



Glasgow and West of Scotland Forum of Housing Associations

GWSF Comments on MAPPA Draft Guidance 2011

1. Glasgow and West of Scotland Forum of Housing Associations (GWSF) represents and campaigns on behalf of community-controlled housing associations and co-operatives in the west of Scotland. 55 such organisations are affiliate members of GWSF, more than one-third of all Scottish registered social landlords.
2. GWSF has contributed actively to policy debate about the housing of sex offenders in recent years, at both national level and in Glasgow. However, we were not included in the distribution list for the present MAPPA consultation exercise and we have only become aware of it as a result of information received from our member organisations.
3. The part of the MAPPA guidance that is most directly relevant to our members is the National Accommodation Strategy for Sex Offenders (NASSO).
4. GWSF provided the Scottish Government with detailed comments on proposed revisions to the NASSO in June 2011 (copy attached).
5. Officials leading on the NASSO review have told us that the NASSO will be finalised in tandem with the present revision of the MAPPA guidance. We would therefore wish our detailed comments on the NASSO to be considered as part of the review of MAPPA guidance.
6. The draft MAPPA guidance (pages 61-62) provides a brief summary of key elements of the NASSO:
 - a) Paragraph 5 says that RSLs are DTC agencies “and as such they have to co-operate with the responsible authorities’ assessment and management of risk”.

This overstates the statutory duties of DTC bodies. The only statutory obligation on DTC bodies stated explicitly in the 2005 Act relates to the exchange of information.

As we have stated on many occasions, the duty to co-operate is poorly defined in the current legislation. We would also point out that the 2005 Act does not provide for the issue of statutory guidance to DTC bodies, other than to specify which bodies have a duty to co-operate.

- b) The bullet point listing following paragraph 5 states that the role of RSLs includes “allocating housing that has been assessed as suitable by the responsible authorities”.

In fact, there is no obligation on RSLs to enter into referral arrangements with the responsible authorities to offer housing to sex offenders, nor do referral arrangements constitute a right to have housing made available. The wording of this part of the MAPPA guidance implies otherwise.

Similarly, the bullet point listing at paragraph 6 implies that it is the responsible authorities who will make decisions about housing. The draft does not recognise that there are a number of distinct strands to the decision-making process. Firstly, the responsible authorities’ own risk assessment and identification of what type of housing they are seeking. Second, dialogue between the responsible authorities and landlords to source suitable housing. Third, an RSL’s own decision making processes about whether it is willing to make housing available.

- 7. As stated in our NASSO response, GWSF has a number of concerns about the overall MAPPA policy. These include:
 - a) The absence of an evidence-based review of the impact of the NASSO framework since it was first introduced in 2007;
 - b) The apparently high levels of offenders (based on our analysis of all published MAPPA annual reports) who have been convicted on further crimes of sexual harm or non-sexual violence, while being supervised under MAPPA;

- c) The absence of accountability for NASSO policy to tenants and the communities most likely to be affected by current policy on the housing of sex offenders
- d) The reactive approach to community engagement described in the NASSO (an issue which the MAPPA guidance does not satisfactorily address either).

**Glasgow and West of Scotland Forum of Housing Associations
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