



Her Majesty's
Inspectorate of
Probation

NPS inspection domain three Case Assessment Rules and Guidance (CARaG)

HMI Probation, September 2020

Domain two and domain three standards, questions and prompts are supported by the domain two and three case assessment rules and guidance (CARaGs) respectively. These are a comprehensive set of published rules and guidance to be followed by inspectors and local assessors in their assessment of cases. The CARaGs promote transparency and consistency in our inspection of cases. Inspection staff and local assessors should use the appropriate CARaG as a reference document when assessing a case.

Guidance is provided in the CARaGs for questions and prompts. The CARaGs are regularly updated to ensure that they remain consistent with any changes that we make at standard, question and prompt level and so that they remain linked to evidence. The CARaGs also contain links where relevant to more detailed guidance and HMI Probation position statements in specialist areas.

Key:

Example	Question Format	Represents:
Does assessment identify offending-related factors?	Dark grey background	A question directly linked to a prompt in the inspection standards. The answers to these questions directly influence the summary judgement at key question level.
Were domestic abuse checks undertaken?	Light grey background	A supplementary question, asked to provide additional background information about the case, but less strongly linked to summary judgement questions.
Does planning focus sufficiently on engaging the service user?	Bold text on a dark grey background	A summary judgement question, answering a key question from the inspection standards.

3.1 Court reports and case allocation

R 1	Is the pre-sentence information and advice provided to court sufficiently analytical and personalised to the service user, supporting the court’s decision-making?	
	Inspection question	CARaG Case Assessment Rules and Guidance
R 1.3	Does the information and advice draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including child safeguarding and domestic abuse information?	<p>Inspectors need to consider what sources of information were available to the report writer at the time the report was written. Were there gaps? If so, were attempts made to find this information from other sources?</p> <p>As a minimum, documents from CPS including previous convictions, and any information on Oasys/nDelius about current or recent supervision, should form the basis for information given to court. If there is one, the victim impact statement should also be taken into account.</p> <p>In some circumstances, information from other agencies such as substance misuse services or mental health should be sought and utilised.</p> <p>We expect the NPS to initiate child safeguarding checks with children social care in all cases where the service user has children, is in contact with children or presents a potential risk of harm to children. Checks should be made at the point a PSR is ordered by the court. Those checks, and responses from children’s social care should be clearly recorded on nDelius.</p> <p>We expect the NPS to initiate domestic abuse checks with the police in all cases at the point a PSR is ordered by the court. Those checks, and responses from the police, should be clearly recorded on nDelius.</p> <p>Failure to obtain child safeguarding and/or domestic abuse information checks may result in the negative answer to this question, if that information might have had a bearing on the assessment of risk in the information and advice provided to court.</p> <p>It is not always appropriate to share detailed information from children’s social care or police domestic abuse units with the court, but the content of any report should refer to checks having been made, and should take any relevant information into account.</p>

R 1.4	Is there evidence that the service user is meaningfully involved in the preparation of the report, and are their views considered?	We do not want to see a "one size fits all" report or proposal. Is reference made in the report, or any other documents, to the views of the service user? Has a Self-Assessment Questionnaire been completed, and/or is it clear that the report writer has explored the issues that the service user identifies for themselves?
R 1.5	Is there evidence that the advice to court consider factors related to the likelihood of reoffending?	<p>Inspectors will be looking to see whether the written record of the report makes it clear what were the main factors related to likelihood of reoffending. The report should be used to address someone's needs in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •accommodation •education, training and employment •relationships •lifestyle and associates •alcohol misuse •drug misuse •emotional management •attitudes, thinking and behaviour •finance, benefits and debt <p>These are the needs that evidence shows either predict reoffending if they are not met, or if they are addressed will contribute to the stability people need to be able to deal with other significant issues.</p> <p>In general, the more of these needs the person has, the greater their likelihood of reoffending.</p>
R 1.6	Is there evidence that the advice to court considered factors related to risk of harm?	<p>Inspectors will be looking to see whether the written record of the report makes it clear whether there were any factors related to risk of harm, not just risk of serious harm, and if so, what they were. This includes factors related to the offence for which the service user is appearing in court, and other known factors about risk of harm presented by service user, including any domestic abuse or child safeguarding concerns.</p> <p>There is no requirement for the report to state the level of assessed risk of harm, as in many cases the full assessment of risk of harm is not completed until after the case has been sentenced.</p>

R 1.7	Is there evidence that the advice to court considered the service user's motivation and readiness to change?	This does not have to be an extensive analysis, but there needs to be some explanation of the motivation of the service user, and an assessment of their readiness to change. Inspectors will expect to find evidence that the service user has been informed about the proposal and their level of motivation and willingness to comply has been considered. Assessments for ATR, DRR and mental health requirements require the service user to consent to treatment.
R 1.8	Is there evidence that the advice to court considered the service user's diversity and personal circumstances?	This does not have to be extensive, but if there are any apparent diversity factors all relevant personal circumstances, particularly where they might affect the service user's ability to comply with any order imposed, we would expect these to be drawn to the attention of the court.
R 1.9	Is there evidence that the advice to court considered the impact of the offences on known/identifiable victims?	We would expect to see the report making some comment about the impact of the offences on any identifiable victims, and the attitude of the service user to that.

R 1.10	Is an appropriate proposal made to court?	<p>Does the proposal allow for assistance to be given with any offending -related factors?</p> <p>Drug rehabilitation requirements (DRRs) can be given when the court is satisfied that the service user is dependent on or misuses drugs, and that treatment is likely to help and is available.</p> <p>Alcohol treatment requirements (ATRs) can be given when the court is satisfied that a service user is dependent on alcohol and that treatment is likely to help and is available. The assessment of suitability of treatment should be completed by the local substance misuse provider and this should be made available at the time of sentencing. The service user's dependency on alcohol does not have to have caused or contributed to the offence for which they've been convicted.</p> <p>Where the consent of the service user is required (e.g. ATR and DRR), it should be clearly recorded.</p> <p>Mental health treatment requirements (MHTRs) can be given where the court is satisfied that an offender has a mental health condition that is treatable either in a community setting or as an outpatient in a non-secure setting. The court must be satisfied that on the evidence of a registered medical practitioner the mental health condition of the offender is such as requires and may be susceptible to treatment but does not warrant making a hospital order. Arrangements should have been made for treatment intended. MHTRs can be used for any mental health issue, including personality disorders, and the treatment offered can cover a wide range of interventions from therapy for depression and anxiety through to secondary and psychiatric care.</p> <p>Has an explanation been given about the factors that might be covered by any Rehabilitation Activity Requirement? To assist sentencers, National Probation Service court officers should make clear proposals that specifically identify the rehabilitative needs to be addressed and the number of days needed to do so. There is no maximum number of RAR days but the 'offender group reconviction scale' (OGRS) score, based on age, gender and criminal history, should be the main guide to the number of days proposed. This is because there is a clear link between the OGRS score and the number of rehabilitative needs. Longer RARs should be reserved for those with a higher risk of reoffending as they will have the most needs to address.</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>OGRS,</td> <td>Average number of needs,</td> <td>RAR intensity,</td> <td>Guideline RAR days</td> </tr> <tr> <td>0 to 24%</td> <td>2.4</td> <td></td> <td>n/a</td> </tr> <tr> <td>25 to 49%</td> <td>3.2</td> <td>Low</td> <td>1 to 15 days</td> </tr> <tr> <td>50 to 74%</td> <td>4.4</td> <td>Medium</td> <td>15 to 25 days</td> </tr> </table>	OGRS,	Average number of needs,	RAR intensity,	Guideline RAR days	0 to 24%	2.4		n/a	25 to 49%	3.2	Low	1 to 15 days	50 to 74%	4.4	Medium	15 to 25 days
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		<p>75 to 90% 4.4 Over 90% 6.2</p>	<p>High High</p>	<p>25 to 60 days 25 to 60 days</p> <p>Is the service user likely to be eligible and suitable for any accredited programmes, and if so was a programme proposed to court? Where an accredited programme has not been proposed or it is unclear if suitability was assessed inspectors will assess the suitability of the proposed requirements/sentence to address the offending related factors. Where the proposal has been for a requirement or set of requirements without any rehabilitative content (any combination of unpaid work, curfew, prohibition), does that meet the needs of the case? Even where the court has specifically asked for e.g. an unpaid work assessment, the NPS should check out and inform the court about whether that is likely to be an effective sentence. Is a punitive requirement proposed in all cases where a Community Order is proposed (as required by LASPO)? Where there are factors related to harm, for example domestic abuse, does the proposal allow for these issues to be addressed? (We would expect this, even where the index offence is not related to these issues). Is the proposed sentence likely to be achievable by the service user, bearing in mind any protected characteristics or other diversity factors? Where custody (immediate or suspended) has been proposed, has it been explained why no other option is appropriate? Where the proposal is not clearly stated, or where there is insufficient information to explain the proposal or is not accessible, inspectors will record that an appropriate proposal was not made to court. If the proposal does not allow for key offending or risk of harm factors to be addressed, based on information that was or should have been available to the person preparing the report, the answer will be "No". Where other measures such as a curfew or prohibition are proposed, relevant checks should be carried, including checks of child safeguarding and/or domestic abuse information where necessary, to ensure proposals are safe and appropriate.</p>
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R 1.11	Is there a sufficient record of the advice given, and the reasons for it?	<p>The main source of evidence about the record of advice given to court, and the reasons for it, will be the written report. For standard delivery and short-format written reports, this will be the typed report itself. For oral reports, it will be the uploaded copy of the report. The written record of oral reports may be brief or even non-existent, but our judgement is still based on the available record.</p> <p>Under the current working arrangements with HMCTS, we cannot expect reports to be lengthy documents in all circumstances. We can, though, expect them to make an appropriate proposal, based on sufficient information. We would also expect them to be personalised.</p> <p>The reason for this is that the written record of the report is what a responsible officer will base their supervision on. The responsible officer needs to understand what was proposed to the court and why, and the content of the report may form part of a breach case in the future.</p>
R 1 S	Is the pre-sentence information and advice provided to court sufficiently analytical and personalised to the service user, supporting the court's decision-making?	<p>To make a judgement, consider whether the report preparation process obtained, and used properly, all the relevant information that was, or could reasonably have been expected to be, available. Was the process sufficiently personalised depending on the individual needs and circumstances of the service user? Was an appropriate proposal put to the court, allowing relevant factors related to reoffending and risk of harm to be addressed? It is important to focus on the proposal made, not the sentence actually imposed. We expect sufficient evidence to be entered on nDelius, so as any subsequent responsible officer can understand the nature, content and purpose of advice provided to court. Absence of evidence is likely to lead to a negative judgement.</p>

R 2	Is the allocation of the case prompt, accurate, and based on sufficient information?	
	Inspection question	CARaG Case Assessment Rules and Guidance

R 2.1	Is there a sufficient record of the assessment and advice to the court, for the purposes of allocation and the communication of relevant information to the organisation responsible for supervision?	As well as a record of the report delivered to court, we expect to see a record of any other enquiries undertaken. This may include a record of the interview with the service user and any significant others; conversations with other professionals working with the service user and their family; and notes of any documents that were used. Enquiries made to other agencies (including police domestic abuse units/children's social care) should be clearly recorded. Relevant documents should be uploaded onto nDelius in a way that is legible, and accessible.
R 2.2	Is the case allocated promptly to the correct agency?	<p>Criteria for allocation to the NPS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -case is already allocated to the NPS under an existing order -case is assessed, on the basis of the current offence, as High or Very High risk of serious harm -RSR score is 6.9 or greater -case is MAPPA eligible -case is a foreign national eligible for deportation (custody 12+ months) -case meets Public Interest criteria -case is subject to a sexual risk order or sexual harm prevention order -case is prosecuted by National Crime Agency and a serious crime prevention order is made at the point of sentence -case is subject to a deferred sentence <p>All other cases must be allocated to the CRC.</p> <p>The most common reason for misallocation is the failure to identify a case as eligible for MAPPA</p> <p>The NPS is expected to allocate cases within two working days of sentence (operating model target of 48 hours), however we accept this could take longer, for example to carry out a good risk assessment or gather further information. Allocation should not take so long that it delays the start of the order.</p> <p>Inspectors will consider the validity of any reasons that have led to a delay in the case being allocated when answering this question.</p>

R 2.5	At the point the report was presented to court, were there any indicators of that the service user might be a perpetrator or victim of domestic abuse?	<p>We recognise the cross-government definition of domestic abuse as any incident of controlling, coercive, or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of their gender or sexuality. Domestic abuse covers, but is not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• psychological;• physical;• sexual;• financial; and,• emotional forms of abuse. <p>The index offence might constitute domestic abuse directly, due to the nature of the offence, such as an assault. Victim and witness statements and other prosecution documents may also indicate elements of domestic abuse in relation to other offences, such as theft and drugs offences. Lists of previous convictions do not indicate which individual offences constituted domestic abuse. We expect report authors to show an appropriate level of professional curiosity in circumstances where previous convictions include offences such as assault, criminal damage, threatening behaviour, harassment, and breach of restraining orders.</p> <p>Existing probation service records may indicate that the service user has been a perpetrator or victim of domestic abuse. OASys assessments, nDelius case records and other available documents, including external reports, child protection conference notes and communication with other agencies may provide useful sources of information.</p> <p>The service user might disclose in interview that they have been a perpetrator or victim of domestic abuse, or might disclose other information about their relationships which could indicate the potential for domestic abuse to be present. We expect report authors to use suitable professional curiosity to explore these issues.</p>
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R 2.6	Is there evidence that enquiries were made to the police domestic abuse unit?	<p>We expect the NPS to initiate domestic abuse checks with the police in all cases at the point a PSR is ordered by the court. Those checks, and responses from the police, should be clearly recorded on nDelius.</p> <p>The only situation where fresh checks are not required is where there is sufficient, up-to-date information available from other sources, such as records of a current case or CPS information. We expect the NPS to be working with police forces to facilitate a clear, detailed and speedy response to all enquiries.</p> <p>If not done at the point of PSR we still expect the NPS to make these checks before allocating a case. As a last resort, we would expect the allocated organisation to undertake these checks on allocation if they had not been done at the court report/allocation stage, but this does not absolve the NPS of the requirement to initiate checks prior to allocation.</p>
R 2.9	At the point the report was presented to court, were there any indicators that there might be child protection or child safeguarding concerns in this case?	<p>The index offence might have had a child co-defendant, a child victim, or child witnesses. For most offences, the list of previous convictions does not identify which individual offences indicated risks to, or concerns for, children. We expect report authors to show an appropriate level of professional curiosity to explore the ages of any co-defendants, and of victims of sexual or violent offences.</p> <p>Existing probation service records may reveal current or previous child safeguarding or child protection concerns. OASys assessments, nDelius case records and other available documents, including external reports, child protection conference notes and communication with other agencies may provide useful sources of information.</p> <p>The service user might disclose issues in interview which indicate child protection or child safeguarding concerns. We expect report authors to use suitable professional curiosity to explore these issues.</p>

R 2.10	Is there evidence that enquiries were made to children's services?	<p>We expect to see clear evidence recorded to show whether the service user has children or is in contact with children (so we know if checks are required).</p> <p>We expect the NPS to initiate child safeguarding checks with children's social care in all cases where the service user:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has children, or • is in contact with children or • presents a potential risk of harm to children. <p>Checks should be made at the point a PSR is ordered by the court. Those checks, and responses from children's social care, should be clearly recorded on nDelius.</p> <p>The only situation where fresh checks are not required in these cases, is where there is sufficient, up-to-date information available from other sources, such as records of a current case.</p> <p>We expect the NPS to be working with local authorities to facilitate a clear, detailed and speedy response to all enquiries.</p> <p>If not done at the point of the report, we still expect the NPS to make these checks before allocating a case. As a last resort, we would expect the allocated organisation to undertake these checks after allocation if they had not been done at the court report/allocation stage, but this does not absolve the NPS of the requirement to initiate checks prior to allocation.</p>
R 2.12	Was a RoSH screening prepared before the case was allocated?	<p>In most cases allocated to a CRC, the NPS is required to complete a RoSH screening on OASys. If a current or recent RoSH screening is available, and its validity is not impacted by the nature of the offence before the court, we do not expect the NPS to produce a fresh RoSH screening.</p> <p>In cases retained by the NPS, the screening can be left to be completed by the allocated responsible officer.</p> <p>We expect a RoSH screening to be in place for all sentence types, including cases going to immediate custody, where availability of an up-to-date assessment of risk of harm on OASys assists safe management of the sentence.</p> <p>If an OASys assessment has been completed as part of the report or allocation process, the RoSH screening will be in the OASys document.</p>

R 2.13	Was the RoSH screening full and accurate?	<p>To be judged 'full', a screening should be informed by domestic abuse checks, and by child safeguarding checks in relevant cases, see guidance for question 2.10. We expect it to refer to all known offences and behaviour that is indicative of potential risk of harm, not just to serious offences that have been committed.</p> <p>To be judged 'accurate', a screening should utilise, and be consistent with, other information that is available at the time, including previous OASys assessments, nDelius records, and available information from other agencies.</p>
R 2.14	Was a full RoSH analysis required in this case?	<p>Inspectors look at any screening completed in the case, and all other available information, to judge whether a full RoSH analysis was required in the case. Inspectors may not be able to judge whether a full analysis was required when key information is missing, such as domestic abuse or child safeguarding checks.</p> <p>The purpose of a RoSH screening is to identify whether there are factors in the case that should be subject to a full analysis of potential harm to others. Normally, the identification of one or more such factors in the screening, should result in a full analysis being completed. Occasionally, where the only offending or behaviour of concern is either very minor or historical, an exemption from completing a full analysis can be justified.</p> <p>Where the current offence is violent or sexual in nature, or where other features of the index offence or recent known behaviour indicate potential to cause harm, the exemption from completing a full analysis should not be used.</p> <p>In some circumstances, a full RoSH analysis is needed to explain and justify an assessment of Low Risk of Serious Harm.</p> <p>In all cases where the correct level of risk of serious harm is medium or above, a full RoSH analysis is needed to explain the rationale for the level that is set.</p> <p>In some circumstances, where the only offending or behaviour of concern is very minor or historical, an exemption from completing a full analysis can be used justifiably.</p>

R 2.15	Has a full and accurate risk of serious harm assessment been completed before the case was allocated?	<p>In most cases allocated to a CRC, the NPS is required to complete a RoSH screening and any full analysis required, using OASys prior to allocation. When a standard delivery report is completed, the screening and any necessary full assessment should be completed as part of the Oasys assessment for that report. If a current or recent RoSH analysis is available, and its validity is not impacted by the nature of the offence before the court, there is no requirement for the NPS to produce a fresh RoSH screening or analysis. In cases retained by the NPS, the screening and any full analysis required, can left to be completed by the allocated responsible officer. However, if a risk assessment is produced in a case retained by the NPS, we will inspect the quality of it.</p> <p>We expect a full RoSH assessment to be completed where required for all sentence types, including cases going to immediate custody, where availability of an up-to-date assessment of risk of harm on OASys, assists safe management of the sentence.</p> <p>A full and accurate risk of serious harm assessment should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • refer to all convictions and known behaviour which indicate a potential to cause harm (not just serious harm) • analyse previous convictions and known behaviour to judge the likelihood of harm being caused in the future • indicate the nature of harm that could be caused, and identify potential victims • incorporate relevant information from other agencies where required, including domestic abuse and child safeguarding information • identify the level of risk of serious harm, following the definitions on Oasys
R 2.16	What was the level of RoSH assessed at the point of allocation?	<p>A screening, and full analysis where required, is necessary to assess the level of RoSH. A fully completed screening which identifies no issues requiring analysis, confirms assessment of Low RoSH. Description of risk of harm issues in the report or use of the nDelius risk flags, without an underpinning screening/analysis, does not constitute assessment of RoSH.</p>

R 2.17	Was the assessed level of RoSH at the point of allocation correct?	<p>Oasys definition of risk of serious harm: A risk which is life-threatening and/or traumatic, and from which recovery, whether physical or psychological, can be expected to be difficult or impossible.</p> <p>Definitions of levels of Risk of Serious Harm: Low Risk of Serious Harm current evidence does not indicate likelihood of causing serious harm Medium Risk of Serious Harm there are identifiable indicators of risk of serious harm. The offender has the potential to cause serious harm but is unlikely to do so unless there is a change in circumstances. High Risk of Serious Harm there are identifiable indicators of risk of serious harm. The potential event could happen at any time and the impact would be serious. Very High Risk of Serious Harm there is an imminent risk of serious harm. The potential event is more likely than not to happen imminently and the impact would be serious.</p>
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<p>R 2 S</p>	<p>Is the allocation of the case prompt, accurate, and based on sufficient information?</p>	<p>To make a judgement, inspectors will consider the promptness and accuracy of the allocation decision. They will also judge the range and consistency of information that has been gathered to make the allocation decision, and provided to the responsible officer to allow them to commence supervision of the case promptly and efficiently.</p> <p>In cases allocated to the CRC, the information provided to the responsible officer must include a RoSH screening, and a full RoSH assessment if required by the screening, containing any necessary information about domestic abuse or child safeguarding issues. If a recent or previous assessment remains valid, that is acceptable. We expected the NPS to flag up to the CRC where any checks are outstanding.</p> <p>For cases retained by the NPS, we do not necessarily expect a fully completed risk of harm assessment, but if one is completed we expect it to be full and accurate. Where the only factor in the case leading it to be retained by the NPS, is that the case is judged to be high or very high risk of serious harm, there should be a fully completed risk of harm assessment to support that.</p> <p>Where domestic abuse and/or child safeguarding checks have not been made, inspectors will consider the impact of those omissions on the overall assessment of the case at the point of allocation. If there are indicators, either from the current offence or other known information, that there may be domestic abuse or child safeguarding concerns in the case (as identified in questions 2.6 or 2.9) inspectors will answer the summary judgement question negatively. If there are no such indicators, the absence of checks alone will not automatically result in a negative judgement.</p>
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3.2 Statutory Victim Work

V 1	Does initial contact with the victim/s encourage engagement with the victim contact scheme and provide information about sources of support?	
	Inspection question	CARaG Case Assessment Rules and Guidance
V 1.1	Is appropriate initial contact made soon after sentence, with consideration given to the timing of such contact?	We expect contact be made as soon as reasonably possible, being sensitive to issues such as date of the offence, date of birth of the victim, holiday and festival periods and any other factors that may have an unnecessarily adverse impact on the victim. We recognise that the probation instruction requires contact to be made within 40 working days from the date of notification of the case by the witness care unit. There is an expectation that initial contact will be made in writing by conventional mail, unless there are reasons that this is not appropriate.
V 1.5	Are the initial letters appropriately personalised, considering the nature of the experience of the victim/s and any diversity issues?	As a minimum we would expect letters to be professionally constructed and to use accurate spelling for the names and addresses of victims. In cases where the person being contacted is not the direct victim (e.g. they are the next of kin of a deceased victim or the parent of a child victim), the letters should recognise the relationship. The letters should also recognise any pre-existing relationship between the perpetrator and any victims. The language of the letter, while not naming the offence the victim has experienced, should be sensitive to the nature of the offence.
V 1.6	Is clear information given to victims about what they can expect at different points in a sentence?	Any letters should be sufficiently clear about what the victim contact scheme can and cannot offer to the victim. Language must be straightforward and understandable. The tone of the letter should make it clear that the victim is completely free to choose whether or not to participate. It should also make it clear that an initial choice not to participate can be changed at any point the victim wishes. It should explain what the victim should do in those circumstances.

V 1.7	Do the initial letters contain sufficient information to enable the victim/s to make an informed choice about whether to participate in the scheme?	<p>We expect letters to include details of the victim contact scheme, and the roles of the NPS and the victim liaison officer. It should include an explanation of the victim's right to decline contact and/or opt in to the victim contact scheme at any point in the offender's sentence. The letter should also include the victim liaison officer's contact details; a suggested date and time when the victim liaison officer could meet the victim at their home (or an alternative location); details of how to confirm this appointment; and how to arrange an alternative location, time or date. The letter should give reassurance that the victim liaison officer will not proceed with this meeting without the victim's permission, and should encourage the victim to contact the victim liaison officer to confirm a meeting. Victims should be assured that the victim contact scheme is a flexible service, and the meeting will, if possible, be arranged to fit around the victim's commitments (e.g. employment or childcare commitments). They should be told that a friend, colleague, or member of a charity such as Victim Support can be present at the meeting if the victim wishes.</p> <p>Victims should be provided with contact details for Victim Support and/or any other appropriate local support organisations, including details of the Victim Support line, along with supporting literature and leaflets if available. Letters and appointments should make reasonable adjustments to accommodate any special requirements that have been highlighted by the witness care unit. This might include providing information in a different language or an easier to read format. If the victim is a child or vulnerable adult, the letter should request the view of an appropriate adult about whether the victim should be actively involved from the outset.</p> <p>The letters need to be sufficiently clear about what the victim contact scheme can and cannot offer to the victim. Language must be straightforward and understandable. The tone of the letter should make it clear that the victim is completely free to choose whether or not to participate. It should also make it clear that an initial choice not to participate can be changed at any point the victim may choose so to do. It should explain what the victim should do in those circumstances.</p>
V 1.8	Are victims informed about the action they can take if the prisoner attempts to make unwanted contact with them?	

V 1.9	Are victim/s referred to other agencies or services, or given information about available sources of help or support?	General information should be provided in initial letters sent to victims. Following the first meeting with the victim liaison officer, consideration should be given to providing information or arranging a referral to generic and specific support services where appropriate. This could include agencies such as Women's Aid, Rape Crisis, Victim Support or specific localised provision. In some cases, provision of general information will be sufficient. In cases with a greater level of need, we expect victim liaison officers to make relevant referrals.
V 1 S	Does the initial contact with the victim/s encourage engagement with the victim contact scheme and provide information about sources of support?	Take into account the answers to all parts of question V 1. Remember that the question shaded dark grey are directly linked to the prompts for this key question, and should be more strongly weighted than the question shaded light grey which are asked for additional information and clarification. The fact that any/all victims chose not to accept the offer of victim contact, is not a reason for answering the summary judgement question negatively. This key question expects victim liaison staff to make reasonable and sufficient efforts to encourage victims to engage with the scheme.

V 2	Is there effective information and communication exchange to support the safety of victims?	
	Inspection question	CARaG Case Assessment Rules and Guidance
V 2.1	Are victim liaison staff involved in MAPPAs where appropriate?	MAPPAs arrangements commence six to nine months before the perpetrator is due to be released from custody. Inspectors expect to see victim liaison staff involved in MAPPAs arrangements, at all levels. This could include professionals' meetings and other multi agency meetings for MAPPAs level 1 cases, as well as formal meetings in those cases that are managed at Level 2 and 3.

V 2.2	Do victim liaison staff share relevant information with the Offender Manager?	<p>We would expect to see an exchange of information between the victim liaison officer and the perpetrator's responsible officer to ensure that the wishes of the victim/s are incorporated into relevant documents and licences. Many of the duties carried out by victim liaison officers depend on co-operation and communication with the responsible officer, particularly those that involve communicating information about the offender's sentence to the victim. This is a two-way process of communication. Timely and clear information exchange between the victim liaison officer and the requires lateral communication and support. This is particularly necessary given the often emotionally demanding and stressful nature of this work. Depending on the stage of sentence, and the prison location of the perpetrator, the 'responsible officer' may be based in the community, or may be working in a prison under OMiC arrangements.</p>
V 2.3	Are the concerns of the victim/s addressed and is attention paid to their safety when planning for release?	<p>We expect to see that consideration of the location of the victim is considered when planning for release. Timely communication with the victim about release arrangements is critical. We would also expect to see liaison with police staff if additional safety measures are required. We expect victims' views to be considered, but recognise that it is not always reasonable or possible to meet all of their needs, nor put in place everything that a victim requests.</p> <p>The NPS is likely to be the first point of contact when victims are dissatisfied with the service they have received from the Parole Board, as contact with the Parole Board will occur when victim contact will have been established for some time. At the stage when victims are first notified about the commencement of the Parole process, they should be provided with information about the Parole Board's single point of contact for dealing with complaints. If a victim is dissatisfied with the service they have been provided with by the NPS, they should complain under the normal process, and then, if appropriate, to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman.</p>

V 2.4	Are victim liaison staff provided with appropriate and timely information about the management of the service user?	Responsible officers must notify the relevant victim liaison officer as soon as they become aware that one of the key stages in the offender's sentence is approaching, or when there are any other key developments in a case which might impact on the victim. Effective systems must be in place to ensure that responsible officers and victim liaison officers exchange information quickly and allow sufficient time for victims' views to be sought and fed into the decision-making process. The responsible officer should pass any victim information provided by the victim liaison officer to the relevant decision-maker (internal prison board/Parole Board). Where the victim has a right to make representations about a particular stage, the responsible officer must take account of this in informing the victim liaison officer in good time. When a parole application is being considered, the responsible officer should pass on victim representations about licence conditions, and must include any victim personal statement and/or victim contact report in the Parole Board dossier.
V 2 S	Is there effective information and communication exchange to support the safety of victims?	Take into account the answers to all parts of question V 2. Inspectors will be looking for a proportionate response, taking into account the length and nature of the sentence, and the range and type of situations that should generate information sharing with victim/s. Where two victims have been subject to inspection, the answers in respect of both victims will be taken into account. Remember that the question shaded dark grey are directly linked to the prompts for this key question, and should be more strongly weighted than the question shaded light grey which are asked for additional information and clarification.

V 3	Does pre-release contact with the victim/s allow them to make appropriate contributions to the conditions of release?	
	Inspection question	CARaG Case Assessment Rules and Guidance
V 3.1	Are the victims given the opportunity to contribute their views to inform decisions about the service user's release in a timely way and supported in doing so?	The victim/s need to be consulted as soon as a request for permanent release approaches. Victims need sufficient time to reflect on the contribution they wish to make in a timely fashion without additional pressure. We recognise that the role of the victim liaison officer is to support the victim/s in preparing their contributions, but the victim liaison officer is not a counsellor or advocate and there is a need to maintain appropriate professional boundaries.

V 3.2	Are views expressed by victims treated appropriately and in accordance with the victim contact scheme?	<p>We expect victim liaison officers to respect views and wishes expressed by victims. Where the views or wishes of the victim are not compatible with the constraints of the statutory victim contact scheme, victim liaison officers should explain that to victims.</p> <p>Victim liaison managers must ensure that victim information is held securely, but that there is sufficient access to information to allow for provision of a continuous service, including when victim liaison officers are on leave, out of the office and, if appropriate, out of hours. Victim liaison unit staff should record information clearly and comprehensively, in such a way that a colleague with no prior knowledge of the case could read and understand the record if necessary. This provides an important basis for effective contact, particularly in cases where there are long periods of non-contact or where the case is transferred between victim liaison officers.</p>
V 3.3	Are victims supported in making a victim personal statement in parole applications?	Victim liaison officers should take all reasonable steps to offer the victim the opportunity to make a victim personal statement for consideration by the Parole Board, where the perpetrator's release or move to open conditions is being considered by the Parole Board.
V 3 S	Does pre-release contact with the victim/s allow them to make appropriate contributions to the conditions of release?	Inspectors recognise that agreeing the conditions of release may not always be able to accommodate all the views and wishes of victims. Legal and policy guidance needs to be followed, and a balance needs to be made between the wishes of victims and the need to develop a safe release plan. Take into account the answers to all parts of question V 3. Remember that the question shaded dark grey are directly linked to the prompts for this key question, and should be more strongly weighted than the question shaded light grey which are asked for additional information and clarification.