# Implementation of the Active Risk Management System (ARMS)

This instruction applies to:-

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Issued on the authority of NOMS Agency Board

For action by All staff responsible for the development and publication of policy and instructions

- NOMS HQ
- Public Sector Prisons
- Contracted Prisons*
- National Probation Service (NPS)
- Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs)
- Other Providers of Probation and Community Services
- Governors
- Heads of Groups
- NOMS Rehabilitation Contract Services Team
* If this box is marked, then in this document the term Governor also applies to Directors of Contracted Prisons

Instruction type Delivery of non-specified service/service improvement

For information Offender Managers in the National Probation Service

Provide a summary of the policy aim and the reason for its development / revision

This instruction provides the arrangements for the implementation of the Active Risk Management System (ARMS) in the National Probation Service (NPS). It also contains the arrangements for training NPS staff. The purpose of ARMS is to provide an approved framework for working with sexual offenders in supervision.

Contact Heather Sutton. Head of the Sex Offender Team. OMPPG. NOMS. Heather.Sutton@noms.gsi.gov.uk Telephone. 0300 33340537

Associated documents Maps for Change. (Tool-kit for working with sexual offenders)

Replaces the following documents which are hereby cancelled: None

Audit/monitoring: The mandatory elements of this instruction must be subject to management checks. NPS Senior managers will be responsible for ensuring that the mandatory actions in this PI are monitored so as to ensure that they are carried out in full. NOMS will have a corporate audit programme that will audit against mandatory requirements to an extent and at a frequency determined from time to time through appropriate governance.

The Deputy Directors of the National Probation Service should also be aware of this instruction as they will impact on their actions as part of the co-ordinated Probation Instruction.
**Introduces amendments to the following documents:** None

**Notes:** *All Mandatory Actions throughout this instruction are in italics and must be strictly adhered to.*
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1. **Executive summary**

1.1 This Instruction introduces the arrangements for implementing the Active Risk Management System (ARMS), including the arrangements required for training. ARMS provides a framework for working with all male sexual offenders who are subject to statutory supervision. It is not in itself a risk assessment tool but will aid the assessment of dynamic risk and protective factors. For low risk of reoffending sexual offenders, the use of ARMS will assist in identifying work that should be carried out using the ‘Maps for Change’ tool-kit. It should be noted however, that Maps for Change is not in any way intended to take the place of an accredited programme. In addition, where it is used with an offender whose risk is assessed as either medium, high or very high then the offender manager should liaise with the Sex Offender Programme Treatment Manager in order to make sure that there is no repetition of work and that sequencing of work is taken into consideration.

**Background**

1.2 There is currently no approved structured framework for working with male sexual offenders within the National Probation Service, where most sexual offenders are managed. In addition, there is no approved provision for low risk of reoffending sexual offenders and those who are deemed to be unsuitable for accredited treatment programmes for other reasons. ARMS will therefore provide the means for offender managers to structure the work they do with this group of offenders and this will enhance the completion of OASys risk management plans and sentence plans.

1.3 ARMS will not replace any other nationally recognised risk assessment tool. It will however, assist in the assessment of dynamic risk.

1.4 There has been a pilot of ARMS in two (former) Probation Trusts and within two police areas - Lancashire and Cheshire Probation Trusts; and Staffordshire and West Midlands and Humberside Constabularies. The Probation pilot involved approximately 40 sexual offenders. The results of the pilot were positive, and offender managers who were involved have stated that they found it useful in terms of providing structure to supervision and aiding the identification of dynamic risk factors and protective factors that could then be addressed and included in risk management plans. As a result of the positive results of the pilot within police areas, all police forces are now implementing ARMS.

**Desired outcomes**

1.5 The desired outcome is that ARMS will be used with all male sexual offenders who are subject to statutory supervision by the National Probation Service.

1.6 For low risk of reoffending offenders it will aid the identification of “protective factors” that can be addressed utilising the ‘Maps for Change’ tool kit that is provided as an annex to this PI.

1.7 There are currently 3 National Trainers who are approved to deliver ‘train the trainer’ events for ARMS. The intention is for the National Trainers to train (in train the trainer) a number of staff from the NOMS training unit and a sufficient number of offender managers who are experienced in working with sexual offenders from within the NPS, to train all NPS suitably experienced offender managers.

1.8 Within 6 months of the NPS offender managers having completed their training, it will be mandatory to use ARMS as the framework for supervision on all new sex offender licence and community order cases and those that have commenced supervision in the last 6 months. More specifically, at commencement of a Community Order and at the point of
release for a licence. It can also be used on cases where the offence had a sexual element, but where the offender was not actually charged with a sexual offence. For all other cases, it is best practice and encouraged, but not mandatory to use ARMS. The National Trainers and trainers from NOMS will support the suitably experienced offender managers in cascading the training within each Probation Division.

**Application**

1.9 Deputy Directors in the NPS should be familiar with the implementation arrangements for ARMS and so will ensure that a suitable number of suitably experienced offender managers are made available to attend the train the trainer events and that all offender managers within each NPS Division attend an ARMS training event.

1.10 Local Delivery Unit (LDU) Heads should familiarise themselves with the contents of this PI to make sure that they identify suitably experienced staff for train the trainer training at the direction of the Deputy Directors within the required time frames.

1.11 NPS Senior Probation Officers supervising suitably experienced offender managers, supervising sexual offenders should be familiar with this PI so that they are aware of the requirement for them to attend ARMS training and use the framework when supervising all new sexual offender cases. Senior Probation Officers and suitably experienced managers should also make themselves familiar with the operational guidance notes and the Maps for Change – a tool kit for working with low risk of re offending sexual offenders (see Appendix 2 at the end of this document).

**Mandatory actions**

1.12 Managers in the National Probation Service must ensure that their staff are aware of, and comply with the following mandatory requirements below:

- **Deputy Directors in each of the Probation Divisions must identify and make available 2 suitably experienced offender managers who will attend the two day ARMS training followed by the two day train the trainer event.**
- **Each Probation Division must plan a schedule of training events in collaboration with the NOMS training unit to ensure that ARMS is rolled out to all suitably experienced offender managers in the NPS by the end of February 2016 All suitably experienced offender managers in NPS Divisions must attend and complete ARMS training.**
- **Once trained in the use of ARMS all suitably experienced offender managers must use the framework in supervision with all new community order cases of male sexual offenders and those who have commenced supervision within the 6 months from when the offender manager is trained. Regarding those sexual offenders on licence, it must be used on all new cases and on existing cases that have commenced within the last six months of the offender manager completing the training and where the licence lasts for more than 12 months.**
- **Suitably experienced offender managers must complete the training within 6 months of the train the trainer event having taken place.**

**Resource Impact**

1.13 There are no capital costs associated with the implementation of ARMS. It will provide structure to the supervision that is currently undertaken with sexual offenders. Although it may take longer to complete ARMS in the early stages, over time it will not. Evidence from the pilot provides evidence for this assertion. The only human resource impact is that of releasing staff to complete the training.
Digby Griffith
Director National Operational Services, NOMS
2. **Operational instructions**

2.1 *All suitably experienced offender managers must use ARMS as the framework for working with all male sexual offenders during supervision once trained. This applies as follows:*

- for all new cases, both community orders and licences. This refers to commencement of an order and at point of release for a licence case;
- for all community orders that have commenced within the last six months of the offender manager completing training;
- for all licence cases that have commenced within the last six months of the offender manager completing training and where the licence lasts for more than 12 months.

For all other male sex offender cases it is considered best practice and utilising ARMS is strongly encouraged, but it is not mandatory.

2.2 *All suitably experienced offender managers should utilise ‘Maps for Change’ in conjunction with ARMS for low risk of re-offending male sexual offenders and those deemed unsuitable for accredited treatment programmes. Maps for Change is not in any way intended to be a substitute for an accredited programme, and where an offender is attending a programme, discussion should take place with Treatment Managers to ensure the work is properly scheduled. This also applies to all new male sex offender cases and those that have commenced statutory supervision within 6 months of the offender manager having completed the training. For all other male sex offender cases, it is considered best practice and utilising Maps for Change is strongly encouraged. Maps for Change can be found on EPIC. It is a straightforward workbook that can be utilised by suitably experienced offender managers without formal training*

2.3 Any significant information that comes to light as a result of ARMS that relates to risk should be shared at MAPP meetings. This will also be referenced in the forthcoming new MAPPA guidance

2.4 A separate document will be issued in due course that will alert offender managers to the factors that ARMS raises and how they fit into the OASys.

2.5 The ARMS document need not be placed on Visor. However, any relevant information that comes to light as a result of carrying out ARMS should be entered onto Visor.

**Policy and strategic context**

2.6 The policies that relate to the implementation of ARMS are not yet finalised but will be published in due course

**Guidance**

2.7 Offender Management user guide to ARMS is set out as Annex A at the end of this document.
ARMS

Quick User Guide

June 2015
ARMS Quick User Guide

Overview

ARMS = Active Risk Management System. ‘Active’ in the sense that it focuses on information that is currently evident in an ‘offenders life’, and a ‘Risk Management System’ in the sense that it enables the assessor to recognise, prioritise and organise information into a framework that assists risk management planning.

ARMS is based on evidence based, contemporary thinking and the 11 factors under which information is gathered have been carefully selected by a team of experts using cross validated research based findings. We have deliberately avoided using terms like ‘risk assessment tool’ or ‘ARMS risk level’ when referring to ARMS, as the research evidence is still awaited to help us ‘weight’ certain factors against others.

ARMS is designed for use with adult male sexual offenders and takes account not only of factors linked to risk but also ‘protective factors’ that research studies have linked to successful desistance from offending. It therefore fits well within a collaborative strength based approach to offender working, and has been welcomed by those who have been subject to it as it can take account of positive change.

It has been jointly developed with police colleagues and therefore provides a common risk management language and system.

How is it used?

ARMS is a simple ‘Microsoft Word’ based tool that has been designed with Offender Managers in mind. The pilots have shown that OM’s value the perspective and organisation that ARMS can bring to the task of managing often complex case information. We envisage that OM’s will want to use it from the outset when they ‘process’ case information and will update it when new significant information comes to light. The ARMS rating template guides the assessor in rating factors but requires that only brief evidence details are noted and relevant strategies identified, which in turn are be copied into the relevant OASys section.

An agreement with the police will mean that when ARMS is fully implemented within NPS, a single ARMS assessment will exist for each case, with the lead responsibility falling to NPS in the cases subject to statutory licence or supervision and to the police when notification requirements only exist.