

TDI *Explainer*

How are risks managed?

In previous Explainers, we've talked a little about the risks of sexual offending. In this Explainer, we discuss some of the ways risks are managed in the community.

Remember: most offenders are in the community

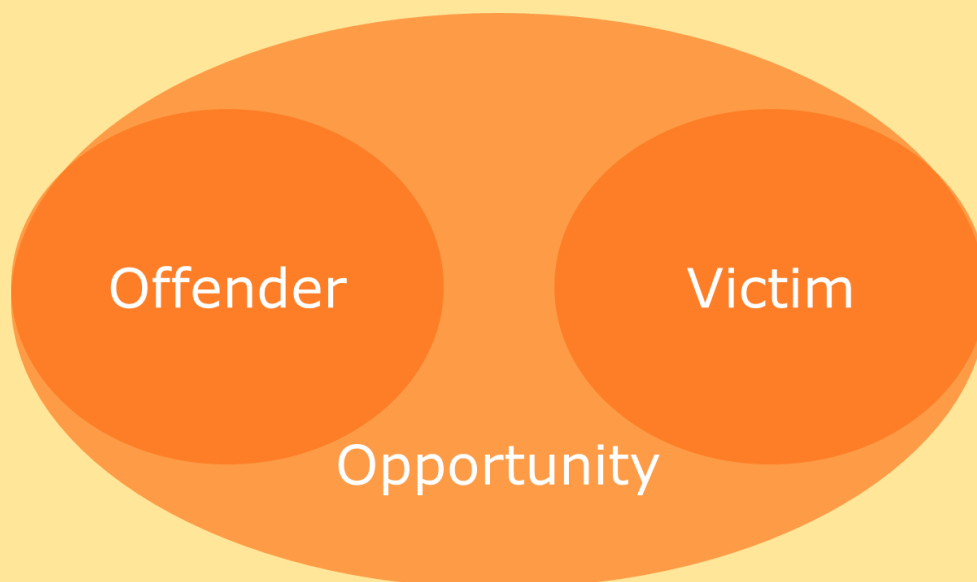
In our Explainer *What is the extent of sexual offending?* we said that there were around 60,000 people subject to Notification Requirements ("registered sex offenders") in England and Wales in March 2019. Of these, only 13,000 or so were serving custodial sentences. On top of those, there are the unknown, but large, number of offenders who have never been caught.

So most sexual offenders are in the community. They are our relatives, friends, neighbours and people we pass in the street.

Many of these will be managed by Probation Services and other public systems. For others, the risks can only be managed by us.

A simple risk assessment model

We can think of the risk of sexual offending as being about three things: the offender, their victim, and the opportunity which bring these two individuals together:



People who want to offend will be looking to satisfy their desires with the smallest amount of effort on their part, and with the smallest risk of being caught. This is one reason why most offences are committed by people who know their victim—these are the people closest at hand and the circumstances where it is easiest to prevent them from reporting the abuse.

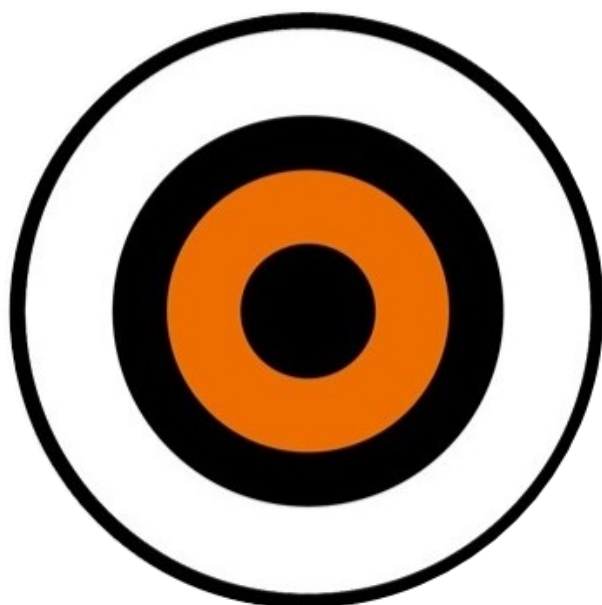
Using this model, we can see that managing risk is about reducing opportunity—either increasing the effort offending takes, or increasing the risk of the offence being discovered.

The MAPPA system of community risk management

We talked in a previous Explainer about Notification Requirements. These are one way of reducing opportunity—because offenders have to register with the Police, it is harder for them to act undetected.

A more comprehensive system is MAPPA—Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements. These are statutory co-operative partnerships between organisations like the Police, the Prison Service, the Probation Service, Local Authorities and health services which share information about offenders in their care. These arrangements seek to limit the risk of further offending by monitoring and guiding the offender to ensure they are not in circumstances where an offence can reoccur.

Leisurewatch



Another community management scheme is Leisurewatch, a programme run by TDI which helps those managing public spaces like Leisure centres, Libraries, Transport networks and Shopping centres to reduce risk.

The scheme works by training staff and managers to spot risky behaviour and respond to it in a calm and sensible manner.

The scheme has been running for over 15 years, and has won praise from the Department for Children, Schools and Families, and the Association of Chief Police Officers. You can find out more at tdi.org.uk

Further questions you might want to think about:

What things influence the risk of offending? How are risks assessed—what models of risk assessment are there? What risks can we control?



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TDI is a national charity which works to increase public protection by finding practical and creative solutions to the problem of sexual offending.

For over 25 years we have been at the forefront of the field, providing training, research, consultancy and public protection schemes to individuals and organisations across society.

If you've found this explainer useful, you may be interested in learning more through one of our training programmes. Contact us at info@tdi.org.uk to find out more.