



Ministry
of Justice

Process Evaluation of the Multi-Agency Response to Serious Organised Crime (MARSOC) Early Adopter Phase

Final Evaluation Report

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Glossary

APMIS – Agency and Partner Management Information System

DWP – Department for Work and Pensions

FIU – Financial Investigations Unit

HMPPS – His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service

HMRC – His Majesty's Revenue and Customs

IDO – Intelligence Development Officer

LOM – Lifetime Offender Management

SRO – Senior Responsible Officer

LTHSE – Long-Term High Security Estate

MARSOC – Multi-Agency Response to Serious Organised Crime

MoJ – Ministry of Justice

NCA – National Crime Agency

NSD – National Security Directorate

NPCC – National Police Chiefs Council

OPT – Operational Partnership Team

PSF – Prioritisation and Selection Forum

RIU – Regional Intelligence Unit

ROCTA – Regional Organised Crime Threat Assessment Team

ROCU – Regional Organised Crime Unit

SOC – Serious Organised Crime

SOCU – Serious Organised Crime Unit

SRO – Senior Responsible Officer

TPM – Tactical Planning Meeting

1. Summary

In February 2021, Ipsos UK was commissioned by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) to conduct a process evaluation of the Multi-Agency Response to Serious Organised Crime (MARSOC) Early Adopter Phase. The Early Adopter Phase constituted a re-branded national rollout of the Lifetime Offender Management (LOM) pilot.

The key objectives of the MARSOC programme are to:

- Develop and maintain a list of the highest-harm SOC nominals using a single, consistent approach to assessment and prioritisation;
- Share information and intelligence relating to the MARSOC cohort more effectively between partners to deliver a more joined-up response; and
- Co-ordinate activities across multiple agencies to deliver disruptions which make the most of each agency's tools, powers and interventions, based on jointly agreed plans for each individual.

To support the ongoing delivery of the Early Adopter Phase, the evaluation adopted a phased approach to provide feedback and insights throughout the programme. In total, there were three main data collection phases, each one concluding with a presentation on the emerging findings to the MARSOC Delivery Board. The data collection methods included interviews, focus groups, surveys, and observations to gather the views and experiences across three main stakeholder groups.¹ Most evidence sources relied on self-reported data meaning the findings presented in this report are based on common themes reported by stakeholders.

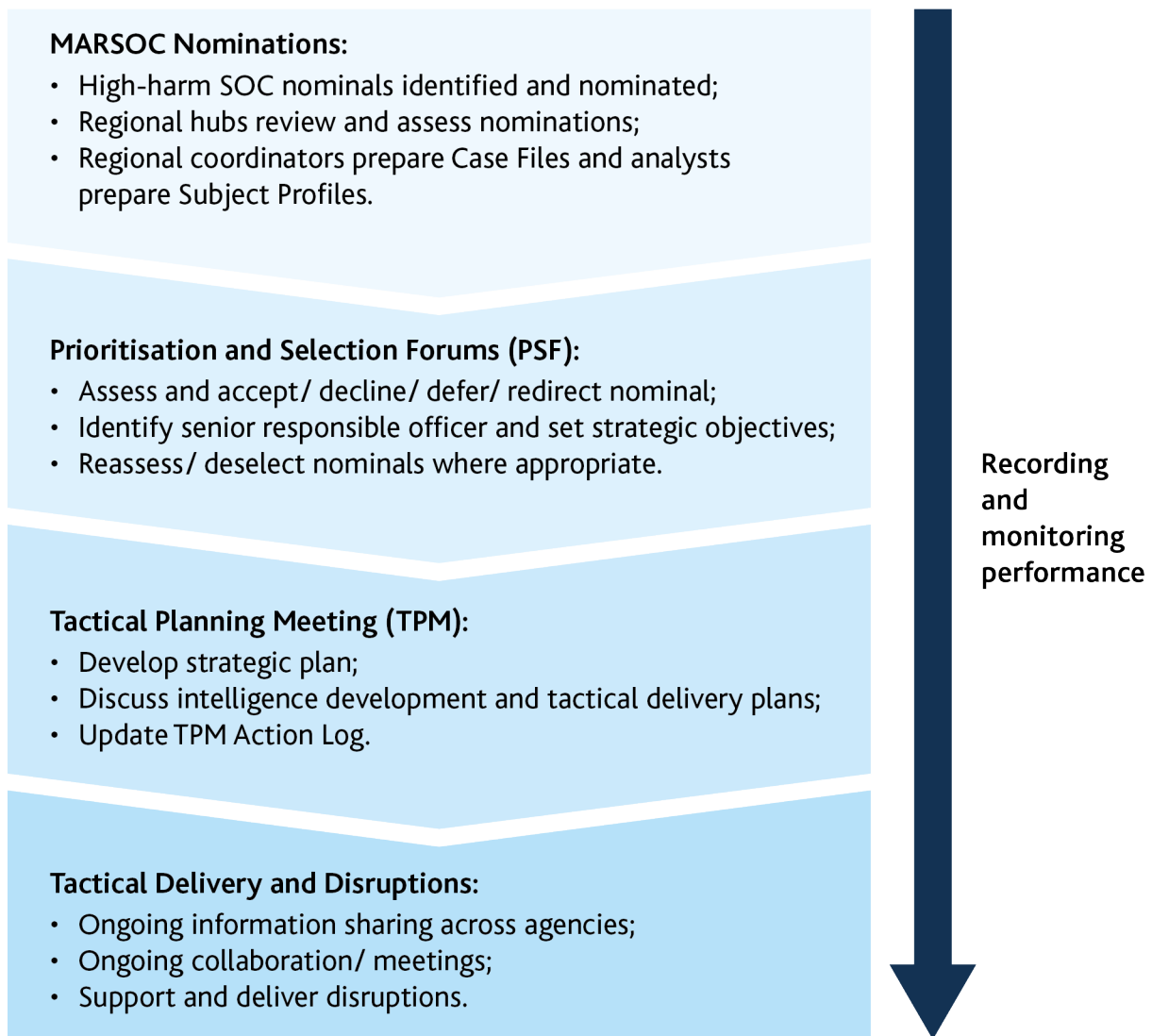
MARSOC is implemented through a hub-and-spoke model with ten regional hubs aligned to the Regional Organised Crime Units (ROCU). Each hub has a dedicated MARSOC Regional Lead and Regional Coordinator who work with 'spoke' agencies and teams that have received a resource uplift to support the delivery of MARSOC. Up to 120 new posts were created and were filled through recruitment or re-prioritising existing posts through

¹ Leadership and management roles; regional hub leads and coordinators; and regional delivery staff from partner agencies.

the uplift. The MARSOC National Team provides support and training for regional hubs and spokes, and Delivery and Planning Boards, which include members from across relevant partner agencies, provide strategic and operational direction respectively.

Figure 1 provides a high-level summary of the key MARSOC processes.

Figure 1: Summary of the key MARSOC processes



1.1 Key findings from the process evaluation

All stakeholder groups were largely positive about the MARSOC model and felt that it was fit-for-purpose and had the potential to provide a platform able to achieve its aims and objectives. In general, leadership stakeholders and regional staff felt that the aims and objectives of MARSOC were clear, although in interviews, there were variations

in the amount of emphasis individuals placed on the partnership working and collaboration elements compared to the ultimate aim of disruptions.

All three stakeholder groups mostly agreed that MARSOC had resulted in partners sharing information and intelligence quicker and more willingly, and enhanced partner awareness of the diversity of information sources available. The model and guidance, for example the selection criteria, coupled with this multi-agency working allowed for the identification, careful consideration, and disruption of high harm criminals.

There was positive initial progress establishing MARSOC and developing relationships across partner agencies, with the National Team seen as accessible and approachable during set-up and early implementation. Regional hub and spoke staff reported that they had better clarity about their roles and responsibilities as MARSOC was implemented.

Leadership stakeholders and regional staff were positive about engagement with MARSOC, particularly about the contribution and effectiveness of police and HMPPS partners. These were the most common nominating agencies and senior responsible officers (SROs) and therefore often provided more significant inputs at meetings and as part of follow-up actions. The lack of MARSOC funded roles and the absence of an information sharing agreement were most commonly reported as barriers to engagement for other partners, such as NCA, HMRC and DWP.

Indicative evidence shows that MARSOC has contributed to the disruption of high-harm criminals. Involvement with MARSOC was described to have made joint disruptions easier to plan and deliver. A total of 307 disruptions were recorded on APMIS during the Early Adopter Phase, examples of which included arrests and recalls to prisons, warrants, relocation of prisoners, and confiscation of mobile devices. A total of 41 arrests were recorded.

A key facilitator for tactical delivery was that MARSOC processes aligned well with the business-as-usual approaches participating agencies used to disrupt high-harm SOC activity. Developing close working relationships and using a single point of contact within agencies improved the efficiency of tactical delivery, and the emphasis on reporting TPM actions increased accountability, meaning partners were more likely to carry out designated actions. Moreover, pooling information and resources was perceived to

increase the impact of disruptions. Interviewees highlighted that without MARSOC, some disruptions would likely have occurred anyways but others would have happened at a reduced scale, been less likely to happen, or not happened at all.

However, survey respondents were more likely to disagree than agree that MARSOC had made the most of each agency's tools, powers, and interventions for disruption.

Challenges included limited partner cooperation, which varied across regions, with issues arising when SROs disengaged from meetings and did not drive forward tactical delivery. Equally, the evidence indicated that by engaging with MARSOC regional spoke staff were more aware of the potential collaborative opportunities and therefore may have felt that these could be further exploited.

Ultimately, the structured process undertaken to set up MARSOC and learning derived during the initial months of delivery **demonstrated that both the premise and supporting infrastructure were largely fit for purpose and of sufficient quality** to be comprehensively tested across the ten MARSOC regions. In addition, many of the preliminary challenges experienced during this early stage could be classified as 'teething or bedding-in' issues that in the main resolved themselves over time as partners agencies became more familiar with the aims and expectations of MARSOC. A significant achievement of the Early Adopter Phase was the **securing of HMPPS baseline funding. MARSOC is now part of HMPPS's 'business as usual' operations.** This strengthens the sustainability of the programme, including transferring regional leads, subject to fixed-term contracts, to permanent HMPPS contracts.

1.2 Recommendations

Recognising these achievements as well as a small number of more complex issues that require further consideration to resolve as the programme moves into its second year of delivery, it would prove useful to consider the following recommendations for the future delivery of MARSOC. It should be noted that due to the feedback loops built into this evaluation, steps have already been taken by the MARSOC team to implement and respond to some of these recommendations.

1. Finalise the information sharing agreement and conduct a review on the levels of engagement across partner agencies.

2. Review the capacity of partner organisations and consider whether and how this may need adapting at national and regional levels.
3. Develop clear and concise communications setting out the expected role and contributions for each relevant agency to achieve the objectives of MARSOC.
4. Implement audit and quality assurance processes and lessons learned forums.
5. Closer links with other statutory functions, such as MAPPA, could also be identified to support collaboration, increase intelligence, and strengthen disruptions.
6. Invest time and resource into the development of a clear strategy for demonstrating the impact of MARSOC.
7. Linked to the above, revisit the scope of the performance statistics and provide training on key performance indicators to minimise variation in disruption reporting and ensure they meet partner agencies' strategic needs to secure buy-in.
8. Develop a long-term vision for the programme and its role within the existing infrastructure for tackling SOC to make MARSOC sustainable, accounting for the demand on partners to maintain and build the MARSOC cohort.

2. Introduction

2.1 Programme context and aims

In 2018, the Government launched its new SOC Strategy² which detailed investment, the introduction of new legislation to combat the SOC threat, and a commitment to lifetime offender management (LOM). The premise of LOM is to bring about cohesive and coordinated multi-agency working between the police, prisons, probation, and other relevant partners as a means of jointly identifying, prioritising, and disrupting the highest-harm SOC offenders in prisons and communities. This includes a focus on offenders that are capable of continuing criminal activity from within custody.

In 2019, Ipsos UK was commissioned to evaluate a 12-month pilot of a regionally-coordinated LOM model. This evaluation, alongside work undertaken by Deloitte Consulting and stakeholders across multiple agencies, informed the infrastructure for the Early Adopter Phase of the national roll-out of LOM – re-branded as the MARSOC programme. The delivery of the £7 million Early Adopter Phase is one element of a £100 million investment to strengthen security in prisons overseen by the HMPPS Security Investment Programme.

Using a hub-and-spoke model aligned with the ten Regional Organised Crime Units (ROCU) (see Figure 2), the key objectives of the MARSOC programme are to:

- Develop and maintain a list of the highest-harm SOC nominals using a single, consistent approach to assessment and prioritisation;³
- Share information and intelligence relating to the MARSOC cohort more effectively between partners to deliver a more joined-up response; and
- Co-ordinate activities across multiple agencies to deliver disruptions which make the most of each agency's tools, powers and interventions, based on jointly agreed plans for each individual.

² [Serious and Organised Crime Strategy 2018 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/681221/Serious_and_Organised_Crime_Strategy_2018.pdf)

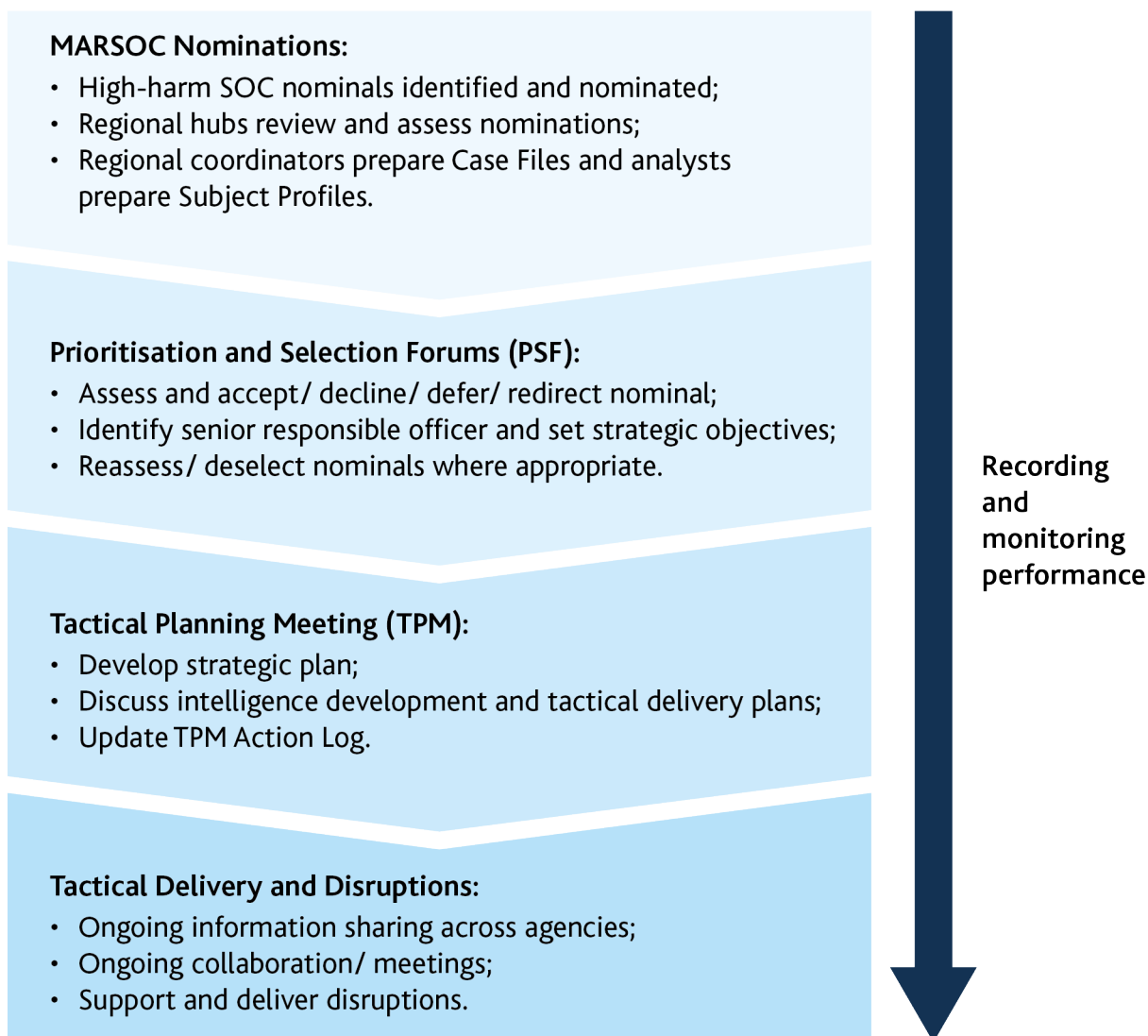
³ MARSOC intended to build a MARSOC cohort upon which a whole system response could be focused as opposed to replacing the Harm In Prison (HIP) list.

An overview of the MARSOC model and how it works is summarised in Figure 2 and detailed further in [Appendix A](#).

Figure 2: MARSOC hub-and-spoke model



Figure 3: Summary of MARSOC processes



2.2 Aims of the process evaluation

In February 2021, Ipsos UK was commissioned by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) to conduct a process evaluation of the MARSOC Early Adopter Phase. It aimed to understand:

- What has worked well/less well, why and in what contexts?
- What enablers and barriers have been experienced in relation to effective delivery and how have the latter been resolved?
- To what extent has each regional hub maintained fidelity to the intended operating model, and what tailoring was required for differing local contexts?
- To what extent is the model sufficient, proportionate and sustainable, and why?

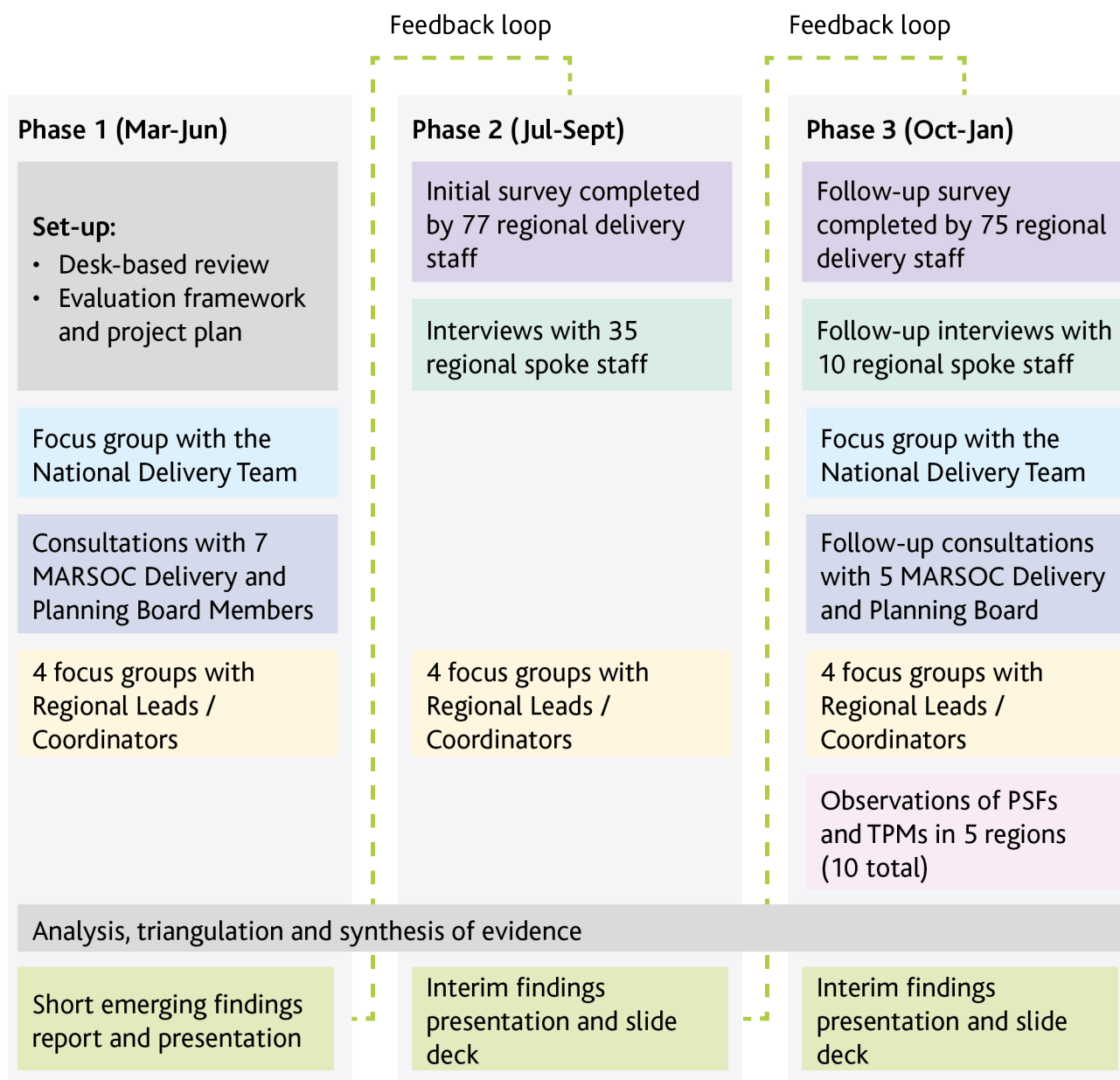
- To what extent have the regional hubs worked together and interacted with the national infrastructure set up to support the facilitation of the programme?
- What improvements or modifications are required prior to a potential transition of the programme into business as usual?

It was also key for the evaluation to consider the wider context and how MARSOC aligned with wider national and regional SOC-related activities.

2.3 Methodology and sources of evidence

The findings presented in this report draw on the triangulation of data and evidence collected from multiple sources to answer the evaluation questions. Figure 4 summarises the data collection approach and evidence sources used for the analysis, and further methodological detail is provided in [Appendix B](#). Most evidence sources relied on self-reported data meaning the findings are based on common themes reported by stakeholders. We sought to minimise selection bias by sampling a variety of organisations and roles, which was achieved. However, respondents still self-selected to take part, meaning their views may not be representative of those who did not take part. Respondents also may have been more likely to respond positively because they viewed their role as linked to the success of the pilot.

Figure 4: Evaluation data collection approach



The following terminology has been used throughout this report:

- Stakeholders – refer to qualitative views provided by the MARSOC Planning and Delivery Board members and MARSOC National Team.
- Regional staff – refer to qualitative views provided by the regional leads and coordinators, and the regional spoke roles. These are specified as hub or spoke staff where appropriate.
- All stakeholder groups – refer to qualitative views provided by both ‘stakeholders’ and ‘regional staff’.

- Survey respondents – refer to the ‘regional staff’ (i.e. regional leads and coordinators, and regional spoke roles) that provided a response to the survey.

More detail on the survey findings reported in the following sections can be found in [Appendix C](#).

3. Design and set up

3.1 Design and operationalisation

All stakeholder groups were largely positive about the MARSOC model and felt that it had the potential to provide a platform able to achieve its aims and objectives.

Members of the MARSOC National Team and Delivery and Planning Boards noted that **the foundational work undertaken to set out MARSOC's objectives, the operating model and guidance documents was key to the programme's design**. This was enabled by:

- **Collaboration and good engagement across key partner agencies**, which included partners that had not been heavily involved in the LOM pilot but were considered to be relevant. This enabled partners to work through key issues such as where the programme should sit regionally (e.g. ROCUs vs SOCUs), the cohort selection criteria, and the responsibilities for agencies.
- **Involving influential leaders within relevant agencies as early as possible**. In particular, the inclusion of a National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) representative as the Chair of the Delivery Board was seen as an **important factor to support buy-in from police on the ground**, which was key for the programme given the critical role of police in the delivery of MARSOC.
- **The work undertaken by Deloitte Consulting**, particularly for the development of processes.
- **The National Team's role in developing guidance and templates**, which were disseminated to regional staff who positively reported that the guidance was useful and comprehensive.

Although generally positive, some regional staff reflected that further work in the early design stages could have improved the transition from strategy to operations. This included a common language-related challenge often experienced in multi-agency work, where both stakeholders and staff reflected that **the language of MARSOC centrally sometimes differed from the language used by police or prisons**. Some regional staff

felt that **translation was needed between the guidance manual documents provided and the operational and practical realities** of implementing the programme and working across partners.

“I think some of the processes that have been created, feel like they have been created without the input from existing practitioners to the level that they should.”
(Intelligence Development Officer).

In general, where regional spoke partners felt there were gaps in the guidance or that MARSOC processes were overly simplistic, this was addressed at a regional level, reflecting region-specific structures and ways of working.

3.2 Regional Hub set-up

The launch of the Early Adopter Phase was staggered across regions between March and June 2021 when all 10 hubs were live. This staggering was largely in response to variation in recruitment and onboarding (including security checks) across the regions.

Overall, feedback across stakeholder groups during the set-up phase was positive about the **initial progress in establishing and advertising MARSOC and developing relationships across partner agencies**. Regional leads were responsible for driving forward MARSOC within their region and their **previous professional experiences were often seen as enabling set-up and relationship development**. Leads emphasised the importance of a working knowledge of law enforcement partners and practices, and regional spoke staff gave examples where this background helped to build trust. **Regional spoke staff reported having positive relationships with the regional leads and coordinators** who they described as professional, organised and approachable and key to successfully bringing together different partner agencies and organisations.

“[The regional lead is] an ex-DCI...which definitely helped with relationships already there within the force and the region, and also ease of understanding around police tactics and methods, etc.” (ROCU MARSOC Manager).

There was general acknowledgement that there would be challenges and teething issues when setting up a new national programme, and that changes would be made throughout.

Both regional leads and coordinators **noted that the flexibility and scope given to them during set up** empowered them to take an approach suited to the personalities and specific circumstances of their region. Equally, they felt comfortable raising issues with the National Team where further effort was needed to resolve these.

Two key challenges were identified early on. First, **regional leads expressed some frustrations over the lack of authority to leverage resources**. Instead, partnership working was based on goodwill, making the facilitator role and the building of relationships more challenging but essential. Second, the **amount of flexibility led to some regional inconsistencies during set up**, which was reinforced by differences in personalities and backgrounds within regional hubs and delivery staff. For example, this meant there was variation in the number of meetings that occurred between meeting cycles in regions, which was particularly notable for spoke roles who worked across multiple regions. More recently, **this was reviewed at national level to ensure more consistency**.

Most of the challenges described in the set-up phase were resolved over time, for example:

- Regional hub and spoke staff felt that the **pandemic negatively impacted communications and relationship building in the early stages of the programme** as face-to-face meetings were not possible.
- Despite temporary cover from other regional leads and coordinators to launch and initiate MARSOC, **security, onboarding and some recruitment delays hindered the early months of delivery**.
- **Delays in receiving appropriate IT equipment and formal identification** was perceived as a barrier for leads and coordinators building relationships with partners early on, though this was resolved as quickly as possible, and staff joining later typically had better experiences.
- Leads and coordinators vocalised **frustrations with the templates and forms** provided. In response, the National Team asked coordinators to review, feedback and update these templates, which resulted in relatively minor changes focused on streamlining and removing inconsistencies and duplication.

3.3 Communications about MARSOC and partner engagement

In the follow-up survey, **nine in ten (91%) respondents felt that the aims and objectives of MARSOC were very or fairly clear** (see [Appendix C](#), Figure C1) and this was echoed across all stakeholder groups in interviews.

Regional spoke staff cascaded information about MARSOC within their organisations through internal briefings and presentations. They felt that this had been important in raising awareness and fostering buy-in, and that it was appropriate for these briefings to be led internally, with the support of regional leads, to ensure the correct language and terminology was used. These efforts were seen to complement the MARSOC guidance materials, which were useful for introducing a large number of people to MARSOC but were sometimes viewed as difficult to digest.

“We invested a lot of time in getting around and sitting down and doing presentations, and I think people, they do get it.” (LTHSE Lead/Manager)

Although regional staff felt that good progress had been made towards embedding MARSOC over the course of the Early Adopter Phase, the engagement of specific partners still varied between organisations and regions. For example, **perceptions about the contribution and effectiveness of police and HMPPS partners were positive** (see [Appendix C](#), Tables C2 and C3), which was in part a result of the enhanced capacity provided through dedicated MARSOC funded roles within ROCUs and HMPPS. Despite this, interviewees from across stakeholder groups also highlighted **barriers relating to the internal structures and processes of HMPPS**, including challenges and resistance when trying to introduce and embed MARSOC which appeared to be driven by personal relationships. Issues were both cross-departmental (e.g. RIU and SOCU) and specific to particular relationships and institutions (e.g. prisons). Similar issues around managing and challenging existing relationships were reported in relation to **police forces**, where regional hub and spoke staff described notable variation.

In general, interviewees from across stakeholder groups reported **lower levels of engagement from other organisations, including the NCA, DWP and HMRC**. Two key barriers to engagement were noted. First, the **absence of an information sharing**

agreement was consistently highlighted as curtailing their engagement. Second, **the lack of dedicated MARSOC-funded roles** meant competing internal priorities put a strain on resourcing for MARSOC tasks.

Overall, even among agencies with dedicated staff, **regional staff reported mixed views about whether their organisation had the required capacity to support MARSOC investigations and disruptions**. Around half of survey respondents agreed that they had sufficient capacity, however, nearly two in five (38%) disagreed (see [Appendix C](#), Figure C2).

Ultimately, regional staff appeared confident that MARSOC would **continue to become embedded and more 'business as usual' with more time, and a wider communications strategy was still seen as a valuable way to achieve wider system buy-in**. For example, a number of stakeholders from across all groups raised concerns that awareness raising (about MARSOC) had been insufficient within prisons in particular and noted that prison governors often did not have enough of an understanding to fully engage with the programme. Interviewees emphasised the continued need to **effectively communicate the value of MARSOC** after the Early Adopter Phase and the onus on the National Team to lead the collection of evidence to demonstrate its value. In particular, regional leads felt that using successful 'case studies' bolstered their ability to show partners the value MARSOC could bring, and detail examples of how and why disruptions happened as a result of MARSOC activity. They also felt that this would be key to the future success of MARSOC, particularly when encouraging partners to nominate the highest harm individuals.

4. Implementation and delivery

4.1 Cohort selection and management

Overview of nominations and cohort

In total, **129 nominations** were put forward during the Early Adopter Phase. Of these, 109 nominals were in custody and 16 in the community under probation supervision and 4 not under supervision. **As expected, the police and HMPPS nominated the majority of nominals** (76 and 48 nominations, respectively).

Following initial discussions involving the regional hub and nominating agency, 115 nominations were put forward to the Prioritisation and Selection Forum (PSF) and **97 nominals were accepted onto the cohort**. Table 1 below summarises how the cohort developed over time. Just over half have been deselected over time, meaning the **current cohort includes 42 nominals**.

Table 1: MARSOC cohort over meeting cycles

	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3	Cycle 4	Cycle 5	Cycle 6	Total
New nomination	40	22	17	14	12	24	129
Put forward to PSF	32	21	16	13	9	22	113
Selected at PSF	29	18	11	12	8	19	97
Not selected at PSF	3	3	5	1	1	3	16
Deselected	-	4	9	13	9	20	55

Source: Monitoring Data collected by the National Team

One barrier that occasionally deterred nominations was the **recognition that nominating would have resourcing implications for their agency since MARSOC does not ‘take on’ responsibility or ownership of the nominal**. The ability to provide resources therefore informed whether nominations were put forward in some cases.

“Because of our paucity of resource, [...] we haven't put forward more nominations. If we did have more resources, I can think of at least four more people we would've put forward, maybe six.” (MARSOC Board Member)

Appropriateness of selection criteria

Most survey respondents (85%) agreed the criteria for making nominations were clear (see [Appendix C](#), Figure C3). Staff reported that **the criteria helped them to carefully consider individuals for nomination**, and that there was a good balance between the criteria being **prescriptive enough to reach the highest-harm offenders** as well as **sufficient flexibility in the criteria**, which includes both mandatory and non-mandatory criteria. Staff valued this because it recognised that some nominals did not necessarily meet all the criteria but were still strong nominations. This supported the **identification of nominals who may have otherwise been missed**, and it **encouraged more multi-agency discussion during the PSF**, which sometimes led to additional information being shared to support a decision.

One challenge associated with this degree of flexibility was that **the criteria could be and had been interpreted differently by different agencies**. For example, different agencies, such as HMPPS and police, reportedly **categorised 'highest harm'⁴ differently** and viewed the requirement for nominations to be **affecting those in custody and outside custody differently**. In other cases, it appeared some issues stemmed from a **misunderstanding of the aims and scope of MARSOC**, or a **lack of clarity about their agency's expected contribution to nominations**. In general, **as understanding of MARSOC grew**, more agencies became clearer about the criteria, which led to more nominations.

Nomination forms, subject profiles, and case files

Most survey respondents (73%) reported that the nomination form was clear and easy to complete (see [Appendix C](#), Figure C3). This was in part reinforced by regional spoke staff who reported that the nomination form was **straightforward, logical, and contained all the relevant information** to accurately inform decision-making at the PSFs, but that it was also **time-consuming and would benefit from being streamlined**. Ultimately, most issues and challenges with completing the form eased over time

⁴ According to the MARSOC Guidance Manual, 'Highest harm' refers to the damage that an individual is assessed to be causing through SOC activity to the UK public, economy and institutions. Harm is to be considered as being caused in the present, with potential to be caused in the future, or with others being led to cause harm in the future.

“I think they look at the nomination form and think, 'I'd like MARSOC to help, but actually that's going to take me 3 hours to complete that form. I haven't got those 3 hours now, I'll do it eventually', which sometimes doesn't necessarily get round to it.” (ROCU MARSOC Officer)

Similarly, survey respondents' perceptions of the clarity and ease of using the Subject Profile and Case File templates improved over time, but there were still considerable numbers who found these challenging (see [Appendix C](#), Figure C4). Staff **queried the rationale for the Subject Profiles and Case Files and whether the time spent completing them was proportionate** given they tended to have a limited audience, the quality often varied, and the information could generally be found in other documents.

What worked well?

Regional hub and spoke staff highlighted that **collaboration between the nominating agency, regional hub and RIU analysts was key to preparing nominations**. They felt that meetings prior to the PSFs were valuable for bringing relevant partners together to agree whether nominations should be put forward, decide which agency would be responsible, and avoid duplication between agencies.

The development of clear objectives early on in the nomination process was seen to help shape tactics and recommendations, with regional hub and spoke staff praising **SROs who provided clear expectations of strategic objectives and took full ownership** of the nomination.

“Getting the buy-in is the really key part to MARSOC from the policing perspective. They've got to really want to take the work that's being produced from the MARSOC process and be willing to invest resource from the force, because, ultimately, I think MARSOC stands and falls on that investment from the agencies that nominate.” (ROCU MARSOC Manager)

What were the challenges?

A small number of staff described how **intelligence used for nominations was not always relevant, for example it did not focus on SOC**. Some interviewees at HMPPS reported **limited resources to produce intelligence**. These barriers made assessing and

identifying potential nominations challenging. For example, one staff member described how a police force had tried to create a matrix to identify individuals but that this was unsuccessful due to the level of detail needed on individuals to make an assessment, and a need for updated intelligence.

Staff reflected that **earlier nominations had been of a lower calibre of harm** and it transpired that there was a **lack of intelligence on some nominals** on the cohort meaning there was little disruption activity that could take place. In these cases, the **deselection process was important to ensure MARSOC targeted the right nominals and kept a dynamic rather than stagnant cohort.**

Not engaging with the relevant partners at the nomination stage proved detrimental in several cases because **nominating agencies were unaware of ongoing operations**, for example being led by HMPPS Counter-Corruption Unit, against potential nominations.

Where barriers such as a lack of buy-in or capacity from some agencies resulted in partners not putting forward nominations, the main **concern was that the opportunity to use MARSOC to disrupt some potential high-harm nominals had been missed.** Some staff hypothesised that **MARSOC was not receiving nominations for some key high harm nominals** because they were already on the radar of other agencies, who did not see the additional value of MARSOC. Additionally, a perceived lack of commitment could also have a knock-on effect for other agencies who could feel deterred from committing resources.

Views on the cohort size

Cohorts of five to seven were generally seen as manageable, but interviewees warned that a larger cohort would likely require additional resource to ensure effective cohort management. This echoed the survey findings that showed respondents were typically hesitant about their own organisation's capacity and others' capacity for MARSOC (see [Appendix C](#), Figure C2). Furthermore, there was some concern that increasing the number of nominals would increase the length of meetings, which would risk partners disengaging.

“I'd like to see that cohort grow. To do that we'd need an uplift in resources. [...] We haven't really got the time to really dedicate our resources to a full approach [for a larger cohort].” (ROCU MARSOC Officer)

Deselections

A key finding from both the initial interviews with regional spoke staff and the survey was that the process for deselecting a nominal from the cohort was **not well-defined**. This **improved over time** as more nominals were deselected (more than half), but a considerable proportion still reported a lack of clarity in the follow-up survey.

Some concerns were raised by staff about nominals being considered for deselection due to limited intelligence. In these instances, it was unclear whether nominals should be deselected, and if so, how they should be monitored in case more intelligence arose. However, staff increasingly saw the value in deselecting nominals to allow inclusion of new nominals who could be disrupted. Ultimately, the degree of subjectivity meant that decisions to deselect nominals likely varied across regions.

“They might go quiet for a bit [...] we get people sitting [on the cohort] and then they don't meet the criteria anymore, or haven't for a couple of months, so we then nominate them off. But I know very well that they could come back on again.”
(ROCU MARSOC Lead)

4.2 Meeting cycles

Partner attendance

Overall, there was consensus that relevant partner agencies attended the PSFs and Tactical Planning Meetings (TPMs). Approximately four in five survey respondents agreed that the relevant people attended the PSFs (79%), TPMs (80%) and other meetings for tactical delivery (80%) (see [Appendix C](#), Figure C5 and C6).

Levels of engagement during meetings mirrored agencies most often making nominations, with the police and SOCU reported as most engaged in the PSFs while HMRC and DWP were reportedly less engaged, largely due to the **lack of an information sharing agreement**. This was one reason why some partners were viewed as “**silent attendees**”, which sometimes frustrated other partners. Some staff raised concerns that the number of

attendees joining the virtual meetings (sometimes up to 40) was not ideal, especially when a much smaller proportion were viewed as actively contributing.

There were also a small number of instances where it was reported that the **SROs missed PSFs and/or TPMs**, and generally showed lower engagement in between meeting cycles. Regional leads responded to this by re-iterating expectations regarding contributions and met with SROs prior to meetings to prepare relevant inputs for the meeting.

One suggestion raised was whether a safeguarding representative should be invited to meetings where it is known that nominals are impacting vulnerable adults and children.

What worked well?

More than seven in ten survey respondents agreed that the PSFs (76%) and TPMs (71%) were efficient and effective (see [Appendix C](#), C5 and C6). **Organisation and preparation were key to concise and efficient meetings.** This worked best when regional leads (as meeting chairs) and SROs articulated clear aims and structure for the meetings, kept to allocated timings, and ensured all partners were concise and kept to the topic. In some regions, **using allocated time slots** helped keep meetings efficient and focused on the objectives. Some staff described how having **PSFs focused on new nominations rather than current nominals made the meeting more efficient and minimised duplication with the TPMs.** Others reformatted their TPMs to prioritise the two nominals with the highest risk and opportunity for disruptions. Having meetings on MS Teams was also viewed as effective and saved time for those that would otherwise have to travel.

Most survey respondents (86%) also agreed **MARSOC supported collaboration in the TPMs to disrupt nominals.** Staff reported that regional leads **created an open forum for discussion and exchange, offering all partners the opportunity to share their views and relevant information.** A key facilitator for this was the **establishment of relationships across key partners.**

“I think [the chairs] bring the right people in at the right time [...] they will bring them in to ask them their expert advice and all the rest of it. [...] Then there will very much be a round table of 'This is what we're thinking and what we're thinking

we're going to do. Does anybody have a different view to that?' and some people are very good at coming forward with views.” (SOCU Lead/Manager)

There was a broad consensus that the **frequency of meeting cycles (around eight weeks) worked well**. However, some intelligence could develop quickly, meaning opportunities could be missed between cycles. As a result, **nearly all regions started more regular (e.g. typically weekly or fortnightly) intelligence review, update action, and partnership meetings. These additional meetings were viewed as an important contribution to effectively supporting collaboration and disruptions between meeting cycles.**

“TPMs now [are] every 2 months, which is too far apart, because you can sometimes get some of those actions done within a day or two. So, we've been having what we call intel review meetings two or three weeks from the TPM..”
(ROCU MARSOC Officer)

What were the challenges?

The main issue raised with the PSFs was the perception that **some decisions on nominations had already been made prior to the meetings without all partner agencies having an equal opportunity to input and agree**. Regional leads met with SROs ahead of PSFs to ensure nominations met the selection criteria and/or were worth bringing to the PSF for discussion. Although this was key to efficient PSFs, some staff felt there was insufficient detail about nominations in the PSF to be able to contest them.

Initially, **some partners were also reluctant to discuss covert tactics in TPMs**, which usually resulted in additional meetings. The introduction of time slots with a focused group of **attendees** helped partners feel comfortable discussing tactics, though potentially excluded partners who could have otherwise contributed. Also, due to the amount of time between formal meeting cycles, **tactical delivery decisions often had to be made in interim intelligence meetings**, without the oversight of all partners or official authorisation of TPMs. This created challenges for ensuring a multi-agency approach where all partners were involved in decisions.

Finally, some staff suggested an **emergency mechanism where individuals could be nominated between PSFs** should be incorporated.

“We're working on someone now and we've been listening to telephone calls, and we've done eight disruptions, and because of the eight week window where we can nominate that particular person, we're still waiting for him to get nominated.”
(ROCU MARSOC Officer)

Other barriers raised by staff included:

- **Meetings were too long**, and several highlighted examples of PSFs overrunning though this was mostly resolved over time.
- **Delays receiving intelligence**, which impacted timelines for disruptions, but there was recognition that this needed to be conducted legally and appropriately.
- Some interviewees were invited to a high number of meetings which sometimes **detracted from tactical delivery** being led by one agency.
- **Strategic objectives were sometimes too generic**, and partners often used different language for these, which could limit understanding with other partners.
- **Issues with personalities** relating to commitment to MARSOC and lack of understanding of other agencies hampered collaboration in some regions.

4.3 Tactical delivery and disruptions

Overview of disruptions

MARSOC Policing teams were responsible for uploading disruptions to Agency and Partner Management Information System (APMIS), a system for recording performance data used by law enforcement organisations working to tackle SOC. However, in some regions Policing teams did not have access to the database and therefore liaised with ROCU colleagues to record disruptions. **A total of 307 disruptions were recorded on APMIS** during the Early Adopter Phase.⁵ This included 235 minor, 46 moderate, and 7 major disruptions (19 assessed as having no impact). When mapped against the 4 Ps,

⁵ Please note that this disruption and arrest data is that recorded on APMIS and only those shown as MARSOC, and so probably represents under-reporting due to local reporting mechanisms (e.g. something not being recorded against MARSOC) and the fact that the vast majority are recorded by the police, as HMPPS are in the infancy of APMIS reporting (7 of the 307 are recorded by HMPPS). Therefore this figure may change in future due to record conversion / reconciliation and back-filling.

most disruptions fell under Pursue (151) and Prevent (123) with a smaller number under Protect (23) and Prepare (10). Examples included **arrests and recalls to prisons, warrants, relocation of prisoners, and confiscation of mobile devices**. A total of 41 arrests were recorded.

What worked well?

MARSOC's emphasis on reporting **TPM actions appeared to increase accountability** and meant partners were more likely to carry out designated actions, which helped keep momentum on cases. In some cases, regional hubs had to become stricter with partners to hold them to account to ensure actions took place, though generally reporting was effective. The **interim intelligence meetings and other additional partner meetings were also key following TPMs**. These meetings reportedly helped staff understand the 'bigger picture' of a nominal through hearing from other partners, and provided an opportunity to review intelligence, make tactical decisions and discuss covert tactics.

In addition to these meetings, **developing close working relationships and using a single point of contact within agencies improved the efficiency of tactical delivery and disruptions**. Staff described how this enabled timely communication, for example, ad hoc calls with queries or to share information and intelligence quickly. Overall, most survey respondents reported that **MARSOC processes aligned well with their organisation's business as usual approaches to disruptions** (see [Appendix C](#), Figure C7).

Collaborative tactical delivery was most commonly reported to have taken place between police and HMPPS, involving RIUs, ROCUs, SOC Community, LTHSE as well as NCA and HMRC for some cases. This included partners drawing on tactics already available to them and greater collaboration in some instances. **As a wider benefit, staff reported improved awareness of partners' capabilities as a by-product of their involvement in MARSOC**.

Pooling information, intelligence, resources and tactics across partners was perceived to increase the impact of disruptions, which some reported to be more efficient through MARSOC than other processes.

“We've got half a jigsaw puzzle, and the other department have got the other half, and when we share that, we can build up that bigger picture... So, putting those two things together is really beneficial, because we can then be proactive in our approach.” (RIU MARSOC Intelligence Analyst)

What were the challenges?

Limited partner cooperation, which varied across regions, was cited as a barrier to effectively dealing with cases and tactical delivery. Issues arose when SROs disengaged from meetings and did not drive forward tactical delivery. Similarly, the lack of engagement from HMRC, DWP and NCA was often perceived as a barrier to delivery. The information sharing agreement should improve this, given the concerns that voluntary disclosure of intelligence could breach their policies and be a risk to covert activity. On the other hand, probation staff were sometimes unsure how to handle the information shared with them, for example, whether and how to share covert information with parole boards.

While not unique to MARSOC, there were issues where **agencies did not communicate with one another**, which caused frustration. For example, police nominated prisoners without the prison's knowledge, and prisons moving prisoners to other establishments without informing police.

Finally, it was reported that disruptions were often recorded differently across the regions, likely stemming from **different regions using different definitions of what qualifies as a disruption and different systems for moderation.** In response to these concerns, the National Team developed and published a **'Disruption Library' to support a more standardised approach** to reporting activity across the regional spokes.

Cross regional cases

A number of nominations and nominals crossed regional boundaries – for example, **prisoners moved between prisons or nominals caused harm across different regions.** MARSOC offers an opportunity to further breakdown regional barriers by working across regional hubs to coordinate responses regardless of geographical location of nominals. Generally, regional hub and spoke roles **wanted more guidance** on how to determine which regions and whom within the region should be responsible for

cross-regional nominals and nominations. In the absence of this, different approaches were being taken across the regions.

5. Governance and oversight

5.1 MARSOC National Team

The National Team was intended to comprise eight roles, but it **largely functioned on the basis of three to four core staff during the Early Adopter Phase**. This core group brought key working knowledge of LOM/MARSOC and law enforcement agencies which stakeholders and staff felt had been vital to the success of this team. Despite the limited team resource, **regional staff were generally positive about the support received from the National Team**, highlighting how responsive, approachable, and visible they were. This included being proactive in their approach to addressing issues raised by the regional hub and spoke staff and designing and delivering 16 training sessions.

“If you notice any extra training or support that you need in the long term, they've been very good at helping and providing that. I have limited training around chairing of meetings [...] and they've quite happily provided that [...] they are clearly invested in you as a long-term employee.” (Regional lead)

Regional leads also spoke highly of the ways in which **the National Team had engaged senior strategic partners during the set-up period** to overcome barriers around being viewed as operational staff, especially when there were organisational culture differences.

Although the **National Team's flexible approach of letting regions trial ideas and tweak the model empowered regional hubs**, concerns were raised about **regional inconsistency** resulting from flexibility. Recognising this, the team also actively supported regional hub staff to run 'mini-projects' to compile and assess regional variations in models, such as on the nature and frequency of interim intelligence meetings. Looking to the future, there was appetite from some regional spoke roles that the National Team should take on a **stronger oversight role over the composition of the cohorts**, particularly to challenge whether nominals should be kept on the cohort.

The National Team's ability to track, monitor and assess the value of MARSOC was limited, partly due to no Performance Manager being in post. Despite this, some

monitoring data was collected and compiled regarding nominations, cohorts and disruptions, and the National Team made use of case study evidence to illustrate what could be achieved, which supported the growing need from stakeholders to **demonstrate the added value of MARSOC**. Steps have also been made to address this issue, with a Performance, Assurance and Communication Lead joining the team from April 2022.

5.2 National Planning Board

The Planning Board's representation from all partners and equitable and democratic approach to decision-making, was viewed as key to implementing a multi-agency programme. It was reported that the Board was attended by individuals with the correct level of seniority within their organisation, as they brought the relevant operational expertise and were able to rapidly instigate actions internally.

However, concerns were raised by some of the stakeholders that were interviewed that the Board had lost momentum and that some partners had started to disengage. They added that it would be important for the new lead of the MARSOC National Delivery Team to re-energise the Board and provide it with a greater sense of direction.

5.3 National Delivery Board

The Delivery Board played a pivotal role in the set-up and design of MARSOC and its underpinning infrastructure, including facilitating a key role in securing early buy-in from key partners. Following the set-up phase, the Delivery Board provided strategic oversight of MARSOC by monitoring progress, providing challenge, and problem-solving partner specific issues that emerged.

Both the Planning and Delivery Boards **supported the development of an overarching information sharing agreement** to address the issues raised earlier in the report. At the time of writing the **information sharing agreement remained a work in progress.**

Looking forwards, there was a desire to **revisit the membership and remit of the Delivery Board, to ensure that it evolved to meet the changing needs and maturity of the programme.** This included focusing more on the development of a **long-term vision,** the transition to business as usual, and **ensuring longer-term funding is secured.**

6. Conclusions and recommendations

6.1 Was the Early Adopter Phase successful?

The set up of MARSOC and learning derived during the initial months of delivery demonstrated that **both the premise and supporting infrastructure were largely fit for purpose and of sufficient quality to be tested across the ten MARSOC regions**. In addition, many of the preliminary challenges experienced during this early stage could be classified as ‘teething or bedding-in’ issues that in the main resolved themselves over time as partners agencies became more familiar with the aims and expectations of MARSOC.

A significant achievement of the Early Adopter Phase was **the securing of HMPPS baseline funding**. MARSOC is now part of HMPPS’ ‘business as usual’ operations. This strengthens the sustainability of the programme, including transferring regional leads, subject to fixed term contracts, to permanent HMPPS contracts. Furthermore, **20 additional police officers have been secured to uplift MARSOC Policing teams** as part of the Police Uplift Programme over the next two years.

The remainder of this section summarises the evidence collected on the extent to which the aims and objectives of MARSOC have been achieved over the Early Adopter Phase.

Aim 1: Develop and maintain a list of the highest-harm SOC nominals using a single, consistent approach to assessment and prioritisation

The majority of survey respondents (60%) reported that MARSOC enabled the development of a list of the highest-harm SOC nominals using a single, consistent approach to assessment and prioritisation a great deal or fair amount (see [Appendix C](#), Figure C8). As noted in Chapter 4, some interviewees felt that partner agencies might not be nominating the highest-harm nominals to MARSOC and that cohorts could likely be of a higher calibre, which might explain why one in four (26%) reported MARSOC had had a minimal impact on this aim.

Compared to other SOC management approaches, MARSOC was perceived to have enabled a more holistic approach to managing SOC nominals that **covers a nominal's full custodial journey** both within and outside custody, their finances and their associates. Several regional spoke staff highlighted that MARSOC is the **most effective iteration of multi-agency working that they had experienced within law enforcement**. Key to this were efforts to **challenge pervasive views within the police that custody is not an end-destination**, recognising some nominals in custody continue to orchestrate criminality within both prison and the community.

MARSOC's formalised processes facilitated a relatively consistent approach by focusing multiple partners on the same objectives. This led to improved understanding of how, and opportunities to, effectively collaborate and forged positive relationships. Funded MARSOC posts were identified by several delivery staff as key to this as they had **dedicated resource available to carry momentum forward**.

Aim 2: Share information and intelligence relating to the MARSOC cohort more effectively between partners to deliver a more joined-up response

Staff generally agreed that **MARSOC resulted in partners sharing information and intelligence quicker and more willingly**, with the 'Dare to Share' ethos that encouraged voluntary disclosure mitigating the absence of an information sharing agreement. Some staff also suggested they had an enhanced understanding of nominals and their behaviour and impact on them as a result of involvement in MARSOC.

Relationship building between partners was identified as another success of the Early Adopter Phase that supported a more joined-up approach. Through MARSOC, staff reported better relationships between and within organisations. This included some spoke roles suggesting that they had a better understanding of partners' capabilities, which in turn, enhanced their own capabilities and created opportunities for intelligence development and tactical delivery.

According to some staff, improved relationships, information and intelligence sharing, and willingness to collaborate with partners developed through MARSOC had **spill-over**

benefits for wider non-MARSOC work. For example, interviewees from both ROCUs and HMPPS emphasised that the partnerships developed through MARSOC had opened channels to gaining information on non-MARSOC nominals.

Aim 3: Co-ordinate activities across multiple agencies to deliver disruptions which make the most of each agency's tools, powers and interventions, based on jointly agreed plans for each individual

Most survey respondents (81%) reported that MARSOC coordinated activities across multiple agencies to delivering disruptions a great deal or fair amount (see [Appendix C](#), Figure C9). Involvement in MARSOC was described as **making joint disruptions easier to plan and deliver**. It was also suggested to have **created new opportunities to disrupt nominals that would have happened at a reduced scale, been less likely to happen, or not happened at all as business as usual**.

Access to police resource was identified by many HMPPS staff as invaluable because it provided opportunities to disrupt within the community and to prosecute nominals. Similarly, several regional spoke staff highlighted how pre-MARSOC, they had never had access to HMRC, DWP or FIU capabilities.

The increase in intelligence sharing across partners and the joint planning and delivery of disruptions was identified to have a **synergising effect on partners' ability to disrupt** nominals. Several staff highlighted examples of disruptions that had a greater impact than would have been possible in the absence of MARSOC.

However, survey respondents were **more likely to disagree than agree that MARSOC makes the most of each agency's tools, powers, and interventions for disruptions**. This was likely related to two issues. First, many staff reported that they had developed a better understanding and knowledge of other agencies' capabilities as a result of MARSOC. As such, this may have meant that respondents were **more aware of the possibilities and therefore felt these could be tapped into further**. Second, as noted in previous chapters, some partners were perceived to not be contributing as much as expected and desired.

6.2 What are the key recommendations for delivery?

Recognising these achievements as well as a small number of **more complex issues that require further consideration to resolve** as the programme moves into its second year of delivery, it would prove beneficial to consider the following recommendations for the future delivery of MARSOC. It should be noted that due to the feedback loops built into this evaluation, steps have already been taken by the MARSOC team to implement and respond to some of these recommendations.

1. **Finalise the information sharing agreement and conduct a review on the levels of engagement across partner agencies.** This follow-up is necessary to identify and resolve any residual barriers to buy-in and engagement and to collaboratively work together to determine each agency's expected contribution as MARSOC becomes BAU. The review should recognise that some partners have potentially had more peripheral involvement during the Early Adopter Phase.
2. **Review the capacity of partner organisations and consider whether and how this may need adapting at national and regional levels.** Evidence from the survey indicated that nearly two in five survey respondents disagreed that their organisation had sufficient capacity for MARSOC, and one in three perceived that other organisations also did not have sufficient capacity. As MARSOC embeds and matures, it would be prudent to review the funded posts to determine whether these should be modified and added to.
3. Linked to recommendations 1 and 2, **develop clear and concise communications setting out the expected role and contributions for each relevant agency to achieve the objectives of MARSOC.** This should cover the expected contribution of each specific agency to ensure all partners are provided with a common understanding of how their organisation fits within MARSOC and how they should work together. Where needed, it may be necessary to produce tailored information for an agency using language that resonates and aligns with their priorities.
4. **Implement audit and quality assurance processes and lessons learned forums.** A greater emphasis on communications between the national team and

partner agencies would support accountability from all parties and better ensure MARSOC responds to partners' strategic priorities. Linking to this, a quality assurance process, particularly at PSFs and TPMs, would support cross-regional responsibility and consistency across the regions.

5. **Closer links with other statutory functions, such as MAPPA, could also be identified to support collaboration, increase intelligence, and strengthen disruptions.**
6. **Invest time and resource into the development of a clear strategy for demonstrating the impact of MARSOC.** Further evaluation would be beneficial to determine whether the programme is leading to the intended outcomes and to what extent. This should include the impact of disruptions on nominals and the criminal justice system more widely, which would build understanding on the effectiveness on disruption activities and provide useful recommendations to improve the outcomes of disruptions.
7. **Linked to the above, revisit the scope of the performance statistics and provide training on key performance indicators to minimise variation in disruption reporting and ensure they meet partner agencies' strategic needs to secure buy-in.** Issues around resourcing and limitations around who can report disruptions on APMIS hindered the reporting, monitoring and interrogation of data being generated as part of the Early Adopter Phase. This must be resolved as demonstrating the impact of MARSOC is intrinsically linked to sustaining the programme in the long-term. This would build on the 'Disruption Library' work to share learning across regions. Consistent reporting would also be supported by implementing practice sharing forums facilitated by the MARSOC National Team.
8. **Develop a long-term vision for the programme and its role within the existing infrastructure for tackling SOC to make MARSOC sustainable, accounting for the demand on partners to maintain and build the MARSOC cohort.** For example, partner agencies need clearer guidance on how MARSOC should work alongside SOCU to avoid duplication. This should also involve reviewing guidance on deselections on how to monitor nominals who are deemed as very likely to be

renominated when more intelligence becomes available and ensuring that the relevant agencies capture activity conducted through MARSOC post de-selection to ensure this is fed back into the existing structures.

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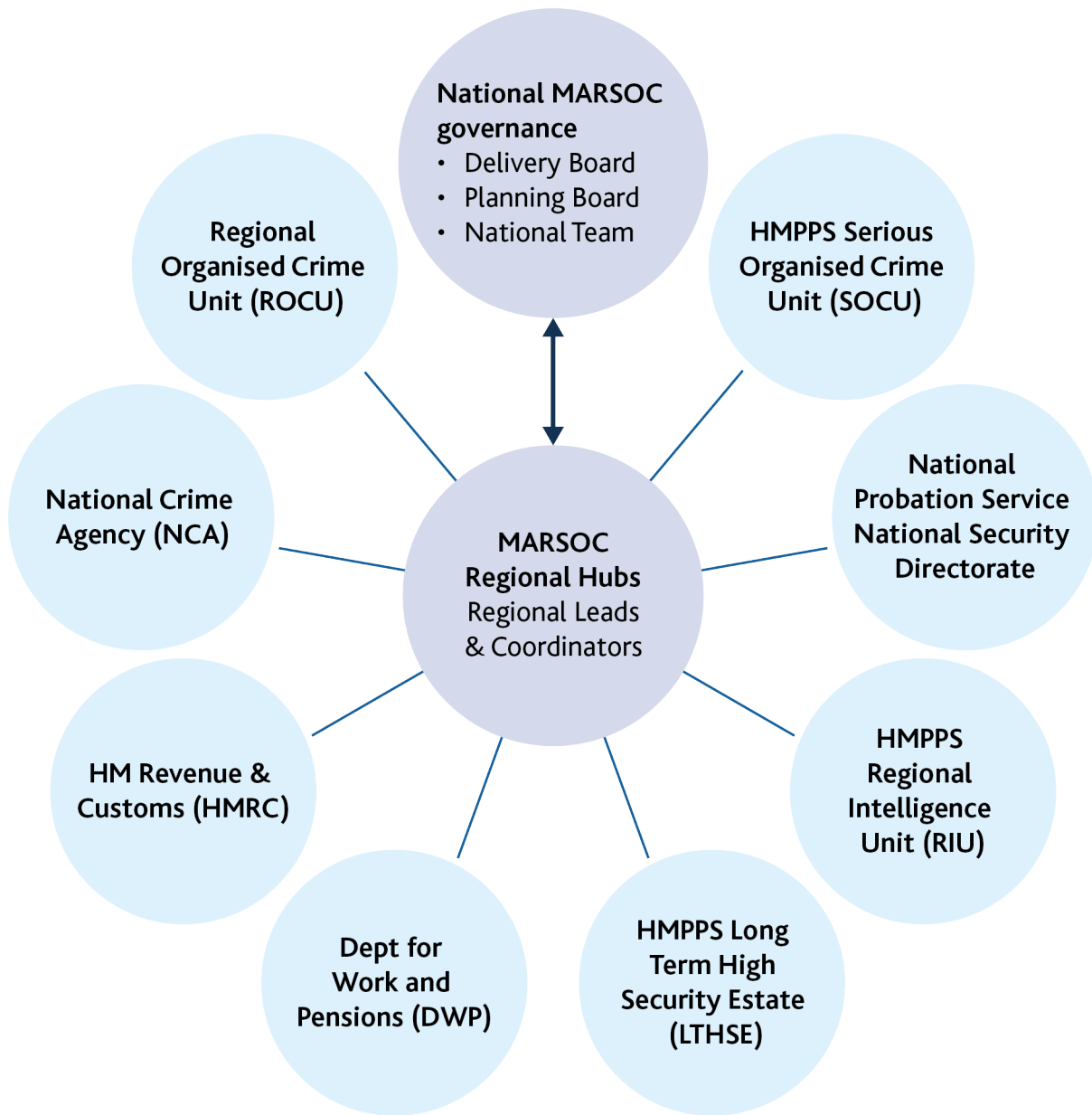
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Appendix A: Overview of MARSOC

MARSOC model

MARSOC is implemented through a hub-and-spoke model with ten regional hubs aligned to the Regional Organised Crime Units (ROCU). Each hub has a dedicated MARSOC Regional Lead and Regional Coordinator who work with 'spoke' agencies and teams that have received a resource uplift to support the delivery of MARSOC (see Table A1). Up to 120 new posts were created and were filled through recruitment or re-prioritising existing posts through the uplift. Delivery of the MARSOC Early Adopter Phase also relied on in-kind resource from partner agencies not directly funded by MARSOC. Figure A1 depicts the hub-and-spoke model including key partner agencies.

Figure A1: MARSOC hub-and-spoke model



Source: Ipsos review of MARSOC programme documentation

Table A1: MARSOC-funded roles

Partner agency	MARSOC roles
MARSOC Regional Hub	Regional Lead Regional Coordinator
Regional Organised Crime Unit (ROCU)	ROCU MARSOC Manager ROCU MARSOC Officer ROCTA MARSOC Intelligence Development Officer
HMPPS Serious Organised Crime Unit (SOCU)	SOCU MARSOC Facilitator
National Probation Service National Security Directorate (NSD)	NSD MARSOC Probation Officer
HMPPS Regional Intelligence Unit (RIU)	RIU MARSOC Intelligence Analyst
HMPPS Long-Term High Security Estate (LTHSE)	Several roles across estate
National Crime Agency (NCA)	NCA MARSOC Officer

Source: Ipsos review of MARSOC programme documentation

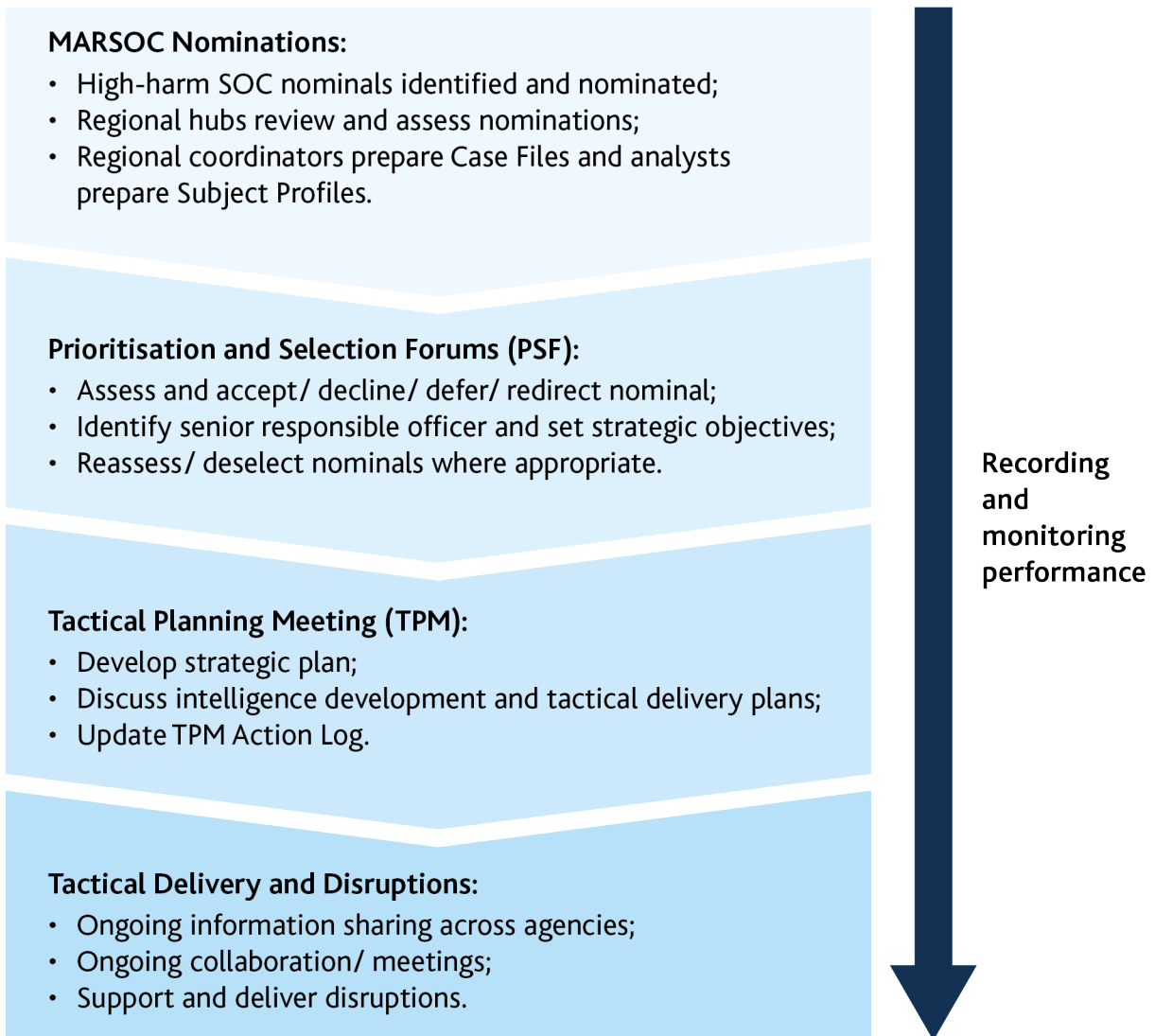
The national MARSOC governance and oversight mechanisms included:

- The National Team which was responsible for oversight of the entire programme including management of the Regional Hubs, ratification of the cohort and the MARSOC Performance Framework. The team reported to the Delivery Board.
- The quarterly Delivery Board provided strategic oversight of the programme, and was composed of senior staff from MARSOC partners and stakeholders.
- The monthly Planning Board, discussed tactical and operational issues and was composed of working-level representatives from MARSOC partner agencies.

MARSOC operational processes

Building on evidence from the LOM pilot and working with Deloitte Consulting, stakeholders spanning multiple partner agencies developed the design, scope, and a set of detailed process maps for MARSOC. This documentation was shared as and when staff were onboarded thus forming the basis for the set-up and launch of the Early Adopter Phase. Figure A2 provides a high-level summary of the key MARSOC processes.

Figure A2: Summary of MARSOC processes



Source: Ipsos review of MARSOC programme documentation

Meeting cycle overview

Across the Early Adopter Phase, six meeting cycles (PSFs and TPMs) took place between March 2021 and March 2022. Cycles were typically six to eight weeks apart with some variation to accommodate the staggered start dates and Christmas period. The length of the meetings varied, from one hour up to three hours depending on the region and cohort.

Appendix B: Detailed Methods Summary

This section sets out the approach that was taken to deliver the process evaluation. It covers the evaluation design phase, quantitative and qualitative data collection, and the analytical methods used to interrogate the data.

Design phase

A short design phase was undertaken at the beginning of the evaluation from March to May 2021. The purpose of this phase was to develop the strategic framework for the evaluation, and as specified in the evaluation Terms of Reference (ToR), to design a phased evaluation approach that was able to provide feedback and insights throughout the programme.

In addition to securing appropriate security clearance, the design phase incorporated the following activities:

- **Familiarisation meetings** – following the inception meeting, a series of consultations were held with key MARSOC stakeholders, including members of the MARSOC National Delivery Team and the evaluation commissioners.
- **Desk-based review** – of programme documentation, including the MARSOC Theory of Change, logic model, process hierarchy, high-level process map, guidance manual, induction and briefing packs, and the national framework, as well as relevant policy documentation and all previous evaluative work that had been undertaken to inform the design of the programme.
- **Review of MARSOC performance framework** – including the intended performance metrics and template within which this was to be collected.

The findings from the design phase were synthesised and used to inform the design of the process evaluation framework (see table B1). The framework sets out the key questions to be addressed by the evaluation and the sources of data and evidence that would be drawn on for this.

Table B1: Evaluation Framework

Process stage	Process	Example data collection questions These will be adapted for survey and/or qualitative approaches.	Data collection methods – triangulated in analysis where appropriate						
			Performance indicators (from Performance Framework)	Focus group with National Delivery team	Consultations with MARSOC Board members	Online survey with regional delivery staff	Online focus groups with Regional Leads and Co-ordinators	Interviews with regional delivery staff (nominating partners)	Observations of regional meetings (PSF and TPM)
Regional Hub set-up	Recruitment, onboarding and set-up	What approaches were taken to recruit into regional MARSOC roles? How effective were the job descriptions in attracting suitable applicants? What helped this process? What were the challenges? How did this vary by region? What activities were undertaken to onboard individuals recruited to MARSOC roles? How well were the aims and objectives of MARSOC communicated? Were the timeframes for set-up appropriate? How could this process be improved?	Not Applicable	Included	Included	Included (pre)	Included	Included	Not Applicable
Governance	Roles, responsibilities and oversight (see Appendix D)	How clear were the roles and responsibilities for: - MARSOC National Delivery Team - MARSOC Regional Lead / Co-ordinator - ROCTA / RIU intelligence analysts - PSF / TPM attendees - Partner organisations What actors/individuals (beyond MARSOC-funded roles) were key to delivery e.g. in-kind resource? To what extent have the regional hubs worked together and interacted with the national infrastructure that was set up to support the facilitation of the programme? What level and types of support were provided by the MARSOC National Team? How responsive were the MARSOC National Team in supporting the regional hubs to resolve issues raised and in	Description of issues related to regional meeting management raised or observed by Regional Hubs & or National Team	Included	Included	Included (pre and post)	Included	Included	Not Applicable

Process stage	Process	Example data collection questions These will be adapted for survey and/or qualitative approaches.	Data collection methods – triangulated in analysis where appropriate						
			Performance indicators (from Performance Framework)	Focus group with National Delivery team	Consultations with MARSOC Board members	Online survey with regional delivery staff	Online focus groups with Regional Leads and Co-ordinators	Interviews with regional delivery staff (nominating partners)	Observations of regional meetings (PSF and TPM)
		providing sufficient information/explanation about the model?							
Identification and nomination	1.1 Identify and consider individuals against criteria (completed by staff in partner agencies)	What initial activities were undertaken by regional hubs to raise awareness about MARSOC (i.e. its aims/remit) among relevant national/local/regional delivery partners e.g. staff within HMPPS, police, ROCUs, NCA, HMRC, IE or other partner agencies? Were the aims and objectives clearly communicated to partner agencies? How did partner representation at Planning and Delivery Boards support knowledge and understanding across all involved agencies? Were the nomination criteria clear? If not, how could it be improved? How easy or difficult was it to complete the nomination form? How many nominations were made by each agency within each region? What facilitated/supported the identification of appropriate cases for nomination? What barriers/challenges were encountered in promoting MARSOC and/or identifying appropriate nominations? How did this vary by region?	Number of nominations made (by agency)	Included	Included	Included (pre and post)	Included	Included	Not Applicable
	1.2 Quality check nominations include sufficient information	What proportion of nomination forms were correctly completed vs required further information and resubmitting? What types of information were typically missing? How often was it necessary to forward nominations to another region? What were	Overall scoring for Nomination form summary	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Included	Not Applicable	Not Applicable

Process stage	Process	Example data collection questions These will be adapted for survey and/or qualitative approaches.	Data collection methods – triangulated in analysis where appropriate						
			Performance indicators (from Performance Framework)	Focus group with National Delivery team	Consultations with MARSOC Board members	Online survey with regional delivery staff	Online focus groups with Regional Leads and Co-ordinators	Interviews with regional delivery staff (nominating partners)	Observations of regional meetings (PSF and TPM)
	(completed by Regional Co-ordinator)	the reasons for these issues e.g. how could guidance for nominators be improved? How much time was needed for quality checking nominations? What were the implications if nominations needed to be re-submitted e.g. nomination not included in the next PSF?							
	1.2 Quality check nominations include sufficient information (completed by Regional Co-ordinator)	What proportion of nomination forms were correctly completed vs required further information and resubmitting? What types of information were typically missing? How often was it necessary to forward nominations to another region? What were the reasons for these issues e.g. how could guidance for nominators be improved? How much time was needed for quality checking nominations? What were the implications if nominations needed to be re-submitted e.g. nomination not included in the next PSF?	Overall scoring for Nomination form summary	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Included	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Assessment	2.1 Check nominations plausibly meet criteria (completed by Regional Co-ordinator and Lead)	What proportion of nomination forms included individuals previously nominated? How easy or difficult was it to ascertain information about these individuals from national records / new information? How much time was needed before passing a nomination on to Intelligence Analysis? What worked well / less well reaching this stage?	Not Applicable	Included	Not Applicable	Included (pre and post)	Included	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
	2.2 Prepare Case File (completed by	How easy or difficult was it to complete the Subject Profile? In what ways did completion of the Subject Profile vary by	Overall scoring for Subject Profiles	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Included (pre and post)	Included	Included	Not Applicable

Process stage	Process	Example data collection questions These will be adapted for survey and/or qualitative approaches.	Data collection methods – triangulated in analysis where appropriate					
			Performance indicators (from Performance Framework)	Focus group with National Delivery team	Consultations with MARSOC Board members	Online survey with regional delivery staff	Online focus groups with Regional Leads and Co-ordinators	Interviews with regional delivery staff (nominating partners)
	the Regional Co-ordinator) and Subject Profile (completed by ROCTA IDO and RIU Intelligence Analyst)	<p>nomination e.g. amount of intelligence, time needed to complete, partner agencies involved? Could the template be improved and if so, how? What challenges were encountered developing this intelligence picture and how might these be overcome? How easy or difficult was it to complete the Case File, including MoRILE assessment? In what ways did completion of the Case File vary by nomination e.g. amount of intelligence, time needed to complete, information sharing agreements/data handling requirements? Could the template be improved and if so, how? What were the key considerations at this stage and how did these inform recommendations to the Regional Lead on whether the nominal should be proposed for selection at the PSF?</p> <p>How easy or difficult was it to complete the one-page Nomination Summary (completed by the ROCTA and RIU Analysts and reviewed by the Regional Lead)? Could the template be improved and if so, how? What were the reasons for not recommending a nominal for selection and how often did this happen?</p> <p>How much time was typically needed to reach this decision? Were the processes timely enough to include the nomination in the next PSF? If not, what implications did this have?</p>						

Process stage	Process	Example data collection questions These will be adapted for survey and/or qualitative approaches.	Data collection methods – triangulated in analysis where appropriate						
			Performance indicators (from Performance Framework)	Focus group with National Delivery team	Consultations with MARSOC Board members	Online survey with regional delivery staff	Online focus groups with Regional Leads and Co-ordinators	Interviews with regional delivery staff (nominating partners)	Observations of regional meetings (PSF and TPM)
	2.3 Propose individual for inclusion within MARSOC cohort (completed by Regional Co-ordinator and Lead)	Were the right people identified to present the nomination to the PSF e.g. SC-cleared, mid-level Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) for the nominal within the nominating organisation? If not, did this have any implications? What type of input and how much information was provided to help nominators/presenters prepare for the PSF? Was the support considered sufficient and proportionate? How were tactical-level delegates identified for the TPM?	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Included	Included	Not Applicable
Prioritisation and selection	3.1 Select individuals to be included within cohort (completed by standing members of the PSF)	How did the mode (face-to-face / virtual / mixed), timing and length of PSF meetings vary by region? How effective were the PSF meetings? Were the right people in attendance? Was there sufficient time for the meeting? Which elements worked well? Which elements worked less well / how could the meetings be improved or more effective? How did this vary by region? For existing MARSOC cohort: How did the profile of the existing cohorts vary by region i.e. by priority level, amount of resources required? For new nominations: How clear was the selection matrix for informing decisions on whether to accept a nominal? How often were decisions deferred? What were the typical reasons for this e.g. what additional information was needed?	Attendance by nominated partner representatives at regional meetings – % format Cohort size Has 100% of cohort Case Files/Subject Profile been updated, presented and reviewed at PSF?	Included	Not Applicable	Included (pre and post)	Included	Included	Included

Process stage	Process	Example data collection questions These will be adapted for survey and/or qualitative approaches.	Data collection methods – triangulated in analysis where appropriate						
			Performance indicators (from Performance Framework)	Focus group with National Delivery team	Consultations with MARSOC Board members	Online survey with regional delivery staff	Online focus groups with Regional Leads and Co-ordinators	Interviews with regional delivery staff (nominating partners)	Observations of regional meetings (PSF and TPM)
		How often was advice sought from the MARSOC National Team? What support was provided?	Number of major issues relating to cohort selection & prioritisation escalated to the National Team						
	3.2 Where accepted, identify lead agency, SRO and supporting agencies	How many nominations were successful by each agency within each region? Did the lead agencies typically make the original nomination? How often were changes made to the lead agency and SRO as suggested in the nomination form i.e. assigning a different lead agency and/or SRO? What were the reasons for this and how were they identified/selected? How were supporting partners identified/selected? Were there any challenges and how were these overcome? What worked well or supported the process of setting strategic objectives for the nominal? What were the challenges? How did these vary by individual? How did these vary by region? How much time was needed for setting strategic objectives? How often were decisions flagged by the MARSOC National Manager? What were the results of any consistency checks?	Number of nominations successful (by agency) Number of nominals without an assigned SRO Number of nominals without assigned supporting partners	Included	Not Applicable	Included (pre and post)	Included	Included	Not Applicable
	3.3 Where not selected, feed	How many nominations were unsuccessful by each agency within each region?	Number of nominations	Included	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Included	Not Applicable	Not Applicable

Process stage	Process	Example data collection questions These will be adapted for survey and/or qualitative approaches.	Data collection methods – triangulated in analysis where appropriate						
			Performance indicators (from Performance Framework)	Focus group with National Delivery team	Consultations with MARSOC Board members	Online survey with regional delivery staff	Online focus groups with Regional Leads and Co-ordinators	Interviews with regional delivery staff (nominating partners)	Observations of regional meetings (PSF and TPM)
	back to nominators / redirect elsewhere	Under what circumstances were nominals redirected to other MARSOC regions?	unsuccessful Description of unsuccessful nominations						
Develop strategic and tactical plans	4.1 Brief HMPPS / Police Joint Tasking co-ordination Group on MARSOC nominals	To what extent did the Regional Tactical Tasking Co-ordination Group and HMPPS / Police Joint Tasking and Co-ordination Meeting (or any other tasking forum) adapt resourcing to reflect the priority level of MARSOC nominals?	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Included (post)	Included	Included	Not Applicable
	4.2 Develop Strategic 4P plan and prepare for TPM	What impact did the timeframes for tasking forums have on when TPMs took place – did this have any implications for the strategic objectives for a nominal? How easy or difficult was it to complete the Strategic 4P Plan (completed by SRO)? How did this vary by individual?	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Included (post)	Included	Included	Not Applicable
	4.3 Hold Tactical Planning Meeting and update TPM Action Log	How did the mode (face-to-face / virtual / mixed), timing and length of TPMs vary by region? How effective were the TPMs? Were the right people in attendance? Was there sufficient time for the meeting? Which elements worked well? Which elements worked less well / how could the meetings be improved or more effective? How did this vary by region?	Attendance by nominated partner representatives at regional meetings – % format	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Included (post)	Included	Included	Included
	4.4 Plan intelligence development	Who was involved in gathering intelligence? What facilitated the development of	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Included (post)	Included	Included	Not Applicable

Process Evaluation of the MARSOC Early Adopter Phase

Process stage	Process	Example data collection questions These will be adapted for survey and/or qualitative approaches.	Data collection methods – triangulated in analysis where appropriate						
			Performance indicators (from Performance Framework)	Focus group with National Delivery team	Consultations with MARSOC Board members	Online survey with regional delivery staff	Online focus groups with Regional Leads and Co-ordinators	Interviews with regional delivery staff (nominating partners)	Observations of regional meetings (PSF and TPM)
		intelligence? What were the challenges and how were these overcome?							
	4.5 Complete actions, including tasking and asking	What sort of actions were taken away from TPMs (recorded in the TPM Action Log)? Were these considered appropriate/actionable by task owners?	Regional Lead assessment on whether regional cohort has sufficient tasked resources Number of tasking requests rejected	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Included (post)	Included	Included	Not Applicable
Tactical delivery	Co-ordinate ongoing tactical and collaborative working	How effectively did agencies collaborate with one another to implement TPM actions? What facilitated good collaboration? What were the barriers to collaboration? How were these overcome? How did coordination approaches vary across regions and/or with different agencies?	Number of Intel products shared with outside partners Number of Intel sharing issues unblocked by Regional Lead / National Team	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Included (post)	Included	Included	Not Applicable
	Support or deliver disruptions / interventions / intelligence	How many disruptions/interventions were delivered as the result of MARSOC? What other factors were important?	Number of disruptions (by agency) Number of disruptions	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Included (post)	Included	Included	Not Applicable

Process stage	Process	Example data collection questions These will be adapted for survey and/or qualitative approaches.	Data collection methods – triangulated in analysis where appropriate						
			Performance indicators (from Performance Framework)	Focus group with National Delivery team	Consultations with MARSOC Board members	Online survey with regional delivery staff	Online focus groups with Regional Leads and Co-ordinators	Interviews with regional delivery staff (nominating partners)	Observations of regional meetings (PSF and TPM)
	development / investigations		moderated (by agency)						
Re-assess cohort	5.1 Revise threat assessment and feed into re-assessment of individuals	See also questions for 2.2. How did updates to the Subject Profile and Case File vary by nominal? Were there any barriers to acquiring the necessary intelligence?	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Included (post)	Included	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
	5.2 Re-assess individuals, and remove if appropriate	What were the reasons for removing a nominal from the cohort e.g. threat level, available resource, transfer to another region? How many nominals were removed from the cohort by region? Was the de-selection criteria consistently followed? What support/input was received from the MARSOC National Team? How did this influence decisions?	Number of de-selections Reasons for de-selection	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Included (post)	Included	Included	Not Applicable
	5.3 Transfer nominal to another regional cohort	What worked well / less well when working with another MARSOC regional hub to transfer a nominal? Were there any challenges relating to data sharing, and how were these overcome?	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Included (post)	Included	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Risk-managed exit	6.1 Remove from MARSOC cohort and record the rationale	What worked well / less well when removing a nominal from the MARSOC cohort? What input/support was received from the MARSOC National Team? How did this inform decisions? Was this support considered sufficient / proportionate?	Number of de-selections Reasons for de-selection	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Included (post)	Included	Included	Not Applicable

Process Evaluation of the MARSOC Early Adopter Phase

Process stage	Process	Example data collection questions These will be adapted for survey and/or qualitative approaches.	Data collection methods – triangulated in analysis where appropriate						
			Performance indicators (from Performance Framework)	Focus group with National Delivery team	Consultations with MARSOC Board members	Online survey with regional delivery staff	Online focus groups with Regional Leads and Co-ordinators	Interviews with regional delivery staff (nominating partners)	Observations of regional meetings (PSF and TPM)
	6.1 Update National Records 6.1 Update partners on MARSOC exit, and put alerts / monitoring in place	How often were nominal re-nominated? What were the reasons for this?	Description of de-selected offenders Issues raised over exit management – hand off						
Recording and monitoring performance information	Record, aggregate, send, analyse, feed back and up and out	How easy or difficult was it to complete/update: - regional co-ordination log - case file - subject profile - one-page nomination summary - selection matrix - strategic 4P plan - TPM action log - SOC master list / cohort list - national records How could these be improved? Was the amount of monitoring appropriate, sufficient and proportionate? What worked well in recording information throughout the processes? What worked less well? What could be improved?	Not Applicable	Included	Included	Included (pre and post)	Included	Included	Not Applicable
Sustainability and lessons learned	All	To what extent is the model sufficient, proportionate and sustainable, and why? How well did MARSOC processes fit alongside business-as-usual / standard ways of working? How did MARSOC support this? Did MARSOC enhance	Not Applicable	Included	Included	Included (pre and post)	Included	Included	Not Applicable

Process Evaluation of the MARSOC Early Adopter Phase

Process stage	Process	Example data collection questions These will be adapted for survey and/or qualitative approaches.	Data collection methods – triangulated in analysis where appropriate						
			Performance indicators (from Performance Framework)	Focus group with National Delivery team	Consultations with MARSOC Board members	Online survey with regional delivery staff	Online focus groups with Regional Leads and Co-ordinators	Interviews with regional delivery staff (nominating partners)	Observations of regional meetings (PSF and TPM)
		existing processes? What were the challenges and how were these overcome? What improvements or modifications are required prior to a potential transition of the programme into business as usual?							

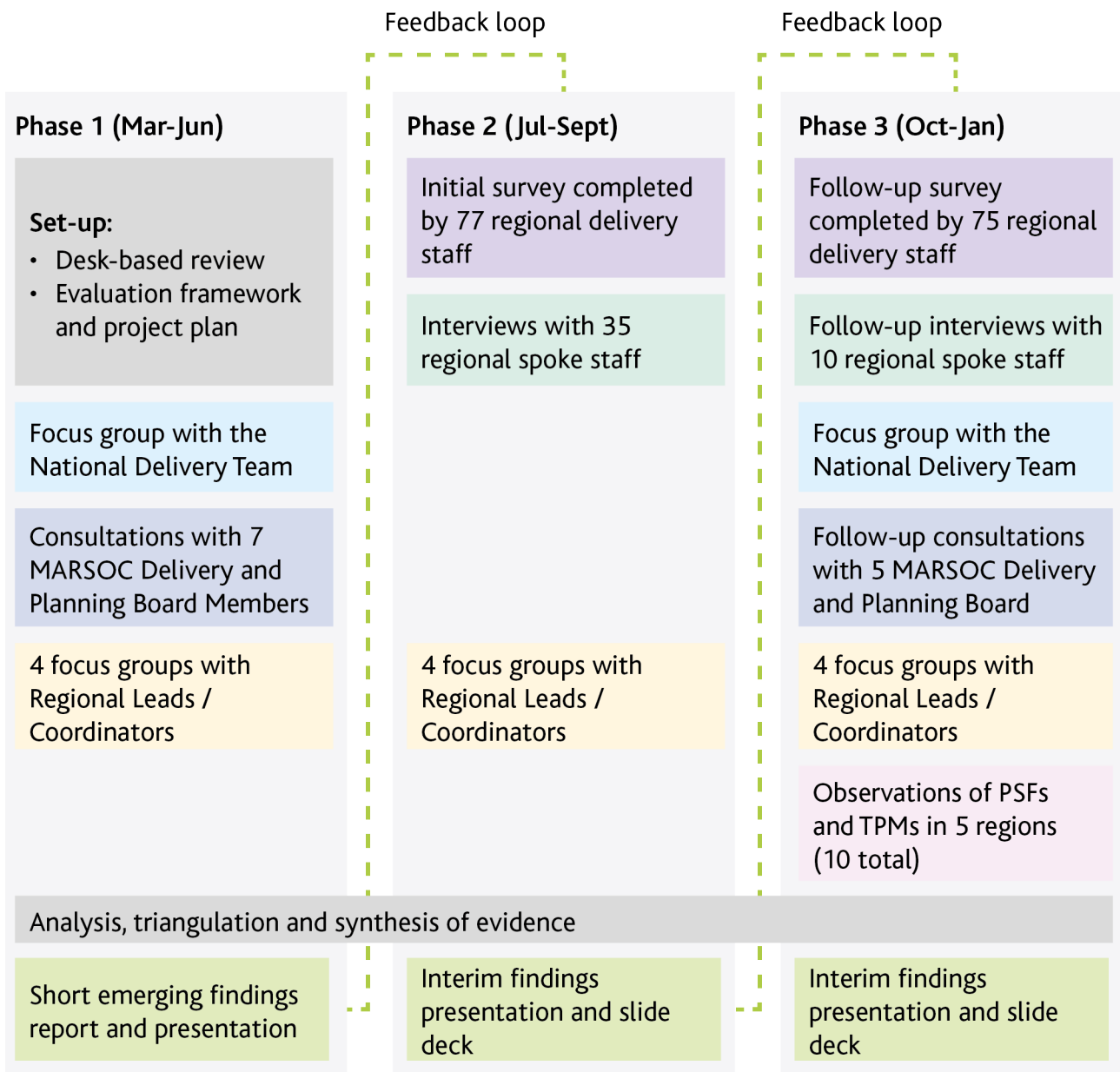
Six primary data collection methods were designed and administered to generate and gather evidence to answer the questions specified in the evaluation framework:

- Focus groups with the MARSOC National Delivery Team
- Stakeholder consultations with MARSOC Board members
- Online focus groups with Regional Leads and Coordinators
- Observations of MARSOC regional meetings
- Depth interviews with MARSOC regional spoke staff
- Initial and follow-up online surveys with MARSOC regional staff.

In addition, the evaluation drew upon one secondary data source – the MARSOC performance metrics and monitoring data.

Evidence was collected during three phases (see Figure B1), each of which concluded with a presentation on the emerging findings to the MARSOC Delivery Board.

Figure B1: Evaluation data collection approach



In line with Ipsos policy, the design phase also involved an ethics review process. This involved completing an ethics form highlighting key ethical considerations, which was reviewed by two members of the Ethics Group who were independent and not otherwise involved in any evaluation activities. All our research adheres to Market Research Society (MRS), Social Research Association (SRA), and Government Social Research (GSR) ethical guidelines. Researchers fully explained the purpose of the research, confidentiality and anonymity, and all participants were asked for their consent to take part in surveys

and interviews. Information sheets and privacy notices also detailed how participant data would be stored, used, and securely destroyed in line with GDPR requirements.

Quantitative data collection

Quantitative Survey

Overview

The Evaluation Team conducted an initial and follow-up online surveys with the 'hub and spoke' roles: regional coordinators, regional leads and regional delivery staff. The initial survey fieldwork took place between 5th July and 17th August 2021 and the follow-up survey fieldwork took place between 24th November and 20th December 2021.

Objectives and topics covered

The objectives of the initial survey were to understand emerging views regarding the set-up and early implementation of MARSOC and to act as a baseline to measure distance travelled for the follow-up survey. This included gathering views on the aims and objectives of MARSOC and the set-up of the regional hubs; partnership working and collaboration through MARSOC; early implementation and MARSOC processes; and questions relating to the support and guidance provided by the MARSOC National Team.

The follow-up survey sought to gather views on how implementation or perceptions of delivery had changed over time. The questions explored: partnership working and collaboration through MARSOC; the implementation of the MARSOC model; MARSOC's value; and the support and guidance provided MARSOC National Team.

Sample and engagement

The Evaluation Team received contact details for regional coordinators, regional leads and regional delivery staff from the MARSOC National Team and sent each member of staff a unique survey link to take part in both the initial and follow-up surveys. Unique survey links allowed respondents to stop and start the survey as needed and supported the administration of follow-up reminders.

Staff who had not taken part in the initial survey were still able to participate in the follow-up survey.

In total, in the initial survey there were 77 survey respondents from a sample of 128, representing a response rate of 60%. In the follow-up survey there were 75 respondents from a sample of 137, with a response rate of 55%. In total, 55 respondents completed both initial and follow-up surveys. The tables below detail the regional and organisational spread of respondents as well as respondent type.

Table B2: Regional spread of survey respondents

MARSOC region	Initial	Follow-up
East	11	10
East Midlands	14	11
London	10	15
North East	14	10
North West	7	9
South East	11	15
South West	10	12
Wales	11	8
West Midlands	11	11
Yorkshire and the Humber	10	8
Total participants	77	75

NB: Some respondents worked across multiple regions and are double counted in the table.

Table B3: Organisation of survey respondents

Organisation	Initial	Follow-up
ROCU	30	34
HMPPS MARSOC regional leads/coordinators	19	15
HMPPS RIU	10	7
HMPPS SOCU Long Term High Security Estate	4	4
HMPSS SOCU Custody	2	4
HMPPS SOCU Community	3	3
HMPPS SOCU – Other	3	2
HMPPS – Other	3	2
National Probation Service National Security Unit	1	0
HMRC	1	2

Organisation	Initial	Follow-up
NCA	1	2
Total	77	75

Table B4: Survey respondent type

Organisation	Initial	Follow-up
Regional Lead	10	8
Regional Coordinator	9	7
Regional Spoke	58	60
Total	77	75

Qualitative data collection

Focus groups with the MARSOC National Delivery Team

Overview

Two focus groups with the National Team were completed in June 2021 (phase one) and December 2021 (phase three). The focus groups took place online using video-calling software and lasted approximately 90 minutes.

Objectives and topics covered

The focus groups were designed to explore the views and experiences of the MARSOC National Team during the set-up of the programme and towards the end of the Early Adopter Phase. The two discussion guides covered the following topics:

- Context and MARSOC objectives (Initial)
- Recruitment, onboarding and regional hub set-up (Initial)
- Delivery (Initial, follow-up)
- Lessons learned (Initial)
- Sustainability (Initial)
- Governance structure (Follow-up)
- Key achievements (Follow-up)
- Looking ahead (Follow-up).

Sample and engagement

All members of the MARSOC National Delivery Team were invited to take part in the focus groups by the Lead of the National Delivery Team. All members took part in both groups.⁶

Stakeholder consultations with MARSOC Board members

Overview

Seven initial consultations and five follow-up consultations (12 in total) were completed with stakeholders who sit on MARSOC's Delivery and Planning Boards between 16th June and 1st July 2021 (phase one initial consultations), and 7th December 2021 and 7th January 2022 (phase three follow-up consultations). The interviews took place either over the telephone or online using video-calling software (at participants' preference) and lasted up to an hour.

Purpose and topics covered

The consultations were designed to explore the views and experiences of stakeholders who sat on MARSOC's Delivery and Planning Boards during following the launch of all ten hubs and towards the end of the Early Adopter Phase. The two discussion guides covered the following topics:

- Context and MARSOC objectives (Initial)
- Design of MARSOC (Initial)
- Board meetings (Initial, follow-up)
- Regional Hub set-up (Initial)
- Early delivery (Initial)
- Sustainability (Initial)
- MARSOC delivery and achievements (Follow-up)
- Looking forward (Follow-up).

Sample and engagement

The Evaluation Team received contact details for all stakeholders who sat on MARSOC's Delivery and Planning Boards and worked collaboratively with the National Delivery Team to identify a suitable range of participants that were able to represent the views of the main

⁶ The make-up of each focus group slightly differed as a result of turnover in the National Delivery Team.

agencies represented on the two Boards. Participants were invited to take part in consultations (including the provision of consent) via email.

Online focus groups with Regional Leads and Coordinators

Overview

Three waves of four focus groups (twelve in total) with regional leads and coordinators were completed in June 2021 (phase one), September 2021 (phase two) and January 2022 (phase three). There were two lead groups and two coordinator groups (four in total), with each group having between four and five participants (due to vacancies). The focus groups took place online using video-calling software and lasted approximately 90 minutes.

Purpose and topics covered

The focus groups were designed to explore the views of regional leads and coordinators (i.e. regional hubs) throughout the Early Adopter Phase. This allowed progress and changes in views to be tracked over time.

The three discussion guides covered the following topics (phase covered in brackets e.g., phase one = 1):

- Recruitment and induction (1)
- MARSOC objectives (1)
- Regional Hub set-up (1)
- Early implementation (1)
- Embedding MARSOC model and partnerships (2, 3)
- Nominations and PSF meeting (2, 3)
- TPM and Tactical Delivery (2, 3)
- Forms and templates (Coordinators only) (2, 3)
- Key achievements and looking ahead (1, 2, 3).

Sample and engagement

All regional leads and coordinators were invited to take part in the online focus groups via email, which resulted in all relevant staff taking part in the series of focus groups.

Interviews with regional delivery staff

Overview

Thirty-five initial interviews and 10 follow-up interviews (45 in total) with regional delivery staff (i.e. regional spoke staff) took place between 15th September to 13th October 2021 (phase two initial interviews) and 7th January to 21st January 2021 (phase three follow-up interviews). The interviews took place either over the telephone or online using video-calling software (at participants' preference) and lasted up to an hour.

Purpose and topics covered

The interviews were designed to explore the views and experiences of regional delivery staff (spoke staff) over two timepoints and explore participants' findings from the survey in more detail (see sampling process below). The discussion guides covered the following topics:

- Communications about MARSOC (Initial)
- MARSOC model (Initial)
- Nominations and PSF meetings (Initial)
- TPMs and Tactical Delivery (Initial)
- Future and Sustainability (Initial)
- Progress since initial interview (Follow-up)
- MARSOC delivery and achievements (Follow-up)
- Looking forward (Follow-up).

Sample and engagement

Participants were recruited from those who had completed the initial survey and agreed to be re-contacted for this purpose. This produced a sample of 53 participants which reflected a broad representation of all MARSOC regions and roles. Participants were invited to an interview by the Evaluation Team via email and 35 participants agreed to an interview.

For follow-up interviews, participants were asked during initial interviews whether they provided consent to be re-contacted to take part in a follow-up interview. From this list of participants, participants that represented a range of regions and roles were selected and invited to take part via email, with 10 agreeing to take part.

Profile of participants

Tables A.5 and A.6 below outline the regions and roles of the 35 participants who took part in an initial interview, including the 10 who also took part in a follow-up interview.

Table B5: Regional spread of interview participants

MARSOC region	Initial	Follow-up
All regions	1*	1*
East	4*	1
East Midlands	4*	2*
London	4	1
North East	4*	2*
North West	4*	2*
South East	5	1
South West	4*	1*
Wales	3*	2*
West Midlands	5*	2*
Yorkshire and the Humber	4*	2*
Total participants	35	10

* Includes participants who work across more than one MARSOC region.

Table B6: Roles of interview participants

MARSOC roles	Initial	Follow-up
Financial Intelligence Analyst	1	
Head of National Probation Service National Security Unit	1	1
HMRC MARSOC Officer	1	
Intelligence Development Officer – MARSOC	2	1
Long Term High Security Estate Regional SOCU Manager / SOC Lead	3	1
NCA MARSOC Officer	1	
Operational Partnership Team MARSOC Support	1	1
RIU MARSOC Intelligence Analyst	5	2
ROCU MARSOC Lead	3	1

MARSOC roles	Initial	Follow-up
ROCU MARSOC Manager	5	1
ROCU MARSOC Officer	5	1
Senior Public Protection Intelligence Analyst	2	1
SIU Intelligence Officer	1	
SOCU Community Lead	2	
SOCU Custody Lead	2	
Total	35	10

Observations of PSFs and TPMs

Overview

Five observations of PSFs and five observations of TPMs (10 observations in total) were conducted in five MARSOC regions between 1st December 2021 and 17th January 2022 (phase three). Researchers joined the meeting using video-calling software and took notes.

Purpose and topics covered

The purpose of the observations was for the Evaluation Team to understand how MARSOC is delivered in practice to complement other data collected. Researchers took notes structured around the observation guide to understand the model, roles and decision-making process used during both meetings. The observation guide focused on the following areas:

- Attendees
- The MARSOC cohort
- Delivery of meetings (aims & how well run)
- Partner engagement / involvement
- PSF nomination and deselection
- TPM tasking
- Follow-up actions.

Sample and engagement

Five MARSOC regions were selected for observations based on consideration of the following factors: i) regional spread; ii) regional size; iii) inclusion in the LOM pilot; and iv) consideration of the findings from the other data collected.

The Evaluation Team's inclusion in meetings was arranged by the National Team and supported by regional leads and coordinators.

Secondary data

The evaluation also drew upon data collated by the National Team, using information monitored by regional hubs. This included numeric data about the:

- **MARSOC cohort** – including the total number of nominations and the breakdown of nominations brought to PSFs, accepted onto the cohort, not selected at PSF, and deselected. This information was available for each region and PSF / TPM meeting cycle, therefore showing how the cohort developed over time. Information on the cohort also included a breakdown of nominating organisations, and region, and whether nominals were in custody, in the community under probation supervision, or not under supervision.
- **Disruptions linked to MARSOC activity** – including the total number of disruptions recorded on APMIS and the breakdown of whether these with minor, moderate or major, and how they mapped against the 4 Ps. The information also included the number of arrests recorded.

This information was provided at one time point in April 2022 at the end of the Early Adopter Phase to summarise overall activity. As discussed in the report, the amount of available monitoring information was reduced compared to original expectations set out in the Evaluation Framework due to resourcing challenges within the National Team.

Data analysis

Analysis and triangulation of the relevant data was undertaken iteratively at the end of each of the three phases. This involved analysis of individual data sources in the first instance, followed by synthesis across datasets to draw out consensus of views, similarities and differences.

Cumulative evidence gathered across all three phases of the evaluation was triangulated to inform the findings in this final evaluation report.

Further detail of how each of the different types of data were analysed and subsequently drawn together is provided below.

Quantitative data analysis

Cross-tabulations of the initial- and follow-up survey findings were produced in MS Excel. The cross-tabulations included the following cross-breaks, allowing for analysis of responses by each group:

- Organisation
- Start of post in MARSOC role
- Respondent type (lead, coordinator or spoke role)
- Region
- Whether in a MARSOC funded role
- Attendee of PSF
- Attendee of TPM
- Rating of level of information and intelligence sharing to disrupt high-harm SOC offenders
- Extent to which MARSOC has enabled the development of a list of the highest-harm SOC nominals using a single, consistent approach to assessment and prioritisation
- Extent to which MARSOC has coordinated activities across multiple agencies to work towards delivering disruptions of high-harm SOC offenders

Significant differences were calculated at the 5% level.

In the final analysis, aggregate comparisons of the initial and follow-up responses were calculated. Individual answers were not tracked as some participants only completed the initial survey and others only completed the follow-up survey.

Qualitative data analysis

Given the evaluation involved handling and analysing multiple streams of qualitative data, the data was managed and analysed using the industry gold-standard CAQDAS⁷ tool, NVivo. This ensured a transparent, comprehensive and rigorous approach was taken.

Key elements of our approach to analysing the qualitative data are detailed below.

- All interviews and focus groups were **transcribed** to ensure accuracy.
- **Summary write-ups** for focus groups were produced to ensure themes could be captured across data collection time points. Write-ups for observations were also produced following the observation guide template.
- At the **data management stage**, we reviewed, sorted, labelled ('coded') and synthesised the raw transcript data for interviews culminating in the creation of a thematic framework – a series of headings and sub-headings under which data are attached. The use of coding frameworks based on the evaluation framework facilitated a systematic approach to the analysis.
- Setting up the **thematic framework** in NVivo facilitated quality control, ensuring the analysis was comprehensive and rigorous.
- This was complemented by ongoing team discussions and **analysis sessions** following each of the three evaluation phases, in which emerging insights were discussed and shared.
- Following data management, the **interpretive phase** incorporated comparison and pattern analysis to identify themes while using divergent views and negative cases to challenge generalisations.

Synthesis

The qualitative and quantitative evidence was subsequently synthesised as follows (both at the end of each phase and for the purposes of the final report):

- **Development of internal notes:** findings from the quantitative and qualitative analysis were written up and mapped against key topics and research questions.
- **Triangulation of evidence:** findings from across all data sources were examined together to form thematic descriptions and interpretive explanations, for example,

⁷ Computer Aided Qualitative Data Analysis

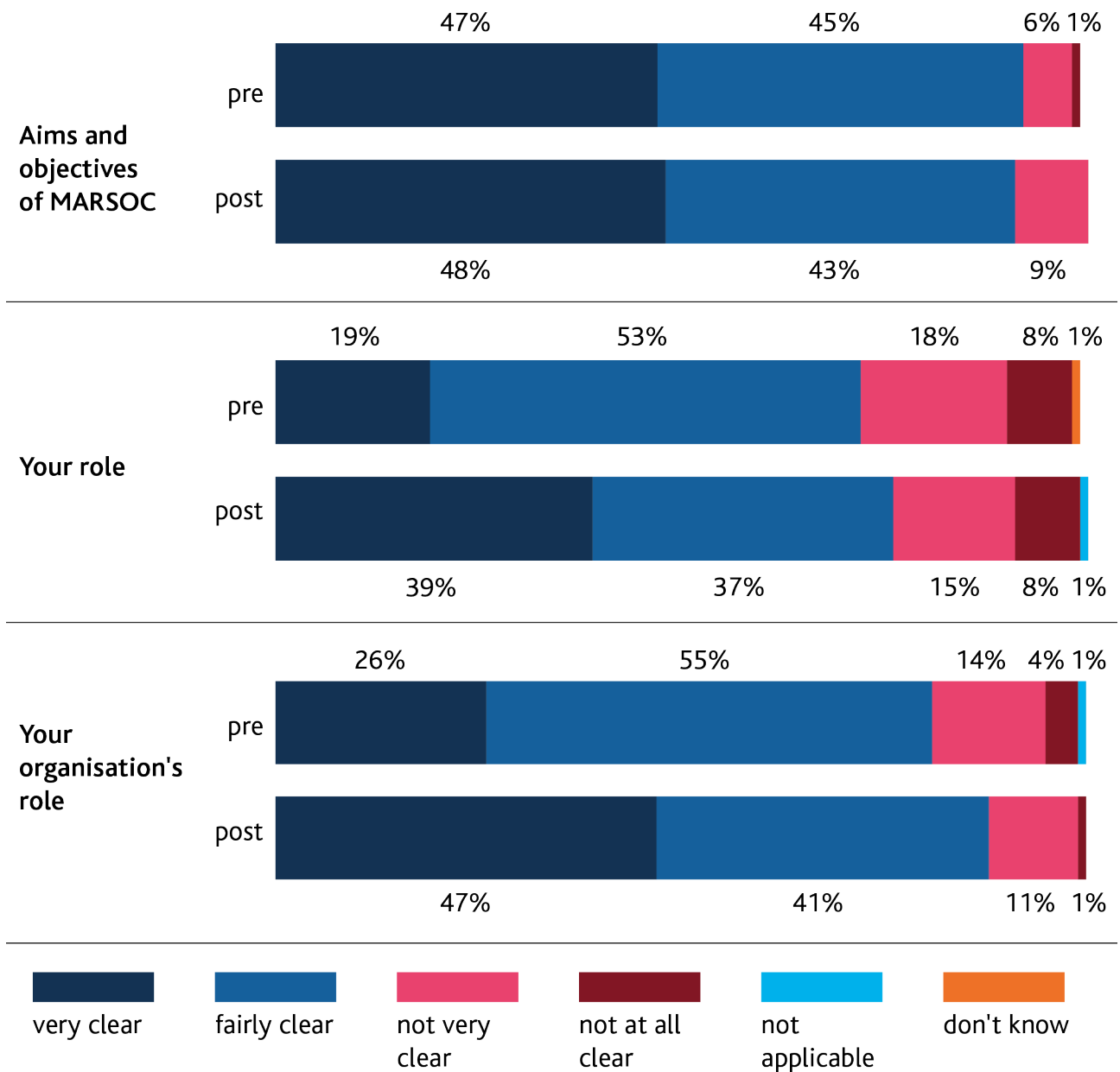
identifying where the qualitative findings could be used to provide more detail on the quantitative data.

- **Analysis sessions:** multiple internal analysis sessions were facilitated with the Evaluation Team to discuss the different data sources and emerging findings, including how these aligned or conflicted with one another, and while the evaluation was in flight, identify areas for further exploration.

Appendix C: Survey Results

Figure C1: Clarity of MARSOC aims and roles

Q5. In general, how clear are the aims and objectives of MARSOC? How clear is your role/ the role of your organisation in relation to achieving these?



Base: All respondents – Initial (77), Follow-up (75)

Table C1: Ratings on partner agencies' contribution to MARSOC

Q31. How would you rate each partner's contribution to MARSOC?

	Very good	Fairly good	Average	Fairly poor	Very poor	This is my organisation	N/A	Don't know
HMPPS SOCU Custody	57%	21%	9%	4%	0%	5%	0%	3%
HMPPS SOCU Community	57%	27%	4%	0%	1%	5%	0%	5%
HMPPS (National level)	45%	31%	4%	3%	0%	15%	1%	1%
HMPPS RIU	44%	29%	9%	4%	1%	11%	0%	1%
RPIU	35%	28%	17%	1%	0%	11%	1%	7%
ROCU	33%	20%	8%	1%	1%	29%	0%	7%
HMPPS LTHSE	32%	28%	12%	7%	3%	3%	7%	9%
HMPPS NSD	19%	33%	21%	4%	5%	0%	4%	13%
Local Police Forces	16%	31%	36%	3%	1%	1%	8%	4%
NCA	5%	12%	33%	19%	15%	1%	7%	8%
DWP	7%	9%	24%	23%	20%	0%	1%	16%
HMRC	7%	19%	31%	21%	13%	3%	0%	7%
NPCC	3%	1%	11%	5%	9%	1%	28%	41%

Base: All follow-up survey respondents (75)

Table C2: Ratings on partner agencies' effectiveness in dealing with MARSOC cases

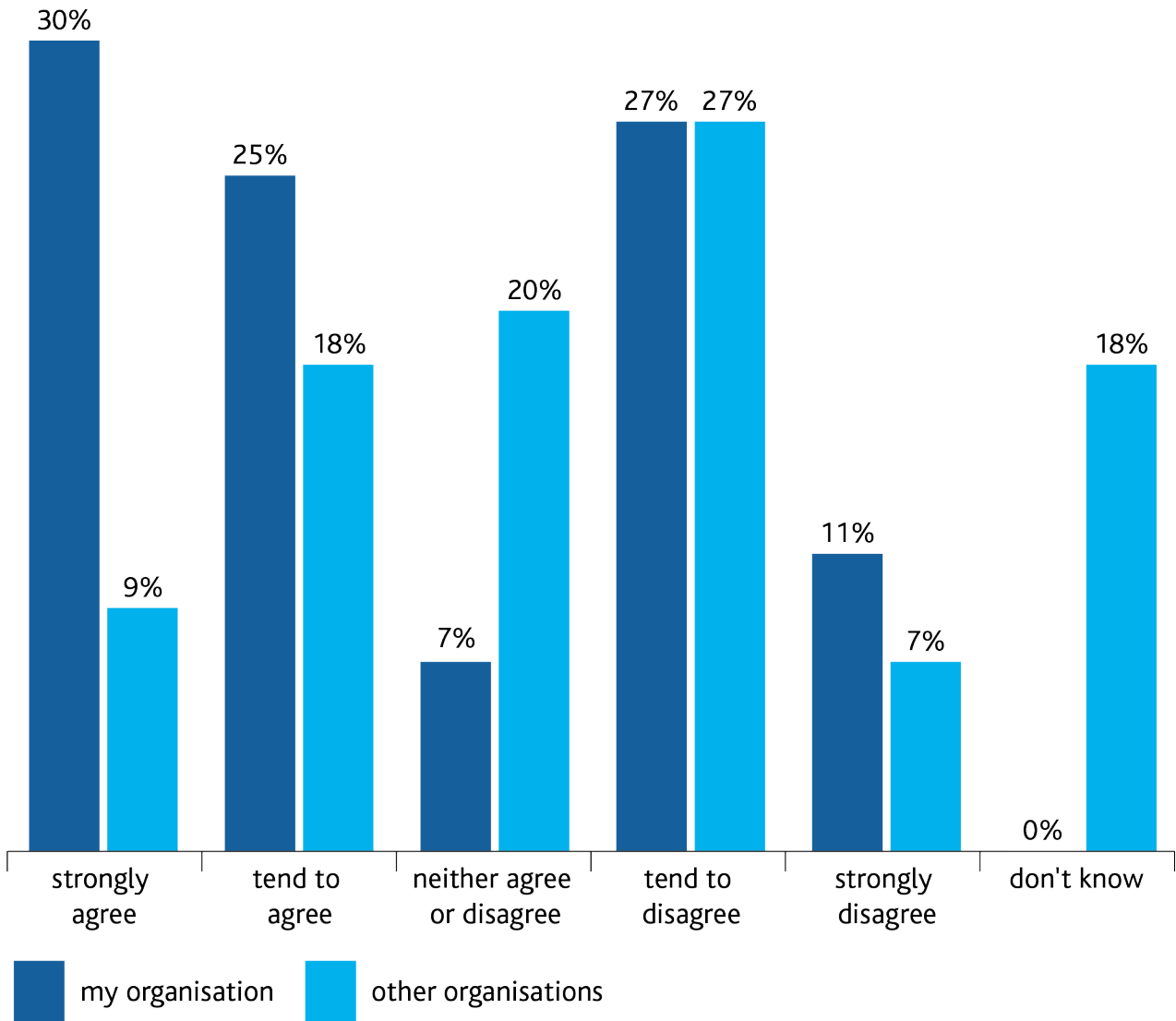
Q32. How would you rate each partner's effectiveness in dealing with MARSOC cases?

	Very good	Fairly good	Average	Fairly poor	Very poor	This is my organisation	N/A	Don't know
HMPPS SOCU Community	53%	29%	4%	0%	1%	5%	1%	5%
HMPPS SOCU Custody	47%	32%	9%	3%	0%	5%	1%	3%
HMPPS	43%	33%	8%	0%	0%	11%	1%	4%
HMPPS RIU	39%	41%	5%	4%	0%	8%	0%	3%
RPIU	33%	32%	16%	4%	0%	11%	1%	3%
HMPPS LTHSE	31%	25%	17%	4%	1%	4%	9%	8%
ROCUs	27%	33%	7%	3%	0%	27%	0%	4%
HMPPS NSD	23%	28%	15%	5%	1%	3%	4%	21%
Local Police Forces	15%	27%	35%	5%	1%	3%	8%	7%
HMRC	7%	21%	31%	25%	8%	3%	0%	5%
DWP	5%	16%	25%	24%	15%	0%	3%	12%
NCA	4%	15%	24%	17%	12%	3%	4%	21%
NPCC	0%	5%	11%	0%	5%	1%	29%	48%

Base: All follow-up survey respondents (75)

Figure C2: Views on internal and partner capacity

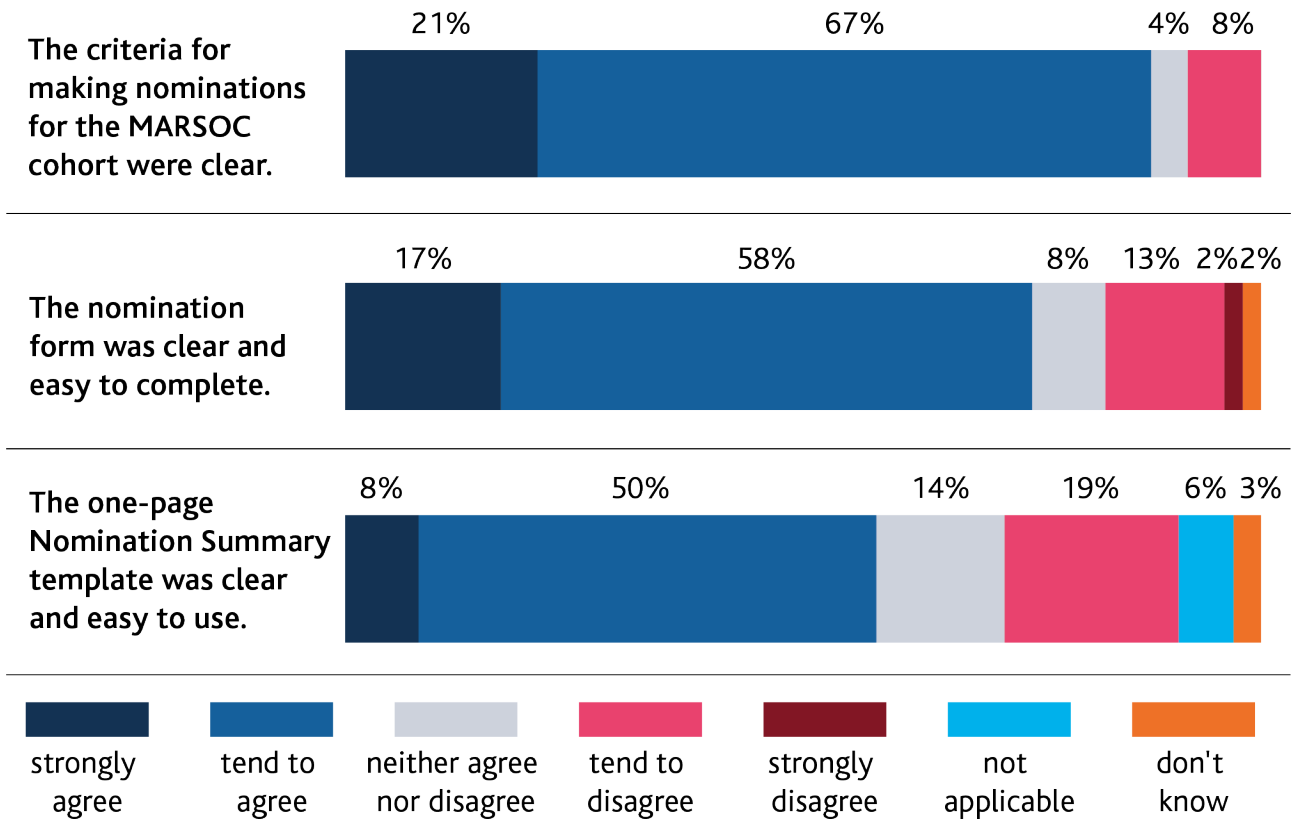
Q22. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
 My organisation has / other organisations have the required capacity to support MARSOC investigations and disruptions.



Base: Follow-up survey respondents (44)

Figure C3: Nomination criteria and forms

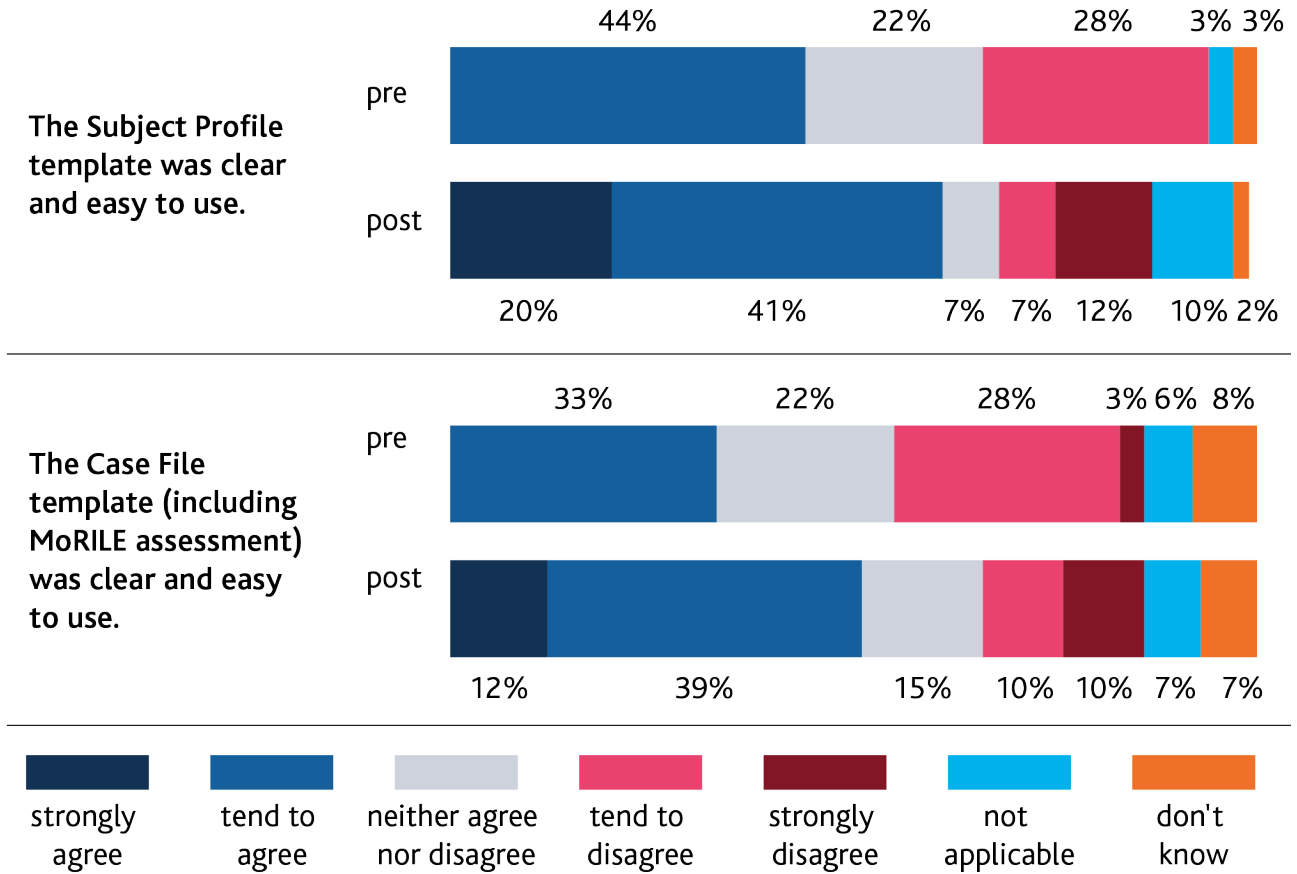
Q22. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



Base: Initial survey respondents – dependent on involvement in processes (32-43)

Figure C4: Subject Profile and Case File templates

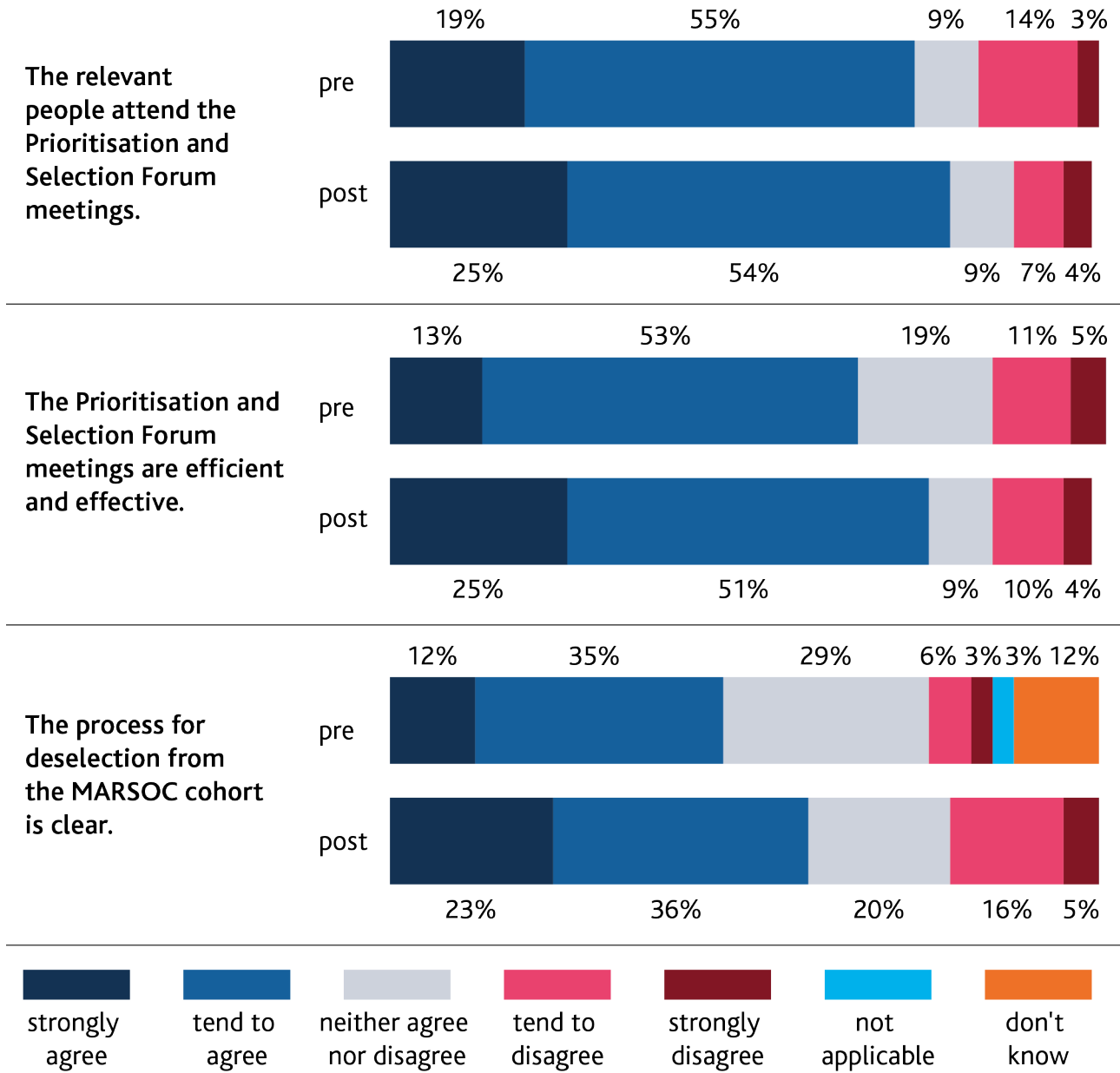
Q22. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



Base: Dependent on involvement in processes – Initial (32-74), Follow-up (41)

Figure C5: Effectiveness of PSFs and deselection process

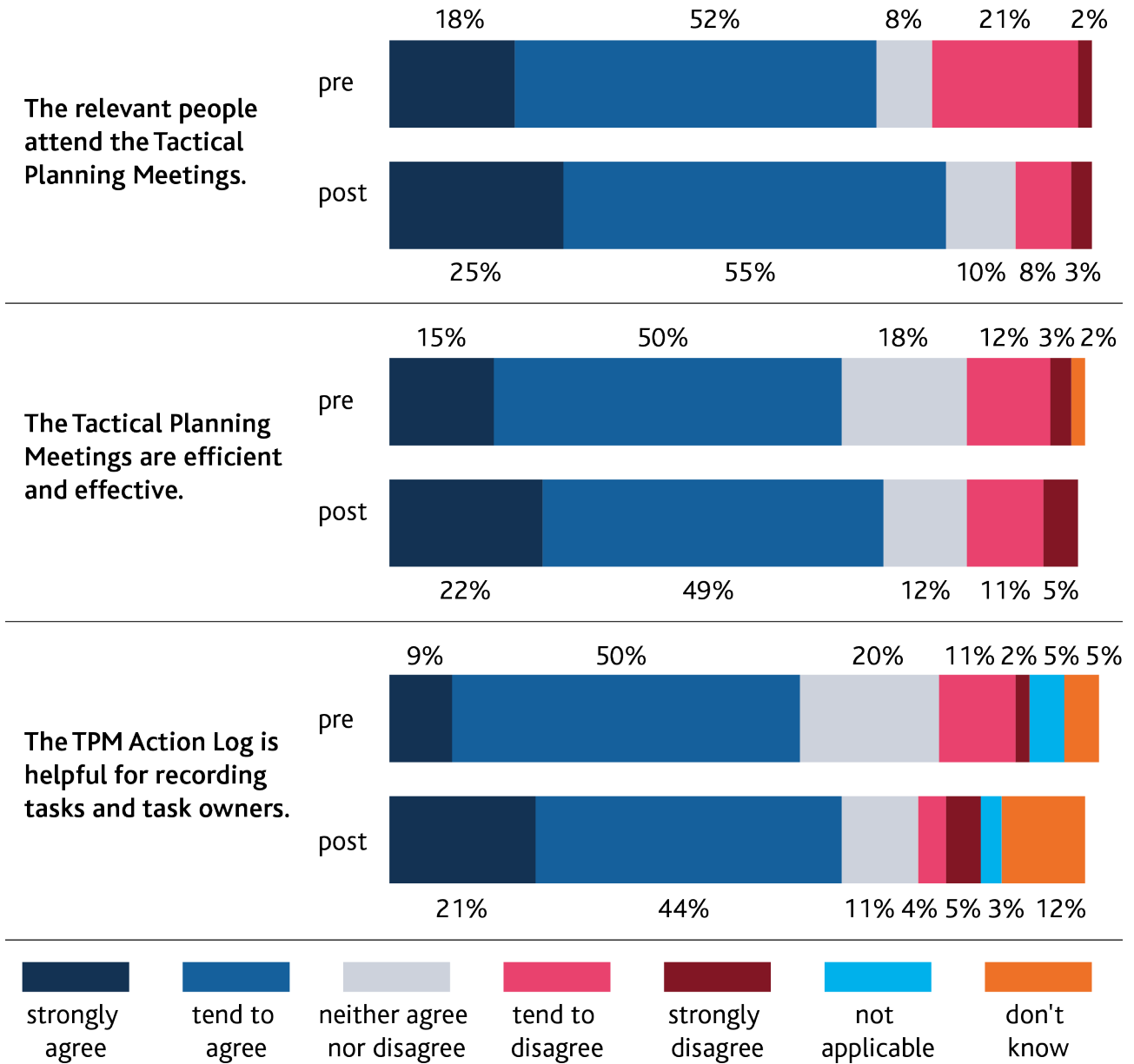
Q22. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



Base: Dependent on involvement in processes – Initial (32-74), Follow-up (67-75)

Figure C6: Effectiveness of TPMs

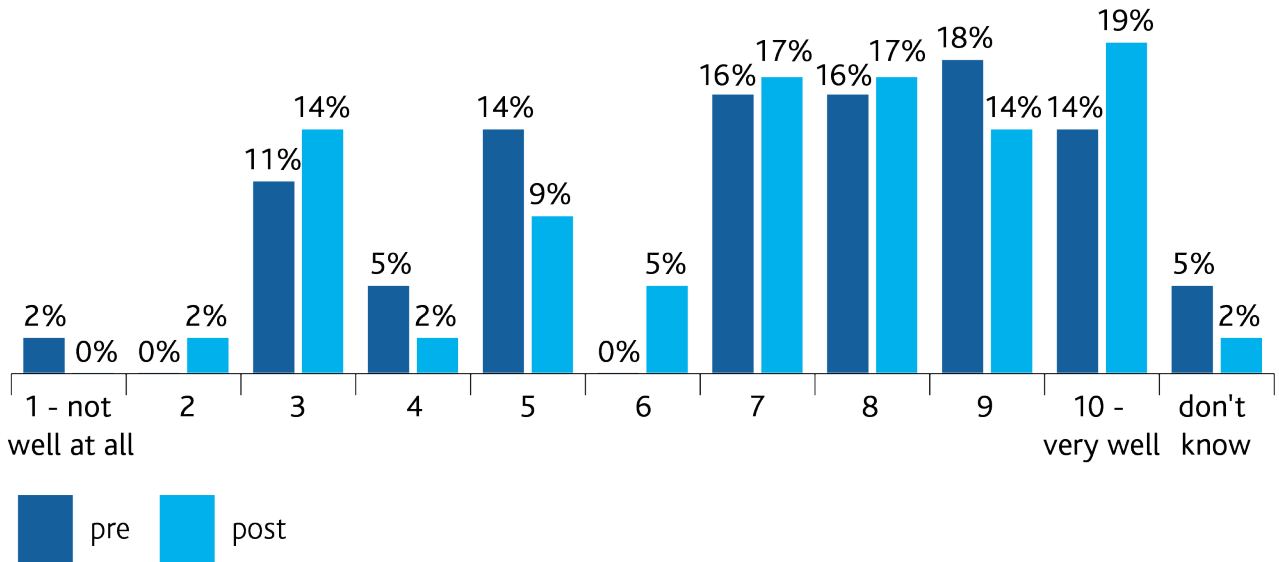
Q22. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



Base: Dependent on involvement in processes: Initial (32-74), Follow-up (73)

Figure C7: MARSOC alignment to organisation’s approaches to disruptions

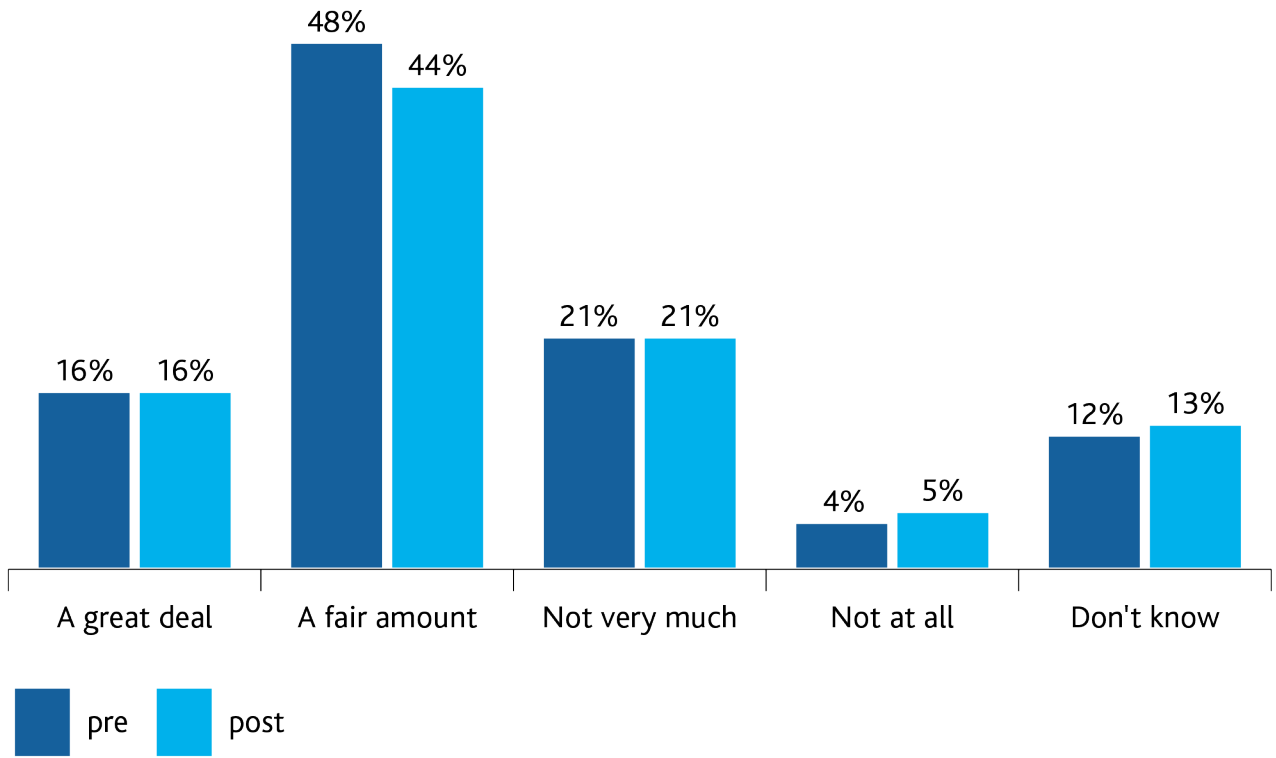
Q25b. On a scale of 1 to 10, how well do you think the MARSOC processes align with your organisation’s business as usual approaches to disruptions?



Base: Regional spoke roles – Initial (57), Follow-up (58)

Figure C8: Development of a list of the highest-harm SOC nominals

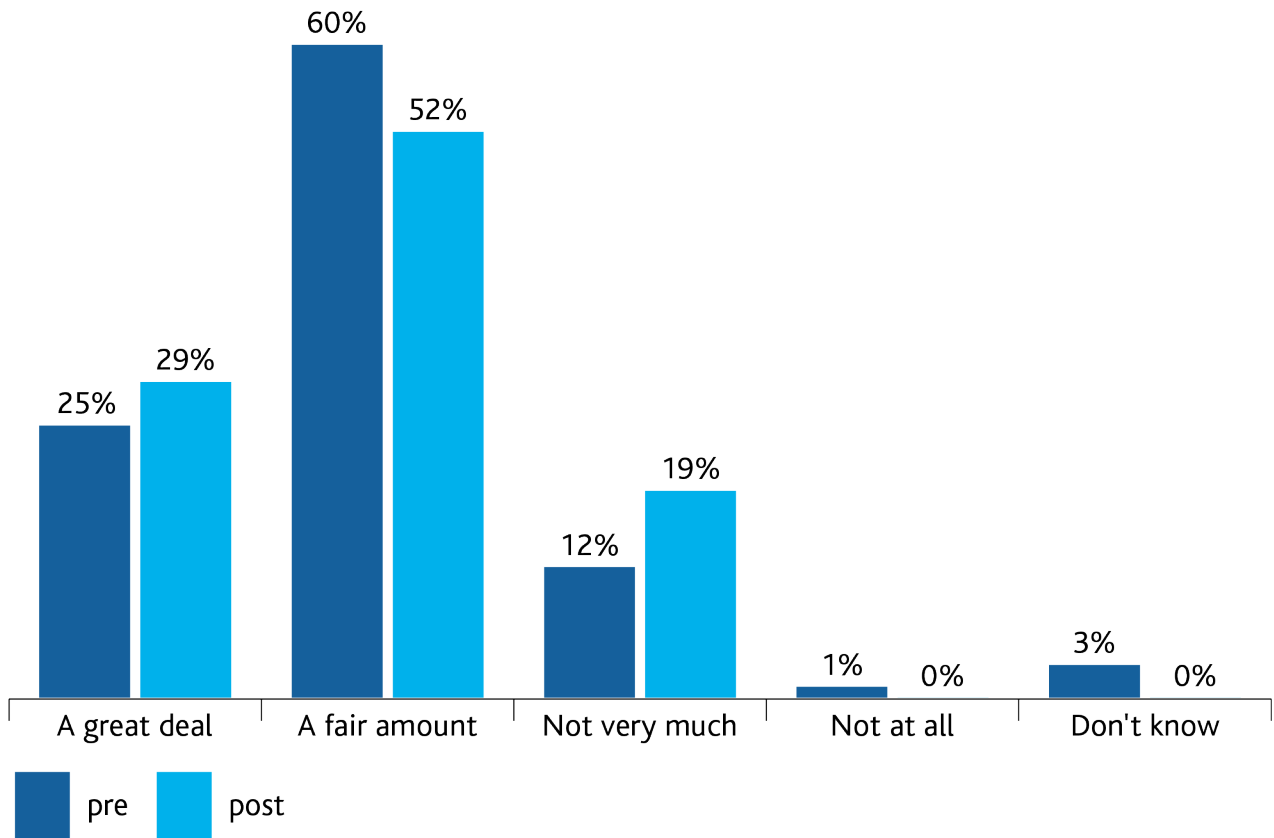
Q23. To what extent has MARSOC enabled the development of a list of the highest-harm SOC nominals using a single, consistent approach to assessment and prioritisation?



Base: All respondents – Initial (77), Follow-up (75)

Figure C9: Coordination of activities across multiple agencies for disruptions

Q24. To what extent has MARSOC coordinated activities across multiple agencies to work towards delivering disruptions of high-harm SOC offenders?



Base: All respondents – Initial (77), Follow-up (75)