are considered by the relevant MAPPA on a discretionary basis. Analysis conducted on the 40 referrals that were declined for Category 3 management revealed several interesting findings.

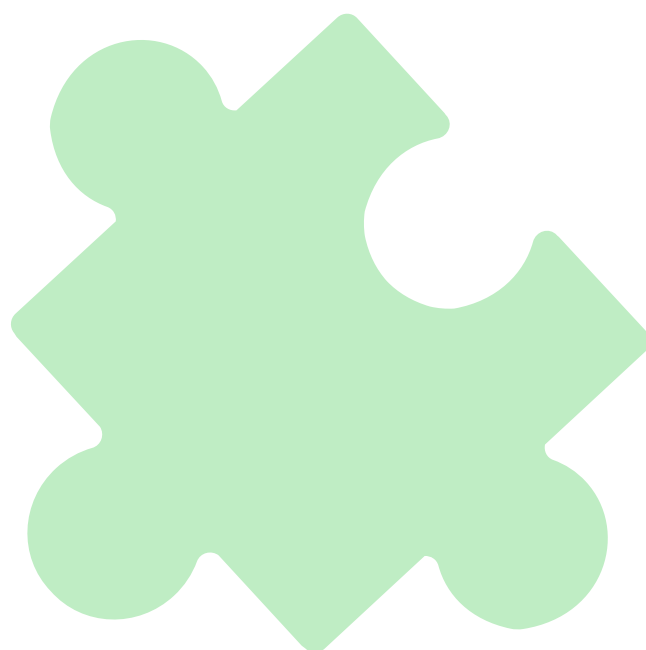
Offending.

Sixty-two different index offences were recorded, the four most common of which were assault (29%), criminal damage (11%), battery (5%) and breach of restraining order (5%). Amongst the multitude of offences committed by the sample during their offending histories, domestic abuse was particularly prevalent and was directly referred to in 55% of cases. Of these, 9% had committed offences against their partner; 14% had committed offences against their partner, their family and their own or a partner's child; and 48% had committed offences against their immediate family (parents, grandparents, siblings). For 37% of the referrals, there were either clear sexual motivations for offending or the disclosure of the commission of sexual offences that had not resulted in a conviction.

Reasons for referral.

Table 8 presents the seven reasons most frequently provided for Category 3 referral, which broadly relate to three main areas:

- The current risk posed by the individual (i.e., poses very high risk of harm as defined by agency specific risk assessment tool; offending has recently escalated)
- The need for multi-agency cooperation to manage the risk posed by the individual (i.e., multi-agency approach required for robust RMP; currently/will be released with no multi-agency management; need for improved information sharing and accountability)
- The individual's safeguarding and desistance (i.e., individual is highly vulnerable; treatment/rehabilitation required)



Reasons for referral	Frequency of reason within sample referrals, % (n)
Multi-agency approach required for robust RMP	16 (7)
Need for improved information sharing/accountability	10 (4)
Offending has recently escalated	9 (3)
Poses very high risk of harm meetings	9 (3)
Individual is highly vulnerable	9 (3)
Treatment/rehabilitation required	5 (2)
Currently/will be released with no multi-agency management	5 (2)

Table 8: Reasons for referral to Category 3

The first two areas encompass the main aims and purposes of MAPPA management.

The third, however, is more aligned to the interventions and treatment pillar within the RMP.

Rationale for declined referrals. The reasons provided for declined referrals varied in nature. However, the two most common were that the case did not meet the threshold for Level 2 management or there was uncertainty as to the value MAPPA could bring.

The research team are not MAPPA experts, nor are they experienced practitioners, however, when analysing the 40 declined referrals against the 2021 MAPPA criteria and threshold guidance, we felt that in 60% (n = 24) of cases, MAPPA Category 3 management should have been offered. Of these:

- 52% were for those who had committed domestic abuse offences
- 13% were for those who had demonstrated sexual motivations for offending or had disclosed the commission of undetected sexual offences
- 22% were for those who had committed domestic abuse offences but who's offending also demonstrated sexual motivation, or who had also disclosed the commission of undetected sexual offences

The joint thematic inspection (CJJI, 2022) found that despite MAPPA guidance now encouraging the use of Category 3 in relevant domestic abuse cases, this had not become routine practice, particularly for those individuals who commit lower-level, prolonged offending. This is consistent with the findings from this research which found that 74% of declined referrals which the research team felt should have been accepted, involved the perpetration of domestic abuse. Further examination of the declined referrals where the individual had committed domestic abuse offences highlighted that only 52% had MARAC (multi-agency risk assessment conferences) involvement, meaning that the remaining individuals had no multi-agency oversight at all. The Probation Service was responsible for 85% of the referrals for individuals who had committed domestic abuse offences; the most cited reasons for referral decline can be seen in Table 9. Alongside 'not meeting the criteria or threshold for Level 2', the most cited reason was that multi-agency involvement was already established and 'it was not clear what value MAPPA management would bring'. It seems that whilst the offences themselves are considered appropriate by those deciding on discretionary Category 3 referrals, an absence of a Level 1 management option in this category and unclear justification for the value added by MAPPA management within the referral, results in their decline.

Reasons cited in MAPPA A for unsuccessful probation DV referrals	Frequency of reason within sample referrals (%)
Does not meet threshold for Level 2 management	24%
MAPPA not needed at this stage/multi-agency involvement already in place	21%
Does not meet criteria for Level 2 management	18%
Not clear what value MAPPA could bring to management	15%

Table 9: Reasons for unsuccessful Probation Service referrals for those who have committed domestic abuse offences

Quality of referrals.

While no formal quality assurance screening was undertaken, the following commonly occurring issues were observed:

Referrals were not clear and concise

The most important section of the MAPPA A relates to why the referral is being made. It is here that the referring agency needs to clearly evidence why MAPPA Level 2 or 3 management is required and what value it will bring to the management of the individual. This was, however, the most poorly answered section in the sample referrals. Often this section repeated information from elsewhere, was cut and pasted from other sections, or simply listed the MAPPA eligible offences that had been committed. Evidence from practitioners during focus group discussions suggests that in order to reduce the time spent on referral completion, short cuts, such as 'cut and paste', are often utilised. This is somewhat of a false economy as the standard of the referral and the evidence included within it are essential to the decision-making of the screening team.

A large number of the referrals were written in a narrational style that documented the complete history of the individual. These referrals were lengthy and required a great deal of reading and processing before key information on risk of harm and evidence for Category 2 or 3 management was highlighted. In some cases, it remained unclear why MAPPA management would be beneficial.

The severity or prolific nature of offending was not clearly communicated

A number of referrals failed to clearly highlight the severity and prolific nature of offending. This was particularly evident where the individual had committed a high number of domestic abuse offences. Referral forms documented a large number of 'DV callouts' but failed to effectively communicate the threat and extent of the offending. The most notable example was where the comment 'is very likely to commit domestic homicide' was secreted amongst a mass of other information.

The MAPPA A form is a substantial document but if completed concisely and effectively, it should not be overly onerous for agencies to complete. It seems that practitioners from all referring agencies would greatly benefit from enhanced guidance or training on what evidence and information is required in the different sections of the form and how to document that concisely. This would not only decrease the onerousness of the task but would also increase the number of successfully adopted referrals.

This analysis of the 40 declined referrals suggests that, in three out of the five sample areas, individuals who the research team considered good candidates for Category 3 management were not currently being managed under MAPPA, despite our perception that they met the criteria. A significant number of individuals who 1) had committed domestic abuse offences, 2) whose offences were sexually motivated or who had disclosed the commission of sexual offences that had not resulted in a conviction, and 3) whose offending

incorporated both of these aspects had not been adopted under MAPPA. From the analysis, it seems that in most cases, MAPPA screening teams declined these referrals on the basis that Level 2 or 3 management was not necessary or that multi-agency involvement via MARAC or IOM (Integrated Offender Management) was already present. These findings are consistent with those of the joint thematic inspection (CJJI, 2022) which found that criteria and guidance are being too narrowly interpreted in some areas, resulting in the underuse of MAPPA. The analysis also highlights that practitioners are referring to MAPPA for assistance with the safeguarding and desistance of individuals, as evidenced in the reasons for referrals (Table 6).

Two areas had no declined referrals because their policies differed. One area automatically accepted Category 3 referrals unless they were of poor quality, and had, since 2020, promoted the use of Category 3 in relation to domestic abuse and serious group offending. The other had a pre-screening process in place that allowed referring practitioners an opportunity to discuss the referral before completing the necessary paperwork. These areas had seen a 50% rise in the number of individuals being managed under Category 3, however, two out of the three remaining areas had also seen increases in their Category 3 managed individuals.

Recommendations

- Practitioners from referring agencies should be exposed to best practice in writing MAPPA referrals
- Level 1 management should be introduced within Category 3 to ensure the risk posed by domestic abuse perpetrators and those whose offending is sexually motivated can be managed under MAPPA

3.5. How closely do panel meeting minutes and RMPs align with the guidance for completion (MAPPA, 2021) and are there sections where information relevant to risk is missed?

The characteristics of the 48 individuals whose MAPPA B (meeting minutes and RMP) documents were included in the sample are detailed below:

- 90% of individuals were male; 10% were female
- The youngest individual was 19 years old, and the oldest was 67
- Individuals' ethnicity was predominantly White (58%), followed by Black British (15%), Irish (4%) and Pakistani (4%)
- 54% of individuals were being supervised in the community by Probation; 40% were in prison and 4% were in a care or hospital setting¹¹

The key sections in the form where it was identified that information could possibly be missed or overlooked were 1) MAPPA actions for review, 2) information from agencies and discussions, 3) additional actions, 4) contingency plans, 5) considerations of child safeguarding and victim

safety, and 6) agreed risk assessment summary. For each heading the purpose of the MAPPA section and the data omitted or overlooked is discussed.

MAPPA actions for review

This is a key section where actions arising from previous meetings should be cut and pasted and included with a record of what action was taken, the date it was undertaken and whether any further action is required along with any outcome from the action. The timely completion of these actions is essential to the accountability of MAPPA agencies and the risk management of the individual because they relate to issues that the panel felt were important to address, either for the safety of potential victims and the public or to better manage the individual. Whilst in 73% (n = 35) of cases, these actions were completed or progressed and an update provided, in 27% (n = 13) of cases this did not happen, and these actions would not have been discussed any further. This is particularly concerning when one considers that the actions related to important matters such as disclosure, mental health assessments and accommodation requests.



¹¹ Totals do not equal 100% due to rounding

Information from agencies and discussion

This section is perhaps one of the most important in the document as it is here that updated information from all agencies involved in the individual's management is recorded. This section details new or changing risks, current concerns and general information, all of which is essential to an up-to-date RMP. The coding framework examined whether updated information was filtered through to the management of an individual by examining whether new risks identified in this section were documented in the RMP. The analysis shows that in nearly a third of cases (31%, $n = 15$), updated information on risk was not documented in the RMP. Omitted information was heterogeneous in nature but broadly related to three main areas:

- **An increase in risk factors.** This included the omission of information relating to: concerns for an individual's mental health; incidents of self-harming; unwillingness or a lack of engagement with supervision; ceasing medication; deteriorating presentation and self-hygiene; increased extremist view; sexualised behaviours and an unwillingness to manage child sexual fantasies. One MAPPA B documented in the 'Information from agencies and discussion' section that the individual being managed had been reported to the Police for following a sex worker. This new information was vital to the consideration of increasing risk as the index offence was murder and disclosed but unconvicted rape. However, this information was not referred to again and did not feature in the RMP despite this document being the primary focus of MAPPA management.
- **Disclosed commission of offences or breach of SHPO.** This included the omission of important information on an individual masturbating in public having watched children in the park; committing indecent exposure; having multiple social media accounts; and having possible access to children.
- **Support for the MAPPA managed individual.** This included the omission of information that would have been useful for the ongoing support of an individual and included such things as loss of accommodation; a new mental health diagnosis; and a new learning disability diagnosis.

Additional actions

This section is important in safeguarding the completion of actions arising from the meeting. It is in this section that agreed actions should be recorded and assigned to a particular agency and individual within that agency. The timescale for completion of the action should also be included. The analysis found that in 27% ($n = 13$) of cases, additional actions documented in the meeting minutes were not documented in the additional actions section. Once again, omitted actions varied in nature, but included the following:

- Public Protection unit to be informed of individual and manage sex offender registration and notification
- Offender manager to explore support options for the managed individual
- Obtaining information on GP assessment
- Referral to Child Sexual Abuse team
- Obtaining more information on a managed individual's social media use
- Managed individual to be given formal warning
- Production of care plan
- Safeguarding assessment of new partner and her child

Contingency plans

Risk is a dynamic factor that can change at any moment. It is, therefore, important that practitioners plan for changes in risk and detail what would happen if those risk-increasing behaviours/factors occurred. The contingency plan section of the MAPPA B is intended to do just that, and this is where alternative outcomes are considered and measures for managing those outcomes documented. The analysis shows that whilst the contingency plan section always included some information, in 35% ($n = 17$) of cases there was no documented detail on what would increase an individual's risk and therefore no plan for what actions may need to be operationalised in response.

Considerations of child safeguarding and victim safety

Victims and potentially vulnerable children are an essential consideration within the MAPPA framework and this was reflected in the analysis of the MAPPA Bs. In 93% (45 cases) of cases, child safeguarding had clearly been considered. Victim safety had also been clearly considered in 96% (46 cases) of cases.

Agreed risk assessment summary

This section of the MAPPA B focuses on key areas of risk in order to provide a summarised version of the agreed risk assessment. Overall, this section of the form was completed appropriately, with sufficient information on who is at risk, the nature of the risk, factors that will increase risk and a consideration of protective factors. Whilst the sections in the agreed risk assessment summary were clearly completed in most cases, where actions or information had not been included in the RMP they had not been included in this section either. As such, although clearly completed, detail on who is at risk, the nature of the risk and factors that are likely to increase risk were not always based on the most recent information.



Other observations

The following commonly occurring issues were observed:

Length of document. The MAPPA Bs were very lengthy documents that often contained sections that were cut and pasted from other parts of the form or from existing reports or databases, despite MAPPA Guidance (2021) discouraging this practice. This influenced the relevancy of the information as some sections did not contain the exact information required and often contained more detail than was necessary.

Missing or outdated information. It was noted that the forms were often missing details in some sections, despite these having been recorded elsewhere in the form. This most often occurred in relation to the names and ages of children considered to be at risk. In some forms, whole sections, such as contingency planning, were missing information, and in others, risk assessments had not been completed or were out of date.

Incorrectly recorded information. In some forms, details relating to family members or those considered at risk from the individual were inconsistently documented throughout the form. This most often occurred in relation to the documentation of forenames and dates of birth. In some cases, details regarding the offences committed by the MAPPA-managed individual were also recorded incorrectly. One MAPPA B stated that an individual had raped a customer of his taxi service as well as a colleague at his workplace, yet information in the RMP then incorrectly stated that all victims had been work colleagues.

The analysis of the 48 MAPPA Bs across the five sample areas has identified key areas where information on risk is missed and not carried through to the day-to-day management of an individual and has found that panel meeting minutes and RMPs do not always align to the guidance for completion (MAPPA, 2021). Whilst the sample size was too small to observe any

variation across categories and levels, findings suggest that in general, there are a number of areas where information on risk was missing and consequently that information was not used to inform the RMP. Good meeting minutes and fully informed RMPs are essential to the effectiveness of the MAPPA framework. It is within these forms that all the necessary information about the risk an individual poses is documented. To be effective, these accounts need to be accessible, and the reader should be able to gain a good understanding of the risk posed by looking at the RMP alone. The analysis of the MAPPA Bs demonstrates how the nature of the document and the amount of information included within it can make it an inaccessible document. It can be difficult to identify the most recent information within the wealth of detail included from previous minutes, and practitioners unable to attend a panel meeting would be required to read through large amounts of detail in order to extrapolate the information relevant to current risk. This finding is fully supported by the thematic inspection which found the MAPPA B template cumbersome, and reporting that current actions were difficult to distinguish from previous ones (CJJI, 2022).

The common practice of cutting and pasting information from other reports or sections contributes to the lengthy, verbose documents, something that was also evidenced in the analysis of the Category 3 declined referrals. This practice is utilised in order to reduce the time taken to complete the form. However, it results in overly protracted accounts of offending, at the expense of concise and accessible information on risk.

Panel meetings are characterised by complex and comprehensive discussions about individuals who pose the greatest risk or whose management requires extensive multi-agency collaboration. As such, there is a great deal of information that needs to be recorded. It seems, however, that at present the process involved in capturing that information in the minutes and RMP is not always effective.

Recommendations

- The most recent discussion, and information relating to risk, should be easily identifiable within panel meeting minutes.
- The SMB in each MAPPA area should conduct quality assurance checks on samples of MAPPA B documents (both meeting minutes and RMPs) to ensure that the issues identified in this research do not/have not become commonplace





Strengths and Limitations

The current research has several strengths and builds on previous studies in the following ways:

- Included DTC agency practitioners and key MAPPA practitioners (i.e., SMB chairs, lay advisors) within focus groups
- Examined five case study areas
- Utilised a large sample of practitioners
- Examined MAPPA effectiveness at a time of national disruption due to the Covid pandemic



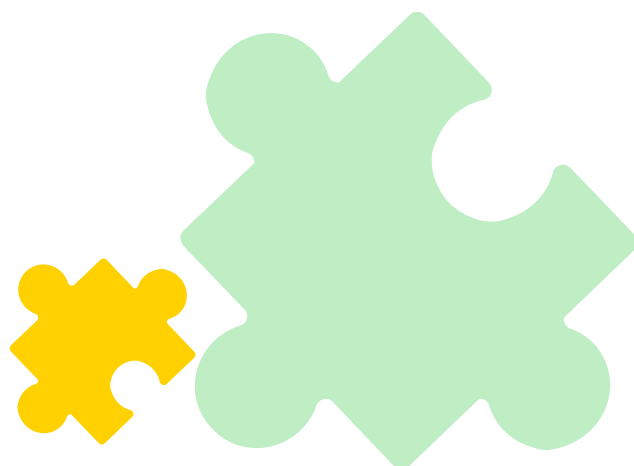
It is also important to document the potential limitations of the study, which may impact on the generalisability of the findings. Firstly, whilst the five areas that participated in the study represented a range of geographical and population characteristics, they may not be representative of all 42 MAPPA areas. As such, the themes discussed by the practitioners in the research should be interpreted as broadly indicative of practitioners' perceptions of MAPPA across England and Wales, and not definitive.

Second, those practitioners who volunteered to participate in the research may not be entirely representative of all practitioners working within MAPPA. Whilst every effort was made to include a range of participants within the focus groups, those who volunteered to take part may have been likely to do so if they had opinions which they felt were important to communicate. It may be that participants were more likely to represent those who had particularly positive or particularly negative experiences and perceptions of MAPPA. As such the findings cannot be generalised to the entire practitioner population.

Third, much of the research organisation and fieldwork took place between March 2020 and March 2021 at the time of the Covid pandemic and resulting lockdowns. The pandemic had a severe impact on the Criminal Justice System in England and Wales, necessitating the introduction of new working practices, including new remote-working technologies, protocols for high-risk offences and an increased focus on facilitating collaborative working across agencies. The transition to remote working resulted in delays, and increased

case backlogs. The pandemic also resulted in considerable staffing issues within the Probation Service, with 60% of probation officers working above 100% workload targets (HM Inspectorate of Probation, 2021). Furthermore, the research was originally designed to incorporate an examination of the perceptions and understanding of those managed under MAPPA; unfortunately, this element of the research had to be omitted due to the restrictions in place as a result of the pandemic. Participants were to be identified via probation and police practitioners; however, the exceptional working models that agencies were working to meant that there was insufficient opportunity to talk to possible participants and promote the research. Whilst this was disappointing, the work of Weaver and Barry (2014) and Wood et al., (2007) provides an excellent account of the individual's experiences of MAPPA management. This is also an area briefly covered by the latest joint thematic inspection of MAPPA (CJJI, 2022).

Lastly, during the latter stages of this research, the Probation Service was unified, having been separated in 2014 into a public sector organisation, (the National Probation Service (NPS)), which managed high-risk individuals, and 21 private Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs) which supervised 150,000 low- to medium-risk individuals. This unification resulted in an influx of probation officers who had no previous experience of MAPPA management and required training, something that placed pressure on existing practitioners.





Conclusion

The aim of this research was to examine practitioner perceptions of the effectiveness of MAPPA, the use of discretion in Category 3 referrals and the alignment of MAPPA panel meeting minutes and RMPS to the guidance for completion (MAPPA, 2021), in order to evaluate the process effectiveness of MAPPA.



5.1 Focus groups

Focus group discussions found that MAPPA is a well-respected and highly valued mechanism for managing the risk posed by individuals convicted of sexual and violent offences. Practitioners welcome the multi-agency approach and value the opportunity to come together to discuss risk. Despite having competing priorities and differing understandings of risk, decisions made by MAPPA practitioners are based on experience, skill, and the guidance and legislation which underpin the arrangements. Practitioners are dedicated to making MAPPA as effective as possible and have a desire to hone the skills required to make best use of it.

Focus group discussion highlighted the highly complex and resource intensive nature of MAPPA, which is reliant on well-established working relationships and effective multi agency working, for its success. Whilst the Police and Probation Service are able to commit thoroughly to their role as MAPPA responsible authorities, focus group discussions found that the Prison Service has struggled to contribute to the same extent. Practitioners perceive this to be a result of a lack of appreciation for MAPPA at Prison Service management level.

Discussions identified two critical points perceived by practitioners as being 'cliff edge' moments in the management of an individual. These related to the role of MAPPA during transfer of management: firstly, from YOS to Probation Service supervision, and secondly, from one MAPPA area to another. The processes in place to manage risk at these points were perceived to be insufficient, with communication and an overstretched Probation Service adding to practitioner concerns.

5.2. Category 3 referrals

The analysis of the declined Category 3 referrals found that a lack of Level 1 management for Category 3 has resulted in individuals being declined for MAPPA management when the nature of their offending and their risk indicates that they should be managed under the arrangements. A number of individuals with domestic violence offences, whose offending was sexually motivated, had been declined for MAPPA management because they did not meet the criteria for Level 2. The analysis also found that practitioners are referring to MAPPA in order to facilitate change in the lives of individuals. Whilst the MAPPA RMP has a dedicated section on treatment and interventions, there was little evidence to suggest that this aspect of an individual's management was being considered to the same extent as the risk they posed.

5.3. Panel meeting minutes and RMPs

The analysis of the panel meeting minutes and RMPs found that in nearly a third of cases (31%, 15 cases), updated information on risk was not documented in the RMP. In 27% (13 cases) of cases, additional actions discussed in the meeting minutes were not documented in the additional actions section, or agreed actions were not completed or progressed. In 35% (17 cases) of cases, there was no documented detail on what would increase an individual's risk within the contingency planning section. This analysis has identified key sections where information on risk is missed and not carried through to the day-to-day management of an individual and has found that panel meeting minutes and RMPs do not always align to the guidance for completion (MAPPA, 2021).



Recommendations

This research has identified several areas which, if addressed, could increase the effectiveness of MAPPA management. Two primary recommendations are made, followed by 15 secondary recommendations (see Table 10).



Recommendation	Primary	Secondary
Level 1 management should be introduced within Category 3 to ensure the risk posed by domestic abuse perpetrators and those whose offending is sexually motivated can be managed under MAPPA	✓	
A MAPPA training package should be developed which addresses the deficits in current training and CPD which have been identified within this research	✓	
The National MAPPA team should provide greater clarity on the use of Level 2 management and Category 3 eligibility		✓
More effective multi-agency working should be encouraged within MAPPA Level 1 cases		✓
The National MAPPA Team should provide clear guidance on agencies' powers to share information under MAPPA, in light of the new legislation		✓
The National MAPPA team should consider how best they can support SMBs to encourage and safeguard consistent and appropriate level attendance by all agencies at panel meetings		✓
HM Prison Service should be supported to make the best use of MAPPA		✓
MAPPA funding models should be reviewed		✓
MAPPA should be used more effectively to manage young people transitioning from youth to adult services		✓
Guidance relating to the transfer of a MAPPA managed individual to a different area should be more effectively communicated to, and operationalised by, practitioners		✓
Rehabilitative tools and interventions should become an essential part of an individual's management in all MAPPA areas		✓
The MAPPA Improvement Group and SMB boards need to more effectively communicate the findings obtained from SCRs to frontline practitioners		✓
Parole Board practitioners should be provided with opportunities to learn about MAPPA and its relevance for parole hearings		✓
Practitioners from all agencies need to be better informed about the information and resources available to them via the MAPPA website		✓
Practitioners from referring agencies should be exposed to best practice in writing MAPPA referrals		✓
The most recent discussion, and information relating to risk, should be easily identifiable within panel meeting minutes.		✓
The SMB in each MAPPA area should conduct quality assurance checks on samples of MAPPA B documents (both meeting minutes and RMPs) to ensure that the issues identified in this research do not/have not become commonplace		✓

Table 10: Recommendations



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