

## Child Sex Offender Review (CSOR) Public Disclosure Pilots: a process evaluation -2nd edition

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This report presents the findings of a process evaluation of the one-year Public Disclosure Pilots in four areas established by the Review of the Protection of Children from Sex Offenders (Home Office, 2007).

The aim of the research was to determine how successfully the pilots have provided members of the public with a formal mechanism for requesting information about individuals who have access to children and who may have convictions for child sex offending. The process evaluation also assessed the extent and nature of the applications, whether the pilots have contributed to existing child protection arrangements and the cost of implementing the process. It consisted of an analysis of 159 application forms;<sup>1</sup> and 186 qualitative interviews with purposively selected pilot staff and other practitioners and key stakeholders

(82); applicants (43);<sup>2</sup> and 61 registered sex offenders (RSOs)<sup>3</sup> living in the pilot areas. It should be noted that these samples represent a small proportion of the overall populations and may not be representative of all views.

### Key findings

- The number of enquiries and subsequent disclosures under the scheme were smaller than initially anticipated: a total of 585 enquiries were made and 315 proceeded with as applications. Twenty-one disclosures (7% of applications) were made under the remit of the pilot with a further 11 applications resulting in non-pilot disclosures, i.e. information not relating to convictions for child sex offences. Analysis of 159 application forms, found a further 43

1 There were 315 applications in total and 159 (50%) were submitted by the pilot forces to the research team for detailed analysis. One pilot force (Area D) accounted for a large proportion of the missing application data; it submitted 23 per cent of its caseload (45/192 cases). The other pilot areas submitted between 71-100 per cent of their applications for analysis. The forms also contained all those applications which resulted in a pilot disclosure.

- 2 All applicants (315) were invited to take part in the study. One-hundred-and-four applicants consented to be interviewed (33%) and after repeated attempts to contact them, 43 interviews were conducted (14% of all applicants, 41% of those who agreed to be contacted). The interviews included a small number of people who had information disclosed to them (8).
- 3 RSOs were recruited via offender managers who acted as gatekeepers. No RSOs were interviewed who had been disclosed against, which does represent a limitation of the study.

### Contents

Summary	iii
1 Introduction and context	1
2 Overview and operation of the disclosure pilot	3
3 Overview of disclosure applications	8
4 Experiences and outcomes of the pilot	13
5 The perceived impact of the pilot on registered sex offenders	17
6 Cost analysis	19
7 Conclusions and recommendations	20
Appendices	22
References	41

### Keywords

Child protection  
 Child sexual abuse  
 Sex offences  
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 Public protection  
 Police investigation  
 Public inquiries

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applications that resulted in other child safeguarding actions e.g. referral to Children's Social Care.

- Of the small number of applicants interviewed, most were largely satisfied with the pilot process, valuing timely contact and the professional conduct of staff. On the whole, applicants interviewed thought the pilot contributed to general levels of alertness about risks to, and protection of, children. Anxiety sometimes remained following applications when some individuals were left to cope with difficult situations. This highlights the need for appropriate follow-up support regardless of whether a disclosure is made.
- Applicants understood the restrictions about disclosure and about confidentiality though they expressed some difficulties in keeping information to themselves. There was no evidence to suggest any serious or damaging breach of confidentiality during the evaluation, but this should be closely monitored in the future.
- Police and offender managers interviewed perceived that the disclosure process formalised what they thought should be good practice in child protection. It was seen as providing greater clarity for staff by focusing on risk, focusing on the child, and permitting the sharing of information with members of the public. Police interviewees said the pilot had 'sharpened up' child protection work by tightening procedures and being explicit about what the public could expect. In terms of the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) though, these arrangements largely operated as they had done before the pilot.
- The pilot was described in some cases by those linked to MAPPA as a 'parallel' process that required some further attention with regards to the interface between the pilot and MAPPA.
- Of the small group of RSOs interviewed, the most common initial reaction was anxiety about negative reactions from communities. As the pilot progressed this decreased and most saw it as an extension of existing controls. No changes in behaviour were reported by the RSOs interviewed, and practitioners working with RSOs did not perceive any changes in compliance with registration and probation supervision. Longer-term monitoring, particularly of compliance should be considered.

## Child Sex Offender Review (CSOR) Public Disclosure Pilots: a process evaluation

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### Background and research objectives

In June 2007, the Government published the *Review of the Protection of Children from Sex Offenders* (Home Office, 2007). Action four committed the Government to:

*'Pilot a process where members of the public can register their child protection interest in a named individual. Where this individual has convictions for child sex offences and is considered a risk, there will be a presumption that this information will be disclosed to the relevant member of the public.'*

(Home Office 2007: 11)

Four police force areas commenced a 12-month long pilot on 15 September 2008.<sup>4</sup>

The aim of the research was to determine how successfully the pilots have provided members of the public with a formal mechanism for requesting information about individuals who have unsupervised access to children and who may have convictions for child sex offending. The process evaluation also assessed the extent and nature of the applications, whether the pilots have contributed to existing child protection arrangements and the cost of implementation.<sup>5</sup>

A mixed methodology was employed including: analysis of a sample of 159 applications for disclosure (50% of the total applications);<sup>6</sup> and 186 qualitative interviews with

- 4 The police force areas are referred to as A, B, C and D throughout the report.
- 5 Due to the lack of comparison site data and inconsistent recording of disclosure practice across forces it was not possible to look at the impacts of the pilot e.g. changes in levels of child sexual offending and RSO compliance with registration and probation supervision. These issues are, however, assessed in a limited way through perception data from qualitative interviews with practitioners, applicants and RSOs.
- 6 There were 315 applications in total; 159 (50%) were submitted by the forces to the research team for detailed analysis. One pilot force (Area D) in particular accounted for a large proportion of the missing application data submitting 23 per cent of its caseload (45/192 cases). The other pilot areas submitted between 71-100 per cent of their cases for analysis. The forms also contained all those applications which resulted in a pilot disclosure.

pilot staff, police and probation offender managers, and other national and local stakeholders with expertise in child protection (82, purposively selected), applicants (43),<sup>7</sup> and registered sex offenders (RSOs) living in the pilot areas (61).<sup>8</sup> It should, however, be noted that the findings presented may not represent the views of all applicants, stakeholders and RSOs.

### Summary of key findings

#### Overview of the pilot process

The pilot provided members of the public with a formal mechanism to ask for disclosure about people they were concerned about who have unsupervised access to children. This development builds on existing, well-established third-party disclosures that operate under the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA). Members of the public, initially parents, guardians and carers but later, in March 2009, extended to include anyone who had a concern about an individual could make an enquiry under the scheme by phone, by walking into a police station or by contacting the police by other means to register a concern about an individual. Upon completion of initial questions and risk assessment checks, enquiries meeting pilot criteria<sup>9</sup> proceed to an application stage. Here, further checks are undertaken and a face-to-face interview with the applicant is used to confirm identity, seek consent for information sharing

- 7 All applicants (315) were invited to take part in the study. One-hundred-and-four applicants consented to be interviewed (33%) and after repeated attempts to contact them, 43 interviews were conducted (14% of all applicants, 41% of those who agreed to be contacted). The interviews included a small number of people who had information disclosed (8).
- 8 RSOs were recruited via offender managers who acted as gatekeepers. No RSOs were interviewed who had been disclosed against, which does represent a limitation of the study.
- 9 Pilot criteria were that: the applicant had to be a parent, carer or guardian of the child in question (although this was later extended in March 2009 to all members of the public); there was unsupervised access to a child; and the applicant had to reside in the pilot force area.

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and to clarify the boundaries of confidentiality. Following a final risk assessment, a decision is made whether or not to make a disclosure to the applicant or to take further action where necessary.

Forces varied in how they operated and staffed the pilot scheme. Area D implemented the pilot by putting in place a dedicated pilot team drawn from civilian personnel with a background in child protection or offender management. Other areas integrated the pilot process into normal police duties.

Perceptions about the quality of pilot briefings and training received by pilot staff and police were mixed; it was thought that process and administrative issues were prioritised over how to support applicants. Interviews with wider stakeholders in all the areas suggested that they had not always been briefed on the pilot and in future a strategy of dissemination to other agencies would be required.

### **Pilot outcomes**

#### **Disclosures and other outcomes**

Management information shows that a total of 585 enquiries were received across all pilot areas with 315 proceeded with as applications. Twenty-one disclosures (7% of applications) were made under the remit of the pilot<sup>10</sup> and a further 11 applications resulted in non-pilot disclosures, i.e. where practitioners deemed it necessary to impart information that did not relate to convictions for child sex offences. Analysis of the 159 application forms, submitted to the research team for detailed analysis revealed 43 additional applications resulted in other safeguarding outcomes, such as a referral to Children's Social Care.

Applicants were able to register concerns about specific individuals who had unsupervised contact with children. Applicants most frequently registered concerns about an ex-partner's new partner (27, 17%), neighbours (25, 16%) or family members or friends of family members (25, 16%), based on data from the sample of 159 application forms. Most applications were made after hearing third-party information about an individual (81 cases, 51%)

Applicants heard about the scheme from a range of sources but primarily TV and radio and word of mouth. However, the total number of enquiries was small and there was some evidence to suggest that some individuals had not understood the remit of the pilot when making applications, thus indicating a need to review the targeting and effectiveness of marketing strategies.

<sup>10</sup> In order to be a pilot disclosure the subject had to be known for child sexual offending.

Internal pilot guidance issued about the disclosure process stated that applications should take a maximum of 45 days to complete from initial contact to final outcome. Data from 136<sup>11</sup> of the 159 application forms analysed revealed that this standard was generally met with the most frequent time taken to complete an application being 18 days.

#### **Applicant perceptions**

A small number of applicants were interviewed as part of the evaluation and they were largely satisfied with the disclosure process. Key factors in a positive experience included: the clarity of staff explanations of the application process; timeliness of contact; the professional conduct of staff; and the opportunity to make an application.

In general the applicants interviewed understood the restrictions about disclosure and about confidentiality though they expressed some difficulties in keeping information to themselves. However, no evidence came to the attention of the research team from pilot forces to suggest any serious or damaging breach of confidentiality during the evaluation.

Applicants' perceptions about the pilot were that it could contribute to general levels of alertness about risks to, and protection of, children. Most of the small number of applicants interviewed (35 out of 43) were told that there was nothing to disclose about child sex offending. For some of the applicants it was a reassuring result, for others anxiety remained. A small number of applicants had been left to cope with difficult situations after receiving a disclosure including having to continue to live near the person they were concerned about. In all cases the importance of follow-up work, after the disclosure process has been completed, needs further consideration both in terms of reassuring applicants about the management of offenders and providing ongoing safeguarding advice or counselling where necessary.

#### **Perceived contribution to child protection and MAPP**

The police and offender managers interviewed thought that the disclosure process formalised good practice in child protection. It was seen as providing greater clarity for staff by focusing on risk, focusing on the child, and permitting the sharing of information with members of the public. Police interviewees highlighted how the pilot had 'sharpened up' child protection work by 'tightening up' procedures and being explicit about what the public could expect. Pilot staff and police officers also valued the gathering of additional intelligence about offenders (not just child sex offenders),

<sup>11</sup> Twenty-three application forms did not have the date and time accurately recorded.

a view supported by some probation officers and social workers across the four areas.

Some of the national and local stakeholders who were interviewed expressed the view that they would require more tangible evidence that child safety had been increased through the disclosure process with doubts that the pilot would add much to existing arrangements. There was evidence that many local stakeholders had changed their views as a result of being involved with the pilot. For some national stakeholders it was still too early to judge the effectiveness of the scheme and scepticism remained. Longer-term monitoring of compliance should be considered.

Police and probation staff interviewed perceived that on the whole MAPPA operated as it had done prior to the pilot, especially given the routine consideration of disclosure as part of MAPPA meetings. The pilot was also described by some of those linked to MAPPA as a 'parallel' process requiring some further attention with regards to the interface and information sharing between the pilot and MAPPA.

### **The perceptions of Registered Sex Offenders**

The small number of RSOs interviewed as part of the process evaluation had mixed perceptions of the scheme but by far the most common initial reaction was one of anxiety related to potential negative reactions in the community. Some offenders reported being less anxious as the pilot scheme developed, but others remained cautious at the time of interviews. For most offenders interviewed, the pilot was seen as an extension of existing controls and was perceived to have no negative impact on accommodation or employment. Some offenders reported being more self-aware about how engagement in certain behaviours may precipitate a disclosure request.

Most RSO interviewees did not report any changes in their behaviour as a result of the pilot though this will require ongoing assessment. It should be noted that despite repeated attempts to engage RSOs it was not possible to interview any who had been subject to a disclosure. However, none of the practitioners interviewed who worked with RSOs reported any fluctuations in compliance during the pilot. This applied to compliance with registration requirements and conditions of probation supervision. Longer-term monitoring, particularly of compliance, should be considered.

### **Cost analysis**

The report provides a cost analysis of pilot scheme spend, but is limited by the lack of baseline data pre-pilot and the difficulties in attributing a financial value to outcomes. These

are therefore indicative cost findings. The pilot forces were given a grant of £150,000 each to implement the pilot, but they did not spend the full amount. Their overall estimated cost of implementing and running the pilot ranged from £97,205 to £143,611. However, it should be noted that all but one of the forces integrated the scheme into normal police and public protection team duties.

Once project set-up costs have been excluded<sup>12</sup> the ongoing estimated cost of handling a disclosure from initial enquiry, to application to disclosure was between £672 (Area D) and £1,499 (Area C). Since projects will need to continue to market the scheme, this will need to be considered in the ongoing costs.

## **Recommendations**

The report makes a number of recommendations should the scheme roll out nationally or continue locally. These can be summarised as:

1. providing adequate preparation time prior to roll-out;
2. using and developing pilot guidance;
3. strengthening the relationship with existing public protection and safeguarding arrangements;
4. further development of marketing and publicity;
5. local areas should review their approach to training and briefing in relation to the disclosure process;
6. a system for recording management information should be set up to ensure accountability throughout the process;
7. disclosure and non-disclosure outcomes need to be effectively communicated and supported;
8. RSOs will require ongoing information and advice in relation to the scheme.

<sup>12</sup> Project set-up costs included initial training and recruitment costs.

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### I Introduction and context

In June 2007, the Government published the *Review of the Protection of Children from Sex Offenders* (Home Office, 2007). The Review considered the way in which the risks presented by child sex offenders in the community are managed, including the amount of information about child sex offenders that is disclosed to the public. The review set out 20 actions to strengthen efforts to keep children safe. Action four committed the Government to:

*'Pilot a process where members of the public can register their child protection interest in a named individual. Where this individual has convictions for child sex offences and is considered a risk, there will be a presumption that this information will be disclosed to the relevant member of the public.'*

(Home Office, 2007: 11)

In February 2008 the Home Secretary announced that four police forces had been chosen to pilot the disclosure model as detailed in the Review. The 12-month pilot was launched on 15 September 2008. The pilot was extended, in March 2009, to allow members of the public (not just parents, carers or guardians as was initially the case) to make an enquiry.

This pilot needs to be understood in relation to the wider context of arrangements for disclosure. Public interest in the management of sex offenders was perhaps most pronounced as a response to the abduction and murder of Sarah Payne by Roy Whiting, a convicted sex offender. There were calls for community notification schemes similar to those laws in the USA that require authorities to make information available about registered sex offenders to members of the public (known informally as Megan's Law).<sup>13</sup> The UK government resisted calls for

<sup>13</sup> Named after eight year-old Megan Kanka who was abducted and murdered by a violent sex offender.

community notification on the grounds that the USA had not found a reduction in sexual offences (Fitch, 2006) and such approaches have the potential to drive offenders 'underground' (Fitch, 2006; Maguire and Kemshall, 2004).

The community management of serious sexual and violent offenders in England and Wales falls under the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) where existing arrangements allow for disclosure by MAPPA to third parties based on national guidance (see Ministry of Justice 2009: 67-77). Third parties may include members of the public where:

- there is evidence that grooming behaviours may take place;
- there is a condition that the offender is excluded from a specific location and/or having contact with a specific person;
- others (including other agency staff, managers or service users) may be at risk;
- there is a need to protect past or potential victims, in particular through the forming of new relationships where the offender may have access to children;
- schools or colleges need to take a role in being aware of grooming behaviours;
- a person may be in a position to actively assist in the risk management of an offender.

The Criminal Justice Act 2003<sup>14</sup> places a duty on each MAPPA authority to consider disclosing a MAPPA-managed offender's convictions for child sexual offences to members of the public. The legislation created a presumption that information will be disclosed where there is reason to believe that a child sexual offender poses a risk of serious harm to a particular child or children, and the disclosure to a particular member of the public is necessary to protect that child or children from serious harm caused by that offender.

<sup>14</sup> As a result of Section 140 of the Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008.

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Research indicates that disclosure is often used as part of the overall risk management of registered sex offenders (RSOs) and this often involves the co-operation of the offender (Wood and Kemshall, 2007). Cann (2007) found that whilst disclosure was used by the MAPPAs and the police in a range of circumstances as part of the management of sex offender risk, it was not possible to gain an accurate measure of the extent due to inconsistent means of recording when a disclosure has been considered and why, and to whom information has been imparted. Furthermore, there was previously no formalised provision for members of the public to ask for disclosure about people they were concerned about. The pilot, therefore, aims to provide the opportunity for the public to initiate an enquiry through new processes.<sup>15</sup>

## Research aims and objectives

The aim of the research was to determine how successfully the pilots have provided members of the public with a formal mechanism for requesting information about individuals who have unsupervised access to children if they were concerned that a particular individual may be a child sex offender and/or have convictions for child sex offending. The process evaluation also assessed the extent and nature of the applications, whether the pilots have contributed to existing child protection arrangements and the cost of implementing the process.

## Methodology

Further details of the methodological approach taken in this study are detailed in Appendix I. A mixed methodology was employed for this project comprising the following.

- Scoping days and follow-up visits in each of the pilot areas.
- Analysis of 159 completed disclosure application forms (representing 50% of the overall number of applications) and management information supplied by pilot forces.
- Completion of 186 in-depth qualitative interviews across the four areas, comprising the following:
  - Twenty-nine purposively selected interviews with pilot staff and police officers involved in the operation of the pilot.
  - Twenty-one purposively selected police and probation offender managers.
  - Forty-three applicants.<sup>16</sup>
  - Sixty-one Registered Sex Offenders (RSOs) living in the pilot areas.<sup>17</sup>
  - Eleven purposively selected national stakeholders included representatives of the following: children's charities: NSPCC, Barnados, Action for Children; the Lucy Faithfull Foundation; police leads for the pilot; MAPPAs national lead; Head of Sexual Violence and Violent Offending Unit, Ministry of Justice (MoJ); representatives of the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP); and the Victims Champion.
  - Twenty-one purposively selected local stakeholders, including probation public protection leads; MAPPAs co-ordinators;<sup>18</sup> senior managers for Child Protection; MAPPAs lay advisers;<sup>19</sup> local safeguarding children representatives and other professionals with an interest or role in child protection.

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15 Due to a lack of available baseline data and the inconsistent recording of MAPPAs disclosures across and within police forces it was not possible to conduct an impact evaluation, e.g. to assess changes in levels of child sexual offending and RSO compliance with registration and probation supervision. These issues are, however, assessed in a limited way through perception data from qualitative interviews with practitioners, applicants and RSOs.

16 All applicants (315) were invited to take part in the study. One-hundred-and-four applicants consented to be interviewed (33%) and after repeated attempts to contact them, 43 interviews were conducted (14% of all applicants, 41% of those who agreed to be contacted). The interviews included a small number of people who had information disclosed (8).

17 RSOs were recruited via offender managers who acted as gatekeepers. No RSOs were interviewed who had been disclosed against, which does represent a limitation of the study.

18 MAPPAs co-ordinators are responsible for co-ordinating inter-agency co-operation in the community management of offenders.

19 MAPPAs lay advisers are members of the public appointed to the Strategic Management Board in each MAPPAs area.

Information on the cost of implementing the pilot was collected via police Single Points of Contact (SPOCs) in each of the pilot areas using the form at Appendix 2. Costs were collected on:

- set-up costs including recruitment of staff;
- marketing and publicity;
- training costs;
- staff costs;
- a range of hidden costs, including fuel, subsistence, and travel costs, etc.

The research team completed this fieldwork across the four different pilot areas. In line with the ethical standards set out in the research, the four areas are not identified in this report. They are referred to throughout as Areas A, B, C and D.<sup>20</sup>

## Limitations of the data

Although the overall number of interviews across stakeholders, RSOs and applicants is quite large (186) they represent a small proportion of the overall populations. The interviews were either purposively selected or based on those who had consented and were willing to proceed to interview and therefore they may not be representative of the views of all practitioners, stakeholders, applicants and RSOs. In addition, it should be noted that of the total number of applications (315) the forces submitted 159 (50%) to the research team for detailed analysis. This response rate was skewed by the low return (23%) from Area D, the remaining three areas submitted between 71–100 per cent of their forms. The forms also contained all those applications which resulted in a pilot disclosure (see Appendix I for more details). The findings, may therefore, not be representative of all cases, especially for Area D, and they should, therefore, be treated with a degree of caution.

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## 2 Overview and operation of the disclosure pilot

This section introduces the CSOR Public Disclosure Pilot by providing an overview of their design and consideration of aspects of the organisation, administration and implementation of the pilot.<sup>21</sup>

### Overview of the pilots

Four police forces piloted the disclosure process which offered parents, carers and guardians a formal mechanism for requesting information from the police about people who have access to children if they were concerned that a particular individual was a child sex offender.<sup>22</sup> The process for handling enquiries contains five key stages (see Table 1).<sup>23</sup>

The guidance indicates that stage 1 of the process must be completed within 24 hours. The full risk assessment at stage 4 must be completed within ten days with the complete process taking a maximum of 45 days. Where any of the risk assessment processes signal an imminent risk to children, forces are required to take immediate action through normal safeguarding procedures.

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<sup>20</sup> This does not imply a ranking and the labels remain consistent throughout this report.

<sup>21</sup> Findings based upon interviews with pilot staff and managers, interviews with key stakeholders, applicant interview data and administrative data.

<sup>22</sup> From March 2009, the scheme was extended so that applications could proceed where the person registering an interest was not a parent, guardian or carer.

<sup>23</sup> Internal CSOR Public Disclosure Pilot guidance was developed for the pilot and it sets out this process in a flowchart, reproduced in Appendix 3.



**Table 1 The disclosure pilot process**

Stage 1 Initial contact/registering an interest (enquiries)
Enquiries are made by a member of the public to the police requesting information about a person they are concerned about (identified as the 'subject'). This can be made by phone, walking into a police station or using other methods such as email.
The police complete an initial enquiry form. They undertake checks on the Police National Computer (PNC), ViSOR, <sup>a</sup> and force local intelligence systems to inform risk assessments.
Where immediate risk is identified, urgent action will be taken at this point and this applies throughout each stage of the process.
Enquiries that did not meet the pilot criteria <sup>b</sup> (for example, where there is no access to children) will be rejected at this point.
Stage 2 Face-to-face application (applications)
The enquiry now becomes an application and the applicant will be met face-to-face in order to undertake the next stage.
This meeting involves confirming the identity of the applicant, along with verification of the applicant and the subject's relationship to the child. Consent should be sought from the applicant for police to share information and make checks with Children's Social Care. It should be explained to the applicant that this might happen without consent if safeguarding concerns about a child's safety and welfare are identified.
Repeat and more in-depth detailed checks to be made on PNC, ViSOR and force local intelligence systems to inform risk assessment.
Stage 3 Information and empowerment
The applicant is given an information pack on the disclosure pilot scheme process and general safeguarding advice.
Stage 4 Full risk assessment
Full checks and research to be completed, to include: PNC, ViSOR, force local systems, Children's Social Care and probation.
Stage 5 Decision route and outcomes
There should now be a clear indication of what action should be taken. Subjects of the enquiry are categorised as 'known' or 'not known' and the risk assessment should identify whether or not there are 'concerns'.
It is here where the decision whether to disclose or take other action is made and agreed. This is undertaken in a multi-agency setting (i.e. MAPPA meeting or, for those subjects who do not meet MAPPA criteria safeguarding children procedures will be commenced and a decision made at a strategy meeting/discussion or case conference).
Police should notify other agencies, consider the use of existing safeguarding procedures and consider engagement with the MAPPA process if this has not already happened earlier in the process
Where a disclosure is to be made it is carried out jointly between the police and children's services. It should also be considered whether the subject needs to be notified.

a The Violence and Sex Offender Register (ViSOR) is a UK-wide system used to store and share information and intelligence on those individuals who have been identified as posing a risk of serious harm to the public.

b Pilot criteria were that the applicant had to be a parent, carer or guardian of the child in question (although this was later extended in March 2009 to all members of the public); there was unsupervised access to a child; and the applicant had to reside in the pilot force area. In order for a pilot disclosure to be made the subject had to be known for child sexual offending.

Source: Internal CSOR Disclosure Pilot guidance.

At stage 5, there should be a clear indication of what action should be taken and the subjects are categorised as 'known' or 'not known' and the risk assessment should identify whether or not there are 'concerns'. Definitions of these terms are set out in Table 2.

**Table 2** *Classification of outcomes for subjects*

Known	
A subject of an application is known to the police for being convicted for child sexual offences	The subject is likely to have a disclosure made about them unless existing risk management arrangements are deemed appropriate, or disclosure is unlikely to enhance the protection of children. Other outcomes may also apply (such as a referral to Children's Social Care).
Not Known	
A subject has no convictions for child sexual offending but they may have other convictions relevant to safeguarding children, e.g. domestic violence related offences or other violent offences – therefore not known in relation to child sexual offending. There may be intelligence known about the subject relevant to safeguarding children from social care databases or other intelligence sources. Sometimes, this classification has also been used to describe people who have pending charges in relation to child sex offences.  Alternatively the subject may have no convictions or intelligence known to the police and therefore more generally not known.	It is unlikely that a disclosure will occur where someone is not known, unless there is behaviour that is of concern to the police. In this case, either a non-pilot disclosure is made where safeguarding offences are identified or general safeguarding procedures may be followed such as a referral made to Children's Social Care.
Concerns	
There are a number of types of concerns that might be relevant to cases. According to the guidance, these could include the following: (i) Information known about the subject in relation to other offences/intelligence relevant to safeguarding children (as explained in 'Not Known' above). (ii) Concerning behaviour relevant to safeguarding children being displayed by the subject that has been disclosed as part of the disclosure application, e.g. grooming/unusual behaviour that may indicate sexual harm to children is likely. (iii) Circumstances known about the subject's previous child sexual offending and the circumstances/gravity of that offending now raise concerns about a risk of harm posed to the child/children named in the disclosure request.	Where there are concerns, disclosure or another form of safeguarding action (such as referral) is likely. Where someone is 'known' and there are 'concerns', disclosure is presumed.
No Concerns	
The subject has no convictions or intelligence relevant to safeguarding children and no concerning behaviour relevant to safeguarding children.	Where there are no concerns, there are no grounds for disclosure unless the subject is 'known' where it may be deemed necessary to provide the applicant with further information to support them in protecting children.

Source: These definitions are reproduced from Internal CSOR Disclosure Pilot guidance, see 'decision tree' in Appendix 3.

## The operation of the scheme

Forces varied in how they operated and staffed the scheme. Areas A, B and C integrated the scheme into normal police and public protection team duties, whereas Area D implemented the pilot by putting in place a dedicated pilot team drawn from civilian personnel with a relevant background. The scheme also operated force-wide in Area D from the start of the pilot so required more dedicated resources at the outset in order to anticipate what may have been a larger number of enquiries.<sup>24</sup> Practitioners involved in this approach saw the dedicated team as important for providing a single point of contact and continuity for applicants throughout the entire process. It is worth noting that Area D received the highest number of enquiries and applications. Nonetheless, given the small number of enquiries, applications and disclosures, the sustainability of resourcing such arrangements could be questioned. Table 3 describes how forces have integrated the pilot work into normal police duties.

**Table 3** *Integration of pilot tasks*

Area	Dedicated phone number	Receive an enquiry	Complete initial contact form	Face to face meeting	Completion of risk assessment	Feedback to applicant
A	No	Call centre, police station, email	Neighbourhood policing team	Neighbourhood policing team	Police Disclosure Co-ordinator	Disclosure co-ordinator
B	Yes	Call centre or police station	Call centre staff	Disclosure Officer	Police Disclosure officer	Disclosure officer
C	No	Call centre or police station	Station Enquiry Officer	Public protection Officer	Police public protection officer	Public Protection Officer
D	Yes	Pilot team via phone, email, text	Pilot Team	Pilot team	Pilot team	Pilot team

Source: scoping visits to each area

The method by which applicants first contacted the police was recorded in 143 cases (of 159). In most cases, initial enquiries were made through non-emergency calls to the police or pilot teams (83, 58%),<sup>25</sup> with enquiries also made in person (47, 33%), by email (5, 4%) or by other means (8, 6%). A dedicated phone number operated in two of the areas, and the Detective Chief Inspector (DCI) in Area D felt that this contributed most to the success of the pilot as it sent out a 'strong message of specialist provision'. However, applicants may not necessarily understand this as a dedicated resource.

### Timelines

According to the internal pilot guidance, the entire application process should take a maximum of 45 days (see Appendix 3). From the form data 136<sup>26</sup> (of 159) cases had time data recorded from initial contact to sign-off of the decision-making process. Some applications may take longer where additional checks are required. Three per cent of applications were considered to have extraordinary delays. Removing this three per cent of cases (4) from the analysis so as not to skew the data, analysis reveals that the most frequent time taken for an application to complete for all areas was 18 days (Table 4).

**Table 4** *Initial contact to sign off of application (in days)*

	Area A	Area B	Area C	Area D	Total for all areas
Mean	42	14	38	25	30
Mode	29	9	10	24	18
Range	4-90	1-43	4-78	2-65	1-90

Source: Form data (133 out of 159 forms included for the analysis).

As the range demonstrates (1-90 days for all areas), cases can be finished promptly or can often be delayed where more complex checks are required.

<sup>24</sup> Whereas other areas operated the pilot in smaller Base Command Units (BCUs) first before later extending force-wide in March 2009.

<sup>25</sup> Percentages throughout the report are quoted as valid percentages i.e. excluding missing data.

<sup>26</sup> In 23 cases, date and time data were not accurately recorded.

A small number of interviews were conducted with applicants (43) who reported that initial responses from the police were on average made within two to five days usually by a home visit from an officer, and most of this sample's applications were completed within 14-21 days. Whilst most applicants across the areas were satisfied with the promptness of police responses, there were some exceptions. For example, in Area C, an applicant experienced a time line of two to three months and limited follow-up. The applicant saw this as unacceptable and a period of time during which children could have been at risk.

### **Marketing and publicity**

Areas used a range of marketing approaches to reach as many people as possible, encourage those with concerns to make applications, convey accurate information about the scheme and inform partner agencies. Data from 153<sup>27</sup> application forms reveals that applicants heard about the pilot from a number of sources but primarily TV and radio (35, 23%), and word of mouth (43, 28%) which accounted for around half of the cases. The remaining applicants reported hearing about the pilot from 'other sources' such as publicity in newspapers, making a general enquiry or being told by a police officer (71, 46%) suggesting the need for a broad range of approaches to marketing and appropriate briefing for police staff. However, the total number of conversions from enquiries to applicants and subsequent disclosures were small (see Section 3) and there was some evidence from applicant interviews to suggest the pilot's remit may not have always been clearly communicated or understood (see Section 4). This suggests further work is needed to ensure marketing accurately portrays the role and remit of the process.

### **Pilot staff training and briefing**

Pilot and police staff interviewed had all been trained on the disclosure processes, although the content, emphasis and duration were perceived differently by staff. Those with previous experience in child protection or sex offender risk management generally perceived the training as adequate. In some instances, pilot staff perceived that process and administrative issues had been prioritised at the expense of professional issues such as how to support applicants.

Pre-operational training included half to one day internal police and multi-agency events about the process. The training received by interviewees was determined by the individuals' roles and by the model of delivery the police force had adopted (as set out in Table 3). Area C, for example, had non-pilot police staff completing the initial contact enquiries and it was more difficult to ensure that they were all adequately trained. All of the police interviewees described a process of briefing rather than training. Briefing events typically covered the aims and objectives of the pilot, giving some understanding of what the process would involve. There was less attention to the initial contact form for enquiries and this may have been one factor resulting in inconsistencies in data collection.

Some events were for multi-agency groups, including, for example, Children and Families Services and these were particularly well received by two (out of 21) local stakeholder interviewees. Interviews in all the pilot areas highlighted that briefing for staff in other agencies was more varied, with some staff receiving no input, and in future a strategy of dissemination to other agencies will be required.<sup>28</sup> Other police staff and civilian staff may also require briefing.

## **Key messages**

- Forces varied in how they operated and staffed the scheme with one area putting in place a dedicated pilot team. This arrangement was felt to be positive in terms of ensuring consistency of contact for applicants but may not be sustainable if numbers of applications remain low.
- The time taken to complete the process fell largely within the national requirement of 45 days, though there were some instances where more complex checks took longer.
- A range of marketing approaches were used but the overall conversion of enquiries to applications and subsequent disclosures across all pilot areas was small. This may have implications for the effectiveness of future marketing strategies and need for better targeting.

<sup>27</sup> Marketing information was completed in 153 of the 159 forms.

<sup>28</sup> Views from pilot staff and stakeholders, together with the perceptions of applicants and RSOs have contributed to an outline training strategy (produced as Appendix 4).

- There were different perceptions about the quality of the training received with some describing it as a briefing rather than training on the pilot. Should national roll-out occur the level and detail of training across agencies should be considered further.

### 3 Overview of disclosure applications

As the previous section illustrated, a consistent process to implementing the pilot was underpinned by internal pilot guidance that included a decision tree (see Appendix 3) though differences in how this was operationalised in local areas were evident.

In this section of the report the number, nature and outcomes of applications under the disclosure scheme are considered. Management information<sup>29</sup> provided by pilot areas as part of ongoing monitoring is presented in Table 5 to give an overview of the volume of cases handled. The table shows that a total of 585 enquiries were received across all pilot areas with 315 (or 54% of enquiries) proceeded with as applications.<sup>30</sup> A total of 21 disclosures were made under the remit of the pilot<sup>31</sup> with a further 11 applications resulting in non-pilot disclosures.

**Table 5 Number of enquiries, applications proceeded with and outcomes across the pilot areas**

Pilot area	Number of enquiries	Number of applications		Number of pilot disclosures made		Number of non-pilot disclosures made
		Number	% of enquiries	Number	% of applications	
A	87	48	55%	3	6%	5
B	109	42	39%	6	14%	4
C	110	33	30%	4	12%	2
D	279	192	69%	8	4%	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>585</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>11</b>

Source: Police management information collated across all pilot areas and supplied to the research team.

The remaining analyses in this section are based on the disclosure application forms provided by pilot areas to the research team. A total of 200 completed forms were submitted by police forces, 41 cases were enquiries only and were not proceeded with past the initial contact stage leaving 159 actual applications, and therefore applicants, to form the basis of the analyses. This represents just 50 per cent of the total number of applications and this rate is skewed by Area D which although it had the highest number of applications (192 based on police management information) it only provided about a quarter (45 or 23%) of the forms to the research team.<sup>32</sup> Therefore, the findings presented may not, especially for Area D, be representative of the overall caseload. That said, the available application form data do provide a useful insight into the pilot process (see Appendix 1 for further details). Where missing data are indicated in the analyses below this is usually on account of forms not being completed fully and any further development of the scheme will need to be underpinned by accurate completion of monitoring and management data.

29 The management information is from records supplied by forces as part of ongoing internal monitoring and the research team were unable to comment on their accuracy. However, the data provided by the forces via the formal application forms (159 forms submitted to the research team) which were subjected to analysis have been verified, though there are still issues with accuracy and completeness (see Appendix 1).

30 In order to be classified as an application, enquiries (or contacts to the police) had to be within the remit of the pilot insofar as a person was concerned about registering an interest in a subject who has contact with children. This was initially parents, carers and guardians but was later extended to other members of the public. Disclosure officers would then meet the applicant face-to-face at application stage.

31 i.e. they met pilot criteria and the subject was known for child sexual offending.

32 The remaining three forces submitted between 71-100 per cent of their forms.

## The profile of applicants

Based on the 159 application forms submitted, 87 per cent of applicants (133) were parents, carers or guardians of the child(ren) named in the application form.<sup>33</sup> Over half (55%, 67) of applicants were female and 45 per cent male (54).<sup>34</sup> The ethnicity breakdown reveals that the applicant profile was overwhelmingly White (98%) and the first language of most applicants was English (98%) largely similar to population data from the 2001 census.<sup>35</sup>

## Who were applicants registering a concern about?

Applicants could register a concern about a person who becomes identified under the pilot as a 'subject'. As with the applicant profiles, data about the subjects revealed a predominately White population at 98 per cent (148) with three subjects identified as from a minority ethnic group. Most applicants, 91 per cent, were registering concerns about men (123) though applications were made about 12 women and gender was not recorded in 24 cases.

Based on the application form data available to the research team, no subjects were aged under 18. The children's charities nationally, and some local Youth Offending Team (YOT) workers expressed concerns about the impact of the pilot on those aged under 18. One YOT manager (Area D) said that the pre-work in telling all RSOs had not been done in their area with young sex offenders. This manager argued that applications could potentially have a negative effect on young offenders and that young sex offenders should be excluded from the scheme.

In one area, a pilot co-ordinator stated during interview<sup>36</sup> that only one application was received on a young sex offender, and the three stakeholders interviewed involved in this case (one police and two Children's Services representatives) all agreed that these merited special consideration, arguing that if they are to be part of the project then strong protocols and guidance are necessary to ensure that the proper checks and balances in decision making are upheld. Internal pilot guidance and advice were provided to pilot staff in dealing with this case; the pilot co-ordinator had found it useful to refer to.

Application form data suggest that just under half of applications (48%) were made about ex-partner's new partners (27, 17%); neighbours (25, 16%) or family members/friends of family members (25, 16%), see Table 6 for further details.

**Table 6** Who applicants were registering concerns about

	Number	Percentage
Ex-partner's new partner	27	17%
Neighbour	25	16%
Family member/friend of family member	25	16%
Boyfriend/girlfriend	15	9%
Authority figure	15	9%
Family friend/partner of friend	12	8%
Friend	11	7%
Neighbour's relative/partner	7	4%
Others (concerned parent, college student, church-goer, lodger)	7	4%
Other family member	6	4%
Partner/living together	5	3%
Ex-partner	4	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Application form data N=159.

33 As would be expected given the initial remit of the pilot to provide parents, carers or guardians with a formal mechanism to register concerns about individuals.

34 A high proportion of forms (38) did not have the applicants' gender recorded. One area in particular, Area B did not record this routinely.

35 Although only based on 50 per cent of completed applications, these figures are similar to 2001 census data for each of the areas which show that minority ethnic populations make up five per cent (Area A), one per cent (Area B), six per cent (Area C) and ten per cent (Area D) of total populations.

36 This case was not submitted in the application form data given to the research team for analysis.



Applicants were asked why they were prompted to make an application under the disclosure pilot.<sup>37</sup> The data suggest that across all four areas, most applications (51%, 81) were made on the basis of the applicant receiving third-party information in the form of advice or through hearing rumours about the subject. A further 36 per cent (57) of applications were made on the basis of observations of the subject's behaviour and 21 per cent (33) were made as a result of observations of a child's behaviour. The smallest number indicated that they were making the application on the basis of having no particular concerns (18%, 28).

## Perceptions of risk and contact with children

Applicants were asked to identify whether the subject had contact with their child(ren) or other children. Table 7 shows that in just over half of cases (54%, 81), the subject did not have unsupervised contact with the child(ren) named in the application. However, just under half (46%, 69) of subjects did have unsupervised contact. The ratio was slightly higher in relation to unsupervised contact with 'other' children at 60 per cent (72).

**Table 7** Subject's contact with children

	No	Yes	Total
Does the subject have unsupervised contact with child(ren) named in application?	54% (81)	46% (69)	150
Does the subject have unsupervised contact with other children?	60% (72)	40% (49)	121

Source: Application form data analysed by the research team. Total excludes missing data nine cases.

Applicants were asked to make an assessment of whether the subject posed an immediate risk to the child<sup>38</sup> and in the majority of cases 79 per cent (108), this was felt not to be the case though 18 per cent of cases (28) applicants identified the subject as posing an immediate risk.<sup>39</sup>

## Disclosures and other outcomes

According to the management information supplied by pilot areas and verified by analysis of the application form data, there were 21 disclosures<sup>40</sup> (7% of applications; or 4% of enquiries – see Table 5) made under the pilot scheme. These were subjects identified as 'known' and there were 'concerns'.<sup>41</sup> Table 8 outlines the outcomes of applications and Box 1 provides case study examples of the different types of disclosures made following assessment.

A further 11 other disclosures which fell outside of the pilot parameters and were therefore classed as 'non-pilot disclosures,' ten of which were reviewed by the research team and are therefore included in the table.<sup>42</sup> These 'non-pilot disclosures' were where 'concerns' existed about a subject but they did not relate to convictions for child sex offences. Therefore, for pilot purposes, the subject was 'not known.' Together this represents a small proportion of the total volume of applications and enquiries.

<sup>37</sup> Four categories were provided and applicants could choose more than one reason.

<sup>38</sup> As defined by the applicant, not the police.

<sup>39</sup> Missing data = 23 cases.

<sup>40</sup> Highlighted in column 1 of Table 8.

<sup>41</sup> Definitions of these categories are provided in Section 2.

<sup>42</sup> Column 3, Table 8.

**Table 8 Outcomes of the applications by category (all pilot areas)**

	<b>Disclosure made N=21</b>	<b>Disclosure not made N=84</b>	<b>Non-pilot disclosure N=10</b>	<b>Other outcome N=43</b>	<b>Outcome not completed in form N=1</b>
Not known and no concerns (N=56)	0	54	0	1	1
Not known and concerns (N=70)	0	25	10*	35	0
<b>Known and concerns (N=30)</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>
Known and no concerns (N=3)	0	3	0	0	0

Source: Application form data N=159

\* Four cases were added into this category by the research team following investigations of the application form data. These cases were originally recorded as pilot disclosures because the intelligence related to child protection, but it was not specific to child sex offences and therefore outside of pilot parameters but did require safeguarding (e.g. domestic violence).

As expected, given the remit of the pilot, the most common disclosures were where a subject was known for convictions for child sex offences and there were concerns. However, in nine cases a disclosure was not made in circumstances that fit within the remit of the pilot.<sup>43</sup> Seven of these resulted in another outcome (see below) and the remaining two were recorded as 'disclosure not made' since in these cases it was agreed through the assessment process that existing arrangements were more appropriate in the management of risk. For example, a subject was currently effectively managed under MAPPA and had no direct access to children, so it was determined that current arrangements were working appropriately.

Under the 'disclosure not made' heading (84 cases) there were a high proportion of cases where subjects were categorised as having 'concerns' (27 cases). However, the definition of 'concerns' is broad including the risk assessment checks by the police and also the applicant's self-assessment of risk (see Section 2). Therefore, 'concerns' is not necessarily a reliable guide to assessing outcomes.

Interestingly, 43 applications resulted in other child safeguarding actions<sup>44</sup> which were not represented in the management information supplied by forces but were on the application form data.<sup>45</sup> These included 37 referrals to Children's Social Care, 15 professional or strategy meetings, which sometimes required the input of other agencies, and three subjects who were defined as current MAPPA offenders subject to existing licence conditions or other controls who would be reviewed at a MAPPA meeting.<sup>46</sup> Although difficult to be equivocal about this, these cases potentially represent an additional benefit of the pilot as they may not have been brought to the attention of the police without the pilot.

<sup>43</sup> Row 3, Table 8.

<sup>44</sup> Column 4, Table 8.

<sup>45</sup> And will be difficult to assess in terms of the cost analysis of the pilot.

<sup>46</sup> To note that more than one outcome may have been actioned per case so the total adds up to more than the 43 other outcomes.

## **Box 1 Case study examples of disclosures made under the pilot**

### **Case study 1 Pilot disclosure**

A Parent makes an application regarding concerns for a neighbour who they felt was trying to befriend the applicant and their children by offering sweets. Checks showed the subject was a child sex offender. The sex offender was subject to a court order prohibiting them from being in contact with anyone aged under 18. The subject was subsequently arrested and remanded into custody.

### **Case study 2 Pilot disclosure**

An offender subject to a Sexual Offences Prevention Order (SOPO) assessed as medium risk to children and adult females. An application was made by female carers who were involved in the delivery of social care to the offender. Carers observe the subject contacting children in the street, and the visit of a child to the subjects flat. A disclosure was made to the carers and to Children's Social Care to enable better protection and risk management for them. An application was also made by a neighbour under the pilot scheme. A minimal disclosure was made to the neighbour to enable them to protect their child. Due to this disclosure and proactive response by police and social workers, the offender remains in their home, continues to receive social care, and the neighbour has been reassured.

### **Case study 3 Non-pilot disclosure**

A Grandparent had concerns about their daughter's new partner who they believed to be acting strangely around their grandchild. Checks showed the subject was not a child sex offender but they did have an extensive history of violence and use of weapons. This information was shared with the Children's Social Care Department who addressed the protection of the child. Although there was no information to disclose regarding child sex offences, the danger the subject posed was highlighted to the applicant, therefore safeguarding their grandchild. This example highlights how the pilot can identify and address other potential child care concerns.

### **Case study 4 Other safeguarding action**

A male was concerned about rumours that an extended family member was a child sex offender. Checks showed that the subject was a sex offender who had failed to register in accordance with the Sex Offender's Act. This was referred to the Children's Social Care Department where the protection of the children in the application was addressed. Disclosure was given to the family by social workers. Without the pilot, police and the Social Services Department would never have known this individual was in the area.

## **The quality of the application form data**

As some of the data above have shown, form data were not always accurately completed and this posed some difficulties in providing profile information, assessing the quality of implementation and tracking outcomes. This, in part, indicates more work is needed to refine disclosure categories and classifications. The small number of returns in comparison to the overall application load (50%) also raises concern (particularly for Area D, which had a 23% application form return rate). Given the importance of this data for child protection and offender management audit purposes, any national roll-out should consider the level of management and audit information required and areas should be encouraged to accurately record this information.

## **Key messages**

- Management data provided by the pilot areas indicate that there were 585 enquiries under the pilot scheme; just 21 of these resulted in disclosure (4%). The research team analysed 159 application forms (50% of the overall total number of applications, which was skewed by a low return (23%) in Area D).
- Applicants registered concerns about a number of different people but mostly neighbours (36 cases), ex partners new partners (34) or family members/friends of family members (31). Most applications were based on hearing third-party information about the subject (81 cases).

- In addition to the 21 disclosures, there was evidence of 43 applications resulting in a number of other outcomes including referrals to other agencies and inter-professional risk management meetings.
  - The completeness and quality of the application form data, together with the small number of returns, raises questions about the effectiveness of monitoring the pilot process and possibly raises concerns about how the schemes were implemented. This will need to be addressed in any future roll-out of the scheme.
- 

## 4 Experiences and outcomes of the pilot

This section draws on interviews with applicants, pilot staff and other stakeholders and provides an overview of aspects of the experience and outcomes of the pilot.

### Applicant perceptions of the pilot

A total of 43 applicants were interviewed as part of this evaluation. This group were largely satisfied with the disclosure application process. Key factors in a positive experience for the whole process of making an application, and particularly around home visits to both discuss an application and to provide a disclosure, were as follows.

- The clarity of staff explanations of the application process.
- Timeliness of contact, including final feedback on the outcome of the application.
- Courtesy, 'listening' and other personal qualities of the staff.
- Responsiveness to applicant's concerns.
- The opportunity to make an application is valued.

The response and levels of satisfaction with both the process and its outcome were, in some cases, associated with applicants' initial expectations and prior knowledge. For example, one applicant had misjudged what the disclosure pilot's precise area of responsibility was (they were concerned about non-sexual violence). Having had a positive experience of the process, however, they came away reassured if only slightly better informed about their own situation. There was also a small group of applicants who were seeking information about new partners and potential step-parents of their own children following the breakdown of relationships (n=4).

Applicants' concerns were often allayed by the way in which disclosure officers had explained the process at the outset and then kept the applicant informed throughout. Once the process begins, some applicants can become more anxious and one applicant talked about the importance of an 'ongoing dialogue' (*Applicant 1, Area D*).

### Confidentiality

Most applicants interviewed appreciated the confidentiality afforded to them in making an application, and were reassured by police staff about their personal safety. In general, the applicants understood that they could be in receipt of confidential information as a result of a disclosure which would prevent them from telling others about what they had learnt. Some applicants struggled with not being able to pass on information to other people. One applicant was part of a small local community in which the families concerned knew each other and may have strayed beyond the formal boundary of confidentiality. However, there was no evidence to suggest any serious or damaging breach of confidentiality. Despite this, some police interviewees did recommend that careful guidance needs to be given regarding confidentiality and there was some concern about whether any appropriate sanctions could be used in terms of dealing with any breaches.

Guidance and help given to applicants at the end of the process, for example on the reasons for confidentiality; the possible public order implications of breaching confidentiality; and reassurance on how any outstanding risks will formally be dealt with, even if there is no disclosure, was seen as an important part of the pilot by stakeholders and will need to be carefully addressed in any roll out of the scheme.

## Outcome of the process

### *Responses to disclosures*

Eight interviewees had received some form of disclosure, including what seems to have been a partial disclosure (in essence advice to be careful about their children). Examples of some of the actions taken by individuals (supported by the relevant agencies) were:

- a community centre worker was able to use the information to provide general safeguarding advice to children and parents;
- a parent stopped the access arrangements that were in place between the children and their father;
- an applicant told their step daughter (who was a mother) that they did not approve of the step daughter's boyfriend and they should not see him.

Most applicants, including those who had not received a disclosure, had felt enabled to safeguard the children concerned, and most applicants thought that the pilot could contribute to general levels of alertness about risks to children.

Some of those who had received a disclosure continued to have to cope with a difficult situation. For example an applicant who had stopped access was worried because the person concerned had moved to live nearer to the family. They were also left with some difficult feelings that they had put their children at risk in the first place. In all cases, the importance of follow-up work after the process has been completed needs to be considered both in terms of reassuring applicants about the management of offenders and providing ongoing safeguarding advice or counselling where necessary.

### *Responses to non-disclosures*

Most of the applicants interviewed (n= 35) were told that there was nothing to disclose about child sex offending. For some of these applicants interviewed with no disclosure it was a reassuring result. However, reassurance was not apparent in all cases. One family, who had made an enquiry about a neighbour, still felt uncomfortable and were planning to move house anyway. This decision did not seem to be related to the information received from this process but instead from a general sense of anxiety.

For two applicants, the way in which the enquiries were conducted increased anxiety as the process continued. This was related to a lack of communication in terms of the time taken to process the application and influenced their ultimate satisfaction with both the process and the outcome. Ongoing communication with applicants is therefore essential to reduce anxiety.

Where applicants received results that there was nothing that could be disclosed, but concerns remained about the subject, it could be difficult for them to know what that meant. One applicant eventually found out through informal networks that the subject of the enquiry was involved in offences not related to child sex offending and this information did ease anxieties. There may be a difficulty therefore in that an absence of information can only reassure applicants up to a point.

Several applicants commented that their involvement with the process had the effect of making them more alert about child protection issues and they saw this as positive.

## Does the pilot add value to arrangements for protecting children?

The majority of pilot staff, police and offender manager interviewees said that the disclosure pilot had formalised what should be good practice in child protection. The pilot was seen by police officers as providing greater clarity for staff by focusing on risk, focusing on the child, and permitting the sharing of information with members of the public. Other benefits cited by police and probation staff included: increased intelligence; information to strengthen risk management plans; information about other crimes which often also have a child protection dimension; and a strengthening of the police's perspective on, and commitment to, safeguarding children.

Locally, pilot staff and police officers valued the gathering of additional intelligence about offenders (not just child sex offenders), a view supported by some probation officers and social workers across the four areas. Two examples described by the disclosure co-ordinator in Area A reflect other experiences across the pilots and exemplify value-added dimensions of the pilot.

- One produced intelligence about a convicted sex offender about whom there was no current knowledge as to his whereabouts and as a result of the application, child protection measures could be put in place.
- Similarly the second case, which did not in the end meet the disclosure criteria, drew attention to the fact that a sex offender had found a potential 'new vehicle' (a church) for meeting mothers and their children. Work could then be done to increase vigilance.

Negative perceptions of impacts were more general in their nature: poor applicant or community reaction as a result of disclosures; breaches of confidentiality; and potential reputation risks if disclosures were handled badly. To date there is no evidence of any significant negative impact under any of these concerns.

The sample of police interviewees said that there were a number of side-benefits in relation to the wider community and the protection of children. For disclosure staff in particular, these have included a potentially educative role in relation to applicants, thus supporting relevant actions of the Child Sex Offender Review (Home Office, 2007)<sup>47</sup> albeit in a limited way. Police staff valued the opportunity to undertake preventative work during the disclosure process. Nationally, the children's charities saw potential for increased public awareness and empowerment for parents in managing their own risks. There was widespread concern that further work is required to reach 'vulnerable families' who may not necessarily access the scheme through contact with the police. One local Children's Services manager, who had been engaged with the pilot from the outset, advocated that more extensive involvement with primary and junior school teachers may be an effective way of reaching such vulnerable families.

Some national and local stakeholders expressed the view that they would require more tangible evidence that child safety had been increased through the disclosure process with some scepticism that the pilot would add little to existing arrangements. They thought that other established arrangements such as MAPPA and Approved Premises provided for more effective risk management and considered that the current polygraph and previous satellite-tracking pilots had more potential to supplement those established arrangements. However, the pilot was not designed to replace these but rather to enhance existing arrangements. Two local safeguarding representatives wanted stronger links between the pilot and safeguarding and in general were the most sceptical about the value-added of disclosure to existing child protection arrangements, doubting its contribution to identify and reduce risk or to practically protect children.

There was evidence that many local stakeholders interviewed had changed their views as a result of being involved with the pilot. For example, four managers in Children's Services had described initial concerns prior to the start of the pilot. However, all had changed their minds once the project had become an established feature of practice. For some national stakeholders interviewed, it was still too early to judge the effectiveness of the scheme and scepticism remained.

<sup>47</sup> Action 1 of the CSOR to enhance public awareness and education, and action 2 to increase public awareness of how sex offenders are managed in the community



## The relationship with the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements

The introductory section gave a brief overview of the current arrangements for third-party disclosure under the MAPPA. The pilot does not replace this, rather it is an additional measure designed to ensure a formalised route in for the public to register a concern. In this respect, the pilot was seen by the majority of pilot staff and offender managers as providing a new input for people (i.e. members of the public) outside of the MAPPA process. This is important as the role of lay advisers (who are appointed members of the public) is in the strategic oversight of MAPPA and not in operational risk management (Wood and Kemshall, 2008). The pilot provided new intelligence and perspectives on risk based on the concerns of the public. This was seen as a key benefit for strengthening risk management plans.

The majority of police and probation staff interviewed said that MAPPA operated as it had done prior to the pilot, especially given the routine consideration of disclosure as part of MAPPA meetings.<sup>48</sup> As before, disclosure decisions relating to MAPPA offenders were referred to, and agreed by MAPPA. Where subjects were not identified as MAPPA offenders or were locally managed as level 1 offenders,<sup>49</sup> decisions were taken by police, often in consultation with other agencies – again a reflection of existing process arrangements. In some cases, the pilot was described by those linked to MAPPA as a ‘parallel’ process requiring some further attention with regards to the interface between the pilot and MAPPA. Issues that were highlighted by offender managers included the following.

- The need for greater information sharing between agencies where a single agency (such as the police or social care) were responsible for delivering a disclosure outside of MAPPA. Issues had arisen where social care staff had made disclosures parallel to the disclosure pilot team’s work.
- The need for other agencies to be adequately briefed on the new pilot processes. For example, in one area, education and health services had not been fully informed of the pilot and were, therefore, least knowledgeable and least able to support potential applicants through the process.

One MAPPA lead suggested that better integration between MAPPA and the disclosure process could be achieved by having enquiries directly routed to MAPPA teams. This would ensure a better interface between the scheme and existing inter-agency arrangements.

## Key messages

- Applicants are generally positive about their experiences of the disclosure pilot, and this is particularly related to the professional conduct of pilot staff, and the timeliness of police responses from initial enquiries to final feedback. This appears to be irrespective of the final outcome.
- Some applicants were left with difficult situations following disclosures. Guidance and advice about how to manage these would be helpful and consideration needs to be given for follow-up and ongoing support.
- Applicants have a reasonable understanding of confidentiality, although some natural limits to this operate. Guidance to applicants on confidentiality is important in governing how they go on to behave.
- Pilot staff were generally positive about the pilot and saw it as strengthening practice, providing greater clarity and introducing a formal process for the public to make enquiries.
- MAPPA was perceived to have largely operated as it had done before the pilot, though there was some evidence that integration with the pilot could be strengthened through better information sharing and co-ordination between agencies when disclosures were being discussed and made.

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<sup>48</sup> Discussed in Chapter 1.

<sup>49</sup> Level 1 offenders (considered the lowest risk) are those who are managed by a single agency not requiring intensive inter-agency work.

## 5 The perceived impact of the pilot on registered sex offenders

This section considers the views of a small group (61) of registered sex offenders (RSOs) who consented to be involved in the evaluation and were subsequently contacted by offender managers. All interviewees were living in the pilot areas but not all were child sexual offenders. Interviews focused, in particular, on the impact of the pilot though none of the RSOs interviewed had been disclosed about as part of the scheme despite repeated attempts to contact some. However, some interviewees had experienced disclosure<sup>50</sup> in the normal course of their supervision.

Exploring RSO views was determined to be an important element of this evaluation due to previous research that has found that most offenders reject the idea of a community notification scheme fearing community reprisals or vigilante action (Wood and Kemshall, 2007). In the same study, many offenders threatened to disengage from criminal justice supervision and management in the event of such a scheme coming into force: a finding similar to that of research that investigated the impact of community notification schemes in the USA (Fitch, 2006) where offenders went underground.

### Registered Sex Offenders' perceptions of the pilot

RSO perceptions of the scheme were mixed, but by far the most common initial reaction was one of anxiety related to concerns that the scheme represented a wider disclosure initiative. These fears appeared to be linked to media coverage. During interviews, some RSOs conflated the pilot scheme coverage with ongoing debates about wider community notification and the potential for members of the public to find out where they live and potential threats to personal safety. Some RSOs reported being less anxious as the pilot scheme developed, but others remained cautious.

For many RSOs, the introduction of the pilot was seen as an extension of the existing arrangements for the management of offenders. As one RSO commented, disclosure *'runs through every aspect of life including employment, looking for work, at some stage you may be asked to disclose...'* (RSO 1, Area B). This may go some way to explaining why offenders have not necessarily reported significant changes as a result of the pilot.

Pilot staff and police offender managers felt that the initial visits by the police designed to explain the pilot had been particularly important in addressing misconceptions and levels of anxiety. All practitioners reported that once accurate information had been presented, most RSOs responded well. Despite this, there was still confusion about the remit of the pilot evident in interviews – a view shared by some applicants.

Pilot staff reported that there was some evidence of negative reactions to the pilot from RSOs. These were sometimes expressed in very specific ways, for example: a threat to sue the pilot co-ordinator in Area A after a disclosure was made to a partner. Some RSOs were reported by pilot staff to be angry with the scheme and *'wanted to throw [police officers] out'* (Police Officer, Area B) when hearing about it.

### The perceived impact on behaviour

During interviews, most RSOs reported *'no change'* (RSO 2, Area B) in their behaviour and were *'not phased'* (RSO 3, Area C) as a result of the pilot though one did acknowledge that *'you don't realise its effect'* (RSO 1, Area B) - for example what information might be disclosed and the repercussions on forming new relationships. RSOs reported a routine mindset of guarding *'against being seen in the wrong light'* (RSO 4, Area B), being *'careful what I say and do now anyway'* (RSO 5, Area D) and *'just keeping my head clean'* (RSO 6, Area D). RSOs are used to the requirements of registration and licence conditions and reported avoiding situations where they might have access to potential victims or other risky circumstances:

<sup>50</sup> Under the existing MAPPA arrangements discussed in Chapter 1. See Wood and Kemshall (2007) and Cann (2007) for a more detailed overview of supervision and disclosure practice.

*'I make sure I am not in any circumstances in which [problems] might arise [such as] having anything to do with dealing with children, where children might be in my care for example. So I make sure that doesn't happen.'*

(RSO 7, Area D)

However, in a minority of cases, there was evidence that the pilot may have aided RSOs in thinking about the implications of their behaviour. This group of RSOs reported becoming more self-aware and with it more anxious about how engagement in certain behaviours or activities may in fact precipitate a disclosure request. One interviewee reported higher levels of anxiety about starting any new relationships since the introduction of the pilot. The disclosure pilot had made another interviewee anxious that another parent who brings their child to his house might make an application.

Although no interviews were conducted with RSOs disclosed against, three cases (from a total of six in one area) were followed up with probation offender managers supervising these RSOs. They indicated that RSO compliance had not been affected and supervision continued. Positive aspects of disclosure were noted, for example that the RSOs knew that evidence for breach of a Sexual Offences Prevention Order (SOPO) could be collected, that agencies were vigilant and 'talked to each other', that the public could report concerns directly and action was taken, and that generally RSOs were 'fearful of going back to court.'

RSOs are already subject to numerous external controls which may influence compliance (Wood and Kemshall, 2007), and in one area the piloting of the mandatory polygraph trials may also have significance. There is no evidence at this stage to suggest that compliance has been affected by the disclosure pilot but longer-term monitoring is recommended. No practitioner reported any fluctuations in compliance resulting from the introduction of the pilots. This applied both to compliance with registration requirements and with conditions of probation supervision.

## The perceived impact on accommodation and employment

The RSOs interviewed reported that the disclosure pilot had had limited impact on their existing employment or accommodation arrangements. Interviewees were invited to consider what might happen as a result of a disclosure in future circumstances, and there was a mixture of views. There was some anxiety that if disclosure occurred, it would result in problems with current accommodation arrangements. Whilst the RSOs acknowledged that the disclosure pilot had tight boundaries, some expressed the view that '*people tell people*' (RSO 4, Area B) and this may result in a wider network of people who come to know about particular offenders.<sup>51</sup>

Similar anxieties were expressed about the impact of disclosure generally on employment prospects. For those in employment or who were actively looking for work, there was evidence that many RSOs had already experienced disclosure to employers and this was usually through self-disclosure. As one commented '*with most places you say you have got a conviction and they can just check it any way*' (RSO 8, Area C). Self-disclosure to landlords or accommodation providers was also discussed by participants. One RSO had experienced a positive outcome as a result of disclosing an offence with the landlord ensuring that they were housed somewhere where they could feel safe.

## Key messages

- Of the small number of RSOs interviewed, some were initially confused about the remit of the pilot and some remained anxious. Anxieties were addressed through explaining the remit of the pilot, but ongoing contact with offender managers will be essential.
- Most interviewees did not report any changes in compliance as a result of the scheme though it is perhaps too early to assess impact and there is a need for relevant data to assess this.

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<sup>51</sup> It should be noted that no examples of vigilante action were reported to the research team during this evaluation.

- For many RSOs, the process was seen as an extension of existing controls and was perceived to have no negative impact on accommodation or employment.
- Some RSOs reported becoming more self-aware about how engagement in certain behaviours or activities may in fact precipitate a disclosure request.
- A longer-term assessment will be required in order to fully determine the impact of the pilot on the behaviour, perceived or actual, of RSOs.

## 6 Cost analysis

The evaluation included an analysis of the costs of implementing and delivering the disclosure model. As this was a process evaluation it was not appropriate to conduct cost-effectiveness or cost-benefit analyses. The report provides a cost analysis of pilot-scheme spend, but is limited by the lack of baseline data pre-pilot and the difficulties in attributing a financial value to outcomes. These are therefore indicative cost findings. These difficulties are not uncommon in such evaluations (Dhiri and Brand, 1999).

Areas returned basic data on costs around the running of the pilot (see Appendix 2), but due to omissions within these data returns, the unit costs provided in this report are estimates derived from the best available data. Additional costs of the process may also be borne by other agencies, particularly those involved in MAPPA, but may not be represented within the cost estimates. Detailed costs as recorded per area are presented in Appendix 2 and the main points include the following.

- The pilot schemes were allocated a budget of £150,000 to trial and test the process; in practice they spent less than this. The overall estimated cost of implementing and running the pilot ranged from £97,205 to £143,611. This range may more accurately reflect differences in cost recording practices between areas, rather than actual differences.<sup>52</sup> Three of the four forces integrated the scheme into their routine child protection duties. Anecdotal feedback to the Home Office policy unit from pilot forces, after the completion of the evaluation, suggested that they would embed the disclosure process into their existing police public protection arrangements.
- Training costs were not fully accounted for across the areas, and ranged from £1,783 to £22,016.<sup>53</sup> The most costly training strategy in Area C comprised a broad programme and included a total of 3,400 staff from Specials and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) up to Inspector level. The training strategy proposed in this report does not anticipate this level of activity or cost.
- Marketing costs varied. The areas which spent the most on marketing and publicity did receive more enquiries, but it would be too simplistic to draw a direct linear connection between marketing costs and applications received and the levels of enquiries did not always reflect conversion rates to actual applications.
- Once project set-up costs have been excluded,<sup>54</sup> the ongoing estimated cost of handling an enquiry ranges from £294 to £799; an application from £226 to £450 and a disclosure from £152 to £250. This is based on calculations from Areas C and D who had the most complete data for these analyses. The costs reflect the amount of time spent on handling the various parts of the process (but does not account for how this time might otherwise have been spent).

<sup>52</sup> For example, pilot Area A did not provide information on recruitment costs and Area B did not, despite conducting an extensive amount of training, provide any data on training costs. See Appendix 2 and specifically Table A4 for further details.

<sup>53</sup> Again, this variation probably reflected some differences in recording practices

<sup>54</sup> Project set-up costs included initial training and recruitment costs; see further detail in Appendix 2.

- Looking at the costs of the application stages is useful to get a sense of where resources are spent, but in order for a disclosure to take place all three stages of the process (enquiry, application and disclosure) have to be completed. The ongoing estimated cost of handling a disclosure from initial enquiry is therefore more representative and was found to be between £672 (Area D) and £1,499 (Area C) per application. Since projects will need to continue to market the scheme, this will need to be considered in the ongoing costs.
  - The volume of enquiries and applications differed significantly between areas, as do conversion rates, and ideally would be factored in when considering the cost calculations above. Creating a high number of enquiries but low conversion rates at both the application and disclosure stages increases the total project costs and the average cost per disclosure. Area C achieved a 30 per cent conversion rate of enquires to applications whilst Area D achieved 69 per cent. This could potentially be improved by more accurate targeting and effective marketing of the schemes to generate more enquiries that are likely to meet the scheme criteria. The conversion from application to disclosure is risk-dependent however (Area C achieved a conversion rate of applications to disclosure of 24%, and Area D 2%). It is, therefore, difficult to set an appropriate level for what this should be.
  - Areas should be encouraged to keep an accurate record of costs and resource using the pro-forma presented in Appendix 2. This would support better recording and more accurate cost calculations.
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## 7 Conclusions and recommendations

This report has assessed how the CSOR Public Disclosure Pilots provided applicants with a formal mechanism for requesting information about people who they may be concerned about. This included looking at the implementation, costs and perceived value of the pilots in relation to existing child protection arrangements. It also investigated the perceptions of a small number of applicants and RSOs living in the pilot areas. The limitations of the research i.e. that the interview findings may not be representative of all views and some of the application form data were missing, should be considered when interpreting the findings.

The pilot has worked well in some respects though it is too early to assess the longer-term impact of the scheme. The pilot staff, police and other criminal justice agencies saw mainly benefits with the scheme particularly in the formalisation of processes, the provision of increased intelligence and providing a better route in for the public to make enquiries should they have concerns.

The majority of police and probation staff felt that MAPPAs operated as it had done prior to the pilot, though better information sharing and co-operation may be required to address any issues of duplication in terms of perceived parallel processes.

The marketing used across the pilots may have had an impact on the number of enquiries, though some stakeholders argued that the pilot may not be effectively targeting vulnerable families. More work needs to be done around clarifying messages to improve the number of appropriate applications and more thought should be given to who to target and through what media particularly given the extension of the scheme beyond parents, guardians and carers.

The number of enquiries progressed to applications, and subsequent disclosures made under the scheme were smaller than initially anticipated. It could be argued that such a small number may not justify the resources dedicated to the scheme. However, there are a number of other child protection actions that may not have been triggered in the absence of the pilot, that have occurred as a result of the process. These are benefits that could serve to reassure the public and strengthen community management arrangements.

Half of the overall caseload of applications were investigated by the research team due to poor completion and returns of forms by pilot areas and this may highlight some possible weaknesses in implementing the process and child protection and sexual offender management audit trails. The timely and accurate completion of management data will be crucial for accountability, ensuring that the correct checks have been completed and in monitoring the effectiveness of the scheme.

The small number of applicants interviewed were generally positive about the pilot and this was particularly related to the professional conduct of pilot staff, and the timeliness of police responses. The research team did not find any evidence of serious or damaging breaches of confidentiality though careful guidance is required. There was evidence of a range of different actions taken as a result of both disclosures and non-disclosures. Attention must be given to how applicants are supported in what to do in terms of protecting children as a result of the process and thought given to whether the disclosure meeting goes far enough.

A small number of RSOs were also interviewed, though none of these had been subject to disclosures under the pilot and were only those willing to take part in the research. Initial perceptions of the pilot were mixed with some experiencing confusion about the remit of the scheme. Offenders need to be briefed effectively and ongoing engagement with offender managers (including those in probation) will be necessary to allay fears. In some cases, offenders indicated that the pilot had supported them in managing their own behaviour. Offenders viewed the scheme as an extension of existing controls and reported that the presence of the pilot had not impacted upon their accommodation and employment, and the research team found no evidence that the pilot had impacted upon compliance. However, this was only a process study and impacts on measures such as RSO compliance with registration and probation supervision, child sexual offending and public reassurance were not able to be assessed. A longer-term exploration may be warranted to ensure that the scheme does not have negative impacts.

## Recommendations

In the event of any national roll-out of the scheme or its longer-term continuation locally, the following points should be taken into consideration.

- **Prior to national roll-out** there needs to be proper and adequate preparation time, as was given in the pilot, for training of police and staff in other agencies to prepare for applications and to ensure a quality of service to applicants. Time also must be given to preparing RSOs in each of the areas so as not to harm compliance rates.
- **Pilot guidance has been used during the pilot and should be used in any roll-out.** In providing a framework for the scheme, the guidance should include, as a minimum:<sup>55</sup>
  - the professional standards expected of disclosure staff including the required knowledge and skills in child protection and sex offender management;
  - guidance on confidentiality including the potential tensions and limitations that may apply to applicants;
  - good practice approaches to working with applicants throughout the process;
  - clear and prescriptive timelines for the process with recognition of potential delays;
  - guidance for partner agencies;
  - strategies for informing RSOs about the scheme;
  - guidance on dealing with enquiries that cross force area borders;
  - guidance for dealing with the particular challenges presented where a subject is aged under 18.
- **Areas should consider how the scheme fits with existing safeguarding arrangements.** In particular, where individual agencies make disclosures to the public, these need to be reported to the scheme to ensure effective information sharing and consistency in the content and timing of the disclosure. Areas should also consider how the scheme may usefully operate within MAPPAs units or teams.

<sup>55</sup> The research team recognise that much of this guidance may already be in place.



- **Marketing and publicity requires: consistent and clear messages and approaches** to avoid confusion about the remit of the scheme; briefing to a wide range of partner organisations; and specific plans to target vulnerable groups and minority ethnic communities.
  - **Local areas should review their approach to the training and briefing of disclosure staff and partners.** Examples of what might be included in a training strategy are offered in Appendix 4.
  - **A system for recording management information should be set up to ensure accountability throughout the process.** If put in place, there needs to be a core data set established which should be completed accurately to ensure comparability across forces.
  - **Disclosure and non-disclosure outcomes need to be effectively communicated and supported.** Applicants in all cases can be left with anxiety and may struggle to effectively respond to the outcome. Disclosure staff need to ensure appropriate 'exits' for applicants including the provision of educational information and referral to other agencies for follow-up where appropriate.
  - **RSOs will require ongoing information and advice in relation to the scheme.** This is important to allay any fears about the remit of the scheme and to consider the implications of any potential disclosure. Probation and police offender managers will be best placed to assume this role as part of their ongoing supervision and management responsibilities.
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## Appendix I Method overview

### CSOR public disclosure pilots - process evaluation: Methodology

The process evaluation of the CSOR Public Disclosure Pilots commenced in March 2009 and was completed in September 2009. Section one of the main report provides a brief overview of the data collection completed for this evaluation. This section sets out the approaches taken to interview the key stakeholders involved in the pilot, and the quantitative analysis of administrative data. Further information about the cost analysis is provided in Appendix 2.

### Fieldwork in the pilot areas

#### *Scoping visits*

Members of the research team undertook visits in each of the pilot areas to ensure familiarisation with the local implementation of the pilot process. This work was conducted at the start of the research contract (in April 2009) and comprised interviews with all of the police leads, disclosure co-ordinators and teams. In addition, pilot staff identified key MAPPA personnel and other criminal justice practitioners including offender managers from police and probation, who were interviewed by the research team. Early interviews were designed to provide an insight into the operational aspects of implementing the scheme, perceptions on the number of applications and any early perceptions of impact in terms of applicants and the engagement with registered sex offenders (RSOs). The research team also reviewed completed disclosure applications at this stage in order to design an appropriate SPSS database.<sup>56</sup> Scoping visits were recorded using a combination of contemporaneous notes and audio, and an early project meeting of the research team was held to explore emerging themes and to compare findings from across the areas.

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<sup>56</sup> A software package designed to analyse statistical data.

## Interviews

Five different participant groups were interviewed as part of this study, namely: pilot staff, offender managers, RSOs, applicants and other stakeholders. Each group required specific consideration in terms of the design of interview questions and the topic guides used to inform data collection as set out below. All interview schedules were semi-structured in format, exploring the attitudes, motivations and experiences of applicants and RSOs, and the perceptions and experiences of pilot staff, offender managers and stakeholders. In-depth interviews were felt to be the most appropriate method for investigating perceptions and aspects of behaviour change in depth and context (Miller and Crabtree 2004).

Face-to-face interviews were audio-recorded by the research interviewer, returned securely to the research team and transcribed in a standard format for consistent and systematic analysis. The data were analysed through an iterative process of describing, classifying and connecting data (Dey, 1993; 1998) within a framework of adaptive grounded theory (Layder, 1998) used previously in similar research by Wood and Kemshall (2007). Transcripts were prepared for review by the research team to enable data familiarisation. Data were categorised, coded and key themes were then established with data grouped under headings. These were then interrogated for connecting themes and isolated or negative cases.

### Qualitative interviews with applicants

A total of 43 applicants were interviewed as part of this study. Their distribution across areas is shown in Table A1. The table indicates that the majority of applicants were interviewed from Area D, due to the larger available 'pool' of those consenting to be involved in the research.

**Table A1 Applicant interview breakdown by pilot area**

Area	Applications within area	Applicants interviewed
A	48	10
B	42	6
C	33	9
D	192	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>43</b>

At the face-to-face stage of the application process, applicants were asked by the police or disclosure officer whether they would consent to being contacted by the research team. Whilst the potential 'pool' for interviews was relatively high (315), the research team were provided with the contact details for only 104 applicants (33%). All 104 applicants who had consented to take part in the research were contacted (by letter and follow-up phone calls) for interview. Usually, two attempts were made to contact these individuals before they were considered to be non-respondents. Interviews were set up during this initial contact and were conducted at a later time either in person (at the applicant's house or a local criminal justice agency) or by phone.

At the start of the study, the research team anticipated that many applicants who initially consented to be involved in the research would later withdraw once their application had proceeded and this happened during the course of the evaluation. The non-participation of certain groups of applicants may in itself be a limitation of the study since certain views may not be represented in this report. However, within the small sample of interviews, the research team managed to speak to applicants who had been in receipt of a disclosure and those who had experienced benefits and anxieties as a result of the process, reflecting a range of views.

### Qualitative interviews with RSOs

A total of 61 RSOs were interviewed as part of this study. Their distribution across areas is shown here:

**Table A2 RSO interview breakdown by pilot area**

	Area A	Area B	Area C	Area D	Total
RSOs	20	8	19	14	61

RSO participation in the evaluation was organised through the use of police offender managers who acted as gatekeepers. Offender managers were asked to identify participants in each of the areas who had originally consented to be contacted by the research team (at the start of the pilots during the RSO visits to explain about the pilot) and these were interviewed on site at local probation, justice and police offices. Whilst the number represents just a small proportion of the overall numbers in the areas, it does offer a reasonable qualitative dataset and there was no indication from the range of responses that compliant RSOs had been selected: many interviewees were disgruntled with offender management arrangements and personnel. Nonetheless, it is important to state that the views contained within this report are not representative of the wider RSO population.

The research team did not interview any RSOs who had been subject to disclosure under the pilot scheme. Attempts were made to identify individual RSOs throughout the research but practitioners were unable to secure co-operation. Given that such a small number of disclosures actually took place under the scheme, this is perhaps unsurprising since the research relied on voluntary co-operation with the evaluation. Whilst a high number of RSOs living in the pilot areas did consent to be involved in the research (some estimates put this at 75% of all RSOs), as with applicants, there was greater reluctance to be involved when contacted again about the evaluation.

### Ongoing qualitative interviews

Aside from the early scoping interview activity with pilot staff and offender managers, repeat interviews were conducted with each of the key staff in pilot areas. In addition to this, national and local stakeholders were interviewed in the second phase of the study. The full list of stakeholders appears in the main report.

### Analysis of administrative data

Data about each application for disclosure under the pilot scheme were recorded using the Child Sex Offender Review Disclosure Pilot Police Referral Pack (referred to in the report as application form data). This was developed prior to the start of the evaluation and the research team were tasked with analysing these to provide information on the number, nature and outcome of requests under the scheme. Following the scoping visits, an SPSS database was designed by the research team and form data was inputted. Quantitative analysis was used to establish explanatory descriptive statistical analyses of the number, nature and outcome of requests for disclosure.

As the report acknowledges, 50 per cent of applications were returned to the research team for analysis. However, as Table A3 below suggests, this low return may be skewed by the response from one particular area (D) and as such caution must be applied when interpreting findings from the application form data, particularly for Area D.

Areas were required to submit forms to the research team using secure delivery procedures established and agreed with the Home Office. Email and telephone prompts were used to encourage return of forms and all remaining forms were requested at the exit interview (October 2009). The poor return was compounded by some other difficulties with the form data. For example, there was evidence of inconsistency and errors in the completion of forms which made comparison of data within and across areas difficult. This process was not helped by the complexity of the forms, and no clear means of plotting accurately the exit routes (i.e. the point at which the process stops in a particular application).

**Table A3 Form data received from pilot areas**

Area	Number of applications recorded in police management information	Number of application forms supplied to the research team	% of application forms analysed by the research team
A	48	43	71%
B	42	42	100%
C	33	29	88%
D	192	45	23%
<b>Total</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>159</b>	

Areas also operated different initial enquiry systems that meant that not all enquiries were logged in a consistent way. This made analysis of enquiries difficult and as a result overall totals are provided from management information only.

Finally, in some cases the results indicated high levels of 'missing data' where forms had not been completed fully or certain questions had been missed out. For example, in one area, the gender of applicants was not routinely recorded. In another, the birth dates of applicants, subjects and children were anonymised making it impossible to quantify the age profiles of these groups. This is reported as missing data in the report.

## Topic guides

Below are the topic guides that were used for different interviews.

### Topic guide: applicants

#### Investigation of communication about the pilots and applicant expectations

- How they heard about the pilot and their views on whether communication was helpful or otherwise. This will include an assessment of the quality of any information received and will investigate what they knew about the pilot prior to being contacted by the police. This will include questions on pilot advertising.
- What other material have they seen, from what source, and what information did they gain from this?
- Initial expectations: what did they hope to gain from the application? What was initially understood prior to being involved? How did they receive and perceive the information related to the pilot process?

#### The process of being involved with the pilot:

- How did they perceive their general experience of being involved with the pilot, relating to:
  - police engagement with the applicant, e.g. how the request was handled, what went well, what did not;
  - timescales;
  - communication about the process generally.
- Did they understand the process, what would happen when and what were the possible outcomes?
- Were any concerns raised and addressed?
- Were they satisfied with what was/was not disclosed? The process – explore differences for those receiving information and those not.

#### The outcomes of the pilot for the applicant

- Was any information disclosed, if 'yes' was it helpful?
- If information was not disclosed, did they understand why not, and what did they do as a result?
- If information was disclosed, what did they do? What were the choices they took subsequent to the disclosure, why, and what impact did this have? Was the information useful?
- Did they tell anyone else about what was disclosed? If so, to whom and why, and what actions followed this disclosure?
- Were the decisions taken helpful or not?

- Did the process change their behaviours and opinions in any way? (This can include their attitudes to parenting, decisions they subsequently took about their children; attitudes and opinions to sex offenders; attitudes and opinions towards the police)? What did they do differently?
- Were they empowered to act upon disclosures or did they feel burdened or more anxious?
- Did the disclosure help them to safeguard their children? If so, how, what are they doing differently? If not, why not? Do they think that their child was placed at greater risk by the disclosure? If so, how and why? What was their response to this?
- Do they feel safer and has their behaviour changed - either about this specific situation or about child sex offenders/child sexual offending in general?
- Do they feel the pilot will/has contributed to child protection arrangements?

### **Topic guide: registered sex offenders**

#### Communication about the pilot

- How were they told about the pilot, and what information was given to them?
- What contact did they have with the police, and what were their reactions to being told about the pilot? How did they feel about the commencement of the pilot in the area they live in?
- Did they discuss the pilot and implications of any disclosure with their probation officer? Did they discuss it with anyone else? What was the outcome of these discussions?
- Any indications that they had been subjected to disclosure?
- Impact of the pilot
- Has it had any impact on them - for example on their behaviour? And in what ways?
- Did they think it would affect their own behaviour in this way? How might it affect their future behaviour and why?
- What might be the wider implications for their own risk management strategies, engagement with police and probation supervision, compliance with licence conditions, registration and so on?
- What other issues might they perceive may be impacted upon by the pilot?
  - The potential for any vigilante action - have there been any responses from the community, vigilante action, threats, attacks?
  - Issues or perceptions around their personal safety - as above, threats, attacks, abuse.
  - The consequences of disclosure for their accommodation and employment.
  - The impact of the disclosure processes on their other dynamic risk factors.
  - The impact of disclosure on further offending.
  - Have there been any consequences for current or potential relationships, and/or for their resettlement in the community?
  - What do they think the impact will be on other RSOs? Do they think it will prevent child sexual offending?

#### Other perceptions and views on the pilot

- What are the perceived advantages and disadvantages of the pilot? For them, for the community and for potential victims?
- Do they think it contributes to child protection?

### **Topic guide: stakeholder interviews**

- What do they think of the process, are they aware of the aims of the pilot and what it is trying to achieve?
- Has it added to existing arrangements, and has it made things more difficult/complex in any way?
- What would have happened about specific child protection concerns from members of the public pre-pilot? How would these have been dealt with and with what outcomes?
- Has the pilot disclosure process protected more children? If so, please provide examples.
- Could the process be streamlined?
- How long are checks taking, are they adequate?
- How was training? Do they understand the process, areas of concern?
- Barriers to delivery, areas for improvement.
- Have there been any negative responses from the community - vigilante action, threats, attacks?
- Have there been any negative responses from applicants? Like what? Why?
- Has the scheme placed children at greater risk? If so, please give examples.

### Offender managers - in addition to those above

- Implications for multi-agency working, e.g. how has the pilot impacted on existing arrangements? Is information being shared?
- What would have happened about specific child protection concerns from members of the public pre-pilot? How would these have been dealt with and with what outcomes?
- Are there any other agencies well informed about the pilot and the process of disclosure?
- Do they think it has affected RSO compliance with registration, supervision or licence conditions? Are there any available data on current RSO compliance or non-compliance since the commencement of the pilot? (Compare where possible actual data with offender managers perceptions and anecdotes).
- Have there been any responses from the community, especially negative ones, e.g. vigilante action, threats, attacks?

## Appendix 2 Cost analysis

The evaluation included an analysis of the costs of implementing and delivering the disclosure model. As this was a process evaluation it was not appropriate to conduct cost-effectiveness or cost-benefit analyses. This section provides a cost analysis of pilot scheme spend, but is limited by the lack of baseline data pre-pilot and the difficulties in attributing a financial value to outcomes. These difficulties are not uncommon in such evaluations (Dhiri and Brand, 1999).

Areas did return basic data on the costs of running of the pilot but due to omissions within these data returns, the unit costs provided in this section are estimates derived from the best available data; they are therefore indicative cost findings. Costs as recorded per area are presented in Table A4.

**Table A4 Pilot costs**

Area	Population (000s)	Marketing costs (£)	Marketing Spend £ per 000	Recruitment costs (£)	Staff costs <sup>a</sup> (£)	Training costs (£)	Hidden costs <sup>c</sup> (£)	Total costs as recorded	Number of applications
A	709	785	1.11	Not recorded	92,293 (excluding overtime)	1,783 (plus 1,446 conference)	898	£97,205	48
B	139	15,450	111.15	200 (internal recruitment)	91,679 (excluding overtime)	Extensive activity but no costs given <sup>b</sup>	6,453	£113,782	42
C	1,644	11,112	6.76	1,914.00	90,823	22,016	1,847	£127,712	33
D	506	11,786	23.29	450.00	99,227	16,458	15,690	£143,611	192
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,707</b>	<b>39,133</b>	<b>10.55</b>	<b>2564</b>	<b>374,022</b>	<b>41,703</b>	<b>24,889</b>	<b>£482,310</b>	<b>315</b>

a Additional costs of the process may also be borne by other agencies, particularly those involved in MAPPA, but may not be represented within the cost estimates.

b Area B funded training through local budgets and were able to secure local authority accommodation at little or no cost for venues.

c Fuel travel etc. plus set up costs if given.

All figures have been rounded up.



## Overall costs

The overall costs reported by pilot areas ranged from £97,205 to £143,611.<sup>57</sup> Hidden costs include fuel, travel, staff expenses, and the differences between Areas A and C with relatively low spend, and Areas B and D with higher spend, possibly reflect more accurate recording of costs associated with home-visiting RSOs to inform them of the scheme.

## Staff costs

Staff costs (excluding overtime) represent the highest proportion of cost and are broadly similar across the four areas and range from £90,823 to £99,227. However, these staff costs reflect different staff complements across the areas (see Table A5), with personnel at differing grades, some part-time and some full-time, and in Areas A and D the use of agency staff. In the pilot, staff costs and total costs were not linked to force area size.

**Table A5 Staffing in disclosure units**

Area Code	Staffing levels and personnel
Area A	Detective Superintendent; Detective Sergeant; Detective Constable
Area B	Detective Chief Inspector; Detective Sergeant; Detective Constable
Area C	Detective Chief Inspector ; Detective Sergeant; Pilot co-ordinator
Area D	Detective Superintendent; Detective Inspector; 3 full-time members of staff; one part-time member of staff

Areas A and B recorded overtime costs of £15,365 and £14,000 on the cost data collection form, (and other areas may have incurred such costs but failed to record them). Areas A and B directly attributed these overtime costs to home visiting all RSOs. Therefore, the cost of RSO visiting ranges from £36 to £111 per visit. However, it is likely that a number of visits were also routinely made by forces in which the pilot was discussed. For any national roll-out the potential cost of additional visits would have to be weighed against the use of routine visits to explain the scheme, and the use of probation offender managers who could also inform RSOs during the normal course of supervision.

The calculation of 'opportunity costs', also proved difficult to calculate, with one area identifying the redeployment of an officer to the pilot as an 'opportunity cost' of £50,621 including on-costs, but other areas not identifying any opportunity costs at all.

The variations in recruitment costs are due to lower costs in those areas that advertised and recruited internally. Training costs were not fully accounted for across the areas, and ranged from £1,783 to £22,016. The most costly in Area C comprised a broad programme and included a total of 3,400 staff from Specials and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) up to Inspector level. The training strategy proposed in this report does not anticipate this level of activity or cost.

Marketing costs varied from £785 to £15,450 across all schemes, and the areas which spent the most on marketing and publicity did receive the most enquiries though not by a substantial margin. For instance, Area B spent the highest amount of marketing but did not see the highest total number of enquiries.

### **The unit cost of an enquiry, an application, and a disclosure**

The enquiries, applications and disclosures should be understood as outputs, (i.e. the direct product of the scheme). Outcomes are the consequences of disclosures, that is, the risks prevented, the value-added to MAPPA, RSO management or child protection interventions, and more broadly any impact on public confidence in policing. These costs are more difficult to assess (Dhiri and Brand, 1999; Dubourg *et al.*, 2005) as they involve consideration of the crimes that might otherwise have taken place, or the victimisation that may have incurred and, more broadly, the value-added in

<sup>57</sup> To note: the pilot forces were given a grant of £150,000 for implementing the pilot process.

public reassurance about the community management of sex offenders. However, sexual offences are amongst the most costly offences to society, based on the estimated physical and emotional impacts of the crime, particularly on children (Dubourg *et al.*, 2005). Impacts on victims and families can range from emotional, physical, and educational with significant effects on well-being and functioning with attendant costs for police, the wider criminal justice system, social services and educational services. The unit costs of the pilot need to be placed within this wider context.

There are difficulties in calculating unit costs, not least that enquiries and applications have differing outputs and, as such, require different levels of input from staff. Also the cost data from this study indicate that areas are collecting their input cost data differently. Using the most complete data presented by Area C and D, costs are detailed in Table A6.

Police SPOCs were asked to provide an assessment of key tasks and staff-time commitment; a number of assumptions were made in the calculations.

- Enquiries take approximately twice the staff time as applications; applications take twice the staff time of disclosures.
- Travel costs were committed from the application stage and apportioned by number of applications / disclosures.
- Initial training and recruitment costs are treated as one-off costs and not included in ongoing costs.
- Marketing costs are included as ongoing costs and factored into the estimated ongoing costs.

In Table A6, in addition to the total cost for running the projects in Areas C and D the costs have been broken down to estimate the ongoing cost (i.e. excluding initial set-up and recruitment costs) of each phase of the process from enquiry through to a full disclosure. In doing this it is also possible to present an estimated total cost of a full disclosure. These figures provide indicative information that could be used to model future costs when anticipated response and conversion rates are presented.

By excluding the set-up costs, apportioning the travel costs to the application and disclosure phases based on volume of activity and using the ratio 1:2:4 for time spent on disclosure, application and enquiry respectively (based on information provided by the police Single Point of Contacts in each of the areas) it is possible to estimate the unit cost of handling each step in the process.

Using this model the ongoing cost of handling an enquiry ranges from £294 to £799, an application from £226 to £450 and a disclosure from £152 to £250. The enquiry stage of the pilot represented the greatest proportion of ongoing costs in Areas C and D and the unit cost of handling enquiries and applications are the greatest. Therefore, by adding the unit costs of the three phases of the process the cumulative ongoing cost of handling the three sequential steps (i.e. initial enquiry, application and disclosure) is estimated to be between £672 (Area D) and £1,499 (Area C).

The volume of enquiries and applications differ significantly between areas as do conversion rates. Area C achieved a 30 per cent conversion rate of enquiries to applications whilst Area D achieved 69 per cent. Area C achieved a conversion rate of applications to disclosure of 12 per cent, and Area D achieved a four per cent conversion rate. Creating a high number of enquiries but low conversion rates at both the application and disclosure stages increases the total project costs and the average cost per disclosure.

Given the relatively low unit cost of taking an enquiry through to disclosure, this indicates that more effective marketing could potentially reduce the total ongoing cost of the scheme by generating enquiries that are more likely to meet the criteria and be progressed as an application and through to a disclosure. As the conversion rate from application to disclosure is primarily risk dependent, it is difficult to predict what an appropriate conversion rate is likely to be.

**Table A6 Unit Costs**

Area	RSOs	Project Costs	Enquiries	Applications	Disclosures	Note: Data supplied
C	1,300	Total project cost £127,712	110	33	4	Note: Data supplied indicate that an enquiry takes twice the time to handle as an application and an applications twice the time of a disclosure
			30 % converted to application	12% converted to disclosure	4% converted from enquiry	
		Total project cost – (travel costs + initial training + recruitment) = ongoing costs £101,935 Travel costs £1,847	Estimated cost to manage 110 enquiries  £87,944	Estimated cost to manage 33 applications  £13,192 £1,647	Estimated cost to manage 4 disclosures  £799 £200	Note: Ongoing costs are apportioned to each phase based on staff time in ratio 4:2:1. Travel cost is apportioned based on volume of applications and disclosures
		Total ongoing costs (excluding set-up & recruitment) £103,782	Ongoing cost to handle enquiries £87,944	Ongoing cost to handle applications £14,839	Ongoing cost to handle disclosures £999	
			Estimated unit cost to handle an enquiry £799	Estimated unit cost to handle an application £450	Estimated unit cost to handle a disclosure £250	Estimated cost to handle a disclosure from initial enquiry £1,499
D	260	Total project cost £143,611	279	192	8	Note: Data supplied indicates that an enquiry takes twice the time to handle as an application and an applications twice the time of a disclosure
			69 % converted to application	4 % converted to disclosure	3 % converted from enquiry	
		Total project cost – (travel costs + initial training + recruitment) = ongoing costs £111,013 Travel costs £ 15,690	Estimated cost to manage 279 enquiries  £82,156	Estimated cost to manage 192 applications  £28,269 £15,062	Est. cost to manage disclosures  £588 £628	Note: Ongoing costs are apportioned to each phase based on staff time in ratio 4:2:1 Travel cost is apportioned based on volume of applications and disclosures
		Total ongoing costs (excluding set up & recruitment) £126,703	£82,156	£43,331	£1,216	
			Estimated unit cost to handle an enquiry £294	Estimated unit cost to handle an application £226	Estimated unit cost to handle a disclosure £152	Estimated ongoing cost to handle a disclosure from initial enquiry £672

## COST ANALYSIS RECORDING FORM

As part of the evaluation, the research team are required to provide an assessment of the costs of implementing and delivering the model in each of the four pilot areas. As a result, we require all pilot areas to provide us with some information and would be most grateful for your assistance. The data you provide will not be used to inform a 'cost/benefit' analysis. These will help to identify the strategic and operational costs of implementing the pilot, and also inform any resource considerations should the scheme be rolled out nationally.

**We are asking you to consider three sets of costs**

- 1. Set-up costs including training, recruitment of staff and marketing.**
- 2. Staff costs including salary costs, on-costs, and where possible 'opportunity costs' where staff are deployed from other duties.**
- 3. Hidden costs, for example fuel costs, accommodation costs, HR costs, and payroll. Your constabulary may well have a formula for calculating hidden costs. Please tell us the formula and how you have calculated this locally.**

Please complete all sections of the form. If you would like further information or any guidance, please contact the De Montfort University evaluation team (details at the end of the form).

### PART ONE: SET-UP COSTS

We appreciate that some of these costs occurred a while ago, and we ask you to provide them as accurately as you can.

#### RECRUITMENT COSTS

Advertising externally	£
Advertising internally	£
Short listing and interviewing costs	£
Appointment costs	£
<b>You may not have recruited externally but there may be costs arising from internal redeployment. Please insert them here and any other recruitment costs below.</b>	

#### MARKETING AND PUBLICITY COSTS

Please estimate as accurately as you can the full costs of your marketing and publicity campaign including leaflets, posters, radio, TV, local newspapers etc.	£
<b>Other marketing costs (please specify)</b>	
	£
	£

#### TRAINING AND BRIEFING

How many training events did you run during the year?	
Can you provide an estimate of the number of participants?	
Cost of any training provision (e.g. trainers, preparation, etc)	£
Cost of venues used	£
Cost of attendance (number of attendees per session and salary costs per session)	£
<b>Other training and briefing costs (please specify)</b>	
	£
	£

#### ANY NOTES IN RELATION TO SET-UP COSTS NOT COVERED ABOVE?

--

**PART TWO: SALARY COSTS**

**DIRECTLY EMPLOYED STAFF**

Please indicate the number of staff, rank and grade, salary cost per person per year. The table below should assist you to lay this out, with salary costs on the left, their and the on-costs (pension, NI) on the right

<b>RANK AND GRADE</b> e.g. Sgt X, salary Y	<b>FT/PT POST?</b> FTE	On-costs	Total
£		£	£
£		£	£
£		£	£
£		£	£

**ALLOCATED STAFF TIME**

If any staff are NOT deployed full-time to the disclosure project, outline as accurately as you can the average hours per month spent on disclosure pilot activities

<b>RANK AND GRADE</b> e.g. Sgt X, salary Y	On-costs	Hours per month	Total
£	£		£
£	£		£
£	£		£
£	£		£

**OPPORTUNITY COSTS**

If your staff had to move from other duties in order to complete disclosure pilot duties, please indicate which tasks they moved from and what time costs this incurs

Person and rank	Tasks moved from	Time costs
		£
		£

**ANY NOTES IN RELATION TO STAFF COSTS NOT COVERED ABOVE?**

### PART THREE: HIDDEN COSTS

Hidden costs may include:

- fuel costs;
- accommodation costs, heat and light;
- HR and payroll costs.

Your constabulary may have a formula for calculating this, e.g. your unit may incur a percentage of the overall costs to the constabulary. Your local finance team should be able to help you with this and provide the information used to complete the form.

Please tell us the formula used and how this was calculated. Where possible, please provide a cash figure.

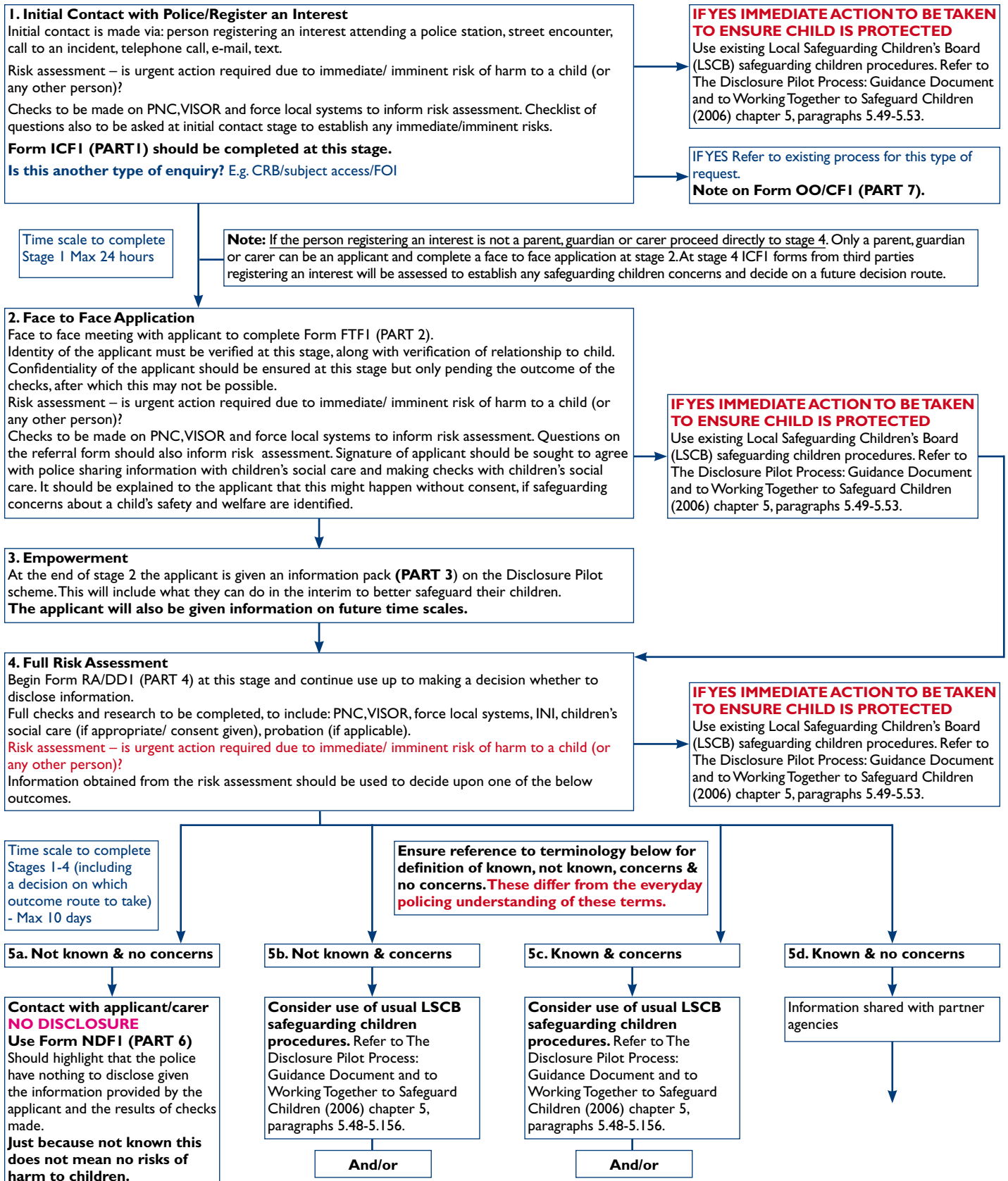
### RETURNING THE FORM

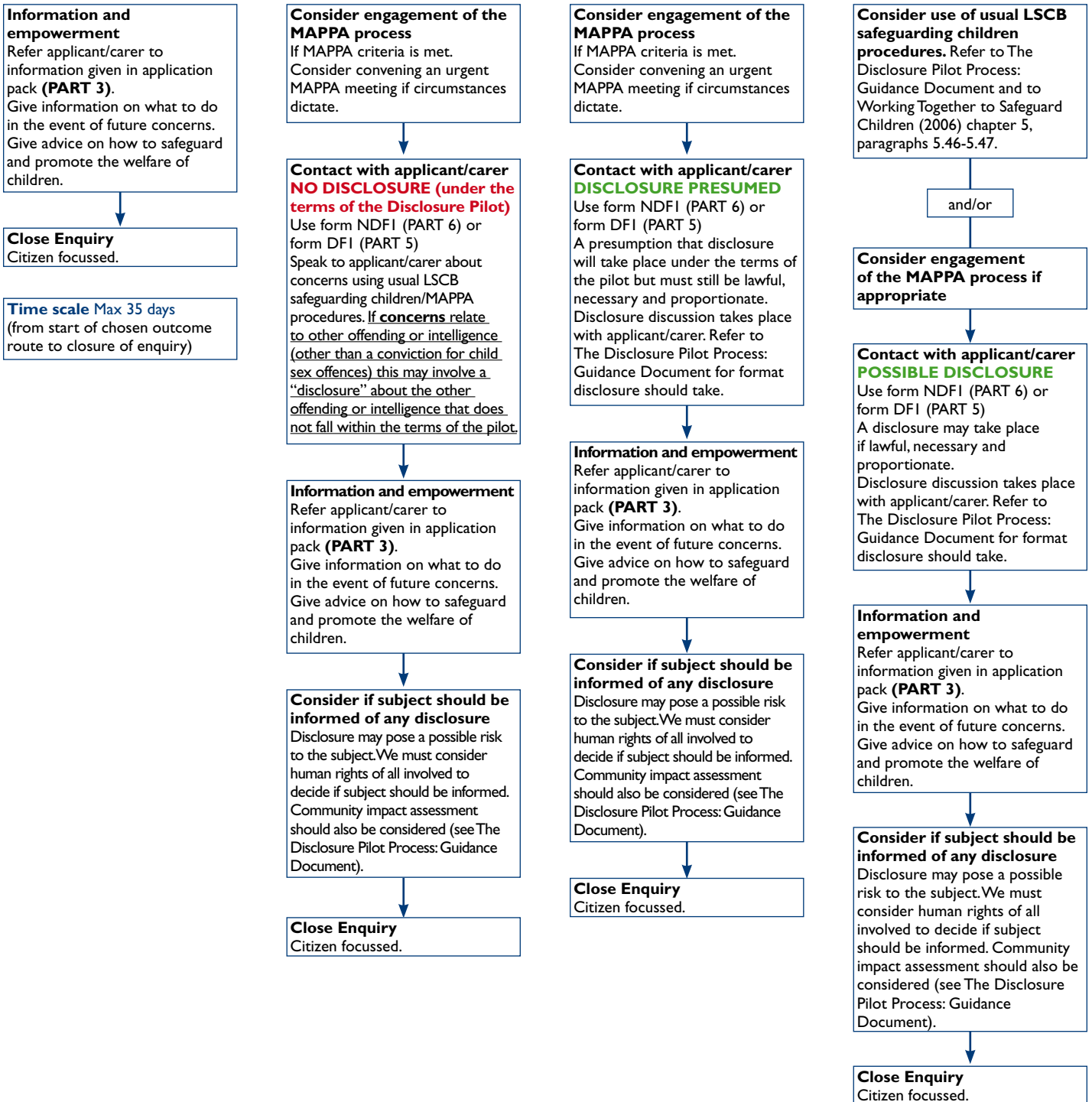
Thank you for completing this form. Please provide the name and contact details for the person completing this form. We may need to contact you to check specific details.

Name	
Telephone number	
Email address	



## Appendix 3 The pilot process decision tree





**At close of enquiry ensure completion of Form OO/CFI (PART 7) where applicable.**

**Time scale for complete process Max 45 days** (all time scales referred to are calendar days) (from initial contact with police to closure)  
It should be noted there may be exceptional circumstances where this cannot be achieved i.e. when dealing with recently settled foreign subjects checks at stage 4 may take significantly longer than 7 days.

## Terminology

Although only a parent, guardian or carer can be an applicant and have presumed disclosure anyone can be **a person registering an interest** about a person (the subject) who has some form of access to or connection with a child/children. This could include any third party such as a grandparent, neighbour or friend). This is to ensure any safeguarding concerns are thoroughly investigated. A third party person registering an interest would not go on to become an applicant and would not receive disclosure as they are not a parent, guardian or carer. Therefore the face to face application does not need to be completed with them. Their registered interest (on the initial contact form) will however be reviewed at Stage 4 to identify any safeguarding children concerns and decide upon a decision route if necessary.

The **applicant** is the person making the request under the Disclosure Pilot to the police. They should be the parent, guardian or carer of a child/children and want information about a person (the subject) who has some form of access to or connection with the child/children. It should be noted that when it comes to the point of disclosure (under the pilot) this disclosure should be only be made to a parent, guardian or carer who is in a position to use that information to safeguard the child or children. This may not always be the original applicant.

The **subject** is the person whom the person registering an interest/applicant is seeking information about under the Disclosure Pilot.

**Known**, for the purposes of the Disclosure Pilot, means known to the police for being convicted of child sexual offences.

**Not known**, for the purposes of the Disclosure Pilot, means the subject has no known convictions for child sexual offences. May have other convictions relevant to safeguarding children (e.g. adult sex offences, violence, drugs or domestic abuse). There may be intelligence known about the subject relevant to safeguarding children (e.g. non-convictions, cases not proceeded with or intelligence concerning sexual or violent offences, or previous concerning behaviour towards children). Alternatively the subject may have no convictions or intelligence known to the police.

**Convicted of child sexual offences**, for the purposes of the pilot means anyone convicted or cautioned of an offence listed under Schedule 34A of the Criminal Justice Act 2003 (a copy of this schedule can be found at Appendix B of The Disclosure Pilot Process: Guidance Document).

**Concerns**, for the purposes of the Disclosure Pilot, could include any of the following:

- (i) Information known about the subject in relation to other offences/intelligence relevant to safeguarding children (as explained in “not known” above).
- (ii) Concerns may also be in relation to concerning behaviour relevant to safeguarding children now being displayed by the subject, that have been disclosed as part of the disclosure application, e.g. grooming/unusual behaviour that indicates sexual harm to children might be likely.
- (iii) Concerns may also be in relation to circumstances known about the subject’s previous child sexual offending and the circumstances/gravity of that offending now raising concerns about a risk of harm posed to the child/children named in the disclosure request.

**No concerns**, for the purposes of the Disclosure Pilot, means no convictions or intelligence relevant to safeguarding children and no concerning behaviour relevant to safeguarding children.

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## Appendix 4 Suggested training strategy

### Introduction

If the disclosure process is rolled out nationally a coherent strategy to support a consistent approach across areas will be important and training is a part of this. The following strategy attempts to meet the training needs identified in the pilot areas by staff and by applicants, but with a careful and controlled use of resources.

The approach recognises the different levels of involvement of staff both within and outside the police and that different training inputs will be required for different elements of the disclosure process. It assumes that:

- the general public and relevant professional organisations will be informed through appropriate and targeted information;
- staff responsible for any part of the disclosure process will have access to detailed guidance that is clear enough to support consistent practice and be an ongoing point of reference;
- appropriate links can be made between this training and other relevant training programmes within the police service, particularly around child protection and IT systems.

Training should be linked to, support and draw on the above.

### Role of the disclosure officers

Comments from applicants as well as police staff and those of other agencies suggest that more attention could be paid to the disclosure process as a whole and the dilemmas and judgements that would need to be made including the following:

- Dealing with offender and with applicant anxiety and giving advice and support at the point of disclosure and non disclosure to help applicants cope with the continuing implications including confidentiality.
- Risk assessment and management including how to ensure that children are safe while an enquiry is underway and when to involve other agencies and processes.
- Keeping other agencies informed and clear about the process. Training in some depth for other agencies may have the additional benefit of allowing them to become champions, within their organisations, for the process.

### Offender managers

Police officer and probation offender managers working with sex offenders need to have a greater familiarisation with the detail of the process, so that they can answer queries from offenders in some depth and also consider the implications for risk management. This training should concentrate on giving them information and encouragement to think about how they can best manage offender anxiety and reduce the likelihood of negative outcomes.

### Other agencies

In the initial stages of any national roll-out it will be important to ensure that relevant others in the police and in other agencies are informed and able to work with the project. They will need to be clear about their role and its limitations and within those boundaries be able to:

- inform the people with whom they work of the existence of the process and basic information about how to access it and in what circumstances and ensure its appropriate use;
- where relevant, support applicants during their involvement with the process and the implications of any disclosure or non-disclosure;
- where relevant, to understand the implications of the process for offenders with whom they work.

It may not be possible to inform all relevant bodies and individuals with face-to-face briefing events, as happened, to some extent, during the pilots. Disclosure staff and relevant training or marketing staff could be given the advice and materials they need to conduct such briefings. For example, at the outset of an area 'going live' it might be helpful to hold a briefing for managers from key agencies and to provide them with information that they can cascade out to staff within their agency. Other information could be provided in written and electronic form.

Key agencies are likely to be: Children and Families Services, voluntary agencies including churches, education (schools and nurseries), health (health visitors were seen as particularly relevant by respondents), and the Children and Family Court Advisory & Support Service (CAFCASS). Briefings and information for other agencies should focus on providing enough information about the purpose and boundaries of the process and some detail about how disclosures happen.

## Suggested delivery package

Materials could be made available to police forces in a flexible easily accessible and usable format, for example on a CD-ROM.

The **materials** would include the following.

- Reference materials for example
  - background material that led to, and informed, the development of the pilot and its rationale;
  - relevant legislation;
  - the evaluation of the pilots.
- Detailed guidance for every stage of the disclosure process.
- Materials to form the basis of local marketing and information giving.
- Documentation to be used in the pilots and simple flow charts / crib sheets to guide staff through the process.
- Case study based opportunities to 'dry run' the process.
- Training materials to support different linked levels of training (see below). These to include:
  - guidance about design and targeting of a range of events including briefings;
  - detailed but flexible training plans timings and instructions for the range of events below with links to the documentation and reference materials outlined above;
  - exercises, case studies and supportive materials.

A small initial training team could deliver the training outlined below to disclosure officers and other key staff. This training team could include representatives of staff involved in the pilot process. Local areas would be free to decide who should receive this more intensive training and how to use their trained staff and all of the materials outlined above. Those who received this comprehensive package of training would then be in a position to use the materials to work with other agencies and potentially, in the future, to help train new disclosure staff. The need for formal training events for disclosure staff should reduce over time, however, as increasingly they will learn by working alongside more experienced colleagues, supported by the package of learning materials

## Suggested training content

### **Disclosure staff: detailed skills and knowledge**

- **Practical skills and understandings** – managing the detail of the process:
  - hands-on opportunities to become familiar with the process and accompanying documentation in detail and using case material and completing documentation during the event.
- **Managing the applicant's experiences** - a chance to consider and rehearse the skills required to:
  - support applicants during the process;
  - give appropriate and helpful advice at each stage of the process, for example about confidentiality;
  - manage risk, for example to children while the process is underway;
  - manage each stage for applicants including the end of the process and facilitate ongoing support where appropriate.
- **Working effectively with other agencies** - a chance to actively use the materials provided to plan for:
  - delivering briefings to others;
  - sustaining ongoing working relationships;
  - an interagency focus on risk.

### **Risk and working with offenders**

Police and probation offender managers should be given access to materials that do the following.

- Address issues related to informing and managing the response of relevant offenders. They also need to be helped to develop a shared understanding of risk that emphasises the importance of ongoing risk assessment and management.
- Provide more detailed information, including exemplar case material, to allow them to actively think through the links and possible implications for other processes, for example:
  - Offenders including MAPPA offenders;
  - child protection.
- Develop further skills in:
  - supporting applicants facing difficult situations;
  - informing and managing the response of relevant offenders.

If the materials are provided in an accessible form then much of that learning could be done through individual or team-based use of the materials although local training teams could use the materials to deliver more structured workshops.

### **Other agencies**

Informing other agencies would be based on the information given including materials that could be locally adapted. The materials will also include suggestions for running more formal briefing events and disclosure staff could have discussed this on their training.



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## Erratum

Page i, second column, key findings bullet point – (4% of applications) amended to (7% of applications).

Page iv, first column under pilot outcomes - (4% of applications) amended to (7% of applications).

Table 5, column 5 title % of applications, the total % amended to 7% from 4%.

Page 10, disclosures and other outcomes, para 1 – original amended from (4% of applications; or 7% of enquiries – see Table 5) to (7% of applications; or 4% of enquiries – see Table 5).