



Ministry
of Justice

[REDACTED]

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Disclosure & Library Team
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28 February 2025

Dear Ms Lyall,

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Request – 250107008

Thank you for your request dated 7 January 2025 in which you asked for the following information from the Ministry of Justice (MOJ):

- 1) **In 2014, the National Offender Management Service stated that “nearly seven million OASys assessments now collated within a national OASys database”. Are you able to provide an updated figure for how many OASys assessments are currently held on the national OASys database?**
- 2) **Do you hold any accessible data or records in relation to the number of OASys assessments that are carried out at any given time?**
If yes, please provide:
 - a. **How many OASys assessments have been carried out in the last week.**
 - b. **How many OASys assessments have been carried out in the last 12 months.**
- 3) **Please provide any guidance documents or helptexts for practitioners conducting OASys assessments.**
- 4) **Please provide a template OASys questionnaire conducted by prison/probation assessors, including all sections.**
- 5) **Have there been any updates, replacements or modifications to the OASys system in the last 18 months, or any plans to update, modify, or replace the OASys system in the last 18 months?**
If yes, please provide:
 - a. **Stated purpose, intentions, and details of any updates, replacements or modifications.**
 - b. **Implementation timeline for any updates, replacements or modifications.**
 - c. **Other agencies or parties working with you on any updates, replacements, or modifications (e.g. government agencies or departments, police forces, other law enforcement authorities, private companies, local councils).**

Your request has been handled under the FOIA.

I can confirm that the MOJ holds the information that you have requested.

Question 1. In 2014, the National Offender Management Service stated that “nearly seven million OASys assessments now collated within a national

OASys database”. Are you able to provide an updated figure for how many OASys assessments are currently held on the national OASys database?

As of 12 January 2025, a total of 7,090,636 OASys assessments are held on the OASys database. This includes completed assessments and those still in progress.

Please note that one individual may have multiple assessments over the course of their sentence.

Question 2. Do you hold any accessible data or records in relation to the number of OASys assessments that are carried out at any given time?

If yes, please provide:

a. How many OASys assessments have been carried out in the last week.

b. How many OASys assessments have been carried out in the last 12 months.

2. The total number of assessments in progress on 13 January 2025 was 21,915.

2a. From 6 January 2025 to 12 January 2025 (inc), 9, 420 assessments were completed.

2b. From 12 January 2024 to 12 January 2025 (inc), 476,474 assessments were completed.

For 2a and 2b we used the term completed rather than ‘carried out.’ This means they were fully completed within the given time frames. There may be additional assessments that were commenced but not completed during the time frames that have not been included in this data.

Question 3. Please provide any guidance documents or helptexts for practitioners conducting OASys assessments.

The OASys guidance/manual is exempt from disclosure under section(s) 31(1)(a) of the FOIA, because it would be likely to prejudice the prevention or detection of crime.

Section 31 is a qualified exemption which means that the decision to disclose the requested material is subject to the public interest test. When assessing whether or not it was in the public interest to disclose the information to you, we took into account the following factors:

Public interest considerations favouring disclosure

- Desire to be open and transparent, enhancing government accountability.
- Informing the public about the operations of the agency.

Public interest considerations favouring withholding the information

- If individuals knew the exact assessment criteria that they are measured against, they may adapt the information they present the assessor, answering questions to generate lower scores and thereby undermining the assessment

process. This would or would be likely to lead to inaccurate identification and assessment of areas of risk and need, reducing the ability of HMPPS to develop meaningful risk management and sentence plans. This would undermine the potential for working effectively with individuals and thereby could increase the risk of reoffending and harm to the public.

- It would also undermine the identification of the best interventions to support rehabilitation as well as numerous other processes which the OASys assessment feeds into, potentially increasing the risk of harm to the others, including the public.

On balance, we consider the public interest favours withholding the information at this time.

However, on a discretionary basis, I can tell you that a significant amount of detail about OASys, its development and evaluation is available and accessible to you at the links below:

[“Identified needs of offenders in custody and the community from the Offender Assessment System” \(June 2021\).](#)

[A compendium of research and analysis on the Offender Assessment System \(OASys\) 2006-2009 \(cep-probation.org\).](#)

[A compendium of research and analysis on the Offender Assessment System \(OASys\), 2009–2013 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\).](#)

Whilst there have been some minor amendments to questions, the pathways and sections broadly remain as set out in the compendium.

In terms of risk assessment more broadly the primary guidance document is HMPPS Risk of Serious Harm Guidance 2020 which can be found in the following link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/652cf8c9697260000dccb834/Risk_of_Serious_Harm_Guidance_v3.pdf

Question 4: Please provide a template OASys questionnaire conducted by prison/probation assessors, including all sections.

A word version of a blank OASys assessment is attached.

Question 5: Have there been any updates, replacements or modifications to the OASys system in the last 18 months, or any plans to update, modify, or replace the OASys system in the last 18 months?

If yes, please provide:

- a. Stated purpose, intentions, and details of any updates, replacements or modifications.**

There has been one significant change to the OASys tool in this period which was to update the OASys Sexual Reoffending Predictor (OSP). The rationale for this change was identified following a revalidation of HMPPS risk predictor tools. This research which details the purpose, intentions and details is titled "The Actuarial Prediction of Sexual Reoffending". This is exempt from disclosure under section 21 of the FOIA because the information is reasonably accessible to you and is available at the following link:

[The Actuarial Prediction of Sexual Reoffending](#)

In addition, the HMPPS Assess Risks, Needs and Strengths (ARNS) project is developing a new digital tool to replace the OASys tool. Further information on the ARNS project is exempt from disclosure under sections(s) 35 (1) (a) as it covers information related to the development and formulation of government policy.

Section 35 is a qualified exemption which means that the decision to disclose the requested material is subject to the public interest test. When assessing whether it was in the public interest to disclose the information to you, we considered the following factors:

Public interest considerations favouring disclosure

- Desire to be open and transparent, enhancing government accountability.
- Informing the public about the operations of the agency.

Public interest considerations favouring withholding the information

- The project is still under development and subject to change at any time. The final decision on how the ARNS project will operate is yet to be fully determined.
- The development of ARNS follows Agile principles which is a methodology that focuses on creating working software quickly, collaborating with users frequently and being able to adapt to changes easily. This methodology is beneficial in such a complex policy area with evolving requirements. Therefore, disclosure of current plans and progress would be detrimental to the integrity of this process as it would give an incomplete assessment of the service being developed.

However, on a discretionary basis, what we can tell you is the ARNS project will deliver an organisational change in the approach to how assessments, risk management and sentence planning is undertaken in practice, enabled by a new digital service.

b. Implementation timeline for any updates, replacements or modifications.

The change to OSP was made on 28 March 2024.

The ARNS project is a three-year project. An early prototype has been developed which is being piloted from December 2024, with a view to a national rollout in 2026.

- c. Other agencies or parties working with you on any updates, replacements, or modifications (e.g. government agencies or departments, police forces, other law enforcement authorities, private companies, local councils).**

The changes to OSP were identified by Ministry of Justice and an issue for us to resolve inhouse. However, as the police also use the tool we liaised closely with them in respect of the changes.

HMPPS has consulted widely with academics and key stakeholders to gather the latest research and evidence to inform the development of the replacement to the OASys tool. The new digital tool is being built in-house by a team from Justice digital who are liaising with Capita, who currently provide technical support for OASys.

Appeal Rights

If you are not satisfied with this response, you have the right to request an internal review by responding in writing to one of the addresses below within 40 working days of the date of this response.

data.access@justice.gov.uk

Disclosure & Library Team, Ministry of Justice, Postal Point 5.22, 102 Petty France, London, SW1H 9AJ

You do have the right to ask the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) to investigate any aspect of your complaint. However, please note that the ICO is likely to expect internal complaints procedures to have been exhausted before beginning their investigation.

Yours sincerely

Cindy Keehner
Head of Risk and Domestic Abuse Policy Team
HM Prison and Probation Service