



Gloucestershire Constabulary
Striving for a Safer Gloucestershire

Press Release

MULTI AGENCY PUBLIC PROTECTION ARRANGEMENTS (MAPPA) - FIFTH ANNUAL REPORT

October 23 2006

The fifth annual report detailing how the public are protected from violent and sexual offenders in Gloucestershire is published today, (Monday, October 23 2006).

The Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) report explains how Gloucestershire Constabulary, Probation Service and Prison Service (collectively referred to as the responsible authority) worked with other agencies to assess and manage the risk posed by relevant offenders in the community from April 1 2005 to March 31 2006.

The report highlights that reoffending by individuals under MAPPA is extremely low and no one managed by the panel was charged with further serious offences.

Yvette Ball, Gloucestershire's Chief Probation Officer and chair of the MAPPA Strategic Management Board, said the report showed the MAPPA within the county were working well.

"The MAPPA continue to work extremely well in Gloucestershire, with real commitment shown from all agencies to this vital area of public protection work," she said.

"I hope that the report and the achievements contained within it provide the public with reassurance that their safety and welfare is paramount and that serious offenders in Gloucestershire are subject to a rigorous and in depth management approach.

Detective Chief Superintendent Richard Berry, from Gloucestershire Police, added: "MAPPA brings together the experience and expertise of a range of agencies all fully committed to safeguarding the public.

More follows...

“We have focussed on domestic violence under MAPPA during the last year to manage offending behaviour and increase victim protection in Gloucestershire.

“We are fully engaged within the arrangements and look forward to building on the excellent work carried out last year.”

The MAPPA annual report includes various statistics for the county, including the number of registered sex offenders as at March 31 2006.

From March 31 2005 to March 31 2006 the number of registered sex offenders in Gloucestershire has increased from 284 to 311.

This increase arises due to the fact registration periods for relevant sex offenders range from a minimum of 12 months to the remainder of the offender's life. Year on year, therefore, the figure will go up.

The introduction of the Sex Offences Act 2003, which became law on May 1 2004, has increased the number of offences requiring offenders to register.

Examples of effectiveness of MAPPA

The report highlights that 98.4 per cent of those on the register have not gone on to commit further serious offences.

During the period covered by the report, 15 people were returned to custody for a breach of licence, demonstrating the power within the MAPPA to respond swiftly to any breaches and to take appropriate action, including fast-track recall to prison within two hours in the most serious cases.

Five offenders required to register have breached requirements this year. These requirement breaches include failure to provide notification of a change of address within three days, failure to provide notification of an additional address that they visit and failure to provide notification if travelling abroad.

Those offenders received punishment proportionate to the level of the breach, including a custodial sentence for one.

The report also shows that 22 Sex Offender Prevention Orders (SOPOs) were granted during the year. SOPOs place prohibitions on sex offenders. For example: - not to live in households with children under 17, not to seek employment giving unsupervised access to a child under 16, and not to stop near a school.

This number of SOPOs has increased from nine during 2004-5, primarily because the courts can now impose them at the point of sentence. This is a change from previous years when only police were able to apply for SOPOs.

ENDS

Note to editors: This press release was issued by Kate Nelmes, Senior Press Officer, Gloucestershire Constabulary. (01452) 754302.

Copies of the MAPPA report are available at www.gloucestershire.police.uk

For a copy of the Gloucestershire MAPPA annual report or to arrange interviews with Yvette Ball, Chief Probation Officer or D/Chief Supt Berry please contact Police HQ Press Office on 01452 754302.

BACKGROUND NOTES

Under the Criminal Justice and Courts Services Act 2000, Sections 67 & 68, (amended by the Criminal Justice Act 2003) the Police, Probation and Prison Services were given a statutory duty to make joint arrangements for the assessment and management of the risks posed by sexual, violent and other dangerous offenders who may cause serious harm to the public.

These included:

- The introduction of protocols and processes for inter-agency information sharing when assessing and managing high risk offenders
- The establishment of a Multi-Agency Public Protection Panel (MAPPP) to deal with offenders assessed as posing the highest risk
- The monitoring and review of procedures and policies to maximise protection
- Multi-agency training on risk management
- The publication of Annual Reports on the work of MAPPA at a local level - including statistics

In Gloucestershire, following recommendations by a Police and Probation Working Party, the statutory duties were met by:

- Establishment of a Strategic Management Board– made up of Assistant Chief Constable, Operations; Chief Probation Officer; Head of Service Children and Families (Social Services), Area Manager Victim Support, Head of Youth Offending Service, Gloucestershire Partnership Trust (NHS); Executive Housing Authority Manager; Governor, HM Prison Gloucester, and two lay advisers.
- Creation of a Multi Agency Public Protection Panel
- Appointment of a co-ordinator to ensure effective running of the MAPPP

Roles and structures:

Strategic Management Board (SMB)

- To review and monitor risk assessment and management processes

- To ensure effectiveness by considering reports on policy, procedure and resource issues
- To publish an annual report on MAPP Arrangements in Gloucestershire

Multi Agency Public Protection Panel (MAPPP)

Made up of senior managers and senior practitioners from Police; Probation; Prison, Social Services, Health and Housing

- To assess and manage risks posed by very high risk offenders referred by those agencies
- To meet regularly to review MAPPP registered cases
- To hold emergency risk meetings when required
- Identify policy, practice and resource issues and refer to SMB as appropriate
- Report to SMB on reviewing or improving policies for offender risk assessment and management

MAPPP Manager

- To develop MAPPP protocols, policies and procedures
- To chair MAPPP meetings and liaise with partner agencies on the management of MAPPP cases
- To set up systems to monitor and evaluate the work of the MAPPP
- To prepare reports for the MAPPP Strategic Management Board and the Annual Report on local implementation.
- To develop risk management policies, procedures and practice within the Police, Probation Service and other partner agencies.

Questions and answers

We are being told there are 311 registered sex offenders in the county and given a breakdown based on policing divisions but not where they live. Why not?

Disclosure of information is always considered as part of the risk assessment process and the overriding consideration is for the protection of vulnerable individuals, eg children, previous victims. However this is balanced against the disclosure of information provoking unrest and disorder in communities; misidentification of the offender leading to targeting of the innocent; fears of driving the offender underground if identified (and potentially out of treatment

programmes); harm to the offender; loss of contact between offender, police and probation, posing more risk to the public; human rights of the offender. Authorised professional targeted disclosure has occurred in the county, for example to a headteacher, an employer, a new partner and churches.

What is meant by “serious harm”?

Serious harm is defined as “harm which is life threatening or traumatic and from which recovery, whether physical or psychological, can be expected to be difficult or impossible.”

What do we mean by high risk offenders?

This is a small group of people within society who present a serious threat to the well-being of others. These are individuals who are assessed as posing a risk of causing serious mental or physical harm to members of the public.

What happens to a sex offender when they are released on bail or from prison?

Convicted sex offenders are required to register their name and address with the police and are subject to monitoring through the Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements which includes confirmation of those details by conducting home visits. If they have served a prison sentence of 12 months or more they will be on licence to the probation service and certain conditions will be imposed, such as having no contact with victims and geographical exclusion areas. A new national computer system - ViSOR - has now been launched and registered sex offenders are monitored through that.

How are they tracked within the community?

Sex offenders are managed on a professional risk assessed basis. The amount of supervision given relies upon the assessment carried out and always includes home visits but may include electronic tagging up to full covert surveillance. A way of ensuring additional conditions apply to an individual's life, in order to protect the public, a Sex Offences Prevention Order (SOPO) may be applied for and proactively policed. These have been used highly successfully in cases in Gloucestershire, and breaches have resulted in prison sentences. Such conditions have, in the past, included one for an individual not to stop within 10 metres of any school, school grounds, or bus stop at school times.

Do you keep tabs on people who have been arrested but not convicted of a sex offence?

Normally such individuals will be in custody on remand if they have committed serious offences, those who are not in custody are subject to bail conditions and those conditions are policed.

What is the process if a sex offender wants to move between policing areas?

If they are a registered sex offender they are required to register their change of address in their new area within 72 hours. The new ViSOR system has improved national tracking of sex offenders.

How strictly do you monitor sex offenders?

Any breach of conditions is strictly policed. One individual in the county who was convicted of sex offences against children was given a Sex Offences Prevention Order because of concerns he would continue inappropriate behaviour with or towards children. As a result of policing that Sex Offender Order he was seen in breach, arrested and put before the courts before he could commit any serious harm. He was convicted and sent to prison.

How many officers are dedicated to monitoring sex offenders?

There is a team of police officers dedicated in each Division to dealing with sexual and violent offenders throughout the county supported by HQ based dedicated staff. Other officers are seconded to assist as and when the risk assessment shows it to be necessary. There is also a dedicated team of public protection probation officers responsible for such supervision. Over and above those officers are the MAPP panel and MAPP Strategic Management Board.

What should I do if I think there is a sex offender in my area/community/village?

Be vigilant and report any conduct that gives rise to concern to the police.