



# Ministry of JUSTICE

National Offender  
Management Service

<b>Mandatory Use of ViSOR</b>		
<b>This instruction applies to :-</b>		<b>Reference :-</b>
Probation Services		<b>PI 05/2009</b>
<b>Issue Date</b>	<b>Effective Date</b>	<b>Expiry Date</b>
30 September 2009	05 October 2009	05 October 2012
<b>Issued on the authority of</b>	NOMS Agency Board	
<b>For action by</b>	Chairs of Probation Boards, Chief Officers/Executives of Probation, Secretaries of Probation Boards	
<b>For information</b>	Board Treasurers, Improvement and Development Managers, Director's of Offender Management	
<b>Contact</b>	NOMS Public Protection Unit: Paul Manning ViSOR Team, 8 <sup>th</sup> Floor, Cleland House. 0207 217 6199 email: <a href="mailto:Paul.Manning@noms.gsi.gov.uk">Paul.Manning@noms.gsi.gov.uk</a>	
<b>Associated documents</b>	National Implementation Operational Guidance' for ViSOR (NPS) October 2007 PSI 08/2009 Public Protection Manual ViSOR National Implementation Operational Guidance Version 1.1 May 2008 (Prisons – for info) NPIA ViSOR Standards version 1.0 March 2008	
Replaces the following documents which are hereby cancelled :-		
Audit/monitoring :		
Introduces amendments to the following documents : -		

## 1. PURPOSE

This Probation Instruction summarises the mandatory requirement for Areas/Trusts to use ViSOR in their management of specific MAPPA (Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements) offenders and clarifies where to get help in the event of problems.

"Directors of Offender Management will monitor compliance in their region with the mandatory actions set out in this Probation Circular. Probation Areas and Trusts must demonstrate compliance with these actions when required to do so by the Director of Offender Management."

## 2. INTRODUCTION

ViSOR is a national confidential database which facilitates the effective sharing of information and intelligence, as well as the recording of joint risk assessments and risk management plans on violent and sexual offenders between the three MAPPA Responsible Authority agencies, Probation, Police and Prisons. The system is only as good as the information that is placed on it, so it is critical that the Probation Service, as well as the other Responsible Authority agencies, contributes relevant information of high quality in a timely manner. Accuracy and completeness of data is vital to deliver effective risk management of offenders and to provide constructive management reports.

A Prison Service Instruction (PSI) will be issued simultaneously with this PI, and a letter was issued to the Police in May 2008 to clarify their respective responsibilities in relation to ViSOR.

## 3. MANDATORY ACTIONS

Chief Officers/Executives are required to ensure that all relevant staff comply with the mandatory requirements which are summarised below.

1. The Probation Service must create and manage ViSOR records for :

**Category 2 (Violent Offenders).** The home Probation Area will enter Category 2, level 2 and 3 cases on to ViSOR at least six months before the actual or potential release date, thereby creating a ViSOR "nominal" for each case;

and

**Category 3 offenders** (Other Dangerous Offenders) where a case was previously managed by the Probation Service, the relevant home Probation Area will create the nominal at the point the the case enters the MAPP meeting structure.

For details of the categories and levels please refer to the 'MAPPA Guidance 2009'

2. The relevant Prison Service establishment must request to be made a 'partner' to appropriate nominal records by the nominal manager from the relevant Police Force or Probation Area whilst the offender is in custody. This must be done at least 6 months prior to release or, where a ViSOR record already exists, at the time the offender enters custody. The prison establishment should then input necessary information into those records. Probation Areas must respond swiftly to partner requests from prisons.
3. The Police Service creates and manages ViSOR records for all **Category 1** offenders, managed at Level 2 or 3, who are subject to licence conditions or community orders. In these cases, the Probation Area must be made a partner by the owning force, so that the Probation Area can populate the ViSOR record with any information or intelligence that it considers relevant, in accordance with its minimum data set guidance (see bullet point 6 below)
4. The Probation Area must make the Police Service a partner to all Category 2, Level 2 and 3 offenders, so that the Police can input any information or intelligence relevant the supervision of the offender.

5. The Probation Service will not be made partners on ViSOR to Category 1, Level 1 offenders, but it must share relevant information with responsible Police colleagues in accordance with current MAPPA Guidance.
6. Detailed requirements for Probation Areas, including a minimum data set, are set out in the 'National Implementation Operational Guidance' for ViSOR which was issued as a Gateway notice in October 2007 by the then ViSOR Project team. Areas must comply with this guidance. Areas must ensure they regularly reconcile their local case management and MAPPA systems with their ViSOR records to ensure accuracy and consistency.
7. Areas must also comply with the 'ViSOR Standards document'. This document was produced by the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) in collaboration with key stakeholders. Issued in April 2008, it sets minimum standards for record creation and validation and provides a framework for data ownership and management. The Responsible Authority National Steering Group (RANSNG) has signed up to this document and Areas, as part of their local MAPPA Responsible Authority, must fully comply with it.
8. Areas must ensure that they always have the following roles covered within their locality:
  - Central Point of Contact
  - ViSOR Administrator(s)
  - User Account Creator(s)
  - ViSOR Trainer(s)

Normal mandatory ViSOR activity will not be feasible if these roles are not covered, and thus succession planning should be a key component of managerial oversight of the use of ViSOR in each Area.

9. Areas must ensure that they fulfil the basic requirement to undertake necessary security clearances on all staff using ViSOR. For the Central Point of Contact (and any necessary deputy), this must be Security Check (SC) clearance obtained via NOMS Security Department. For all other roles, including those listed above and the middle manager read-only access, this is a locally verified Baseline Standard Check plus CRB check (as detailed in the gateway notice issued 16.01.09).
10. Middle managers have a critical role in ensuring the effective operation of ViSOR according to the agreed business model for probation. Senior Probation Officers or their equivalents must ensure that they have mechanisms in place to assure themselves that their staff are viewing and entering all relevant information. This means they must log on regularly to ensure that their staff routinely access ViSOR nominal records. It is essential that Offender Managers use information recorded on ViSOR by other agencies to support their management of offenders.
11. Staff who are likely to be involved in the use of ViSOR must be made fully aware of the contents of this Instruction.

#### 4. WHERE TO GET HELP

Details of where to obtain help with specific problems are set out in out in the 'National Implementation Operational Guidance' and Introductory letter from PPU dated 16<sup>th</sup> June 2008. A summary of where to find help is attached at Annex A to this PC.

(signed)

**Michael Spurr**  
**Chief Operating Officer**

**Annex A: Summary of Where to get help with ViSOR:**

<b>Problem Type</b>	<b>Where to get help</b>	<b>Contact details</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Strategic and Operational Issues	Regional User Groups	<b>Currently one per ACPO Region - relevant chair details via your local Police CPC or via NOMS ViSOR Team within PPU</b>	There are currently 9 Regional User Groups (RUGs). They aim to share good practice, discuss implementation issues and problems at regional level. The RUGS also propose change requests on behalf of member agencies to the National User Group. Probation areas and Prison Areas should ensure they are represented on these groups.
ViSOR system account maintenance and password resets	Local account creators located within the Area IT Department	<b>Local contacts</b>	
Access accounts on the OMNI National Gateway	Steria.	<b>Steria Service Desk</b>  <b>Telephone: 01442 885300 &amp; 0844 800 4626 (08:00 – 18:00, Mon-Fri)</b> <b>I:<a href="mailto:probation.servicedesk@steria.co.uk">probation.servicedesk@steria.co.uk</a></b>	In line with existing practice, ViSOR incidents should, in the first instance, be reported to the Area IT Help-Desk.'
<b>IT infrastructure</b>		MOJ ICT ViSOR Service Manager is Mustafa Ali. E-mail is <a href="mailto:mustafa.ali@justice.gov.uk">mustafa.ali@justice.gov.uk</a> <a href="mailto:mustafa.ali@justice.gov.uk">mailto:</a>	MOJ ICT (formerly OIS) is responsible for managing the service delivery to OMNI
User accounts including permission tokens for access to different parts of the application	Local User Account Creator (often in IT section) and the user.		Queries relating to user accounts can be resolved directly between the local IT section user and the user.
<b>Business and Operational Questions</b>		Help with other types of queries, including those described in the Operational guidance as ' <b>How to?</b> ' issues should initially be obtained from the Operational Guide and the, <b>ViSOR Training Manual</b> .	These documents provide detailed information for a range of ViSOR activities. If this does not identify a solution, the issue can exceptionally be escalated to the <b>Senior Probation Officer (SPO) or Central point of Contact (CPC)</b> . The CPC can if necessary contact the NOMS ViSOR team via the MAPPA inbox at <a href="mailto:mappa@noms.gsi.gov.uk">mappa@noms.gsi.gov.uk</a>
<b>Questions relating to ViSOR Record Management</b>	ViSOR Standards document		Enquiries about the standards should be sent to <a href="mailto:visor@npia.pnn.police.uk">visor@npia.pnn.police.uk</a>

## ANNEX

**GENDER EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE**

A Gender Equality Impact Assessment (GEIA) should be completed, where a prison service function/policy/practice is being developed or revised which will impact on both male and female prisoners.

Name of policy/practice/function

<b>ViSOR – multi-agency electronic database for use with MAPPA qualifying offenders across all Prison Establishments and Probation Areas and Trusts</b>		This is a <b>new</b> function/policy/practice
		This is a <b>change</b> to an existing function/policy/practice
	√	This is an <b>existing</b> function/policy/practice

*If you are revising an existing function, policy or practice or developing a new function, policy or practice, you must complete and return this document together with the final Business case for OPG approval.*

If you need any help in completing this Gender Equality Impact Assessment please contact the Women and Young People's Group: Terry Harvey 020 217 5048 [terry.harvey@hmps.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:terry.harvey@hmps.gsi.gov.uk)

**Section 1 Gender Equality Impact Assessment – Initial Screening**

The first stage of conducting a GEIA is to screen the function, policy or practice to assess its relevance to gender equality. This will indicate whether a full impact assessment is required.

If you need any help in answering any of the questions, please ring Terry Harvey in the Women and Young People's Group on 020 217 5048.

1. What are the aims of the new function, policy or practice or the revisions being proposed?

**ViSOR is a national confidential database which facilitates the effective sharing of information and intelligence on violent and sexual offenders between the three MAPPA Responsible Authority agencies: Probation, Police and Prisons. The anticipated benefits include improved risk assessment, risk management and ultimately improved public protection . Two relevant business operating models were agreed by the former NOMS ViSOR Project Board. There is access through key teams (OMU, PPU, Security) within all custodial establishments and access via Senior Probation Officers within all Offender Management Units within Probation Areas and Trusts. Probation staff will act as managers of all relevant Violent Offenders and partners to relevant Registered Sexual Offenders. Prison staff will be partners to all relevant Violent and Registered Sexual offenders.**

2. Please describe what impact the function, policy or practice or the revisions being proposed will have on prisoners.

**This database will provide a national platform to share and store relevant data about relevant MAPPA qualifying offenders.**

3. Will the function, policy or practice be gender specific i.e apply only to either male or female prisoners? (an example might be policy concerning mother and baby units)

**No**

If so – Why?

4. In the case of revisions to existing functions, policies or practices, has any of the material contained in these revisions come to attention in the past as having a relevance to gender equality?

**No**

- Have other prison service or NOMs units ever suggested that any of the material in the proposed revisions might raise questions of gender equality?

**No**

If YES – please give details

- Have HMPS Women and Young People's Group ever suggested that any of the material in the proposed revisions might raise questions of gender equality?

**No**

If YES – please give details

- Have prisoners ever suggested that any of the material in the proposed revisions might raise questions of gender equality?

**No**

If YES – please give details

- Has any other third party ever suggested that any of the material in the proposed revisions might raise questions of gender equality?

**No**

If YES – please give details

5. If the policy is to apply to both male and female prisoners - could the policy itself or the revisions being proposed have a differential impact on male and female prisoners? E.g.:

- *A different visits entitlement may impact differently on male and female prisoners given that in general women are likely to be located further away than men on average, from their homes*
- *A resettlement policy will need to take account of the fact that male prisoners in general, will have different identified resettlement needs to those of female prisoners*

- *A policy relating to use of force will need to take account of the physical differences between men and women, and the possibility of the requirement to use force on a pregnant prisoner*
- *A policy aimed at reducing bullying will need to take account of the different ways bullying manifests itself and why in the different estates*

**No – qualifying offenders will have relevant data entered and shared between accredited ViSOR users, regardless of gender identity.**

If you have answered “Yes” to any questions in 4 or 5 this would indicate a “High Relevance” to Gender Equality.

If you have answered “Yes” to question 3 or “No” to all questions in 4 and 5 those questions this would indicate a “Low Relevance” to Gender Equality.

Please circle which one applies in this case:

**Low Relevance**

*If you have stated “High Relevance” a full impact assessment must be completed. Please proceed to Section 2 “FULL IMPACT ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE”*

*If you have stated “Low Relevance”, a full impact assessment will not be needed. However, this assessment must be agreed with the Women and Young People’s Group.*

Signed.....

Paul Manning, ACO, NOMS ViSOR Development Manager

Date 16<sup>th</sup> March 2009

W&YPG signatory

Signed.....Terry Harvey.....

Date.....16 /03/ 09.....

Section 2 Gender Equality Full Impact Assessment N/A

## 1. TARGET GROUP

Does this policy apply to the whole of the male and female prison estate or is this function/ policy/ practice aimed at a specific group (e.g. young offenders)?

## 2. MONITORING

How will the function/ policy/ practice be monitored to measure the impact of it on the different genders?

What does the latest monitoring show?

## 3. CONSULTATION

It is important that consultation occurs with key stakeholders – those who are either directly affected by the function, policy or practice or those external bodies with an interest in the impact of prison service policies

- In terms of this function, policy or practice, who do you consider to be your key stakeholders?
- How have you consulted them? What methods of consultation were used?
- What action has been taken as result of the consultation?

## 4. CONCLUSION

Having thought about the potential negative impact on the different genders, is it your opinion that the function/policy/practice:

a) needs revision?

If yes, please state what action you will take

b) is fit for purpose?

c) could lead to negative impact but other considerations (such as security) are paramount?

If yes, please list the other considerations

## 5. REVIEW

How often will this function, policy or practice be reviewed in the future?

## SIGNED

Name

DATE

## HEAD OF GROUP

Signed

Name

Date

PLEASE SEND A COPY OF THIS COMPLETED FORM TO: TERRY HARVEY, THE WOMEN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S GROUP, 7<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR, CLELAND HOUSE, PAGE ST. LONDON SW1P 4LN

## RACE EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

The purpose of this template is to help establishments determine whether functions, policies or practices relating to service delivery are relevant to race equality and to give guidance on how to conduct full impact assessments if it is clear that the function, policy or practice is relevant to race equality.

[Link To Race Equality Impact Assessments template](#)

### SECTION 1 INITIAL SCREENING

The first stage of conducting a Race Equality Impact Assessment is to screen the function, policy or practice to assess its relevance to race equality<sup>1</sup>. This will indicate whether a full impact assessment is required.

This first section is required if you are assessing a local function, policy or practice not included in the list of functions, policies or practices in Annex 3 or if you are making amendments to existing local functions, policies or practices, or if you are issuing new instructions locally or devising new local policies.

#### Initial Screening template - ViSOR

1. Aims and Purpose
<p>ViSOR is a national confidential database which facilitates the effective sharing of information and intelligence on violent and sexual offenders between the three MAPPAs Responsible Authority agencies: Probation, Police and Prisons. The anticipated benefits include improved risk assessment, risk management and ultimately improved public protection . Two relevant business operating models were agreed by the former NOMS ViSOR Project Board. There is access through key teams (OMU, PPU, Security) within all custodial establishments and within all Offender Management Units within Probation Areas and Trusts. Probation staff will act as managers of all relevant Violent Offenders and partners to relevant Registered Sexual Offenders. Prison staff will be partners to all relevant Violent and Registered Sexual offenders.</p>
2. Impact
<p>There are no identified areas of impact in respect of the use of ViSOR in terms of race equality. ViSOR is utilised on all qualifying cases, predominantly MAPPAs ones, regardless of the race or ethnic identity of the offender. There are no perceived implications for staff use of the system on the grounds of race or ethnic identity.</p>

<sup>1</sup> Relevance to Race Equality – For the purposes of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act, 'relevance' means 'having implications for the general duty (to eliminate unlawful discrimination; promote equality of opportunity and promote good relations between different racial groups). Any function, policy or practice that involves the public (in the Prison Service's case this will mainly be in relation to prisoners), including staff, or has consequences for them should be assessed as being relevant to the general duty. Further guidance can be obtained on the Commission for Racial Equality's website: [www.cre.gov.uk](http://www.cre.gov.uk).

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3. In the case of reviews of existing functions, policies or practices or revisions to existing ones, state whether this has come to attention in the past as having a relevance to race equality
Since ViSOR was rolled out across the Prison and Probation estate between Autumn 2007 and June 2008, there have been no incidents raised with the policy lead or public protection unit indicating issues around any matters in regard to race or ethnic identity.
4. In the case of a new local function, policy or practice or revisions to existing ones, state whether the new procedures/ revisions themselves could have a differential impact on staff, prisoners or visitors of different racial groups
This is a national system and therefore there should be no local divergence in terms of policy, function or practice.
5. In this section you need to decide whether the function, policy or practice, or the revisions being proposed, allow staff to exercise discretion in the way it is implemented and whether, as a consequence this could lead to differential treatment of staff/ prisoners/ visitors of different racial groups
<b>No</b> the function, policy or practice does not allow staff to exercise discretion in the way it is implemented and there is no possibility of differential treatment on the grounds of race or ethnic identity.

If you have:

indicated in section 3 that this function, policy or practice has come to attention in the past as having a relevance to race quality, or

indicated in section 4 that it could have a differential impact on staff, prisoners or visitors of different racial groups, or

indicated in section 5 that it allows staff to exercise discretion in the way it is implemented then this would indicate a "High Relevance" to Race Equality and you MUST complete a full impact assessment (see section 2 "Full Impact Assessment Template")

If you have indicated in section 3 that this function, policy or practice has NOT come to attention in the past as having a relevance to race quality, or

indicated in section 4 that it could NOT have a differential impact on staff, prisoners or visitors of different racial groups, or indicated in section 5 that it DOES NOT allow staff to exercise discretion in the way it is implemented then this would indicate a "Low Relevance" to Race Equality and a full impact assessment will not be required.

Please circle which one applies in this case:

**Low Relevance**

Name of person undertaking this initial screening

Paul Manning, ACO, NOMS ViSOR Development Manager...

Signed.....yes.....

Date 16th March 2009.....

***Ratified by Chair of REAT***

Signed.....Yes.....

Date...16 march 2009.....