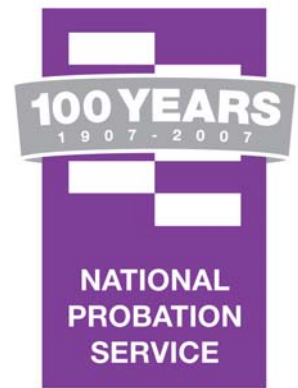


Probation Circular



PC17/2007 – ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF SEX OFFENDERS

IMPLEMENTATION DATE: 1 July 2007

EXPIRY DATE: 1 July 2010

TO: Chairs of Probation Boards, Chief Officers of Probation, Secretaries of Probation Boards

CC: Board Treasures, Regional Managers

AUTHORISED BY: Gordon Davison, Acting Head of Public Protection and Licensed Release Unit

ATTACHED: N/A

RELEVANT PREVIOUS PROBATION CIRCULARS:

PC56/2003, PC31/2005, PC09/2007

CONTACT FOR ENQUIRIES:

Mark Farmer - mark.farmer5@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

Janet Cockerham – janet.cockerham@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

PURPOSE

This Circular gives further advice on the use of Risk Matrix 2000 (RM2000).

It also advises Areas of a new end of programme report format for accredited sex offender programmes, the Structured Assessment of Risk and Need (SARN)

Finally it restates the position regarding consultancy from the Lucy Faithfull Foundation for probation officers working with certain high risk male sex offenders and with female sex offenders

ACTION

Areas to:

1. Note the information regarding RM2000, conduct an internal audit and create an action plan to ensure adequate numbers of staff are trained in RM2000 by April 2008.
2. Prepare for the implementation of SARN reports and arrange for relevant staff to be trained
3. Ensure all relevant staff are aware of the Lucy Faithfull Foundation consultancy arrangements

SUMMARY

This Circular gives guidance on the use of RM2000 and requires Areas to undertake audit and action planning with regard to RM2000. It also gives information on the Structured Assessment of Risk and Need, which is to replace end of programme reports for accredited sex offender programmes. It advises of training arrangements and of arrangements for identification of suitable individuals to act in a limited capacity as national trainers. Finally it advises of consultancy available to offender managers in work with certain male sex offenders and with female sex offenders.

Equality Impact Assessments have been produced for following policy areas contained in the PC: RM2000 training, SARN and Lucy Faithfull consultancy. They are available separately from Mark Farmer, contact details above, on request.

Risk Matrix 2000

Risk Matrix 2000 (RM2000) is an evidence-based risk assessment tool, using static factors, for men over 18 with at least one conviction for a sexual offence. The conviction must have taken place when the offender was over the age of 16. It predicts the likelihood of reconviction for a sexual or violent offence in the long term (up to 15 years). It is useful to predict which offenders are most likely to be reconvicted and thus who require greater resources to manage their risk. It should therefore be used in the following circumstances:

1. All pre-sentence and parole reports on sex offenders.
2. As part of the assessment of offenders for accredited sex offender programmes, as specified in the programme manuals for those programmes.
3. As the first part of the Structured Assessment of Risk and Need described below.

RM2000 should not be used to determine risk in specific circumstances such as whether to allow a father to return home to his children.

Where used in pre-sentence and parole reports it should be used to inform the risk assessment. If it is referred to by name a fuller explanation of what it is and what it does should be given, along the following lines, which may be adapted to suit the circumstances of the report:

“Mr. X. has been assessed as falling into the Very High/High/Medium/Low risk category using Risk Matrix 2000/S. Risk Matrix 2000/S is an evidence-based risk assessment tool used by probation, prisons and police services, which predicts likelihood of reconviction for a sexual offence. In long term follow up research approximately 60%/40%/20%/10% of men falling into this category were reconvicted for a sexual offence over a period of up to 15 years. Actual rates of re-offending will exceed the rate of reconviction.”

RM2000 should only be used by staff who have completed and passed an RM2000 training course. A national survey completed recently by the NOMS Public Protection Unit (PPU) indicates that many areas do not have sufficient staff trained in RM 2000 for the minimum circumstances outlined above. All areas need to develop action plans to ensure that they will have sufficient capacity by 1st April 2008. This will mean that training in RM 2000 must be given a high priority in the year ahead. Training can only be delivered by those who have completed the appropriate ‘Train the Trainers’ programme and it will be helpful for areas to work collaboratively on a regional basis and in partnership with the Prison Service to make best use of existing trainers. PPU is providing additional Train the Trainers opportunities in July and October 2007. These events will be advertised shortly in the normal way via the Midlands Consortium. It should be noted that in order to maintain consistency it has been agreed with Dr David Thornton, the author of RM2000, that RM2000 trainers will only be trained via one of these nationally run training events provided by PPU, and not by any other route. It is not acceptable, therefore, for Areas or Regions to run their own train the trainer events.

Action required

Areas should audit their requirements for staff trained in RM2000 to meet the needs outlined above. They should then formulate an action plan in order to ensure that they have adequate staff trained to use RM2000 by April 2008.

Use of RM2000 with violent offenders.

RM2000 has three components, the S scale which predicts sexual reconviction, the V scale which predicts violent reconviction, and the C scale which combines the two. Until recently trainees were advised that the V scale could only be used for offenders with at least one conviction for a sexual offence. However recent research by Dr. David Thornton, the developer of RM2000, shows that the V scale can be used as a predictor of violent reconviction for violent offenders who do not have a conviction for a sexual offence. Details of the research are given in the latest version of the RM2000 manual.

NOMS has commissioned two research projects which will, amongst other things, review assessment tools for instrumentally violent offenders. Until the outcome of the research is known the PPU is not able to endorse the use of the RM2000 V scale as an assessment tool for violent offenders who do not have a conviction for a sexual offence.

Structured Assessment of Risk and Need (SARN) – background.

There are currently four accredited sex offender programmes:

- Community Sex Offender Programme (CSOGP)
- Thames Valley Sex Offender Programme (TVP)
- Northumbria Sex Offender Programme (NSOGP)
- Internet Sex Offender Programme (iSOTP)

When these programmes were introduced staff were trained to write end of programme reports as part of the programme training. This report format is now to be replaced with the Structured Assessment of Risk and Need (SARN) report. The SARN report format was developed in the prison service to act as an evidence-based assessment of both progress in treatment and future treatment needs. The final SARN report contains information that is gathered throughout the treatment programme. It provides a summary of progress in treatment followed by an indication of remaining treatment needs to be addressed by offender managers. Areas should now prepare to move to a position where all end of programme reports for sex offender programmes are completed using the SARN format. Areas should also note the contents of PC09/2007 which advises that end of programme reports must be completed from April 2007 in order that cases can count as completions. For sex offender programmes SARN will count as the end of programme report for the purposes of PC09/2007 according to the timescales laid out below in the section on transitional arrangements.

Training requirements

Training for SARN incorporates three elements:

1. Risk Matrix 2000 training. As indicated above delivery of this is devolved to probation regions with central training the trainers events arranged on a regular basis. It is anticipated that most programme facilitators for the accredited sex offender programmes will have already completed this training
2. SARN II Treatment Needs Analysis Training. This 4 day training comprises an initial 3 day training course, followed by a fourth day of private study to complete two test cases which are

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assessed. Successful completion of the two test cases entitles the candidate to apply for a place on SARN III training.

3. SARN III risk report writing. This 2 day training is designed to enable staff to write reports on risk, based on the SARN II training.

Elements 2 and 3 of the training are delivered jointly with the prison service and consequently it is not intended that training be devolved to Regions as is the case with element 1. However we hope to increase the pool of probation trainers available to deliver national training alongside colleagues from the prison service. In order to deliver this training there is no specific train the trainers course. Instead trainers must have completed all elements of the SARN training themselves and should be confident in writing the reports. They should also have proven training skills, either as a trainer for one of the accredited sex offender programmes, or in another field.

Training arrangements for SARN within the probation service will be co-ordinated by the Midlands Consortium.

Transitional arrangements from current end of programme reports to SARN

Given the relatively low numbers that can be trained on each event it is recognised that Areas will not be able to change to the SARN format immediately. **Consequently Areas are advised to initially train staff who will be in a position to advise and inform other staff in the use of SARN until all staff are eventually trained themselves.** In most cases it is anticipated that this will be the treatment manager or another manager who has responsibility for production of assessment reports. Until all staff can be trained it is acceptable for non-trained staff to complete SARN in the short term provided:

1. Their treatment manager (or other manager) has completed SARN training.
2. Their treatment manager has instructed staff in the use of SARN
3. The report is signed off by the treatment manager
4. Staff complete the full SARN training at the earliest opportunity.

It is recognised that there will be a transitional period when some Areas will be ready to use SARN while others will continue to use the old end of treatment report format. In any event it is expected that all reports on offenders completing accredited sex offender programmes are completed using the SARN format by 1st April 2008. However the treatment needs analysis grid, which staff will be trained to use as part of the SARN II training, should be used for all offenders in accredited sex offender programmes as soon as possible, to enable data to be gathered ready for completion of SARN reports.

Action required

Areas/Regions should:

1. Identify which of their staff require training in SARN in order to meet the deadline of full implementation of SARN by April 2008. Staff undertaking elements 2 and 3 of SARN training should:
 - a. Be trained to deliver one or more of the accredited sex offender programmes (they need not have completed their final accreditation but should be working towards it).

- b. Be responsible for writing end of programme reports, and for supervising staff who are writing such reports, for one or more of the accredited sex offender programmes.
 - c. Have completed Risk Matrix 2000 training or be in a position to complete it prior to SARN training.
2. Book relevant staff onto a suitable training course. Details of SARN training are notified to Areas via the Midlands Consortium.
 3. Prepare to be in a position to replace current end of programme reports with SARN reports by April 2008.

To assist in roll out of SARN Areas might be approached to free up certain staff for limited training duties. Only staff who achieve "Gold Standard Score A" are suitable to be trainers and Areas will be fully consulted about any possible training requests.

Consultancy for offender managers working with certain high risk males who have committed sexual offences, and females who have committed sexual offences, funded by Public Protection Unit, NOMS.

PC31/2005 advised Areas of the contract between NPD (now NOMS) Public Protection Unit and the Lucy Faithfull Foundation (LFF) to provide consultancy services for work with high risk male sex offenders who are not suitable for accredited sex offender programmes, and with all female sex offenders. This contract has been renewed for a further year (2007–2008) consequently these services are still available to Areas. This is for work with offenders over 18 years of age. For the consultancy for male sex offenders the offender should be currently excluded from treatment programmes. The service is available for any female sex offender. MAPPA cases level 2 & 3 should receive priority for this service.

Consultancy can be provided via telephone contact or in face to face meetings. The LFF may also be used for limited assessment work for male offenders within the scope of the contract. However if a full assessment or sustained programme of intervention is required to meet the needs of the offender, or the protection of the public, the Probation Area will need to fund this work directly. Probation Areas may consider contracting the services of the LFF to provide this work but are not restricted to using LFF and may wish to contract with local providers to undertake work outside the scope of this arrangement.

For female sex offenders the service will provide consultancy, assessment and limited forms of intervention.

A recent evaluation of the service carried out by the LFF demonstrated that it was valued by offender managers in helping them to manage the risk presented by female offenders and high risk male offenders.

Provisions for Male Offenders

Under the agreement, the LFF are funded to provide staff time to assist offender managers in their work with males who sexually offend.

Referral Criteria:

Male offenders aged 18+
Subject to Probation supervision.
Risk Matrix 2000 high or very high risk of reconviction and/or
OASys high risk of harm to a child/children
Managed at MAPPA level 2 or 3
Not eligible for accredited sex offender programmes.

What the Service Provides

The type of work will be discussed and agreed with the referrer on a case-by-case basis and delivered in partnership with the Offender Manager.

The work can include:

- Advice on risk management to Offender Managers
- Advice to assist with child protection issues
- Advice on intervention with partners or external monitors where appropriate
- Case consultancy
- Telephone support
- Advice/support to assess and develop supervision/intervention plans
- Advice/support to assess and develop risk management plans

Provision for Female Offenders

Under the agreement the LFF will be funded to provide staff time to assist Offender Managers in their work with females who sexually offend.

Referral Criteria

- Female offenders aged 18+
- Subject to probation supervision, including those in last 6 months of custodial sentence.
- Convicted of offences against children or vulnerable adults with a sexual element.

What the Service Provides

The service provided for female sex offenders can include:

- Assessment delivered either through individual, co-work or consultancy, supported in appropriate cases by psychometric testing designed for use with females who sexually offend.
- Consultancy/limited co-working to support a structured programme of intervention in the community
- Consultancy/advice on risk management to Offender Managers and MAPPA level 2 or 3
- Advice to Offender Managers to assist with child protection cases
- Advice to PSR authors on interview techniques and risk management

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The type of work will be discussed and agreed with the referrer on a case-by-case basis.

How to Refer

Offender managers should:

- Check suitability against criteria set out above
- Discuss case with line manager to agree suitability of referral
- For male offenders, contact LFF Epsom office for initial case discussion regarding the suitability/scope of work and timescale, then complete LFF referral form and send to LFF Epsom offices with supporting paperwork/information. The referral form can be obtained by contacting the LFF at the Wolvercote Centre (Epsom offices) Tel: 0870 774 6354 Fax: 01372 847162.
- For female offenders the offender manager should contact LFF at Bordesley Hall for an initial case discussion regarding suitability/scope of work and timescale (01527 591922). They should then complete the LFF referral form and sends to LFF Bordesley office with supporting paperwork/information

Other Information

There is limited funding for this service. This means that LFF will have to prioritise and restrict their support to those cases that most closely match the funding criteria. Cases in which the match is uncertain will be referred to PPU for a decision to be made. The PPU will be the final arbiter in such cases.

LFF will provide PPU with quarterly information regarding referrals and accepted cases for monitoring and funding purposes.