



Ministry
of Justice

Electronic Monitoring of Domestic Abuse Perpetrators on Licence

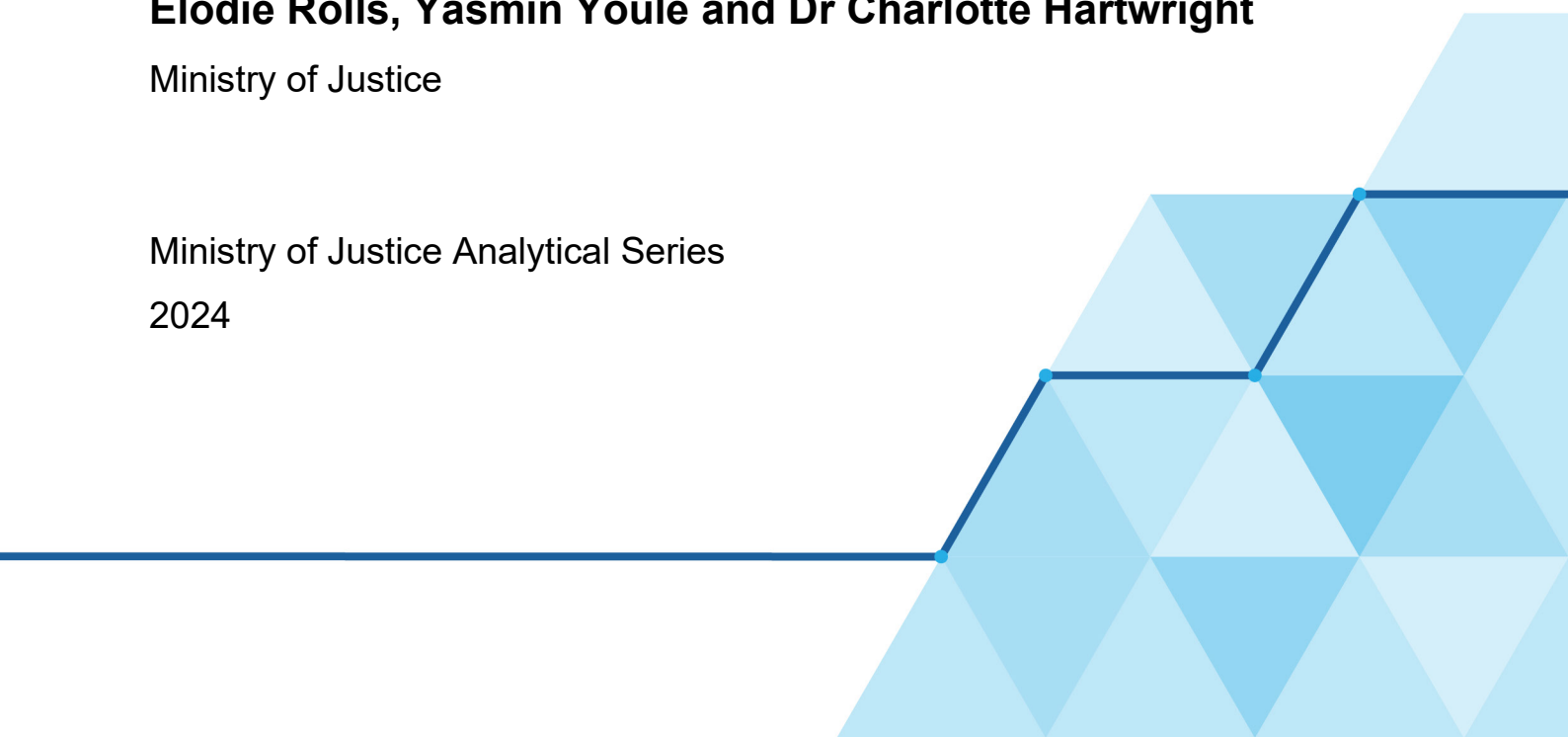
Process Evaluation

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Ministry of Justice

Ministry of Justice Analytical Series

2024



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First published 2024



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This publication is available for download at <http://www.justice.gov.uk/publications/research-and-analysis/moj>

ISBN 978 1 911691 42 6

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the staff at HMPPS, MoJ and the monitoring provider, and the people on probation who participated in this research. Without your contributions and support, this research would not have been possible.

We would also like to thank the academics and people from charitable organisations who participated in a series of workshops conducted when scoping this evaluation. We're also grateful to colleagues in HMPPS and the MoJ who contributed to our understanding of electronic monitoring, domestic abuse and Probation Practice, while designing this evaluation. These include the electronic monitoring SPOCs, Domestic Abuse Safety Officers, Victim Liaison Officers, Probation Practitioners, colleagues in the Electronic Monitoring Performance and Statistics team, and Policy experts.

Finally, we would like to thank the two anonymous academic peer reviewers for their helpful feedback on the report.

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1. Summary

Domestic abuse (DA) is a widespread crime. According to the Crime Survey for England and Wales, about 4.4% of people aged 16 and over experienced DA in a single 12-month period. This means approximately 2.1 million people were victims of DA in just one year (Office for National Statistics, 2023).

The Government's plan to tackle DA, announced in 2022, included the establishment of interventions for perpetrators, such as electronic monitoring (EM) for high-risk individuals.

The Domestic Abuse Perpetrators on Licence (DAPOL) scheme was launched in August 2023 in two probation regions, the East Midlands and the West Midlands. DAPOL requires adult offenders at risk of committing DA to wear an electronic tag upon leaving prison, if deemed necessary and proportionate as part of the formal licence planning process.¹ The scheme aims to strengthen offender management, help victims feel safe following the release of the abuser, and help prevent further offending.

An evaluation of DAPOL was commissioned by His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS). It will involve three types of evaluation: process, impact, and economic.² This report presents findings from a process evaluation conducted during the first few months of delivery. The findings can be used to inform expansion of the scheme, prior to assessing impacts.

1.1 Evaluation Objectives

The research was undertaken during the first six months of delivering the DAPOL scheme. The evaluation aimed to address four objectives:

¹ 'Necessary' means that the electronic monitoring is necessary to manage the risks identified and no other less restrictive condition will be enough. 'Proportionate' means that any restriction or loss of liberty because of the electronic monitoring is proportionate to the level of risk presented by the individual. For more detail see [Licence Conditions and how the Parole Board use them](#).

² A process evaluation is used to assess what can be learned from how a service or intervention is delivered to identify what worked well and what could be improved. An impact evaluation assesses what difference a service or intervention has made and why. An economic evaluation assesses whether a service or intervention provides value-for-money. For more detail see [Electronic Monitoring in the Criminal Justice System](#).

- To gather evidence that describes the context in which DAPOL was delivered (see Sections 4 and 8).
- To collect evidence on how DAPOL was used by practitioners (see Section 5).
- To provide a descriptive analysis of compliance and any early perceived impacts (see Sections 6 and 7).
- To identify facilitators and barriers to the implementation of DAPOL (see Section 8).

These objectives centred on understanding early implementation of the DAPOL pilot. This ensured that lessons learned could be embedded prior to any expansion and assessment of impact.

The research comprised three strands: primary data collection through interviews and surveys with people on probation and staff working with EM or DA, an analysis of management information (quantitative) data, and qualitative analysis of probation case management records. By triangulating findings across these data sources, the research team aimed to capture the complexity surrounding the implementation of DAPOL.

1.2 Key Findings

There were 442 DAPOL orders during the six-month evaluation period. Key findings are summarised below:

- **The scheme was used to manage high risk individuals with complex criminogenic needs.** Probation practitioners typically used DAPOL with prison leavers who had a history of violent offending, stalking and harassment, and those with an elevated risk of perpetrating DA. People supervised under the scheme often had attitudinal and psychosocial risks relating to relationships, thinking and behaviour, and pro-criminality. EM was used alongside other licence conditions such as alcohol monitoring, freedom of movement, non-contact, supervised contact, disclosure of information and (notification of) relationships. The profile of people on the scheme was consistent with established predictors of DA perpetration (e.g., Costa et al., 2015), suggesting that DAPOL was applied with reasoned professional judgement around DA risk.

- **Practitioners viewed DAPOL as a much needed tool to manage DA risk, but refinements to data training and data access were wanted.** While around three quarters of probation practitioners reported that DAPOL had benefitted risk management, some felt that improvements to the service could maximise these benefits. Some felt that more guidance should be given on how to best use location-based data. They reported that the initial training centred on ascertaining eligibility for DAPOL, with less on supporting someone once they were on it. Moreover, accessing the tag data once a person was on the scheme was said to take too much time. This sometimes meant that practitioners were less proactive with the data than they wanted to be. Practitioners expressed a preference for data they could access at their convenience, without the need for telephone or email requests.
- **The capacity to corroborate a tag wearer's location was viewed as beneficial by probation staff, victim liaison officers and people on probation.** Probation practitioners reported that location data could help them spot potential patterns of risk escalation, such as where a victim's home or work address had been compromised, should those locations not be known to the perpetrator. Some practitioners also looked for changes in tag wearers' movements, to direct risk and compliance discussions with the person on probation. Indeed, some people on probation reported feeling reassured that the tag could corroborate their whereabouts, exonerate them if under suspicion, or demonstrate their compliance. Victim liaison officers highlighted that evidence of a perpetrator's whereabouts meant the onus was no longer on victims to prove breaches. They felt this could help build victims' confidence in the justice system. Collectively, these perspectives highlight that EM could be beneficial for all stakeholders, including the people required to wear the tag.
- **Global Positioning System (GPS) tags were used in 96% of cases suggesting demand for location-monitoring will rise with further expansion of the scheme.** Trail monitoring was the most frequently used EM licence condition under DAPOL. Practitioners used the data to identify patterns that could indicate risk escalation, for example, emerging intimate relationships, and more generally to assess compliance. Given the high uptake of location-based data in

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the early stages of this scheme, it is likely that demand will increase with further expansion of DAPOL. This may result in more demand for GPS tagging equipment. This report also found qualitative evidence that location monitoring was more time consuming to manage. Therefore, the potential for a greater time cost to supervise DAPOL cases should also be considered.

2. Background

2.1 Legislative Definition of Domestic Abuse in England & Wales

The Domestic Abuse Act (2021)³ defines DA as any incident or pattern of incidents between those aged 16 years and over who:

- Are a partner or ex-partner
- Are a relative
- Have, or there has been a time when they each have had, a parental relationship in relation to the same child

The Domestic Abuse Act (2021) outlines the following behaviours as abuse:

- Physical or sexual abuse
- Violent or threatening behaviour
- Controlling or coercive behaviour
- Economic abuse
- Psychological, emotional, or other abuse

The Domestic Abuse Act (2021) recognises children under the age of 18 years who see, or hear, or experience the effects of the abuse, as a victim of domestic abuse if they are related or have a parental relationship to the adult victim or perpetrator of the abuse.

2.2 What is Electronic Monitoring?

EM is used in England and Wales to monitor curfews and conditions of a court or prison order. The person being monitored is required to wear a device, often referred to as a 'tag'. This is typically attached around their ankle. A monitoring unit will also be installed in a

³ See [Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#)

place stated in the court or prison order. This is usually the tag wearer's home or an approved premises.⁴

There are two types of electronic tag considered in this evaluation: curfew and location.⁵

Curfew Tags

Curfew tags check that the wearer is where they are meant to be during their curfew hours, for example, at their home. The tag will send an alert to a monitoring centre if the wearer is not home when expected.

Location Tags

Location tags record data about a person's movements via GPS. This can be used to determine if they have been to areas they have been told not to go to by the court or prison; if they have attended appointments or programmes as part of their conditions; and if they are adhering to curfew. Location tags provide a way of remotely monitoring and recording information on an individual's whereabouts or movements, 24-hours a day.

Breaches

If a tag wearer breaches their licence conditions they could be taken back into custody.

2.3 The Domestic Abuse Perpetrators on Licence Electronic Monitoring Scheme

The DAPOL scheme enabled probation practitioners to impose EM on eligible people on probation at the point of release from prison. DAPOL could be applied as an Additional Licence Condition alongside the Standard Licence Conditions for all, or part of, the person on probation's sentence period,⁶ for a minimum of one month and a maximum of one year, with quarterly review.

⁴ 'Approved Premises' are residential units in the community which house and closely monitor people with an offending history in the community.

⁵ Alcohol tags are also used in Probation Practice. Alcohol tags were not an explicit part of the DAPOL scheme, but there were DAPOL cases that were also required to wear an alcohol tag.

⁶ Licence conditions are the set of rules individuals must follow if they are released from prison but still have a part of their sentence to serve in the community. For more information on Standard Licence Conditions and Additional Licence Conditions, see [Licence Conditions and how the Parole Board use them](#)

The following electronically monitored conditions could be applied under the DAPOL scheme: attendance, curfew, exclusion zones, and trail monitoring. EM was applied on a case by case basis, where the probation practitioner established it was necessary and proportionate to:

- Support risk management
- Reduce reoffending
- Enhance public protection

Probation practitioners could apply EM to eligible individuals regardless of their index offence(s).⁷ Doing so ensured that practitioners could focus on intelligence around risk such that any victims, known or future, could be protected. Where a victim had engaged with the Probation Service Victim Contact Scheme (VCS), their assigned victim liaison officer would be fully involved in the process of considering appropriate licence conditions to ensure the victim's concerns were considered.⁸

⁷ The index offence is the offence that has been prosecuted by the Police and proven through conviction.

⁸ More details on the Victim Contact Scheme is available from [Information about the Victim Contact Scheme](#)

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

Ministry of Justice (MoJ) analysts conducted a process evaluation between August 2023 and late February 2024. The evaluation used a mixed methods approach derived from three main data sources:

- Management information data from the monitoring provider and HMPPS
- Probation case management records
- Interviews and surveys with people on probation, probation practitioners, staff working with EM and victim liaison officers

The evaluation plan was reviewed by the MoJ Ethics Advisory Group and Information Assurance Team prior to starting the research. This ensured that all procedures were consistent with ethical practice and data legislation (see Appendix A). The research was conducted in accordance with principles set out in the Government Social Research Code (Government Social Research Profession, 2023). All analytical code used to create this report was reviewed by a separate analyst as part of MoJ quality assurance procedures. This included line-by-line review of all analytical scripts and documented evidence of the checks performed.

3.2 Research Methods

Management Information Analysis

Management information from the EM provider was gathered over a 6-month period, ending in late February 2024. This included data on the number of people on DAPOL, the breakdown of tag types, and how long the individual was required to wear the tag for. The evaluation also drew from the Probation Service's case management system (nDelius) and Offender Assessment System (OASys) to describe tag wearer demographics, wider offending characteristics, and information around non-compliance.

Survey and Interview Methodology

Sampling: Fieldwork comprised surveys and semi-structured interviews. Purposive sampling was used to ensure feedback reflected the DAPOL scheme. Invitations to participate were sent to probation practitioners, victim liaison officers, monitoring staff, field monitoring officers and people on probation.⁹ For operational staff, invitations to participate were sent by email. The monitoring provider supplied contact details of monitoring staff and field monitoring officers. Where fieldwork involved HMPPS staff, the research team targeted those delivering DAPOL. The research team also worked with regional probation support to distribute invitations amongst operational staff who may be unaware of the pilot.¹⁰ People on probation were accessed via their responsible officer who requested permission for the research team to contact them directly.¹¹ Table 3.1 outlines the number of people contacted to participate and the subsequent response rate. Overall, 39 surveys and 9 interviews were completed by criminal justice practitioners and monitoring staff. 10 people on probation participated in interviews.

Table 3.1. Fieldwork Participation and Response Rates

	Surveys			Semi-Structured Interviews		
	Total contacted	Response Rate		Total contacted	Response Rate	
		<i>n</i>	%		<i>n</i>	%
Monitoring / Field Staff ^a	9	6	66.7	6	0	0
People on Probation ^b	-	-	-	204	10	4.9
Probation Practitioners	237	23	9.7	125	8	6.4
Victim Liaison Officers	35	10	28.6	35	1	2.9

Note. Values reflect participants who fully completed surveys / interviews. Dash (-) indicates the method was not used with that respondent group. ^a Zero response rate may result from resource limitations due to restructuring occurring within the service at the time of data collection. ^b People on probation were invited to participate if they were registered on the scheme during, or prior to, January 2024 and had not been recalled at the time of recruitment. A further 6 people on probation initially expressed an interest in participating but later declined or did not respond to three contact

⁹ People on probation were invited to participate in interviews only.

¹⁰ It is not possible to quantify the scale of this activity. Therefore, references to response rate reflect direct contact attempts made by the evaluation team.

¹¹ It is not possible to establish how many practitioners invited tag wearers to participate in the evaluation. References to response rate refer to the overall number of DAPOL cases that the research team asked probation practitioners to invite. It is likely that the response rate is an underestimation of the proportion of people on probation who expressed an interest after being told by their probation practitioner about the research.

attempts from the research team. This table is also supplied as an Excel datasheet – see corresponding worksheet within the ‘data tables’ file.

Surveys: Surveys were developed in consultation with criminal justice practitioners to ensure the appropriate terminology. Surveys were delivered in phased batches throughout the 6-month period to capture insights at early and later stages of the pilot. All surveys opened with an overview of the scope and eligibility of DAPOL, a brief description of the overarching survey aims, an outline of the evaluation and how the data would be used, and a contact for further questions. Respondents were advised that participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time prior to submitting their responses. Surveys were completed online, anonymously, and included a mix of quantitative fixed-response questions and optional, open-ended qualitative questions.

Semi-Structured Interviews: A written participant information sheet was sent to prospective interview participants in advance of taking part, where possible. Information sheets were tailored to the target respondent group and described the research aims, an outline of the overarching questions the participants would be asked, how their data would be used, a contact for further questions, details of how they could withdraw from the study, and a copy of the consent form. In all cases, prospective participants were given a verbal overview of this information prior to obtaining consent.

Interviews were conducted individually by phone or video call and were recorded and transcribed using Microsoft tools.¹² A topic guide was used to structure interviews (see Appendix B). Practitioner interviews centred on understanding the scope of the DAPOL scheme, challenges and experiences. Interviews with people on probation focussed on their experience of wearing a tag, their view on how this impacted their desistance journey, and working with the EM provider and Probation. For interviews with tag wearers, unless raised by the interviewee, DA was not explicitly mentioned to ensure no risk of disclosure. Interviews lasted around 30 minutes.

Analysis: Quantitative survey data were collated to summarise findings across respondent groups and question types. All interview and free-text survey data were analysed using thematic analysis. A deductive-inductive approach was taken, using latent

¹² Telephone interviews were recorded using Microsoft Word Online. Video interviews were recorded in Microsoft Teams. Both systems provide automatic transcription.

and semantic interpretation. A coding frame guided initial analyses. This comprised codes for different types of stakeholders and a set of relevance criteria (Appendix C). The data were reviewed line-by-line and coded in meaningful sections. This allowed multiple codes to be applied, where appropriate. Coding was conducted independently by two researchers. A coding review was then run in NVivo which facilitated appraisal between the researchers to reach consensus on coded extracts. The data were then summarised using the Framework Method (Gale, Heath, Cameron, Rashid and Redwood, 2013) and a series of matrices. A third researcher then reviewed, and collective agreement was achieved on the overarching thematic structure. Coding review demonstrated an excellent level of agreement between analysts for survey and interview data.¹³

Analysis of Probation Case Management Records

Rationale: Administrative data can provide policy and programme evaluators valuable information on DA that is often unobtainable through primary research (UN Women and World Health Organization, 2022). To ensure that the evaluation captured a detailed understanding of DAPOL in practice, the evaluation team conducted a longitudinal thematic analysis of administrative records from the Probation Service's case management system, nDelius, for a sample of people on DAPOL. This analysis aimed to compliment survey and interview data to understand how relevant aspects of a DA perpetrator's circumstances fed into their engagement with EM and the management thereof. EM is not decoupled from other interventions used by the Probation Service to manage risk and rehabilitation. Therefore, the analysis drew on the interplay between EM, wider compliance, barriers and limitations, and the person on probation's criminogenic needs.

Sampling and Procedure: Case management records were extracted from 27 people on probation who were enrolled on DAPOL. These individuals reflected a convenience sample derived from the date of entry into the DAPOL pilot. Records were extracted weekly for each included person up until the end of their EM licence period, or the end of the 16-week data collection period, whichever came sooner.¹⁴ Over the 16-week period,

¹³ Inter-rater agreement was calculated in NVivo. (Survey data: Kappa avg. = 0.9; % agreement avg. = 99.5; Interview data: Kappa avg. = 0.8; % agreement avg. = 98.5)

¹⁴ Min. period of observation = 1 week; max. = 16 weeks; avg. = 10 weeks. The EM licence would end either due to successfully completing the EM order, or due to recall to prison.

probation practitioners logged a total of 1,147 records across the sample of 27 DAPOL cases. These records were manually screened by the research team to identify those that met a set of pre-determined relevance criteria (see Appendix C). Records that did not meet these criteria were excluded from any further analyses (n=940). The final thematic analysis comprised 207 anonymised records from 23 people on DAPOL. The final sample was composed of males, mean age 32 years. Most had a DA marker on their case management record, were considered a high Risk of Serious Harm (RoSH), were on a GPS tag, and had an initial order length of 3–6 months (see Table 3.2).

Table 3.2. Case Management Analysis Sample Characteristics

		<i>n</i>	%
Case Registrations ^a	Domestic Abuse History	22	95.7
	VCS eligible	8	34.8
RoSH	Low	0	0.0
	Medium	4	17.4
	High	18	78.3
	Very High	1	4.3
Tag Type	GPS	22	95.7
	RF	1	4.3
Order Length	<=3 months	6	26.1
	>3 months and <=6 months	11	47.8
	>6 months and <=9 months	2	8.7
	>9 months and <=12 months	4	17.4
Recalled during observation ^b		6	26.1

Note. Data derived from the case management system, nDelius, based on information at point of release. Full risks and needs data are not provided for disclosure control. ^a DA history reflects an historic or active marker. A person on probation can have registrations for both DA history and VCS. VCS data describe cases that were eligible. VCS is offered to victims of serious sexual or violent offences where there is a custodial sentence of 12 months or more. The figure quoted does not capture uptake of the service. ^b The number of included people on probation who were recalled during the 16-week administrative data collection period. This table is also supplied as an Excel datasheet – see corresponding worksheet within the ‘data tables’ file.

Analysis: Case management records were subject to thematic analysis conducted within the qualitative analysis software, NVivo. The data were analysed using the approach

described for survey and interview data. This approach also yielded a good level of coding agreement between analysts.¹⁵

3.3 Limitations

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings in this report:

- Data were collected over a 6-month period from the launch of DAPOL. Consequently, the current evaluation does not capture the licence period for cases that went beyond the evaluation period. A further process evaluation is planned to cover a longer timeframe.
- This process evaluation focused on implementation of the DAPOL scheme and did not measure impact. The term 'impact' in this report relates to qualitative findings where stakeholders voiced a perceived impact, not a quantified effect. Later evaluation will compare the impact of DAPOL against an appropriate comparison group.
- Management Information data were drawn from administrative systems. While the analytical team aimed to produce high quality analyses, it is not always possible to detect errors in administrative data that occur at source. Decisions to exclude data due to concerns around reliability are made clear in the report.
- Some administrative data are not static. They can be changed or revised, for example, when a probation practitioner reassesses a person on probation's risk levels. Where the report includes data that can be updated like this, details of the time period is provided.
- Sampling for interviews and surveys was non-random, as all participants volunteered for the evaluation research. This voluntary participation may affect the generalisability of the findings. Tag wearers were approached through their responsible officer within the Probation Service. However, not all tag wearers may have been asked to participate in interviews. Additionally, limited feedback was available from the monitoring provider due to wider restructuring, potentially resulting in overlooked difficulties they encountered while supporting the scheme.

¹⁵ Inter-rater agreement was calculated in NVivo. Coding review demonstrated a good level of agreement between analysts; Kappa avg. = 0.7; % agreement avg. = 97.3%.

- Responses from surveys and interviews represent the participants' perceptions and may not accurately reflect operational practices. Fieldwork saw low response rates in all areas, which may affect the generalisability of findings. To mitigate bias from these and the sampling limitations outlined previously, the evaluation included a qualitative analysis of case management records.
- Direct feedback from victims of people monitored under the DAPOL scheme was not sought. However, fieldwork was conducted with victim liaison officers working directly with victims. The next phase of evaluation will aim to capture victim feedback.

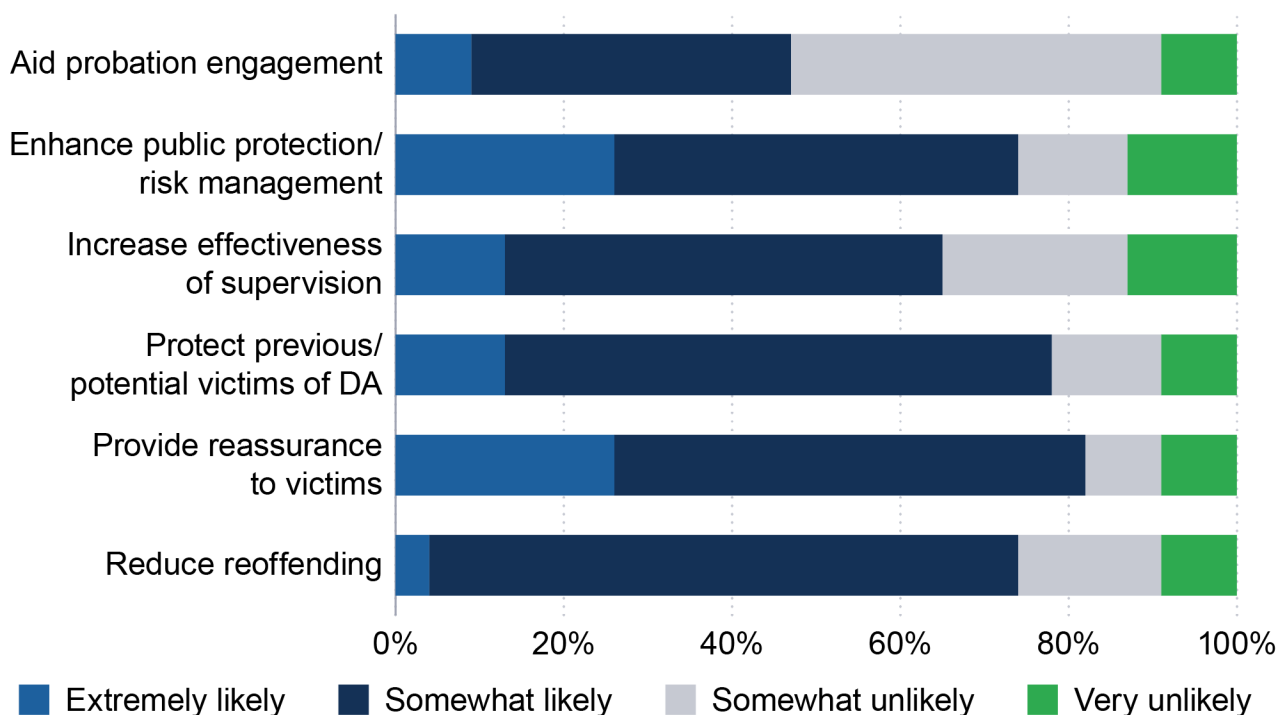
4. Findings: Staff Perceptions and Understanding of the Scheme

This section describes findings on how staff involved in delivering DAPOL perceived the scheme's aims, their capacity to deliver DAPOL, and their confidence with the scheme's eligibility. The section includes stakeholder perspectives derived from surveys and interviews, and encompasses views from probation practitioners and monitoring staff.

4.1 Awareness and Perceptions

To understand staff buy-in for the scheme, the survey asked probation practitioners to review six key aims for DAPOL and assess whether they felt these would be achieved (see Figure 4.1). Of the 23 responses received, the data largely suggested staff support for DAPOL, converging most strongly around the likelihood that the scheme would provide reassurance to victims: 83% felt this was either 'extremely' or 'somewhat likely'. The majority also felt that DAPOL would likely protect previous and potential victims of DA (78%). Practitioners seemed less confident in the scheme's capacity to aid probation engagement itself, with just under half of respondents feeling this was likely (48%).

Figure 4.1 Perceived Likely Success of Project Aims



Note. Data reflect probation practitioners’ responses to the survey question, “Looking at the key project aims, how likely do you feel DAPOL will achieve these?” Four fixed-response options were available which described a range of outcomes, starting with ‘very unlikely’ through to ‘extremely likely’. This figure is also supplied as an Excel datasheet – see corresponding worksheet within the ‘data tables’ file.

When asked whether they felt there were sufficient resources to deliver the scheme, 57% of probation practitioners surveyed felt there were insufficient resources. The remaining 43% indicated that they felt adequate resources were in place. Interviews identified that this division might be explained by wider expansion of EM use within the Probation Service and the time some practitioners felt it takes to feel confident with the different applications. For example, some probation practitioners reported feeling overwhelmed with the volume of new interventions being added. Differing processes for each of the wider EM schemes exacerbated these concerns:

“Having a different process for each monitoring option is difficult to navigate and the processes are clumsy. Having the conditions for licences would be helpful, along with how to explain this to people on probation before we add the condition.”

Some probation practitioners asserted that it was not possible to become fully confident with interventions like DAPOL through training alone, as they needed to put the process

into practice first. This familiarisation with new schemes was recognised to take time and, to some degree, be a feature of the challenges of their work:

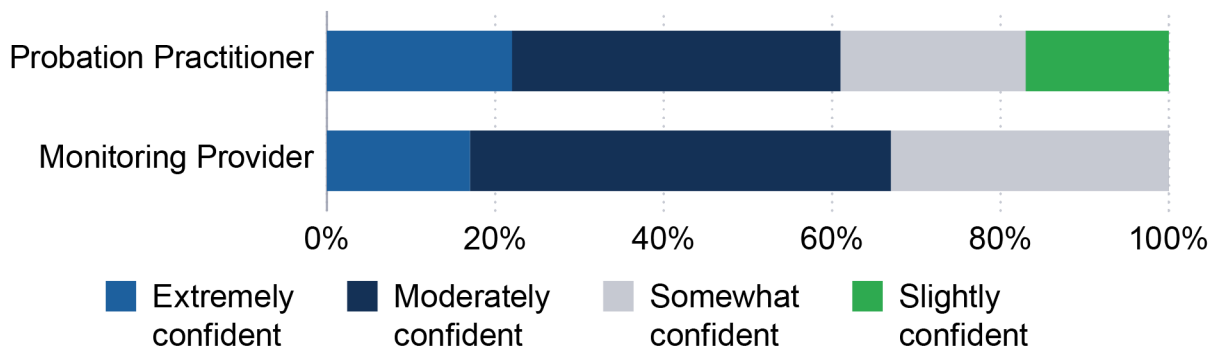
“I think, ultimately, as probation officers we’re used to getting new things put on us and then just having to adjust to it.”

4.2 Knowledge and Understanding

The survey asked probation practitioners and monitoring staff to reflect on how well they felt they understood the eligibility and scope of DAPOL. This was important, given their roles typically require them to be at the fore of decision-making, application, and enforcement.

Of the 29 respondents, none reported that they were ‘not at all confident’ and, as highlighted in Figure 4.2, a slight majority (62%) expressed being ‘moderately’ to ‘extremely’ confident in their understanding.

Figure 4.2 Practitioner Confidence in Eligibility and Scope



Note. Data reflect monitoring and probation practitioner responses to the question, “How confident is your understanding of the eligibility and scope for DAPOL?” Five fixed-response options were available which described a range of levels of confidence, starting with ‘not at all’ through to ‘extremely.’ Zero respondents used the ‘not at all confident’ option. This figure is also supplied as an Excel datasheet – see corresponding worksheet within the ‘data tables’ file.

While survey respondents seemed relatively confident in the eligibility and scope of the scheme, several reported that their colleagues and other stakeholders had less awareness. The monitoring provider reported:

“I believe there should be a mandatory online training course as some of my colleagues were not aware of it.”

Respondents also highlighted a lack of awareness of DAPOL within prisons, with some community-based probation practitioners having DAPOL licence applications questioned or erroneously rejected by prison staff. This meant that practitioners felt they had to “spread the word” by supplying guidance to other staff.

“It’s not very well advertised, and I have had some difficulty suggesting the tag for individuals in prison in areas outside of the [pilot area] when the person will be residing in the [pilot area] upon release.”

Confusion centring on the pilot area was echoed by several staff:

“The most common doubt I have seen is, if it’s the subject’s residence that has to be in [the pilot area], or if it’s the managing probation office that has to be in [the pilot area]...or if both the subject’s residence and the probation office that has to be in [the pilot area].”

Probation staff also felt that guidance could be improved around the stages after the licence condition had been determined. For example, there was uncertainty around what data they could get from the tag, or how they could use it:

“There is lot of guidance on people who are eligible, but not a lot of guidance on what to do when the tag is fitted, how to get the data, who to contact, [or] how long it takes.”

5. Findings: Decision-Making and Use of the Scheme

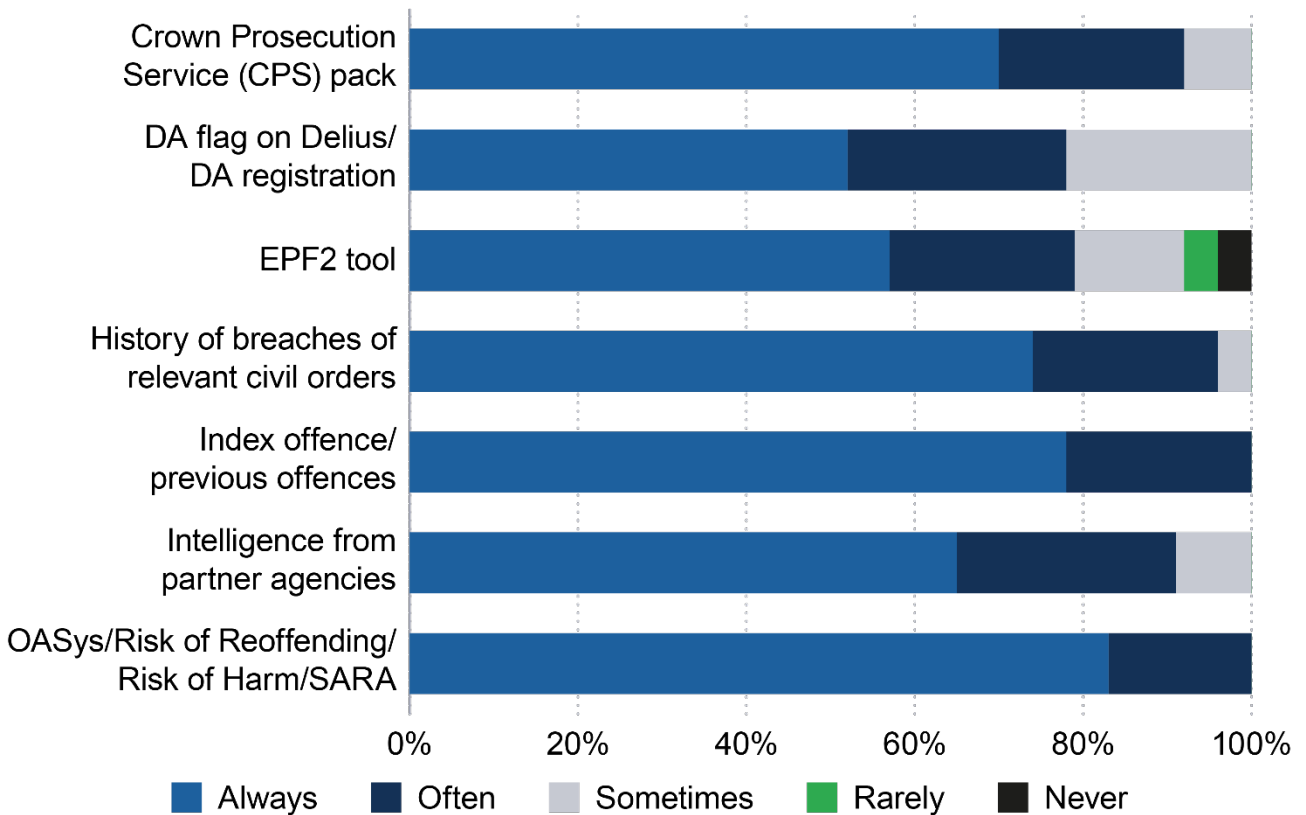
This section describes findings on how and when EM was used by probation practitioners to manage DA risk. It includes survey data from probation practitioners, and management information data to describe the characteristics of individuals monitored under the scheme, such as their offending histories, risks and needs, and quantitative information on the different types of EM that were used and their duration.

5.1 Decision-Making

All probation practitioners who responded to the survey reported being involved in deciding licence conditions for people on probation ($n=23$). When asked about the tools they used to support licence planning for DAPOL, as illustrated in Figure 5.1, agreement converged most strongly on the use of risk information such as OASys, RoSH and Spousal Assault Risk Assessment (SARA), with 83% reporting that they would 'always' use these tools. Approximately three quarters reported that they would 'always' refer to the index offence (78%), and history of breaches of relevant civil orders such as restraining and non-molestation orders (74%). Of the suggested tools, the Effective Proposal Framework (EPF) was the only tool that was reported as 'never' or 'rarely' used (9%).¹⁶

¹⁶ The Effective Proposal Framework (EPF) is a digital tool used within HMPPS to inform sentencing and licencing proposals. EPF2 is used for licence planning.

Figure 5.1 Practitioner Use of Tools



Note. Data reflect probation practitioners’ responses to the question, “How often do you think you would use the following tools when deciding whether to add DAPOL to licence conditions?” Five fixed-response options were available which described a range of frequencies, starting with ‘never’ through to ‘always’. There was an additional option to exclude tools where the practitioner did not know what the listed tool was; however, there were no instances where this option was used. Relevant civil orders were stated to include restraining / non-molestation orders. This figure is also supplied as an Excel datasheet – see corresponding worksheet within the ‘data tables’ file.

Probation practitioners surveyed were also asked to consider the administrative process of adding DAPOL to the individual’s licence conditions. Most probation practitioners reported that it was ‘easy’ or ‘very easy’ to add DAPOL as a licence condition when compared with other EM licences (68%). The remaining third reported it was ‘difficult’ or ‘very difficult’ (32%). Those reporting difficulty may share the perceived complexity around there being several different EM programmes that was outlined previously.

5.2 DAPOL Order Types and Lengths

There were 442 DAPOL orders during the six-month evaluation period,¹⁷ of which 370 went on to receive a tag.¹⁸ There were 250 orders in the West Midlands region (56.6%) and 192 in the East Midlands region (43.4%). This split approximates forecasted volumes within each area.

Table 5.1 outlines which types of electronic tag were used with DAPOL. 96.4% ($n=426$) of the orders were associated with a location (GPS) tag, with the remaining 3.6% ($n=16$) curfew (RF) tags. GPS tags comprise approximately half (46%) of orders in the wider post release community, highlighting that GPS was used extensively under the DAPOL scheme.¹⁹

Table 5.1. Volume of Tag Types

Tag Type	<i>n</i>	%
HDC – GPS	26	5.9
HDC – RF	11	2.5
Non HDC – GPS	400	90.5
Non HDC – RF	5	1.1

Note. Data compiled from the monitoring provider based on information at the start of the order. Table reflects all DAPOL orders within the six-month evaluation period including those that did not receive a tag. This table is also supplied as an Excel datasheet – see corresponding worksheet within the ‘data tables’ file.

Data from the Create and Vary a Licence (CVL) tool were extracted to help better understand how practitioners planned to use the different EM applications. Table 5.2 shows that almost three quarters of DAPOL cases had a CVL record ($n=324$; 73.3%).²⁰

¹⁷ Count reflects orders that were eligible for the inclusion in the evaluation. Some were excluded ($n=33$) as these were identified as duplicates or did not meet the evaluation eligibility criteria (e.g., out of region).

¹⁸ Some individuals who received a DAPOL order did not subsequently have a tag fitted. Reasons for this included recall prior to the tag being fitted or deemed ineligible for tagging due to housing or medical reasons.

¹⁹ Estimated use of GPS in the wider post release community derived from published data. For further information see [Electronic Monitoring Statistics Publication](#)

²⁰ CVL is a digital tool that allows probation practitioners to create licences for prison leavers, and to vary active licences for those already released. This tool is used in place of paper-based methods. It was not possible to quantify orders using paper-based methods due to difficulty extracting these at volume.

Given that around a quarter of cases did not have these data, caution should be taken when interpreting the findings.

Of those with CVL data, trail monitoring was the most frequently added licence condition ($n=289$; 89.2%), and approximately half of individuals had an electronically monitored exclusion zone ($n=155$; 47.8%). Curfew monitoring was added in almost one third of cases ($n=102$; 31.5%). This is significantly higher than the proportion of orders with an RF tag, which is conventionally used to monitor a curfew. This suggests that curfew monitoring was used in conjunction with other licence conditions necessitating the use of a GPS tag.

The data also suggest that, of those with a CVL record, just over a third were monitored with both an alcohol and a GPS/RF tag ($n=115$; 35.5%). This finding is largely consistent with the prevalence of alcohol misuse indicated in the OASys data provided in Section 5.3.

Table 5.2. Volume of Order Types

	<i>n</i>	%
CVL Tool used	324	73.3
Electronic Monitoring Licence Conditions ^a	Attendance	12 3.7
	Curfew	102 31.5
	Exclusion zone	155 47.8
	Trail monitoring	289 89.2
	Alcohol abstinence/monitoring	115 35.5

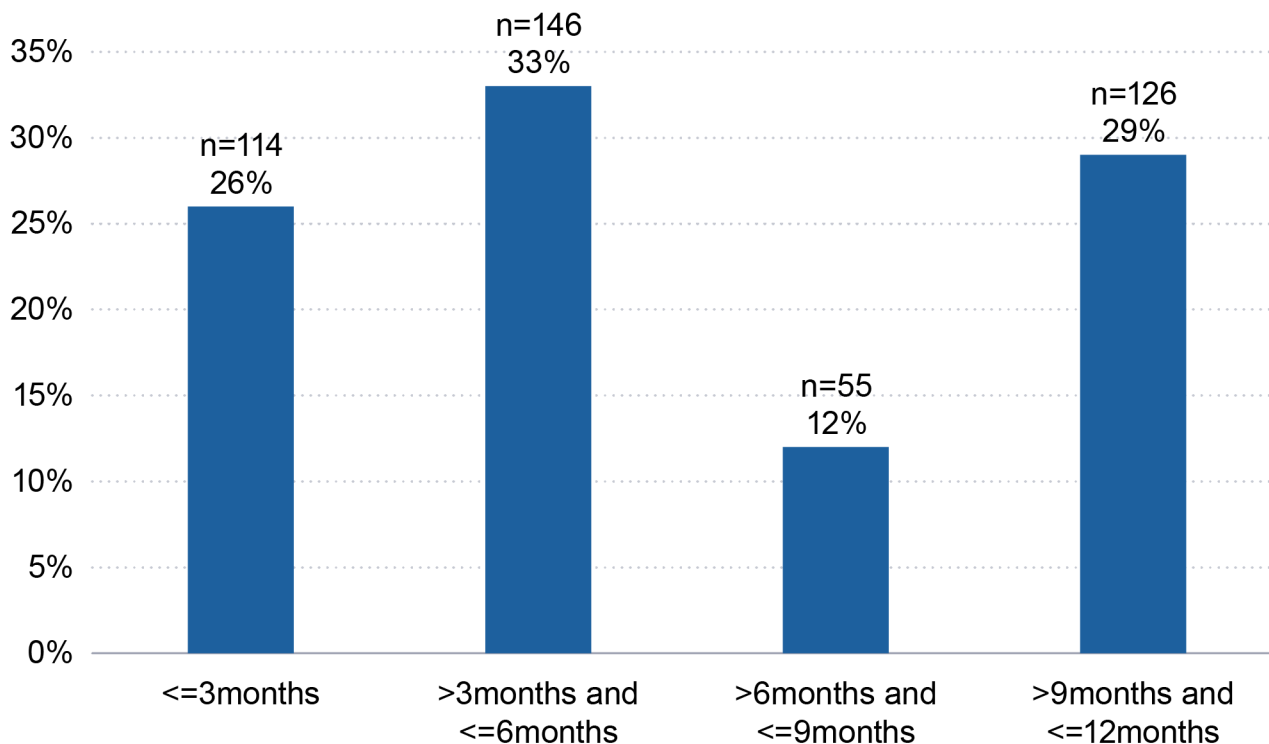
^a **Note.** Licence conditions were extracted from section 14 of the CVL Tool. Percentages reflect the number of orders with a licence produced using the CVL Tool, not the overall number of DAPOL orders. This table is also supplied as an Excel datasheet – see corresponding worksheet within the ‘data tables’ file.

As shown in Fig. 5.2, there was some variation in intended order lengths, with probation practitioners regularly expecting to make use of DAPOL as a shorter-term intervention (< 3 months) and a longer term one (up to the maximum period of one year).²¹

²¹ The intended order lengths reflect the difference between the order start date and the order end date reported by the EM provider. This reflects the intended order length at the start of the order by the probation practitioner and does not show the actual time spent on tag. All orders would be subject to review on a quarterly basis.

Figure 5.2 Distribution of Order Lengths

Proportion of orders



Note. This figure is also supplied as an Excel datasheet – see corresponding worksheet within the ‘data tables’ file.

Where possible, data around the wider sentence duration was extracted from nDelius and linked with DAPOL order length data from the monitoring provider.²² This suggested that probation practitioners added an EM licence condition that mirrored the duration of the Standard Licence Conditions period in 39.2% of the cases ($n=156$). Of the remaining DAPOL orders, the intended EM licence period reflected only a part of the wider licence period ($n=242$; 60.8%). As DAPOL could only be applied for a maximum of 12-months, this sometimes reflected cases where the person on probation had longer than one year to serve under their wider licence conditions. Of the cases with 12-months or fewer to serve under the wider Standard Licence Conditions, almost three quarters had an intended DAPOL order length that mirrored their wider licence period. This suggests that probation practitioners would typically plan to apply the tool for the maximum period possible, as

²² In a small number of cases, it was not possible to match data across systems ($n=29$; 6.6%) or the quality assessment indicated irregularities in the data recording ($n=15$; 3.4%). Such cases were excluded from reporting around DAPOL order length and the wider Standard Licence Condition period.

DAPOL was only available at the point of release. Practitioners could then review the order end date as necessary.

5.3 Characteristics of People who Received a DAPOL Order

Demography

Table 5.3 summarises the characteristics of individuals who received a DAPOL order. The majority were male ($n=440$; 99.5%), 30–39 years old ($n=200$; 45.2%) and had at least one active or historic DA marker on their case management record at the start of their order ($n=370$; 83.7%).²³ Nearly half of the individuals had a marker indicating involvement of the VCS on their case management record at the start of their order ($n=207$; 46.8%).²⁴

Table 5.3. Characteristics of People Who Received a DAPOL Order

		<i>n</i>	%
Sex	Male	440	99.5
	Female	2	0.5
Age	18–20	7	1.6
	21–24	40	9.0
	25–29	70	15.8
	30–39	200	45.2
	40–49	84	19.0
	50–59	38	8.6
	60+	3	0.7
Ethnicity ^a	Asian or Asian British	26	5.9
	Black or Black British	28	6.3
	Mixed	31	7.0
	White	355	80.3
	Not stated/Unrecorded	2	0.5
Case Registrations ^b	Domestic Abuse History	370	83.7
	VCS eligible	207	46.8

²³ The presence of these markers was not a requirement for DAPOL but could be used to guide practitioner decision-making when establishing whether a tag was necessary and proportionate. Decision making would derive from a series of information sources in addition to these indicators.

²⁴ The presence of this marker indicated that the case was eligible for the VCS but does not confirm whether the victim opted-in to work with the service.

Note. Data derived from the case management system, nDelius, based on information at the start of the order. Column percentages may not total 100% due to rounding. ^a The ethnicity “white” includes white British/English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish, Irish, Gypsy and Irish Traveller.

^b Refer to Table 3.2 for further description. This table is also supplied as an Excel datasheet – see corresponding worksheet within the ‘data tables’ file.

Offending History

Where possible, the individual’s index offence was extracted from their probation records and mapped to the relevant Home Office offence group.²⁵ The most common index offence associated with a DAPOL order was ‘violence against the person’, reflecting 63.8% ($n=272$) of the cases that were matched to an nDelius record. The next most common were ‘public order offences’ ($n=35$; 8.2%), ‘drug offences’ ($n=27$; 6.3%) and ‘miscellaneous crimes against society’ ($n=23$; 5.4%). All other Home Office offence groups reflected less than 5% of the cases that were matched to an nDelius record.

The most common offence sub classes within the ‘violence against the person’ category were:

- **‘Violence with injury’** ($n=133$; 48.9%) – index offences such as assaults occasioning actual bodily harm, intentional strangulation and wounding, or inflicting grievous bodily harm.
- **‘Stalking and harassment’** ($n=90$; 33.1%) – index offences such as breach of restraining orders, controlling or coercive behaviour and stalking.
- **‘Violence without injury’** ($n=47$; 17.3%) – index offences such as common assault and battery, and making threats to kill.

Risks and Needs

Table 5.4 summarises the key risks and needs of the people on DAPOL, as ascertained through formal practitioner assessment. This highlights that most had had a SARA

²⁵ Each order was matched with a release date within 13 days of the order start date in nDelius. In a small number of cases there was no match ($n=16$; 3.6%). This was either due to no release being present within 13 days of the order start date, or individuals having multiple offences attached to their release making it infeasible to ascertain the index offence. More information on Home Office offence groups is available from [Home Office Crime Recording Rules](#)

completed ($n=352$; 79.6%).²⁶ Of the 413 DAPOL cases with a Layer 3 OASys assessment,²⁷ the most common criminogenic needs were:

- **‘Relationships’** ($n=384$; 93.0%) – captures relationships with family, childhood experience, relationship with partner, previous relationship experience, domestic violence: perpetrator or victim, parental responsibilities, relationships related to offending behaviour.
- **‘Attitudes’** ($n=374$; 90.6%) – centres on pro-criminal attitudes, attitude to supervisions, attitude to community/society, motivation to reduce offending, attitudes linked to offending behaviour.
- **‘Thinking & Behaviour’** ($n=372$; 90.1%) – centres on interpersonal skills, impulsivity, temper control, problem recognition, problem solving, awareness of consequences, understands others’ views, thinking and behaviour linked to offending behaviour.

When compared to the wider population of those on licence in the community, the DAPOL caseload had a much higher prevalence across all criminogenic needs. For the most common criminogenic needs identified above, there were large differences when compared to the wider population on licence (Relationships 63.6%; Attitudes 65.6%; Thinking & Behaviour 63.6%). Alcohol misuse was the least prevalent need within individuals on DAPOL ($n=172$; 41.6%); however, it was much more common for people on DAPOL than those generally on licence in the community (15.9%).²⁸ These data indicate that, at the point of leaving prison, a person on DAPOL was likely to have complex psychological and interpersonal needs. This could be indicative of decision-making surrounding the application of DAPOL, or reflect more general correlates associated with DA.

²⁶ As part of the public protection process, individuals in custody or on the community probation caseload are assessed to determine the level of risk of serious harm they present to others. These ratings are made by practitioners, observing national [Risk of Serious Harm Guidance](#). For further information and statistics, see [The Risk of Serious Harm of the prison and probation caseload](#)

²⁷ Data on criminogenic needs are recorded in OASys which is an operational database used to assess the risks and needs of eligible individuals in prisons and probation trusts across England and Wales. Data reflects Layer 3 assessment conducted prior to release from prison. Additional assessments continue as part of routine Probation Practice. For further information and statistics, see [Identified needs of offenders in custody and the community from the Offender Assessment System](#)

²⁸ Ibid.

The table also highlights that a large proportion of individuals on the scheme were assessed as having a high or very high RoSH rating at the start of their order ($n=344$; 77.8%). Data were also obtained from two key Actuarial Risk Assessment instruments, the Offender Group Reconviction Scale (OGRS)²⁹ and the Risk of Serious Recidivism (RSR).³⁰ Table 5.4 shows that 22.6% ($n=100$) of the cohort had an OGRS 2-year score greater than 75% and therefore viewed as having a high likelihood of reoffending within two years. This table also highlights that 36.4% ($n=161$) of the DAPOL cohort had an RSR of above 3% and therefore a higher likelihood than typical of being convicted of a further serious harmful offence. These data show that people monitored under the scheme typically had a high risk profile, consistent with DAPOL being used to manage such risks.

Table 5.4. Risks and Needs of People who Received a DAPOL Order

Structured Professional Assessments		<i>n</i>	%
SARA Completed		352	79.6
OASys Layer 3 Assessment Completed		413	93.4
Criminogenic Needs ^a	Accommodation	277	67.1
	Alcohol Misuse	172	41.6
	Attitudes	374	90.6
	Drug Misuse	226	54.7
	Employment	280	67.8
	Lifestyle & Associates	364	88.1
	Relationships	384	93.0
	Thinking & Behaviour	372	90.1
RoSH	Low	5	1.1
	Medium	92	20.8
	High	313	70.8
	Very High	31	7.0
	Data unavailable	1	0.2

²⁹ OGRS is the calculated percentage chance of reconviction within 2 years.

³⁰ RSR predicts the likelihood of an individual committing a seriously harmful offence that results in conviction two years post release. An individual with an RSR below 3% has the risk profile that is typical for the majority of those supervised in the community.

Electronic Monitoring of Domestic Abuse Perpetrators on Licence
Process Evaluation

Actuarial Risk Assessment Instrument Estimates		<i>n</i>	%
OGRS – 2 year score	24% or less	34	7.7
	25% – 49%	107	24.2
	50% – 74%	193	43.7
	75% – 89%	90	20.4
	90% or more	10	2.3
	Data unavailable	8	1.8
RSR	3% or less	279	63.1
	3% – 6.89%	138	31.2
	6.9% or more	23	5.2
	Data unavailable	2	0.5

Note. Data compiled from multiple sources including nDelius and OASys based on information at the start of the order. Column percentages may not total 100% due to rounding. ^a Criminogenic needs were extracted from the Layer 3 OASys assessment. Percentages reflect the number of individuals with a Layer 3 Assessment completed prior to the order start date, not the overall number of individuals on DAPOL. This table is also supplied as an Excel datasheet – see corresponding worksheet within the ‘data tables’ file.

6. Findings: Offender Compliance, Non-Compliance and Recall

This section summarises findings on rates of compliance and non-compliance with DAPOL. It includes an overview of successfully completed EM orders, and a summary of violation and recall statistics derived from management information data.

6.1 Completed Orders

As of the end of the evaluation period, 43 people on probation had successfully completed their EM order and not been recalled. For the majority of these completed orders, the observed order length was similar to the intended order length set by the probation practitioner. However, some completed orders were considerably shorter in duration than the intended order length. These ‘early’ completions typically reflected practitioners’ lifting requirements due to a perceived reduction in risk, or medical exemptions that occurred after the tag was fitted.³¹ The occurrence of these early completions exemplifies ongoing practitioner review during the DAPOL licence period.

6.2 Non-compliance and Recall

Alerts generated by the tags were recorded by the monitoring provider as potentially actionable tag alerts, referred to as ‘violations’. These alerts can be triggered due to the tag wearer’s behaviour, for example, by failing to adhere to a curfew requirement, entry into an exclusion zone, failing to keep the battery charged, or tampering with the device.

As the current evaluation did not capture the entire EM licence period for all DAPOL cases, violation data were assessed separately for the following groups:³²

- Cases where the order was completed prior to the end of the data collection period ($n=43$)

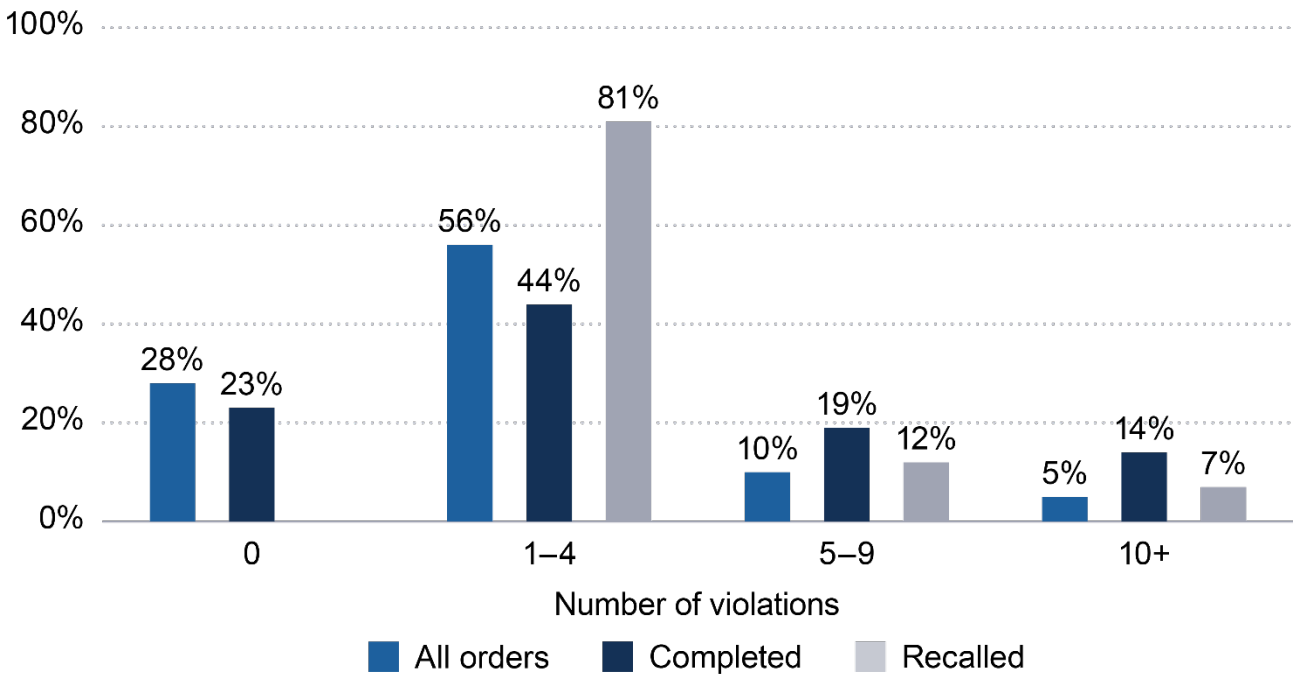
³¹ It is not possible to quantify decision making of this nature at scale. These exemplars were identified through manual review of individual case records and notes.

³² As the sample size for completed orders is relatively small, caution should be taken when interpreting these figures.

- Cases that resulted in recall ($n=139$)
- All orders ($n=442$)

During the six-month evaluation period, 71.9% of individuals had at least one violation event that was confirmed by the EM provider ($n=318$). As highlighted in Fig. 6.1., the majority of individuals had fewer than five violation events.

Figure 6.1 Confirmed Violation Events per Order
Proportion of orders



Note. All orders and completed orders are grouped by number of violations. Recalled people with zero violations have been combined into the 1–4 category for disclosure management. This figure is also supplied as an Excel datasheet – see corresponding worksheet within the ‘data tables’ file.

Table 6.1 further distils the confirmed violation events into categories. There were 1,137 violation events recorded during the data collection period. The most common reflected the person on probation failing to keep the tag charged ($n=698$; 61.4%). Of those who had successfully completed their DAPOL order, an average of 5.1 violation events were recorded per order. This rate is largely consistent with a larger study of the GPS tagging pilot in England and Wales that suggested an average of 5.8 violations per order.³³

³³ Data from the [Process Evaluation of the Global Positioning System Electronic Monitoring Pilot](#)

With an average of 2.6 per order, the present data indicated a substantially lower violation rate for those who were recalled compared with those who successfully completed the DAPOL order. This is not unexpected, given that recall will result in a short period of time on tag and therefore less time to accumulate violations. The violation data are also impacted by the volume of individuals who were recalled prior to the tag being fitted. These cases cannot accumulate many of the violation event types as most derive from the equipment itself. This assertion is supported by Table 6.1, which shows that the recalled population had a greater proportion of violation events reflecting 'not available for installation' or 'withdrawal of consent.'

Table 6.1. Volume of Confirmed Violation Events

		All Orders		Completed		Recalled	
		<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Total no. of DAPOL Orders ^a		442	-	43	-	139	-
Average no. of Violations per Order		2.6	-	5.1	-	2.6	-
Violation Type	Battery violation	698	61.4	155	71.1	174	47.3
	Location violation	118	10.4	47	21.6	30	8.2
	Not available for installation	108	9.5	4	1.8	56	15.2
	Withdrawal of consent ^b	70	6.2	3	1.4	52	14.1
	Curfew violation	59	5.2	7	3.2	20	5.4
	Equipment violation ^c	33	2.9	1	0.5	10	2.7
	Conditions of tag violation ^d	26	2.3	0	0.0	12	3.3
	Not suitable for tagging ^e	25	2.2	1	0.5	14	3.8

Note. Column percentages reflect proportion within cohort grouping (All; Completed; Recalled) ^a Count reflects the number of unique DAPOL orders assessed within this data series. ^b Occurs either when the homeowner refuses their property being used by someone on tag or the individual refuses to be monitored. ^c This includes both tampers to the tag/strap and power loss to the home monitoring unit (HMU). ^d Failed to make themselves available upon visit from the field monitoring officer. ^e Through circumstances that prevent consistent and effective monitoring of the individual. This table is also supplied as an Excel datasheet – see corresponding worksheet within the 'data tables' file.

Once a violation alert has been confirmed by the EM provider, it is referred to the probation practitioner for consideration. In certain cases, there may be a reasonable excuse for the violation alert and so no further action is required other than recording the

incident.³⁴ If the violation event is deemed unacceptable by the probation practitioner, enforcement action is taken. Enforcement actions include issuing a warning letter, a formal compliance review, or recall to prison. Of those with at least one EM violation event, 14.8% ($n=47$) were recalled prior to being fitted with a tag. EM Violation events that can occur prior to a tag being fitted include not available for installation and withdrawal of consent. A further 25.8% ($n=82$) were recalled after having the tag fitted.³⁵

Overall, around a third of individuals were recalled to prison during the six-month evaluation period ($n=139$; 31.4%).³⁶ The characteristics, offending history and order types for those recalled largely mirrored those of the wider cohort.³⁷

Recall was typically initiated following escalation of non-compliance across a range of licence conditions not limited to EM alone. However, of those recalled, the vast majority had at least one EM violation event during the six-month evaluation period ($n=129$; 92.8%), suggesting that non-compliance with the EM order may have contributed to the recall decision. A third were recalled prior to being fitted with a tag ($n=50$; 36%). This, too, could have factored in the decision to recall.

The length of time between an individual's release date and recall date was typically around 18 days (median = 18 days; min = 0 days; max = 131 days). Figure 6.2 illustrates the typical duration a person was enrolled on the DAPOL scheme before being recalled.³⁸

³⁴ Reasonable excuses for a violation include device failure, network failure, reasonable delay due to hospital admission.

³⁵ Due to data availability and quality issues on enforcement action, violation outcomes other than recall are not supplied.

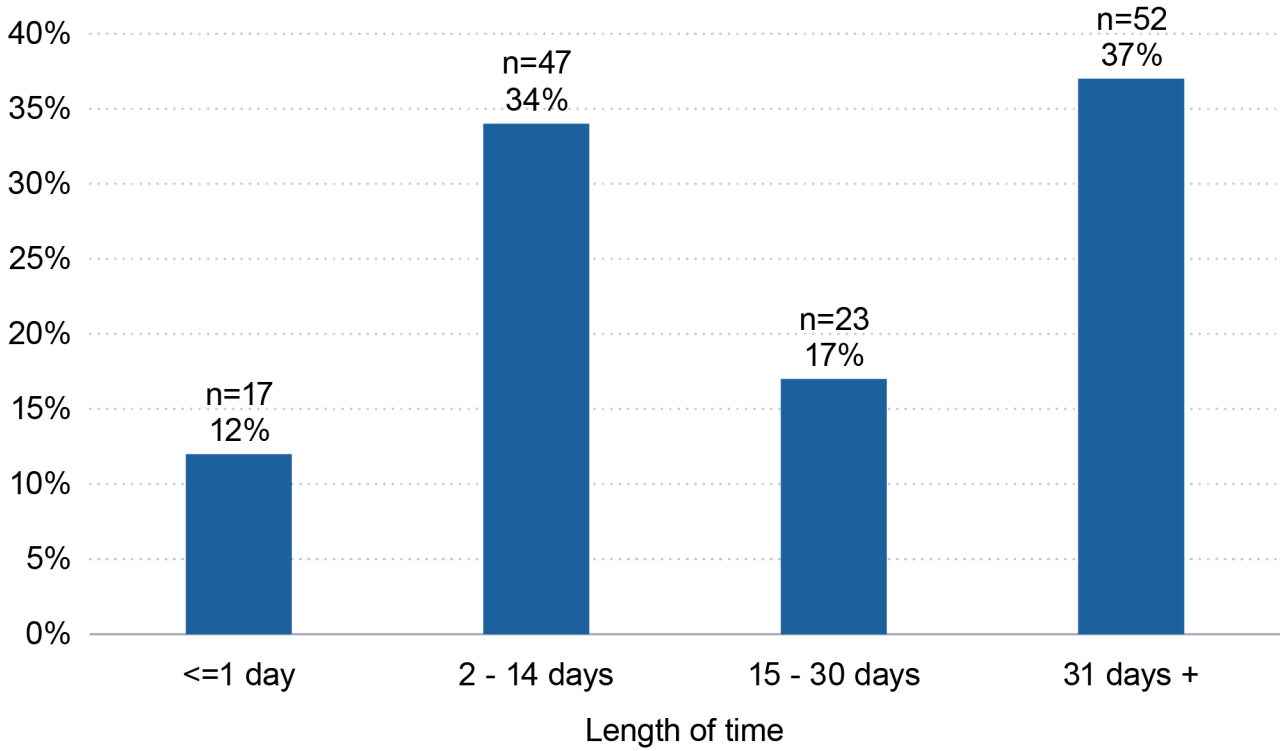
³⁶ Individuals who are released from prison on licence to continue serving their sentence under supervision in the community can be recalled to prison if they fail to comply with the conditions in their licence. This includes requirements to be of good behaviour, not to commit further offences, to live and work only as approved by the supervising officer and not travel abroad without permission. For wider information and statistics on recall, see [Offender management statistics quarterly](#).

³⁷ The low volume of recalls and completions during the during the six-month evaluation period precludes attempting to draw wider comparisons at this stage.

³⁸ Due to the length of the pilot, data on recalls occurring after the evaluation time frame are not captured. Therefore, the rate of recall may be higher than is described.

Figure 6.2 Duration Between Release Date and Recall Date

Proportion of recalled orders



Note. This figure is also supplied as an Excel datasheet – see corresponding worksheet within the 'data tables' file.

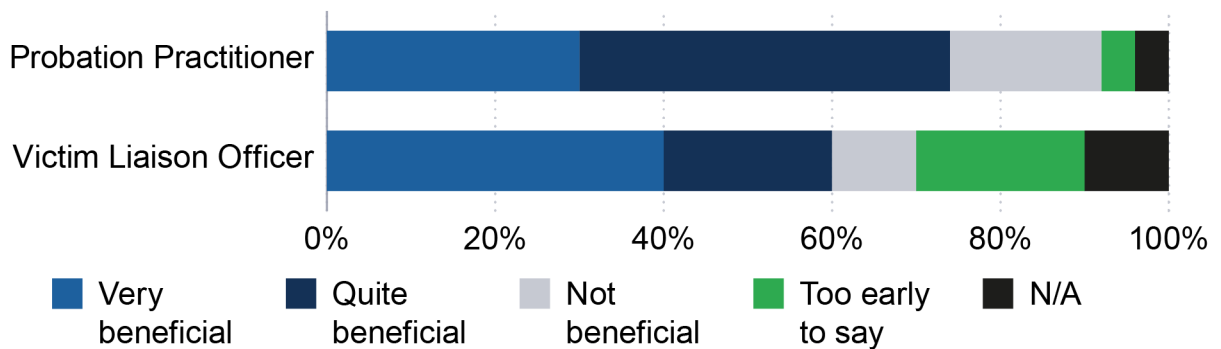
7. Findings: Perceived Impacts and Benefits of the Scheme

This section uses survey data to describe practitioners' views on any early perceived benefits of DAPOL. Findings reflect views from probation practitioners and victim liaison officers.

7.1 Risk Management

Probation practitioners and victim liaison officers were asked how beneficial they had found DAPOL in managing day-to-day DA risk ($n=33$). As highlighted in Figure 7.1, approximately three quarters of probation practitioners (74%) and 60% of victim liaison officers survey felt that the scheme was 'quite' or 'very beneficial'. 9% of the overall respondent group felt it was 'too early to say'.

Figure 7.1 Perceived Benefit to Risk Management



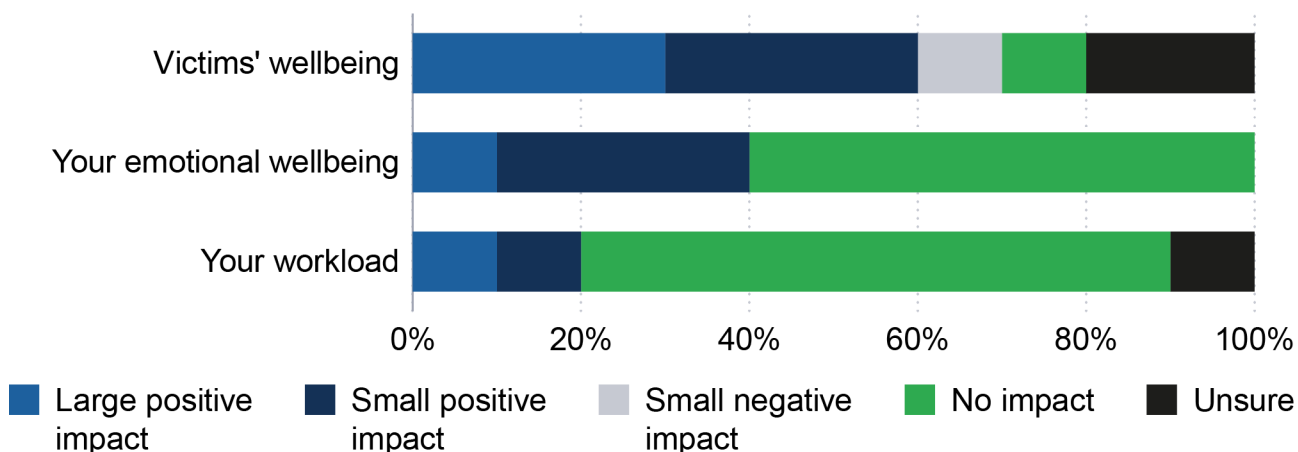
Note. Data reflect probation practitioners' responses to the question, "How beneficial have you found DAPOL to support managing day-to-day DA risks?" Victim liaison officers were asked, "Thinking specifically about the DAPOL cases we mentioned in our email, how beneficial was the inclusion of electronic monitoring in managing DA risk?" Three fixed-response options were available that described a range of perceived levels of benefit, from 'not beneficial' through to 'very beneficial'. Two additional options enabled practitioners to indicate where it was 'too early to say' or respond with 'N/A' if they were unable to comment entirely. This figure is also supplied as an Excel datasheet – see corresponding worksheet within the 'data tables' file.

7.2 Supporting Victims

Victim liaison officers ($n=10$) were additionally asked to consider whether the scheme had provided reassurance to victims. 70% reported some benefit, 10% reported ‘no benefit’. The remaining respondents felt it was ‘too early to say’ (20%).

Early scoping work with victim-facing practitioners highlighted that practitioner wellbeing could often become intertwined with victim outcomes. Consequently, victim liaison officers were also asked to consider the impacts of DAPOL to three key areas: their workload, their own emotional wellbeing and the wellbeing of the victims they work with. As shown in Figure 7.2, 40% of victim liaison officers who responded felt that there was a ‘small positive’ or ‘large positive’ impact of the scheme to their own wellbeing, and most reported a perceived ‘small positive’ or ‘large positive’ impact to their victims’ wellbeing (60%). One, however, reported a ‘small negative’ impact (10%). The majority reported that DAPOL had ‘no impact’ on their workload (70%), suggesting no detriment to their capacity to support victims. Interestingly, a small number reported a positive workload benefit, suggesting the scheme might deliver some minor operational efficiencies (20%).

Figure 7.2 Perceived Impacts to Victims and Victim Staff

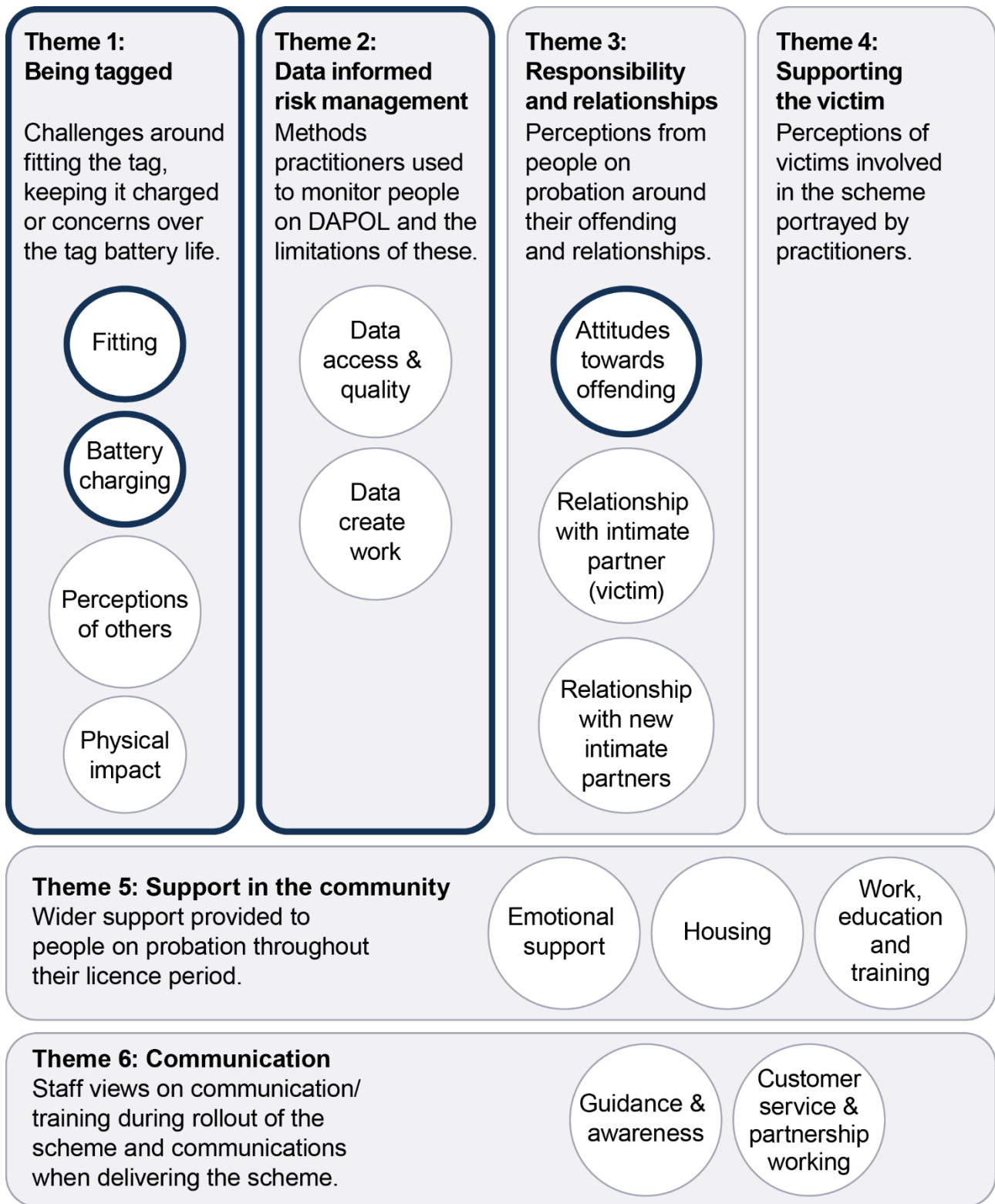


Note. Data reflect victim liaison officers’ responses to the question, “Thinking specifically about the DAPOL cases we mentioned in our email, how has the inclusion of electronic monitoring impacted the following areas?” Five fixed-response options were available which described a range of perceived levels of impact, from ‘no impact’ through to ‘large positive impact’. Two additional options enabled practitioners to indicate where they felt ‘unsure’ or respond with ‘N/A’ if they were unable to comment entirely. Zero respondents selected the ‘large negative impact’ and the ‘N/A’ option’. This figure is also supplied as an Excel datasheet – see corresponding worksheet within the ‘data tables’ file.

8. Findings: Facilitators and Barriers within the Scheme

This section describes broader qualitative findings on facilitators and barriers derived from survey, interview, and case management records data. Six overarching themes were identified: 'Being Tagged,' 'Data Informed Risk Management,' 'Responsibility and Relationships,' 'Supporting the Victim,' 'Support in the Community' and 'Communication'. The themes demonstrate the complex interplay between Probation Practice in using DAPOL alongside wider licence conditions, the numerous support services involved, and the changing needs of people on probation, their families, and victims. As illustrated in Figure 8.1, most of the themes comprised subordinate themes to further distil the data.

Figure 8.1 Themes Identified through Fieldwork & Case Management Records' Analysis



Note. Rectangles represent the six superordinate themes and a high-level description of these. Five themes were composed of subordinate themes, as indicated within the circles. A darker border highlights themes that were identified in both fieldwork and case management records. This figure is also supplied as an Excel datasheet – see corresponding worksheet within the ‘data tables’ file.

Theme 1: Being Tagged

This theme centres on views on the issues raised around fitting, charging, and the impact this had on daily routine, as well as the physical impact of wearing a tag and views on how others might perceive a person wearing a tag.

Fitting

There were multiple instances identified within the case management records of people on probation failing to be at their agreed address as required for the tag to be fitted, resulting in delays in people being monitored. This led to some staff questioning whether the scheme was effective:

“The majority of DAPOL [tag fitting] tasks I attended were ‘No Shows’, so from my experience it [the scheme] did not appear to be having much effect.”

Probation practitioners expressed concern that fitting delays could impact risk management. Such instances resulted in significant additional work for probation staff, approved premises staff, tag fitters and the monitoring provider to resolve and ensure that no breaches had occurred. Victims aware of the perpetrator’s tag requirements, via the VCS for example, were also seen to be negatively affected by delays in fitting:

“[The victim] said that [the person on probation] has been going round their house. They were aware [the person on probation] was due to have GPS monitoring but they are never there when they are due to fit the tag. [The victim] is concerned and has lost hope.”

One practitioner voiced that they wanted to be able to request having the tag fitted at the prison to ensure it happened rapidly and better safeguard victims. This was not possible under the existing scheme. A few days between prison release and fitting was typical.

“[I] was hoping for tag to be fitted at the prison before leaving, as it was considered [that the tag wearer] was a very high risk to [the] victim, but it took 3–4 days to have the tag fitted.”

Perceived delays or changes to planned tag fitting also affected people on probation. Some reported feeling anxious if the tag was not fitted as expected:

“[The monitoring provider] had gone out to fit the tag... [The person on probation] disclosed a medical condition which resulted in being told that they couldn’t have a tag fitted. They reported feeling stressed because they now do not have a tag on.”

There were also delays reported with tags being replaced. Probation practitioners expressed frustration that they could not always “trust” that the tag would be fitted. Furthermore, some tag wearers expressed difficulty in reaching the monitoring provider about tag replacement:

“[The person on probation] referenced having issues with the tag... They called [the monitoring provider] on multiple occasions. They said they feel like cutting it off. I [probation practitioner] recommended not doing this, but to keep logging this and enquiring.”

There was some discussion around the time of day that tags could be fitted. One tag wearer expressed feeling “lucky” that their appointment was earlier in the evening. Others complained because fitting took place late at night. This was said to disrupt routine, particularly if tag wearers did not usually stay up late. This frustration was exacerbated when providers did not attend the tag fitting as expected:

“I think 12:00 at night is a bit excessive. You know, I’m not one of these people that stays up... I go to sleep [early]. So... you stay up till 12 and they don’t turn up it’s, you know, it can ruffle your feathers a little bit”.

However, tag wearers praised staff who came to fit the tag for their pleasant approach, providing help and advice for the tags, and exhibiting a discreet approach to their visits:

“To be fair, they did a pretty good job. They kept their badges hidden, they didn’t come in a big white van that said ‘Tagging Company’...I think they did a fantastic job in the sense of that.”

Tag wearers also empathised with the tag fitters’ role and the challenges they were thought to have faced, such as workload and dealing with individuals resistant to having the tag fitted.

“They was polite enough, you know. They was a professional and they only had a job to do. At the end of the day, I didn’t blame them for having to put it on my leg.”

Battery Charging

There were frequent instances of tag wearers reporting issues with charging their tag and, in some cases, the battery depleting leading to a breach. The uncertainty of the tag remaining charged, knowing when the tag was low on battery, or the responsibility of keeping it charged, was sometimes reported to cause anxiety. Probation staff highlighted that difficulties may reflect lack of visible battery indicator on the tag itself:

“[The person on probation] had some issues with [the tag]...the battery’s been depleting quite quickly...they can’t tell when the battery is dying cause, obviously, it’s not like a phone – you can’t just look at how much percentage is left – and [they have] really struggled with that but, again, that is very common feedback for a lot of tags.”

Some people on probation tried to minimise their anxiety by charging excessively or carrying a charging device on their person.

“[The person on probation] advised they had some anxiety around the GPS tag and have taken the steps to carrying the mains charging device around.”

There were cases where the monitoring provider identified that the tag wearer was not charging their tag appropriately. Identifying whether the tag was faulty, or if the tag wearer was failing to charge the tag correctly, resulted in additional work for probation staff and the monitoring provider. While some issues reflected failure on the tag wearer’s part to charge adequately, there were also instances where the tag appeared to be faulty:

“The battery on the tag didn’t seem to be working properly ... [the person on probation said they] charged it for 8 hours when it only needed 2 and it was already dying.”

Some tag wearers intimated that ageing equipment could potentially explain poor battery life:

“I think the only downside is ...maintenance wise, it’s like anything. Like any electrical device, the longer you charge it, the more you charge it, the less the battery life, the more the more issues that come with it.”

Others felt that better, more modern technology could reduce the need for charging:

“I think with that the technology that we’re in, we’re beyond these charging tags. There is tags out there which [are] smaller build, don’t have to charge it, you can just forget about it. Every single day I’m looking at this tag like 3 times a day, charging it. It’s constantly on my mind.”

Some people on probation initially struggled to formulate a consistent charging routine. Probation practitioners worked with tag wearers to suggest charging routines, remind them how to charge the battery effectively, and communicate the consequences of battery depletion. However, some people on probation wanted more help with reminders to keep the battery charged:

“I think this should be looked at, the battery going dead, and a phone call should be put over to the [tag wearer] to say: ‘look your tag’s dead, get yourself back on charge before you get in trouble.’ You know what I mean? Because I’ve only got three warnings and that there just took one of my warnings.”

Nonetheless, there were times when last-minute changes in the tag wearer’s routine resulted in failure to charge, and some tag wearers reported difficulty with fitting charging in around day-to-day living:

“[The person on probation] said it can be difficult to charge for long periods of time when they are dealing with children.”

Charging was reported to affect people’s capacity to enjoy day-to-day activities:

“I do it once a day at [time] which impacts my life – going out at night...if I want to go out for a meal, I’d have to go [earlier]... By the time you eat the food, you need to be back [in time to charge the tag], so you kinda think...can you have a social life?”

Although charging was often cited as a source of frustration, some tag wearers recognised that, regardless of these frustrations, they needed to be responsible for keeping the tag charged:

“I had a couple of like warnings due to a battery being dead ... Don't make no sense to me but then, obviously, I just have to come up with a new plan to charge it at a more convenient time so it don't die”

Perceptions of Others

There were several comments from people on probation about how they felt that they were perceived wearing a tag. The visibility of the tag was felt to invite judgement, or being viewed as a criminal:

“It's more of an embarrassment factor. I mean, I know that... [the tag is] there for a reason, cause you've done something wrong, but you don't necessarily wanna tell the world that you've got it either.”

This prevented some tag wearers from taking part in activities, such as going to the gym or participating in group exercise:

“[It's] people's perception. You would be less likely to engage in [group exercise]...I wouldn't want to engage in [group exercise] having the tag...I'd rather not have the...the looks.”

Those who did continue with these activities reported the need to wear clothing that would conceal the tag. The need to do this in warmer weather was a noted concern, however. Some people on probation acknowledged that the tag was justified to track people who have committed crime, but felt it was necessary to reduce the size of the tag. This would enable them to participate in positive activities for their health and wellbeing, and to better reintegrate back into society without the fear of judgement.

“You've got to work your way back into the community, and everyone with this tag on, it's hard to blend in, if you know what I mean, because you just stand out like a sore thumb, like you've just come out of prison... if it was a much more subtle approach, like a slimmer build, it would help a lot.”

Additionally, some people on probation did not want to be labelled as “domestic abusers.” Wearing the tag was viewed as tarnishing them in a way that was inconsistent with their identity, as this probation practitioner highlighted:

“Some of the [people on probation] find it difficult ...that it’s related to domestic abuse, I think. I think that the name gives it a negative...negative connotation straight away. Domestic abuse...they don’t want to be ‘domestic abusers’, and they don’t like to be labelled as that.”

Physical Impact

This physical size of the tag was reported to impact some tag wearers, for example, by preventing them from wearing certain footwear for work, or precluding the use of certain exercise equipment:

“I can’t ride a bike. You can’t ride cause it [the tag] keeps on hitting onto the cog going round and I’m too afraid of the [expletive] thing breaking, so I’ve got to pack my bike up and go on foot”.

Those who felt impacted by the size of the tag suggested it be made smaller. Some suggested a wrist worn device would be both less overt and less disruptive to day-to-day life.

Theme 2: Data Informed Risk Management

This theme captures views on the role of data in risk management. The first subordinate theme reflects views on data access and quality. The second covers perspectives from operational staff on how data create additional work.

Data Access & Quality

Tag data was cited to offer the potential to provide a useful addition to risk management for assessing wider compliance, corroborating tag wearers’ accounts of their whereabouts at relevant times, or as a source of evidence to exonerate. For example, in some cases, the tag wearer was required to disclose any new intimate relationships to their probation team. There were, however, cases where the person on probation tried to conceal such relationships. In these instances, practitioners sometimes combined data from the tag with other sources of intelligence to assess and manage the risk of DA to prospective partners:

“I asked [the person on probation] who resides [at a street address] as [the tag showed they] stayed there [on multiple occasions into the night]. They stated this was [an intimate partner] they have been seeing a few times... I explained that I need to be made aware of these, as per their licence conditions.”

Probation practitioners requested GPS data to verify tag wearers' whereabouts retrospectively. These requests were typically made following a licence breach notification, missed probation appointments, or after a disclosure by the tag wearer. Such disclosures were generally to highlight adherence to requirements, such as following a pre-agreed overnight stay away from the usual approved address, or to confess an unintended infringement, for example, momentarily passing through an exclusion zone due to a traffic diversion. The capacity to explain such occurrences or evidence compliance using tag data appeared beneficial to tag wearers:

“I asked [the person on probation] if they had contact with [the victim] ... They said I can check the tag and this will show they had not.”

Several people on probation commented that knowing their probation officer could access tag data provided a protective factor against false allegations that could be made about them:

“It gives you a bit of reassurance because nobody can say: ‘you were here doing this,’ cause you’re GPS tagged, so they know where you are. You’ve got perfect cover. You can say: ‘well, you can check my location’ so they can put any allegation against you whilst you’re wearing it, but it gives you that reassurance.”

While the tag seemed to provide practitioners with valuable insight there were, however, limitations reported about the tag data. Some probation practitioners appeared dissatisfied with the process to access the data, the time it took to receive the data, or the quality of the data:

“I called the urgent number for data relating to breaches. [I had] concerns that [the person on probation] was not residing at the address. Advised this would still need to go through the GPS email.”

Some practitioners commented that delays in receiving data or breach notifications from the monitoring provider could make EM ineffective for risk management of DA cases:

“I have found it difficult to obtain information from [the monitoring provider]. The information takes too long to be sent back to us and these tags are fitted because of risk. The fact that we can only receive [an amount of data] at a time, due to the lag in time of getting the information, this can be disruptive to the management of the case and our ability to protect the victim.”

Additionally, some probation practitioners criticised the quality of the data, describing the maps as unclear and “zoomed out” which made it difficult to pinpoint tag wearers’ exact locations. The scaling and resolution of maps appeared to cause ambiguity when needing to look at more precise location information. Others were unsure if they could get data that would be more precise:

“[The data] would, sort of, tell you what area [the person on probation] was going to and that kind of thing. But ... quite often [the person on probation] would say: ‘well, I’m visiting my [associate], which is on the same road or estate,’ and I don’t know if we could actually get the exact data.”

Data Create Work

A bidirectional relationship was identified between wider workload pressures and the capacity to understand and make best use of tag data. Probation staff expressed how high workloads reduced their ability to engage with the training materials that explained the DAPOL scheme. These pressures later affected their capacity to utilise the data to its full potential for supervised DAPOL cases. Requesting data was also said to be an “added task” for probation practitioners, which was difficult to manage alongside an already heavy workload:

“[We need] support to gain monitoring data – my caseload is currently unmanageable so requesting additional information can be problematic.”

One practitioner shared how their workload meant they were unable to complete the exploratory data checks they felt would be beneficial. Reviewing the data was seen as a substantial undertaking. They felt they only had time to check when they had suspicions:

“In the ideal world, I would like to be able to... every now and again, request [data] just to see, just to verify somebody’s day, to know: ‘what were you doing yesterday?’ ... I could just verify what they were saying.”

Probation practitioners voiced how useful data could be in supervising DA risk in the community, but they felt that improvements could maximise the potential benefits:

“It is something that’s really helpful and...it does strengthen your risk management plan a lot if... you can actively check if they’re [the person on probation] adhering to the other conditions that were in place to manage the risk and stuff. So, I think it is, it is effective, it just needs a few little tweaks here and there to improve how we can access the data, and how quickly we can access and things like that, but otherwise it’s really helpful.”

It was suggested that daily data reports, data highlights to illustrate patterns, or a portal practitioners could access at their convenience could reduce the workload burden and make a more proactive service:

“If I got them [the data reports] daily then I could monitor where they’re going every day. Whereas, when I do random dates [as I do now], it might be that [the person on probation has] not gone to a particular place on the date I’ve requested, but the day before they have.”

Theme 3: Responsibility & Relationships

This theme centres on attitudes towards offending and relationships. The data suggested that an important part of probation practice within DAPOL was understanding how the tag wearer perceived their role in their offending history, and their attitudes towards relationships going forward.

Attitudes Towards Offending

There were cases of people on probation recognising the triggers for their offending. These were often cited as mental health, adverse childhood experiences, emotional dysregulation, and addiction:

“We had a discussion around how things had changed since the index offence...[The person on probation] confirmed that they had not been able to communicate their feelings properly at the time of the offence and this had led to them acting out in anger. They also showed an understanding around the impact that alcohol had played in relation to their offending.”

Some tag wearers voiced taking positive steps to avoid further offending, including removing themselves from triggering situations, or creating new strategies in existing relationships for conflict resolution. Some looked to their probation practitioner for advice on their relationships, who in turn provided constructive advice and signposting to encourage building healthy relationships. Practitioners tried to explain how the tag, when used alongside wider conditions, could be beneficial:

“[The person on probation] wants to comply with the licence although feels that restrictions are too over the top. However, they say that they cannot blame anyone but themselves. We looked at their restrictions...I pointed out they support their goal of staying away from alcohol and drugs and offer a level of protection of proving where they are at a given time.”

Some probation practitioners felt that the tag could promote a good attitude towards compliance. The physical presence of the tag, coupled with the routine of charging, was seen as a reminder that could deter further offending:

“I think it does act as a deterrent and a reminder that they’ve got exclusion zones and non-contacts because it’s on their leg, and every day they have to charge it, so they know what that’s there for.”

Still, several people on probation expressed dissatisfaction with having an EM order for DA:

“I explained [to the person on probation that the tag] relates to them being an offender that engaged in DA, and there were concerns about their risk to the victim, and the tag would enable monitoring of the [person on probation’s] location. They said they understood the concept but do not like it.”

When explored in interviews, some tag wearers viewed EM as unnecessary for them to live a law-abiding life, feeling as though they had already been rehabilitated or “served their time.” Some people on probation felt that others needed a tag to deter them from offending or manage their risk, but it was not necessary for them:

“Some people need it, some people don’t, and I don’t think it’s a bad thing, erm, but people like me – I don’t need it round my leg to be, you know, told what to do... I’m pretty much set in my own ways, like I said, I’m not going back to jail regardless.”

Others accepted their previous harms but felt that their overall treatment was not proportionate when considering the nature of their offending. One person on probation discussed having a history of coercive control. They felt that a lack of physical violence on their part should perhaps absolve them of intervention, and that previous partners should not have as much of a stake in what happens next:

“I’m not saying that... what I’ve been doing is right. ...But I’ve never been violent... I’m just known as manipulator and a controller... But with [people] who know your history, what’s the only thing they can do to someone like me? Put me in prison? I just believe that [some people] have too much power when it comes to that situation, yeah.”

Despite most attributing their law-abiding behaviour to their own locus of control, there was recognition that the tag could help prevent offending behaviour by keeping individuals away from previous negative influences, or simply by acting as a reminder to follow licence conditions:

“If you want to make a change in their life, the tags they’re good, the tag’s very good, ... it can take your mind off doing crime...it can put brain waves in your head to move on in life, you know? But yeah, it’s down to the person at the end of the day... [Having a tag is] like your mum and dad round your ankle: ‘stop being bad; stop being naughty!’ ...”

Others, however, felt the tag had no impact:

“It doesn’t make a difference. You know, if I wanted to go out and commit a criminal offence, I can go out and commit a criminal offence – it’s just they know where I am and if an offence was committed in that area then you know they could say, well, s/he was in that area.”

There were instances of people on probation blaming the victim, downplaying their offence, and appearing to lack empathy or recognition of the consequences of DA. This might explain why some tag wearers reported feeling that their conditions were not proportionate to their offence, or reflective of the nature of their offending behaviour:

“[The person on probation] asked [to change some conditions]. They said that no one understands why these conditions are in place... They said that they had not broken any bones.”

Some voiced aggrieved attitudes towards ex-partners, or strong, derogatory views of women. Probation practitioners sought to challenge these through interventions delivered within regular supervision or referral to wider services, alongside the provision of EM. Such grievances were sometimes coupled with resistance towards wider licence conditions, for example, failure to attend probation appointments or disinterest in interventions:

“[The person on probation] called to check what [structured interventions] they have and if they could do them over the phone instead of coming into the office. They said they did not want to do [the structured interventions] and put the phone down. I tried calling them back and they cut me off.”

Relationship with the Intimate Partner (Victim)

There were numerous examples within the case management records of people on probation restoring contact with their intimate partner, and maintaining a relationship with them throughout their licence, where their licence permitted. Probation practitioners used supervision meetings to provide tools to help them have healthier relationships:

“[The person on probation and the victim] appeared to be pursuing a relationship... We discussed effective and ineffective [conflict resolution] strategies. [The person

on probation] agreed to discuss this with [their partner] so they can devise an agreed strategy together that works for them both.”

In some cases, the person on probation recognised they were not yet in the right place for a relationship, providing an opportunity to focus on improving their own behavioural regulation first. However, there were examples of individuals putting a relationship before their own progression through licence, suggesting the EM conditions alone did not assure compliance. For example, one person on probation considered declining accommodation due to rules which prohibited a partner from staying overnight, despite a scarcity of approved accommodation that met the requirements of their licence.

There were also cases where contact with the victim/ex-partner was prohibited under the licence conditions. However, despite the restrictions, some victims attempted to regain contact with the person on probation, either directly, or through associates or agencies:

“[The victim] was waiting at the bus stop outside [location]... at the same time [the person on probation] was leaving [the location]. The [victim did not work or live] near [the location].”

Some tag wearers struggled to understand why victims and ex-partners did not have restrictions on attempting to contact them. They expressed frustration that responding to contact could result in a recall to prison.

There were also cases where victims wanted restrictions lifted for particular occasions such as birthdays and celebrations:

“[The victim said] that they want the licence conditions lifting, especially before [a celebration]. They will approach [agency] to advise that they would like [the person on probation] to have contact.”

Where the licence conditions did not allow contact with victims, some people on probation voiced looking forward to their conditions ending so they could rekindle their relationship with their former partner. This could suggest that, even if the tag wearer complies with requirements during their licence period, this may not continue long-term.

Relationships with New Intimate Partners

Several people on probation were keen to establish new intimate relationships. In some cases, the person on probation was required to disclose these to the probation team. Some tag wearers voiced objection in having to do so, whereas others cooperated willingly, as illustrated in this probation practitioner's reflection:

"I explained to [the person on probation] that [the new partner]...wanted to know their licence conditions... The [person on probation] was fully willing to discuss these and any other concerns. I stated that it was important for them both to feel that they could approach me and that we had a dialogue to keep everyone safe."

There were cases where probation practitioners worked to ensure any DA risk to the prospective partner was minimised. This sometimes involved discussions around disclosure under the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme:³⁹

"[The person on probation had] concerns about 'Clare's Law'. They said they didn't know how to go about it. I advised them to tell [their new partner] about their past and invite [the new partner] into the [probation office]...If there were gaps in [the new partner's] knowledge and we had concerns about this we can address it."

Some tag wearers reported that curfew restrictions reduced their opportunity to meet people, which resulted in them seeking alternative ways to socialise. In some cases, tag wearers used the internet to meet new sexual partners or to browse pornography during their curfew period. Probation practitioners worked with tag wearers to ensure that internet usage was legally appropriate and to highlight risks, for example, from the inability to confirm a person's age online, or to interact with materials which would result in immediate recall to prison:

"[The person on probation] stated [they use the internet] because they enjoy socialising as they can't go out [during curfew]. From what I could see, [the person

³⁹ The Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme, also known as 'Clare's Law,' enables the police to disclose information to a victim or potential victim of domestic abuse about their partner or ex-partner's previous abusive or violent offending. [Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme factsheet](#)

on probation] was messaging with the purpose of having sex or finding a partner. Discussed risks.”

Theme 4: Supporting the Victim

Fieldwork identified a superordinate theme reflecting early insights into how the scheme was working for victims, and practitioners who work with victims. These views largely reflected those reported by victim liaison officers, but probation practitioners working directly with tag wearers echoed the findings.

The tag was said to provide peace of mind to victims, who reported relief that perpetrators were being monitored. It was recognised that the tag could provide evidence if the perpetrator was not abiding by their conditions. Practitioners working with victims hoped that the scheme would bring greater use of EM alongside the application of exclusion zones. Staff working with victims said that some reported feeling reassured that the tag provided substantiating evidence if they made an accusation against the tag wearer, which could not be achieved with a freedom of movement restriction alone:

“The victim said that the DAPOL tag has given them enough peace of mind to be able to sleep at night, knowing that if they see the offender in the exclusion zone, or even if they are informed by a third party that they see the offender in the zone, it is not a matter of their word against the offender’s word. Now it can be proven and, if so, there is evidence for possible recall.”

Similarly, practitioners highlighted that DAPOL provided them with a better way to corroborate non-compliance, requiring less work on the victims’ part to prove breaches. This was seen as a way to restore confidence in justice:

“[DAPOL gives practitioners] a quicker way of proving a breach of an exclusion zone without constantly having to go back and forth to the victim, increasing their anxiety and their lack of trust in the Justice system.”

Probation practitioners supervising people on DAPOL also felt the tag was a positive step for protecting victims. In cases where the victim had moved to a protected residence, practitioners recognised that the tag could provide insight into whether the tag wearer had become aware of that protected location. Data could also highlight if the person on

probation was routinely going near an exclusion zone and therefore potentially putting a victim at risk.

“[You can] see if somebody’s not complying with the conditions that you’ve put in place, and if there is kind of any imminent risk concerns to victims or children, so I think it’s really useful.”

However, victim liaison officers reported mixed experiences of their involvement with DAPOL cases, and what they knew of the scheme more generally. One victim liaison officer reported feeling “out the loop” and felt it would be more effective to reassure victims safety if they had more knowledge of the scheme. They felt that EM schemes seem to get “rolled into one.” They wanted to be able to talk confidently with victims about how EM is being used:

“I want to know...so that I can give the [victim the] correct information because.. there’s different types of tagging, tell me what they are so I, at least, I can give that relevant information to that victim.”

Some victim liaison officers reported sharing information with probation practitioners to monitor if a breach had occurred, whereas others had not been notified that DAPOL was in place. While only certain cases will involve the victim liaison team, one victim liaison officer highlighted the value of having that involvement:

“There was a discussion that probation felt that there was no need for an exclusion zone if using DAPOL.... As a result the victim became distressed and, eventually, an exclusion zone was agreed in conjunction with DAPOL.”

Theme 5: Support in the Community

This theme captures the nature of support delivered by probation practitioners to a person on the DAPOL scheme. Support typically involved providing guidance on tags and any wider licence conditions, delivering counselling or relationship interventions, signposting to relevant healthcare services, and support with finding accommodation, education, and work.

Emotional Support

Some tag wearers sought advice from their probation team by sharing recent life situations or disagreements and reflecting on how to make positive changes. Others were resistant to sharing or receiving support, particularly during emotionally difficult periods. Several people on probation talked about having no-one to turn to, feeling isolated, or a lack of trust in others:

“I asked [the person on probation] how they feel... they said they’re not really bothered, they only care for themselves, doesn’t get close to anyone as they can only count on themselves.”

There were also cases where they shared how guilt affected their wellbeing:

“[The person on probation] said they feel everyone else is getting punished for their behaviour and they can’t cope with the guilt...their children are sad.”

Several sought support from their probation team outside of scheduled meetings; such requests were often seeking reassurance or advice. Some tag wearers would voluntarily phone or text to share positive outcomes. There were also cases where people on probation would reach out for wellbeing support when in crisis. Whilst there were no references to the tag itself causing low mood, there were numerous instances where tag wearers reported depression or suicidal ideation due to previous trauma, feelings of guilt, isolation or loss of contact:

“[The person on probation] is down and spending all of their time [isolated]... They say that they wanted to commit suicide due to not seeing their children or [the victim].”

Housing

Most individuals in the case management records sample lived in an approved premises at some point during their licence period. In some cases, people on probation reported that the approved premises was positive in helping them settle back in the community. One was concerned about their stay ending, as they recognised that the transition was previously a critical period where offending behaviour occurred. However, some people on

probation had concerns about their accommodation. They felt that they would be around drug users, and this could increase their risk of reoffending:

“[The person on probation] disclosed that they are surrounded by drugs, and it is harder to resist than in custody...they said the drugs they take are easier to get in the community. [The approved premises provider] tried really hard to engage them but [the person on probation] is determined that they want to go back to prison.”

Approved premises staff often served as an intermediary between the tag wearer, Probation and any support services. They also often worked with Probation and the monitoring provider to corroborate information from the tag wearer or the tag itself:

“The tag records showed [a breach]. [A member of approved premises staff] informed the monitoring provider that they had seen and chatted with [the person on probation] during that time in the garden... [The approved premises staff recommended] to the monitoring provider that that they may need to return to reconfigure the map perimeters to include the garden.”

There were examples of tag wearers struggling to find accommodation after leaving the approved premises. In some cases, concerns around finding accommodation seemed to be exacerbated by the accommodation requirements for the tag, or provider restrictions due to the tag wearer’s history, risks or needs. There were also challenges around consent to install and check the home monitoring equipment, where the tag wearer resided with a friend or relative:

“[The homeowner] saw this [visit from the monitoring provider] as an invasion of their privacy, given that they came unannounced.”

Work, Education and Training

A small number of people on probation reported feeling that some of their licence conditions restricted work or training opportunities. Most of these issues were not specific to EM, but reflected requirements that would often coincide with DAPOL, given the risk profile of individuals monitored under the scheme.

Curfew and sign-ins were reported by some tag wearers to limit the opportunity to attend employment or training at particular times, or limited opportunities further afield due to journey times.

“[The person on probation] complained strenuously that they are struggling with attending [education/training] and having to get back to [the Approved Premises] to sign in [during the daytime].”

There were also cases where risk of contact with a prohibited person, such as the victim, precluded certain opportunities. For example, wanting to work in a public space where the victim may frequent. Probation practitioners worked with people on probation to explore potential employment opportunities, considering the stage in their licence and individual risk factors. It was highlighted that longer term demonstrations of compliance could allow some conditions to relax:

“[The person on probation] appeared motivated to find employment and has discussed movement of evening curfew.... Explained that nights would not be appropriate at this time, but consideration later in the licence would be reviewed.”

Theme 6: Communication

A theme around ‘communication’ was identified through fieldwork. This centred on how communication was used to build operational awareness of the DAPOL scheme and how communication affected relationships between stakeholders.

Guidance & Awareness

Several practitioners felt there were gaps in the guidance for DAPOL, particularly around the stages after the licence condition had been determined. Some probation staff were uncertain of what data they could get from the tag, or how they could use it:

“There is lot of guidance on people who are eligible, but not a lot of guidance on what to do when the tag is fitted, how to get the data, who to contact, [or] how long it takes.”

Similarly, the monitoring provider reported a broader lack of awareness of the scheme:

“I believe there should be a mandatory online training course as some of my colleagues were not aware of it.”

Some probation practitioners asserted that it was not possible to become fully confident with interventions like DAPOL through training alone, as they needed to put the process into practice first. This familiarisation with new schemes was recognised to take time and, to some degree, be a feature of the challenges of their work:

“I think, ultimately, as probation officers we’re used to getting new things put on us and then just having to adjust to it”.

There was evidence that some practitioners felt overwhelmed with the volume of new interventions being added. Differing processes for each of the wider EM schemes exacerbated these concerns:

“Having a different process for each monitoring option is difficult to navigate and the processes are clumsy. Having the conditions for licences would be helpful, along with how to explain this to people on probation before we add the condition.”

Lastly, there was a reported lack of awareness of DAPOL within prisons. Some community-based probation practitioners reporting having DAPOL licence applications questioned or erroneously rejected by prison staff. This meant that practitioners felt they had to “spread the word” by supplying guidance to other staff.

“It’s not very well advertised, and I have had some difficulty suggesting the tag for individuals in prison in areas outside of the [pilot area] when the person will be residing in the [pilot area] upon release.”

This confusion was echoed across probation practitioners, prison staff and monitoring providers, particularly regarding the pilot area:

“The most common doubt I have seen is, if it’s the subject’s residence that has to be in [the pilot area], or if it’s the managing probation office that has to be in [the pilot area]... or if both the subject’s residence and the probation office that has to be in [the pilot area].”

Customer Service & Partnership Working

There were some difficulties raised around communication and ways of working. The monitoring provider expressed frustration with receiving incomplete or incorrect documentation. It was highlighted that documentation errors may not be obvious to staff at the monitoring centre, who have limited capacity to independently verify the content. This often resulted in additional work between the monitoring provider and probation staff:

“There is often a situation where a Licence Conditions Notification Form is required ...If we [the monitoring provider] received duly completed versions of the Licence Conditions Notification form with the DAPOL requirement clearly identified, this would save having to send a query to establish whether DAPOL is required, or not, by Probation.”

Fieldwork suggested a shortage of people to deal with the administrative burden associated with DAPOL. For example, several probation practitioners reported struggling to reach the monitoring provider to resolve enquiries, or to request data.

“On a number of occasions I have tried to call [the monitoring provider] to enquire about something or ask about delays in information – I have been kept waiting for over 30 minutes, and generally give up”.

Similarly, there were reports from people on probation struggling to resolve issues with their tag. This could trigger frustrated and unhelpful behaviours, which appeared to contribute to a further breakdown of communication, as was highlighted by this tag wearer:

“The [approved premises staff] have emailed them [the monitoring provider] but they did nothing about it. They haven’t been to [resolve the tag issue] and they’re having people coming in here every night fitting tags to other people, so I don’t see what problem is. They’ve been funny about it and they’ve hung up on me a few

times as well, erm, ...it's kind of wound me up a bit and I've stopped answering the phone to them because I'm not getting on with them."

Some people on probation reported delays in equipment being updated to reflect changes in licence conditions, for example, where a curfew had been extended or removed and the home monitoring unit had not updated. This resulted in erroneous alert notifications, additional work for practitioners and the monitoring provider, and frustration for the tag wearer:

"My curfew got removed... I've been going to [location] and when I get back the phone's ringing and I'm telling them [the monitoring provider], like I told them [several] days in a row last week, that I've not got a curfew and, erm, they said on the second day: 'oh, we'll write it down and we'll log it on the computer' but then it rang again the next day."

9. Conclusion

This report presented a process evaluation of a new EM scheme aimed at managing risk of DA perpetrators on release from prison. Findings were drawn from administrative data, longitudinal qualitative analyses of case management files, and fieldwork conducted with tag wearers and people working to deliver the service. The research aimed to understand how DAPOL was being used, the context it was being delivered in, and to highlight elements of DAPOL that were working well and any improvements that could be made.

The findings suggest that the scheme was generally well received by practitioners. Most practitioners reported feeling that DAPOL helped them to manage risk in complex DA cases, which was a primary aim of DAPOL. Later evaluation will test whether this results in concrete benefits to reoffending. The research also identified some potential limitations in service delivery that could improve the operational effectiveness. Some of these, such as confusion around paperwork and eligibility, might reasonably be expected in the first few months of any new intervention. These are expected to improve as awareness of the scheme increases. Other difficulties, such as practical limitations of wearing a tag, were not specific to DAPOL but are reported frequently in other studies of EM across the world. These highlight wider limitations that affect EM programmes generally.

This report closes by summarising key examples of good practice, lessons learnt and an overview of wider limitations of EM.

9.1 Examples of Good Practice

- **Reviewing the necessity:** Probation practitioners were seen to apply an EM order length that matched the wider licence period, up to 12-months. Practitioners advised people on probation how they could progress through their licence and how restrictions could gradually be lessened with clear demonstrations of compliance. Cases were identified where order lengths were reduced, and the EM order removed prior to the end of the wider licence period. This exemplifies good practice; DAPOL was used to support risk management, and through periodic

review, conditions were lifted when no longer deemed necessary and proportionate.

- **A working alliance:** Probation officers were seen to manage two roles while supporting people on DAPOL: promoting compliance and acting in a supportive, guiding capacity. This evaluation found substantial evidence of practitioners providing support in many elements of tag wearers' lives, during mental health crises, housing instability and addiction, for example. Practitioners were found to develop positive working relationships, where people on probation felt able to turn to their practitioner for advice on managing relationships and navigating feelings. Practitioners' efforts to build these effective relationships should be commended. Aside from the direct benefits to people on probation, there was qualitative evidence that doing so promoted disclosures associated with increased risk to others, for example, in forming new relationships.

9.2 Lessons Learnt

- **Getting data:** Probation practitioners spent considerable time trying to secure and interpret GPS data. They reported frustration with reaching monitoring staff via phone or email and experienced long waiting times. Some probation practitioners felt that a data portal they could access at their convenience would maximise the benefits to risk management. They felt that direct access to tag data could substantially reduce time spent on securing data, freeing up time to focus on managing their caseload. Finding ways to speed up and improve access to data would benefit further expansion of the scheme.
- **Guidance and tools:** Some staff reported feeling there were inadequate resources to deliver DAPOL; however, there were multiple areas where administrative issues created unnecessary work. For example, monitoring staff reported errors with documentation received from probation practitioners. They highlighted that email traffic between probation and themselves could be reduced if the correct paperwork was used. Similarly, there were reports of new licence requests being refused by prison offender managers who were unaware of the scheme, or the eligibility requirements, resulting in additional work to rectify. Tools such as CVL and EPF2 are mandatory and could reduce some of these issues,

but there was evidence that these were not always used. Finding ways to promote their use could help.

9.3 Wider Limitations

- **Tag battery:** As has been identified with wider evaluations of GPS tags, battery breaches were frequent (e.g., see Galisteo, Hillier, Liffen, Smith and Stephenson, 2019). Tag wearers recounted difficulty with keeping the tag charged and reports of suspected battery faults from staff and people on probation were common. Probation practitioners tried to promote compliance by encouraging a consistent charging routine and highlighting the importance of doing so regularly. Future EM programmes should consider how to increase compliance with charging and what can be done to promote maximum battery life, for example, through innovations to the hardware itself. Doing so could potentially reduce the administrative burden associated with managing battery related alerts and would minimise periods where individuals are unmonitored.
- **Tag size:** Findings on tag wearers' concerns around stigma, public perceptions of them, and the practical difficulties of having a tag, echo other qualitative research with tag wearers (e.g., Hwang, Simpson, & Butler, 2021). Some people on probation reported that the bulky size of the tag meant they refrained from activities important for health and wellbeing, like exercise and socialising. Innovations to reduce the size of the tag itself could bring benefit by making them less visible to others, more comfortable and potentially easier to wear while exercising or wearing particular clothes or shoes. Addressing this could better promote reintegration into society.

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Appendix A

Ethical Considerations

The evaluation was conducted in line with the GSR six ethical principles:⁴⁰

1. Clear and Defined Public Benefit

Prior to commencing the evaluation, the research team completed a rapid evidence review of existing published literature on the effectiveness of EM with DA. The research team also worked with stakeholders, relevant charitable organisations and academics to develop the research objectives.

2. Sound Application, Conduct and Interpretation

The analytical design was developed by experts in Social Research design at the MoJ and subject to internal review prior to commencement. All results were scrutinised by senior stakeholders and two external academic experts in DA / EM prior to publication.

3. Data Protection Regulations

The research was conducted under two lawful bases for processing:

- Consent – For all primary data collection activities
- Public Task – For all secondary data collection activities

All data procedures including collection/access, storage/anonymisation, use and destruction were reviewed by the MoJ Information Assurance Team as part of a full Data Protection Impact Assessment.

All qualitative data were anonymised prior to analysis following best practice guidance.⁴¹ This included the removal of any direct and indirect identifiers, and redacting or rephrasing where there was an increased risk of disclosure. All interview recordings and raw transcriptions were destroyed once anonymised. Only the evaluation team were able to

⁴⁰ The full GSR Professional Guidance can be accessed via [GSR Ethical Assurance for Social and Behavioural Research - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/612122/GSR_Ethical_Assurance_for_Social_and_Behavioural_Research_-_GOV.UK.pdf)

⁴¹ As outlined by the UK Data Service here [Anonymising qualitative data — UK Data Service](https://www.ukdataservice.ac.uk/datacatalogue/studies/study?id=7201) and the Information Commissioner's Office, here [Chapter 2: How do we ensure anonymisation is effective? \(ico.org.uk\)](https://ico.org.uk/our-work/consultations-and-guidance/consultations-and-guidance/2018-03-29-how-do-we-ensure-anonymisation-is-effective/)

access the raw research data prior to anonymisation and all data were stored on secure MoJ computer systems.

4. Specific and Informed Consent

Participation in surveys and interviews was voluntary. No incentives were offered for taking part. Participants were given information about the research prior to their participation and gave their consent to take part. Participants were able to withdraw at any time during their participation. More information on the consent process for each method is provided within the report.

5. Enabling Participation

The research team worked with stakeholders in probation and DA to understand and minimise barriers to participation. Materials were developed in consultation with stakeholders to maximise the accessibility of content. Information was offered in both written and verbal form and a variety of participation modes offered.

6. Minimising Personal and Social Harm

All fieldwork participants were fully informed on the research purpose and overarching content prior to taking part. Participants were also signposted to relevant sources of support. Participants were advised they did not have to answer questions they were not comfortable with. People on probation were not asked any questions about DA. All participants were reassured that their responses would remain private unless they disclosed a risk of harm to themselves or others.

Appendix B

Semi-Structured Interview Topic Guides

As detailed in Section 3, fieldwork included semi-structured interviews with practitioners and tag wearers. Interview topic guides are provided below and outline the loose structure adopted. Note, a topic guide is not provided for monitoring staff as no interviews were successfully completed with this group.

Victim Liaison Officers

- **Are you aware of the discretionary tool for the DAPOL pilot?**
 - If yes: what is your understanding of the purpose for DAPOL? What do you think about the rationale for it?
 - If yes: how did you hear about it?
 - If no: how could we improve on providing this information? For example, what information would be useful and where would be the best place to present this?
- **Can you recall any cases from DAPOL specifically?**
 - If yes: How did DAPOL work for you? What worked well? What could have been improved?
 - If yes: Did DAPOL change any of your ways of working?
 - If yes: Did you get any feedback from victims about it? What did they say?
 - If no: Don't worry – thank you for what you've shared so far.
- **Is there anything else about your overall experience of EM for DAPOL you would like to mention?**

Probation Practitioners

- **What is your role within Probation?**
- **Are you aware of the discretionary tool for the DAPOL pilot?**
 - If yes: what is your understanding of the purpose for DAPOL? What do you think about the rationale for it? How did you hear about it?

- If no: how could we improve on providing this information? For example, what information would be useful and where would be the best place to present this?
- **Have you added EM as a licence condition for DAPOL?**
 - If yes: what helped you decide that DAPOL was appropriate?
 - If yes: what was your experience and how did you find it? How effective did you find EM for supervision of DA?
 - If yes: did you get any feedback from people on probation about it? What did they say?
 - If no: why have you not used it? Were there any barriers which discouraged you from using it? Could anything be improved?
- **How confident would you feel about using DAPOL in the future?**
 - If no, please explain why.
- **Is there anything else about your overall experience of EM for DAPOL you would like to mention?**

People on Probation

- **Can you tell me a bit about what it's like for you to wear your tag?**
 - What type have you got? (curfew/GPS/alcohol)
- **Why do you think you've got to wear a tag?**
 - How does that seem to you?
- **Has wearing the tag impacted your everyday life?**
 - Could you talk through any impact it's had, good or bad?
- **Has the tag has made it easier or harder to live a law-abiding life?**
 - In what ways?
 - If easier, do you think this will continue in the long-term?
 - What changes could be made to tagging to help people get back on track in the community?

- **How was your experience with having the tag fitted/removed?**
 - Is there any way to make the fitting/removal easier?

- **How was your overall experience with probation whilst wearing your tag?**
 - Were they helpful/informative?
 - Is there anything else that could help you with your supervision under licence?

- **Is there anything else about wearing a tag you'd like to mention?**

Appendix C

Qualitative Analysis of Case Management Records: Methodological Information

The evaluation included thematic analysis of case management records to gain qualitative insight into DAPOL.

As outlined in Section 3, case management data were extracted and manually screened by the research team to identify whether the extract was relevant for thematic analysis. Only records deemed relevant were analysed. Relevance was ascertained by assessing whether the extract centred on at least one of the four key stakeholder groups:

- People on probation who have DAPOL added as a licence condition
- Criminal justice practitioners including probation practitioners, victim liaison officers, police and police staff, tag fitters and monitoring staff
- Victims or associates, including those of the person on probation
- Supporting agencies

Extracts included in the analysis also had to be deemed to provide qualitative insight into at least one of the following foci:

- Compliance
- Benefits / positive impacts of DAPOL
- Barriers / limitations of DAPOL
- Eight criminogenic needs when linked to offending behaviour/compliance/barriers and EM: accommodation; employability, relationships, lifestyle, drug misuse, alcohol misuse, thinking & behaviour, and attitudes

These elements also comprised the initial coding frame to support deductive thematic coding.

Glossary

CVL – Create and Vary a Licence

DA – Domestic Abuse

DAPOL – Domestic Abuse Perpetrators on Licence

EM – Electronic Monitoring

GPS – Global Positioning System

HMPPS – His Majesty’s Prison and Probation Service

MOJ – Ministry of Justice

OASys – Offender Assessment System

OGRS – Offender Group Reconviction Score

RF – Radio Frequency

RoSH – Risk of Serious Harm

RSR – Risk of Serious Recidivism

SARA – Spousal Assault Risk Assessment

SPOC – Single Point of Contact

VCS – Victim Contact Scheme