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of Justice

Process Evaluation of the Acquisitive Crime Electronic Monitoring Project: 3–12 month cohort

Julia Yates & David McAlonan

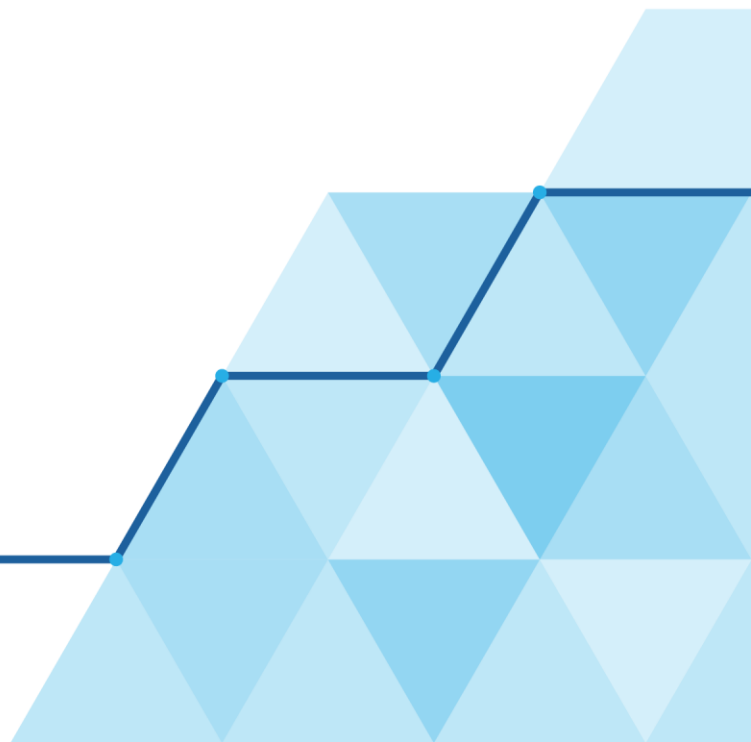
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1. Executive summary

This report is part of a series of evaluations to assess the Acquisitive Crime (AC) Electronic Monitoring (EM) Project (referred to as the “AC Project”). The AC Project commenced in 2021 when new legislation took effect governing the use of EM in relation to a subset of people on probation.

The project involves a mandatory licence condition that requires the installation of EM tags on certain prison leavers, which uses devices based on Global Positioning System (GPS) technology. Eligibility is limited to those individuals whose acquisitive offence¹ was the most serious for which a custodial sentence was imposed and who are released from prison on licence to reside in particular geographic areas. There are exemptions from enrolment in the project.

The AC Project initially applied to prison leavers serving a standard determinate sentence of at least 12 months for the eligible acquisitive offence who were released into specific police force areas in England and Wales. Starting on 26 October 2022, the custodial threshold was lowered to include prison leavers who had been serving a sentence of at least 90 days.² This report sets out the process evaluation of the additional AC cohort (hereafter referred to as the “3–12m” cohort or group).

The purpose of this process evaluation report is to provide an assessment of the qualitative similarities and differences between the 3–12m and the over 12 month cohorts (referred to as the “12m+” cohort or group) from the perspectives of stakeholders. A quantitative summary of the 3–12m cohort is also provided in the report.

Following this process evaluation, an impact and economic evaluation will be conducted and published in due course to assess the cost-effectiveness of the AC Project with respect to each of the 3–12m and the 12m+ cohorts.

¹ See Annex A for a list of eligible offences.

² The AC Project began in six police force areas in mid-April 2021. The project was then expanded to a further 13 police force areas in late September 2021. The 3–12m cohort of the AC Project has therefore been live in 19 police force areas since late October 2022.

1.1 Methodology

The lack of an HMPPS reporting mechanism that reliably and routinely distinguished between the 12m+ and 3–12m AC cohorts meant that all AC order starts reported by the main EM supplier between 26 October 2022 and 31 December 2023 had to be manually investigated by two HMPPS members of staff.

Data were extracted from the nDelius management information system to enable the matching of identified 3–12m AC order starts data to individual probation records so as to estimate the distribution of protected characteristics and other variables, which were subject to missing values and possible data input errors.

Comparisons were provided with respect to all prison leavers released on an adult licence between the cohort's go-live and December 2023, where relevant.

The qualitative data regarding stakeholders' perceptions were obtained using mostly interviews that were conducted among police officers, probation practitioners, MoJ AC Hub staff, EM service provider staff and people on probation who were enrolled in the AC Project.

The main limitation was that the views expressed were only representative of those individuals who volunteered to be interviewed. In particular, the number of people on probation respondents was small.

1.2 Key findings

Quantitative data

Between late October 2022 and the end of December 2023 when the 3–12m cohort of the AC Project was first operating, it was found that:

- Of the c. 2,600 AC order starts recorded in the management information, almost 300 of them were attributable to the 3–12m cohort and over 1,800 to the 12m+ cohort. However, around 200 of the AC order starts were unattributable due to the aforementioned lack of an HMPPS reporting mechanism. Around 300 of the AC order starts were found to be out of scope due to the enrolment of ineligible prison leavers.

- Among the valid 3–12m AC order starts, around 75 per cent resulted in a successful tag installation, which was around 16 percentage points lower than the estimated rate of tag installation among 12m+ AC order starts. The reason for this disparity may be a product of the 3–12m cohort reportedly tending to lead more chaotic lives.
- The single largest number of 3–12m AC order starts was in the Metropolitan police force area, while the single smallest number was in both the Gwent and Gloucestershire police force areas.
- In terms of completed orders where a tag installation took place, the average period of enrolment among 3–12m AC order starts was estimated to be 83 days and the median period was 67 days.
- Among all 3–12m AC order starts the average likelihood of reoffending within 24 months, as measured by the Offender Group Reconviction Scale, was estimated to be 72 (out of a maximum of 100) and the median was 77. In contrast, the average among all prison leavers released on an adult licence over the same time period was 57 and the median was 63.
- In the event of future reoffending, the most likely risk of serious harm to victims was “medium” at 69 per cent of all 3–12m AC order starts. Among all prison leavers released on an adult licence, the single most likely risk of serious harm was also “medium” at 47 per cent of this group.
- Where data on protected characteristics were recorded among 3–12m AC order starts, the group was almost entirely male (97%), most likely to be aged 25–44 (71%), predominately White (81%), most likely not to have any religion (61%) when declared, largely made up of British citizens (94%), more likely than not to have a recorded disability (55%) and likely to be heterosexual (99%).
- The most common combination of ethnicity, religion and nationality was White, no religion, British citizens (52%) among 3–12m AC order starts. This was the same most common combination as among all prison leavers released on an adult licence.

Overall perceptions of the project

Stakeholders held a mainly positive view of the AC Project. The police and probation practitioner groups both commented on what they saw as the benefits of EM and its

perceived ability to deter reoffending. Police respondents stated that they would like the project to be rolled out to further crime types and to involve additional police force areas.

The respondents in the MoJ Hub held a positive view of the AC Project as well as probation practitioners who stated that the use of the Self-Service portal worked well in the management of people on probation enrolled in the project. While EM service provider respondents who were not field officers had generally positive views of the project (e.g., relationships with other stakeholders), the EM field officers were broadly negative about the process of tag installation overall.

Notwithstanding the small sample size of respondents, monitored people on probation who contributed to the research held largely positive views of participating in the AC Project. Where a reason was given, it was that the EM tag was perceived to act as a reoffending deterrent and/or help to demonstrate that the person was not in the area of an alleged offence. Concerns related to discomfort caused by the EM tag and its battery charge durability.

Some stakeholders reported that perceived limitations in probation staff resources had negatively affected the project.

These findings were similar to those from the process evaluation of the AC Project's 12m+ cohort.

Expansion to the 3–12m AC cohort

Respondents among the police, the MoJ AC Hub and EM service providers stated that the expansion to the 3–12m cohort had not changed any aspect of their roles. Both the police and the MoJ Hub respondents noted that the only change was an increase in the number of people on probation subject to the AC Project.

Probation respondents were the only stakeholders who perceived that the expansion to the 3–12m cohort had an impact on their role. They said that the expansion had resulted in a material increase in their project-related workload.

Stakeholder relationships

There were mixed findings with respect to stakeholder relationships across the project. The police and MoJ Hub respondents generally agreed that they worked well together.

Probation practitioners were generally positive about working with the police. However, some probation respondents said there was a lack of clarity with respect to data sharing and what information they could and could not share with the police. Police respondents, although positive about their relationship with probation, stated that staffing constraints were having an adverse impact on the performance of probation and their ability to carry out compliance checks on the Self-Service Portal.

EM service providers had mixed views. Non-field officer respondents said that stakeholder relationships were positive. However, field officer respondents described some negative experiences during home visits due to incorrect addresses. EM service provider staff who contributed to the project's 12m+ cohort evaluation reported that stakeholder communication in general could improve.

Respondents from the police, the MoJ Hub and probation all felt that the main EM service provider was slow to respond to queries and address issues with tag installation, which was also a finding from the 12m+ cohort evaluation.

Staff resources

There were mixed responses from stakeholders with respect to staff resources. Some police respondents said that staff resources were currently sufficient. However, others commented that police forces were struggling with capacity issues in general, which was not specific to the AC Project. Police respondents mainly discussed how probation staff constraints were having a significant impact on the AC Project in their view. Probation respondents also articulated a perception that the Probation Service was not adequately staffed to deal with the expansion to the 3–12m cohort, which has reportedly resulted in an increase in their workload.

The MoJ Hub respondents stated they had sufficient staff resources. However, if the project were to be expanded to further police force areas, they said that they would require more staff. EM service providers generally felt that they were well-resourced in terms of the project, where some respondents commented that they had a good team with relevant

expertise to address any major issues with stakeholders quickly. However, it was argued that having additional resources would be beneficial.

Findings from the 12m+ cohort process evaluation were that most stakeholders (besides probation) generally identified that staff resources were sufficient, although concerns were raised about being under-resourced if the AC Project volumes were to increase significantly.

Crime mapping

The police and the MoJ Hub staff articulated various benefits of crime mapping under the AC project, which allowed for monitored people on probation to be placed in the vicinity of an acquisitive offence. Both stakeholder groups generally stated they were satisfied with the 100 metre crime radius, which they felt was working effectively. This contrasted with the findings from the 12m+ cohort evaluation where some police respondents stated they would like to see the radius reduced.

Police respondents discussed what they saw as the benefits of being given direct access to the AC Self-Service Portal. These respondents argued that having access to the portal would enable them to interrogate location data more thoroughly, something which respondents believed that probation staff do not have time to do due to resource constraints. This finding is in line with that of the 12m+ cohort evaluation where police respondents believed that having direct access to the portal would be beneficial for them.³

The MoJ Hub respondents said that crime mapping had become more automated since the start of the AC Project, and they discussed the mainly positive changes that they believed this has brought.

General issues

Other issues identified include monitored people on probation arguing that the EM tag posed physical challenges for them. In particular, it was stated that the tag was too big, which was also a finding from the small sample of people on probation who contributed to

³ There is currently no legal power to allow this type of data sharing with the police. At present, they must make use of an External Agency Request (EAR) to obtain information for wider law enforcement purposes (<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/uk-gdpr-guidance-and-resources/data-sharing/sharing-personal-data-with-law-enforcement-authorities/>).

the 12m+ cohort evaluation. Some respondents also noted issues with the tag's battery working well.

Probation respondents expressed that not always knowing how properly to use the AC Self-Service Portal was a barrier. Probation practitioners who contributed to the 12m+ cohort evaluation also stated there were issues with using the Self-Service Portal, mainly regarding how to interpret the data.

1.3 Implications

The two main issues that arose in relation to the 3–12m AC cohort compared to the 12m+ cohort were: the absence of an adequate HMPPS reporting mechanism to distinguish between the two cohorts; and the perception among probation practitioners that the 3–12m cohort resulted in a more complex additional caseload to manage.

All other implications could be applied to the 12m+ AC cohort such as the need for a robust quality assurance system with regard to prison leaver enrolment, improved stakeholder communication, additional training in terms of the project and consideration of required probation staffing levels.

Although not necessarily specific to the AC Project, EM field officers who participated in the research were clearly of the view that a better system of address verification was required for tag installation visits.

2. Introduction

The AC Project started on 12 April 2021 when the Compulsory EM Licence Condition Order 2021⁴ became law. This legislation entails the mandatory use of a licence condition that requires the installation of GPS EM tags on eligible prison leavers who are released on licence.⁵ Enrolment in the AC Project is mandatory for eligible prison leavers, except where an individual's health or personal circumstances makes the use of an EM tag inappropriate. Eligible prison leavers can be enrolled in the AC Project for up to 12 months following their release from prison.

The project began in six police force areas during April 2021.⁶ The number of police force areas increased to 19 on 29 September 2021.⁷ Those people on probation who were initially eligible for mandatory enrolment were individuals serving a standard determinate sentence of 12 months or more for a principal offence that was a specified theft or robbery offence.

The project's custodial sentence threshold was lowered to 90 days or more in respect of eligible prison leavers released on or after 26 October 2022.⁸ No other changes have been made to legislation governing the AC Project since then.

2.1 Background of the Acquisitive Crime Project

Adults who committed an acquisitive offence in England and Wales tend to have higher rates of proven reoffending: around 21 per cent of those convicted of robbery and about 50 per cent of those convicted of theft reoffend within a year, compared to 22 per cent for all other principal offence types in 2021/22 (MoJ, 2024).⁹ This is coupled with relatively high

⁴ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2021/330/made>

⁵ For the purposes of this legislation, location monitoring is not intended to ensure that the prison leaver complies with restrictions on movements, such as exclusion zones or a curfew. The individual is free to travel anywhere, subject to their other licence conditions.

⁶ Avon & Somerset, Cheshire, Gloucestershire, Gwent, Humberside and West Midlands.

⁷ Bedfordshire, City of London, Cumbria, Derbyshire, Durham, Essex, Hampshire, Hertfordshire, Kent, Metropolitan Police, North Wales, Nottinghamshire and Sussex.

⁸ See Appendix A for all of the project's eligibility criteria.

⁹ The 12 month reoffending rate among all adult offenders in 2021/22 was 25 per cent. Excluding all theft and robbery principal offences lowers this overall reoffending rate to 22 per cent.

rates of crime outcomes where the police investigation was completed without the identification of a suspect: in 49 per cent of robbery cases and 74 per cent of theft cases, compared to 39 per cent of all recorded crime outcomes in 2022/23 (Home Office, 2023).

As part of the AC Project, data from GPS EM were also used for “crime mapping”. This overlaid reported crime data from the police with movement data from location monitoring to identify if any monitored people on probation were in the vicinity of a reported acquisitive crime. A match to a crime occurred where there were a minimum of two consecutive GPS location points within a crime radius, which was 100 metres around the coordinates of a reported crime.¹⁰

There is limited national and international evidence to date on the effectiveness of EM and its impact on reoffending. Within the available published research, existing studies show mixed evidence with respect to reducing reoffending (Belur et al., 2020).

The series of evaluations conducted for both the 3–12m and 12m+ cohorts are intended to help build the evidence base on the use of EM in England and Wales.

2.2 Evaluation aims and objectives

The purpose of this process evaluation was to assess the delivery of the AC Project for eligible prisoners on release from sentences of 3–12 months (“3–12m”). There is a separate process evaluation report in respect of the findings from the over 12 month (“12m+”) cohort of the AC Project.

As with the 12m+ cohort, a series of future evaluation stages will also be delivered to assess the AC Project for the 3–12m cohort: (i) an impact evaluation to test whether location monitoring has had a statistically significant effect on 12 month proven reoffending of the treatment group compared to a counterfactual; and (ii) an economic evaluation which will assess whether the project’s quantifiable benefits offset its estimated costs given the impact observed.

¹⁰ At the AC Project inception, the crime radius was 150 metres, which was reduced to 100 metres in September 2021 due to a large proportion of proximity alerts requiring no further action.

This report focuses on the key findings from interviews conducted and surveys carried out with those individuals involved in the project and provides insight from an operational perspective with respect to the 3–12m cohort.

The objectives of the 3–12m cohort process evaluation were to:

- Understand how the AC Project as a whole was working from an operational perspective.
- Understand if there were any changes to stakeholders' work in relation to the 3–12m cohort in comparison to the 12m+ cohort and what these were.
- Gather the perceptions of people on probation monitored under the project.
- Identify the lessons learned and any improvements that could be made.
- Identify factors that worked well and less well for whom and why.

3. Methodology

3.1 Quantitative data

Data collection

Data on the AC Project order starts that arose between 26 October 2022 and 31 December 2023 were provided by the main EM service provider, EMS Capita at the time of study, to the MoJ as part of the business-as-usual activities required by the EM contract. The data on AC order starts were then matched to wider data contained in nDelius, which is the case management system of the Probation Service. The quantitative analysis of this process evaluation was therefore highly reliant on the use of secondary data.

Approach

A critical first step was to differentiate between the 12m+ and 3–12m cohorts within the AC Project. This activity was complicated by the absence of a project reporting mechanism that routinely and reliably distinguished between the two cohorts.

Consequently, two members of staff in HMPPS manually checked the custodial sentence length of the eligible acquisitive offence related to around 2,600 individual AC order starts that arose between 26 October 2022 and 31 December 2023. This was based on the detailed records contained in p-NOMIS.¹¹ The manual checks enabled the custodial sentence length associated with the eligible offence to be determined, which was not possible using nDelius.

Over the time period in question the manual checks found that:

- 293 AC order starts were in the 3–12m cohort;
- 1,816 AC order starts were in the 12m+ cohort;
- 303 AC order starts were out of scope of the project due to the enrolment of ineligible prison leavers; and

¹¹ The Prison National Offender Management Information System (p-NOMIS) is the principal database that prison staff use to help manage prisoners in England and Wales.

- the remaining 193 AC order starts were unattributable because the available p-NOMIS data proved to be inadequate in these instances.

Further checks by the MoJ research team of the 293 AC order starts assigned to the 3–12m cohort indicated that five orders were terminated early due to being invalid, (e.g., they were either duplicates or realised as out of scope of the AC Project). These five order starts were therefore excluded from the overall count to give an estimated total of 288 valid 3–12m AC order starts.

Following these exclusions, there were 268 unique individuals among the 288 valid 3–12m AC order starts over the time period, of whom 16 people had two AC order starts each and two people accounted for three AC order starts each. The remaining 250 people only had one AC order start each.¹²

In terms of the 216 valid 3–12m AC order starts that resulted in a successful tag installation, there were 205 unique individuals in total, of whom 11 people had two AC order starts each. The remaining 194 people had one AC order start each.

Data were extracted from nDelius to enable the matching of 3–12m AC order starts data to individual probation records so as to generate a more complete set of estimates regarding the distribution of protected characteristics and other variables. The nDelius data were also used to obtain a relevant date of release from prison.

This data matching was undertaken on the basis of NOMIS IDs and PNC numbers, which were supplied by the main EM service provider and further confirmed by dates of birth that were recorded by the provider and by nDelius. An additional check of the strength of matching was carried out using individuals' first names and last names, as recorded by the main EM service provider and by nDelius. In cases where there was not a high degree of confidence, the causes were investigated and manually rectified (e.g., incomplete NOMIS ID recorded).

¹² Uniqueness was determined by distinct NOMIS identifiers.

Following the correction of erroneous matching variables and the addition of missing unique identifiers, 100 per cent of all 3–12m AC order starts over the time period were successfully matched to individual people on probation recorded within nDelius.

The Open Geography Portal¹³ was also employed to identify the police force area of each participant in the 3–12m group based on the postcode recorded for each AC order start.

For the purposes of comparison, summary estimates of the same protected characteristics were also obtained from nDelius in respect of all prison leavers released on an adult licence across England and Wales over the same time period as the 3–12m AC order starts. This totalled 84,049 prison leavers whose dates of releases were recorded on nDelius as falling between 26 October 2022 and 31 December 2023 inclusive. Note that not all of this group was made up of unique individuals – some of them would have been released from prison on more than one occasion during this period.

Limitations

As is common with administrative datasets that were not compiled for the purposes of research, some variables were subject to missing values and likely data input errors. These were manually corrected where identified and where possible to do so.

More specifically:

- The lack of a reporting mechanism to distinguish between the AC Project's 12m+ and 3–12m cohorts resulted in a need for a manual check of the custodial sentence length of the eligible acquisitive offence, which was undertaken by two HMPPS members of staff using p-NOMIS, so as to assign the AC order to the 12m+ or 3–12m cohort. Such manual checks entail an inherent risk of misassignment, due to errors either in inputting the correct cohort type or in relying on management information incorrectly recorded on p-NOMIS.
- The recorded AC order end date does not always reflect the actual end of AC location monitoring. In particular, there were instances when the main EM service provider was not informed of a prison leaver's recall to prison until some time after the fact. When eventually discovered, the AC order is terminated, which means

¹³ <https://geoportal.statistics.gov.uk/>

that the order end date is then recorded as the date on which the order is terminated as opposed to around the date on which the licence is formally revoked. As a result, the licence revocation date associated with any recall was taken to be the AC enrolment end date if this was earlier than either the listed AC order end date or the date of tag removal.

- Comparison of the closest recorded prison release date and the recorded AC order start date among the 288 valid orders shows that the two dates were not always identical. The largest differences were investigated and justified or corrected where possible. Following correction, the data indicated that: (i) the two dates were identical in 89 per cent of cases; (ii) the recorded order start date preceded the closest recorded release date in nine per cent of cases; and (iii) the recorded order start date exceeded the closest recorded release date in two per cent of cases.
- If an eligible individual were subsequently re-enrolled in the AC Project following a re-release from prison, then a new AC order and therefore a new “Subject ID” were created by the main EM service provider, both of which were treated as a new AC order start for the purposes of analysis.

3.2 Qualitative data

Data collection

Interviews were held with stakeholders and practitioners working in England and Wales to gain their views on the implementation, operation and perceived effects of the AC Project as well as to draw comparisons between the roll-out of the 3–12m and 12m+ cohorts.

A mixture of interviews, surveys and one focus group were conducted with participants including volunteers from seven police forces and eight probation regions involved in the project between March and May 2023.

The total number of respondents was 43, which was made up of:

- nine integrated offender management (IOM) police officers (seven senior police officers and two police constables);

- 10 respondents working for the private companies operating under contract to provide electronic monitoring services to the MoJ (two senior members of staff and eight other staff across EMS Capita¹⁴ and Airbus¹⁵);
- 11 IOM probation practitioners (four senior probation officers and seven frontline probation officers);
- eight MoJ Hub staff (three senior members and five caseworkers); and
- five people on probation who were being monitored under the AC Project.

Approach

A total of 35 in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted across the project areas via telephone or video call. An in-person focus group was held with a further five EM service provider participants and an online survey was completed by three monitored people on probation.

Questions were asked of stakeholders around: their experiences of the project; what they found worked well or less well; views on training offered; any improvements that could be made; views on the impact of the project for the criminal justice system; what lessons could be learnt from the roll-out; and whether there were any differences between the 3–12m cohort and the existing 12m+ cohort. Some questions put to stakeholders were adapted to their profession or circumstances.

The purpose of one-to-one interviews was to ensure all participants had sufficient time to discuss their experiences of the project's implementation, perceived impact and future recommendations in detail. One-to-one interviews also ensured responses were not subject to any biases from other participants. A focus group was carried out with EM service provider field officers to accommodate their shift working pattern and to obtain a collection of perspectives in a time efficient manner. An interview or survey was offered to people on probation who were monitored under the AC Project to maximise the number of volunteers for this often hard to reach group.

With consent, interviews/focus groups were recorded and transcribed. A thematic analysis approach was adopted to analyse the interview transcripts. The coding framework

¹⁴ Responsible for installing the EM tags along with other responsibilities detailed in Appendix B.

¹⁵ Airbus provided the IT software for crime mapping under the AC Project.

incorporated both deductive coding (i.e., derived from predetermined themes) and inductive coding (i.e., themes emerging from participant data).

By employing a deductive approach, the analysis of the data confirmed the predetermined themes and allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the issues discussed by the participants. For example, engagement with other stakeholders, identifiable improvements, and resource capacity were discussed by participants. An inductive approach however, uncovered new themes emerging from the interviews such as issues with equipment installation.

Limitations

The main methodological challenge identified in the fieldwork was the recruitment of participants. An important aim was to ensure a wide sample of people with direct experience of the AC Project, specifically those who had experience working with the 3–12m cohort.

Information sheets were provided to prospective participants informing them that the research team wished to interview those individuals who had experience of working with the 3–12m cohort in some capacity. However, it transpired in many interviews that participants would talk more generally regarding the AC Project as many respondents did not perceive a difference between the 3–12m and 12m+ cohorts with respect to their work.

Furthermore, information sheets provided to people on probation requested volunteers who had an EM tag installed as part of the 3–12m cohort, although it emerged in interviews that some respondents may have been part of the 12m+ cohort. Nevertheless, the MoJ research team considered the feedback from all participants involved in the project to be valuable and important for understanding the AC Project.

Participation was encouraged by periodically highlighting to stakeholder groups the advantages of being involved in the research, such as having the opportunity to feedback their experience and directly influence any further roll-out of the project. However, recruitment remained challenging, as respondents expressed that they either had busy work schedules or a lack of direct involvement in the project with respect to the 3–12m cohort specifically.

The monitored people on probation were a particularly hard-to-reach subgroup, partly due to probation practitioners having an important role in putting forward relevant individuals who were willing to participate in the study. This indirect contact method presented issues in obtaining written consent forms and contact information in a timely manner.

As a result, a small sample size of five people on probation volunteered (two interviews, three survey respondents) from one probation region for the research, despite participation being sought from multiple regions. Consequently, the views presented in this report may not represent the full range of views held by people on probation. Furthermore, there were no respondents who had been monitored as part of the AC Project and recalled due to non-compliance with their tag, so findings may not encompass the full range of experiences in this subgroup.

It should also be noted that, although respondents from the police and probation included a mixture of representatives from different police forces and probation regions, it was not possible to capture views from all relevant police forces and probation regions. Individuals from 14 of the 19 police force areas participated across the 3–12m and 12m+ research reports.

Finally, it is important to highlight that a number of respondents in the 3–12m process evaluation also contributed to the 12m+ process evaluation, so this overlap should be considered when reading both reports.¹⁶

¹⁶ Four out of the nine police respondents were the same individuals who participated in the 12m+ research report. This was also the case for four of the 11 probation respondents, three of five EM service provider respondents and all of the MoJ Hub respondents. In contrast, all people on probation respondents were different between the 3–12m and 12m+ process evaluations.

4. Summary of quantitative data

This chapter summarises the available numerical data regarding the 3–12m order starts in the AC Project (“All 3–12m AC orders”) that commenced between late October 2022 (when this particular cohort went live) and the end of December 2023. They are compared either to the subset that resulted in a successful tag installation (“All 3–12m AC tagged”) or to estimates for the wider population of prison leavers released on adult licences (“All prisoners released on licence”), where appropriate. The data were provided by the main EM service provider and from the Probation Service’s management information system, nDelius.

Sections 4.1 and 4.2 present summaries by month and by police force area plus probation region for all 3–12m AC order starts and for the group that resulted in a successful tag installation.

Section 4.3 estimates the recorded time period that individuals spent enrolled in the AC Project’s 3–12m group where the AC order has completed.

Section 4.4 shows the distribution of the estimated reoffending risk associated with the group of 3–12m AC order starts.

Section 4.5 discusses the various protected characteristics of the group for which data were recorded.

All 3–12m AC order starts are only shown in Section 4.4 onwards because this variable and the percentage estimates of all 3–12m successful tag installations were very similar. These distributions are compared to all prison leavers released on adult licence over the same time period based on data extracted from nDelius.

Statistically significant differences between the 3–12m AC order starts and adult licence prison leaver cohorts are highlighted in Section 4.4 onwards.¹⁷

Where percentage estimates are presented in this chapter, they are rounded to the nearest one per cent so as to avoid spurious accuracy. In addition, estimates are suppressed where there were fewer than three individuals in any sub-group to protect the confidentiality of individuals and to prevent disclosure.

4.1 Volumes by month

According to the data provided by the main EM service provider that was manually checked by HMPPS to determine the particular AC cohort, there were an estimated 288 valid 3–12m AC order starts between 26 October 2022 and 31 December 2023 among the 3–12m group, of which 75 per cent resulted in a successful tag installation.

This rate of tag installation was appreciably lower than the 91 per cent rate estimated for the 12m+ AC order starts between go-live and June 2022. While the reason for such a disparity between the cohorts cannot be explained with certainty, it may be at least partly attributable to the relative behaviour of the 3–12m AC cohort, given that the most common reason for failing to install an EM tag was the individual not making themselves available on the appointed date.

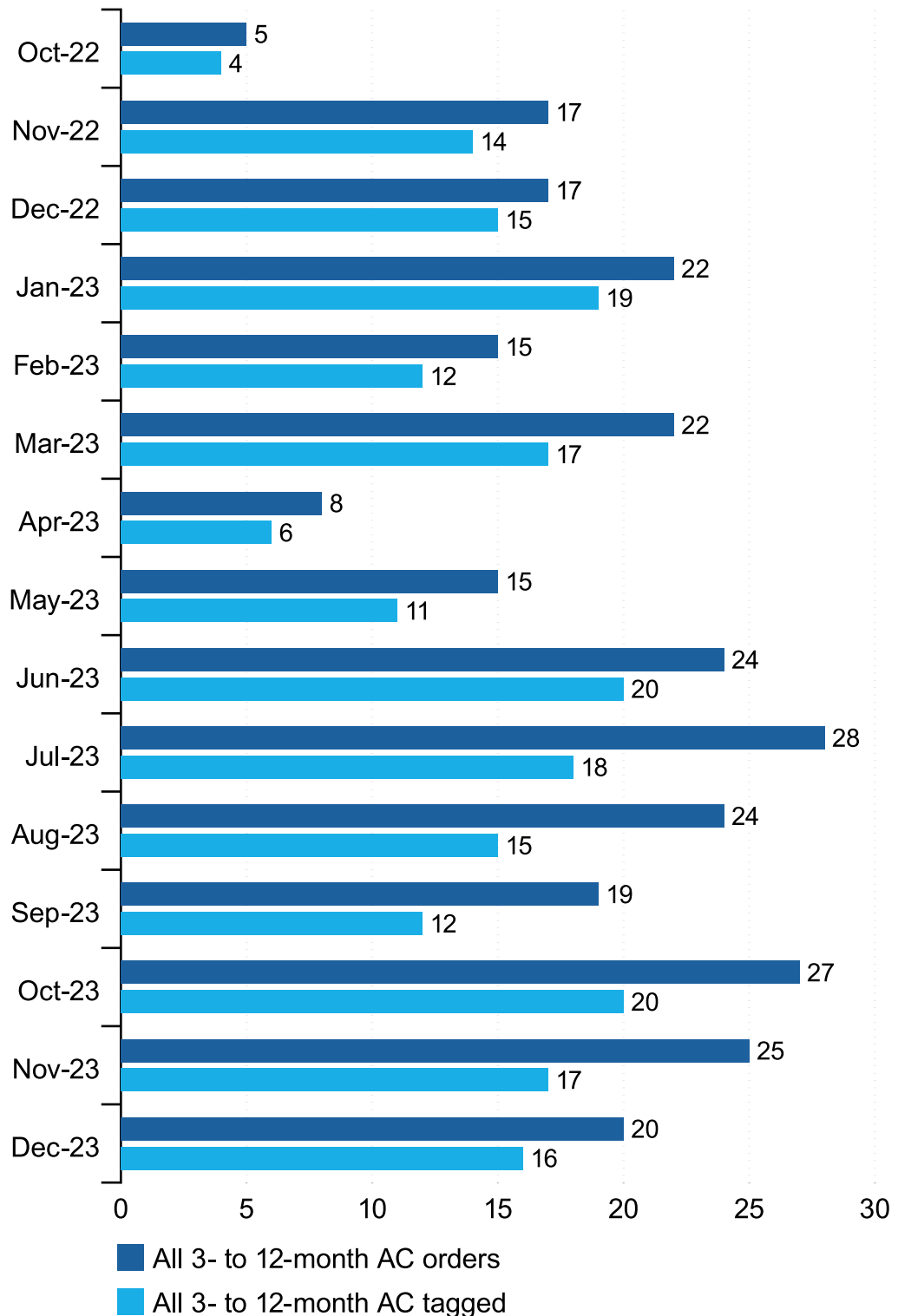
Further evidence is available in that probation staff respondents indicated in their qualitative feedback that this group of prison leavers tended to lead more chaotic lives. This perception was consistent with the MoJ's published statistics, which showed that the 12 month reoffending rate of prison leavers whose determinate custodial sentences of under 12 months has been two to three times that of their counterparts who had determinate sentences of 12 months or more since 2015.¹⁸

¹⁷ A two proportion Z-test is used to determine whether there is a difference between two estimated percentages. A Welch t-test is employed to test whether the estimated means of two variables are different. A statistically significant difference for either test is determined by a "P value" of 0.05 or less. The "P value" represents the probability of an estimated difference being as large or larger if the null hypothesis of no difference is true, given the sample sizes in question.

¹⁸ See table C2a of *Proven reoffending statistics: October to December 2022* (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/proven-reoffending-statistics-october-to-december-2022>).

Figure 4.1 shows the number of AC order starts and tag installations each month up to December 2023, as recorded by the main EM service provider.

Figure 4.1: Monthly number of 3–12m AC order starts, October 2022 – December 2023

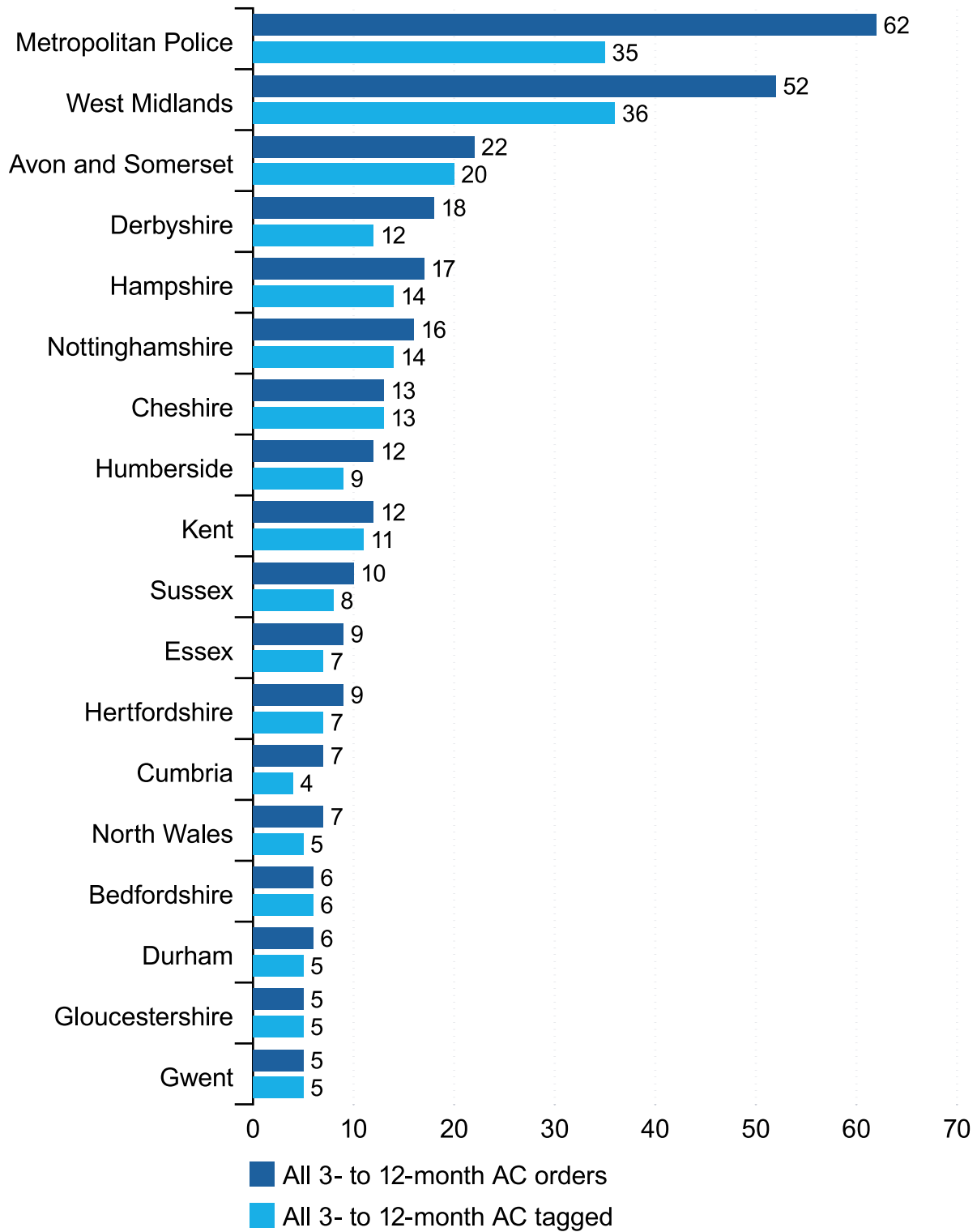


The number of AC order starts averaged 20 per month between November 2022 (when the new cohort was fully live) and December 2023. The average number of successful tag installations was 15 per month.

4.2 Volumes by area

As shown in Figure 4.2, the largest contributor of 3–12m AC order starts was the Metropolitan police force area with around 60 order starts, followed by the West Midlands police force area that had about 50 order starts. The smallest contributors were the Gloucestershire and Gwent police force areas, which both had five AC order starts each.

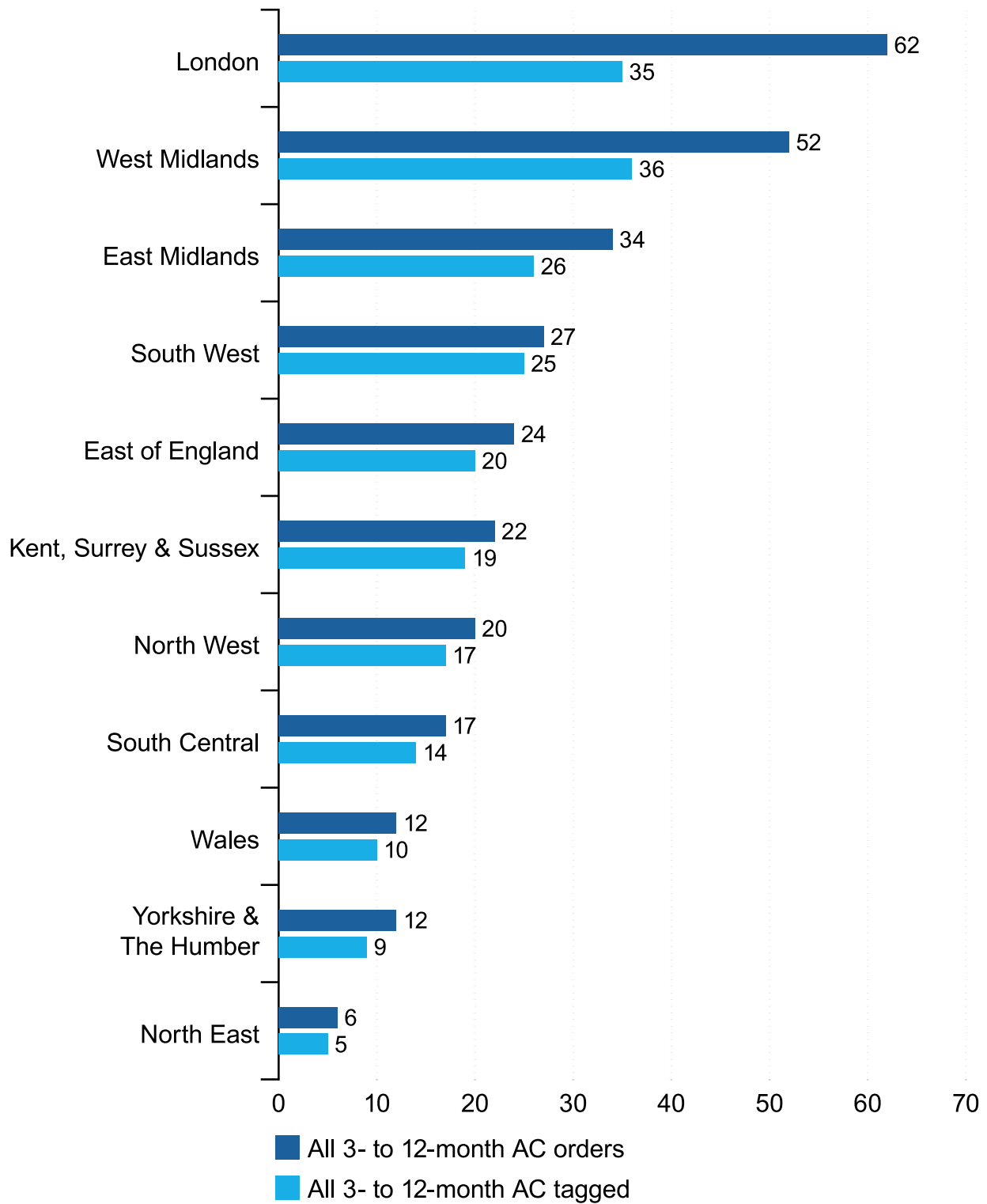
Figure 4.2: Volume of 3–12m AC order starts by police force area, October 2022 – December 2023



N.B. All of the police force areas in the bar chart participated in the AC Project from October 2022.

Although residence at the point of release within a number of specified police force areas was the legal basis for enrolment in the AC Project, the distribution of probation regions is set out in Figure 4.3 for the purposes of illustration.

Figure 4.3: Volume of 3–12m AC order starts by probation region, October 2022 – December 2023



4.3 Enrolment duration

The outturn enrolment period of the 3–12m group in the AC Project was estimated to be 83 days on average (in 206 of 288 order starts), where the start date was the recorded date of release¹⁹ and the end date was the earlier of any date of licence revocation due to recall to prison, the order end date or the date of tag removal following completion of the AC order.²⁰ The estimated median duration was 67 days.

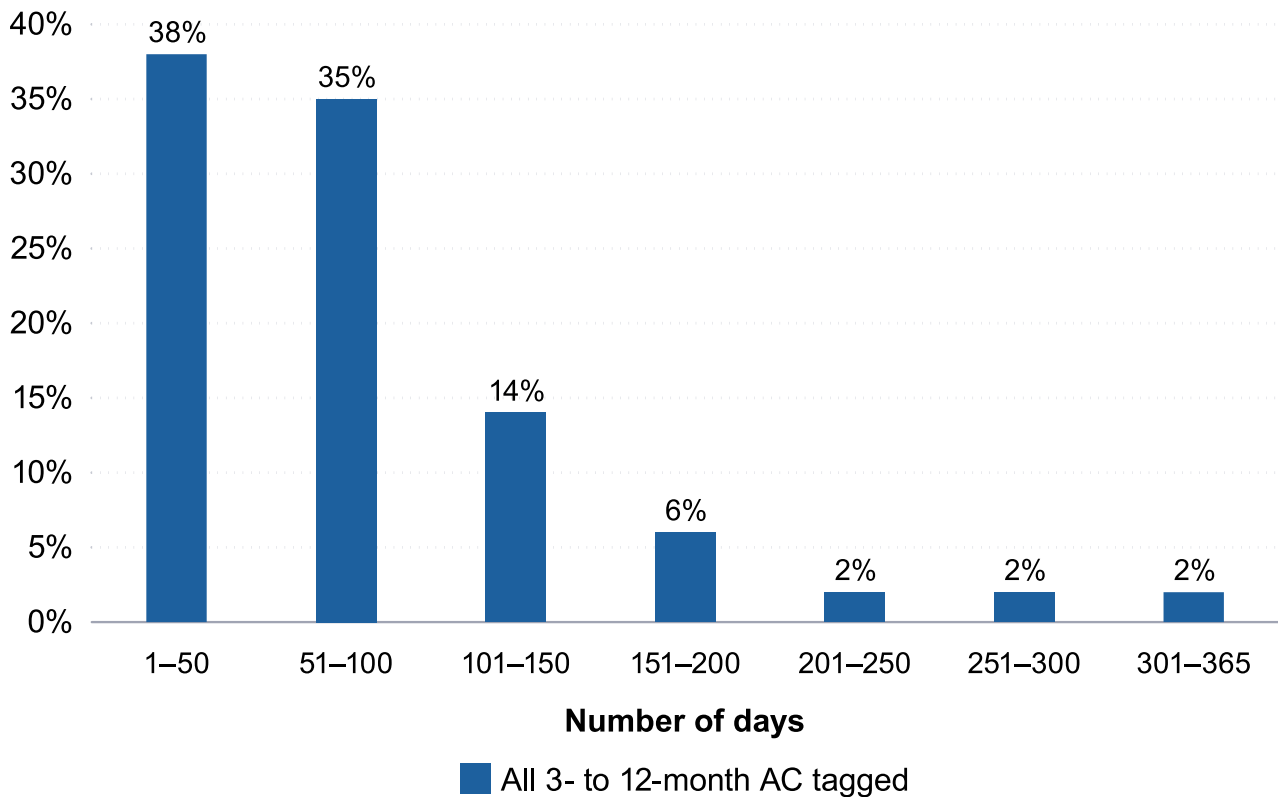
Figure 4.4 illustrates the time distribution of this subset of 3–12m AC order starts. The distribution was skewed towards a lower number of days, which is to be expected given the group's shorter custodial sentences and therefore the shorter period of time in which an individual can be placed on licence following release from prison.²¹

¹⁹ Legally, the date of release from prison is the start date for AC enrolment, even if a successful tag installation does not take place on the same date.

²⁰ N=206.

²¹ It should be noted that the existence of AC enrolment periods of up to 365 days among the 3–12m cohort of AC order starts is consistent with the underlying legislation, which states that the enrolment period cannot exceed the “end of the sentence” or 12 months. It is possible for the sentence expiry date of the 3–12m cohort of prison leavers released on licence to be longer than 182 days from the date of release (i.e., the automatic release point of a total 12 month custodial standard determinate sentence). This situation would arise if a prison leaver had received consecutive custodial sentences that were imposed at the same time for various offences, which would have the effect of prolonging the sentence expiry date and therefore the total number of days served on licence in the community.

Figure 4.4: Distribution of 3–12m AC order starts by enrolment duration, October 2022 – December 2023



4.4 Reoffending risk

OGRS

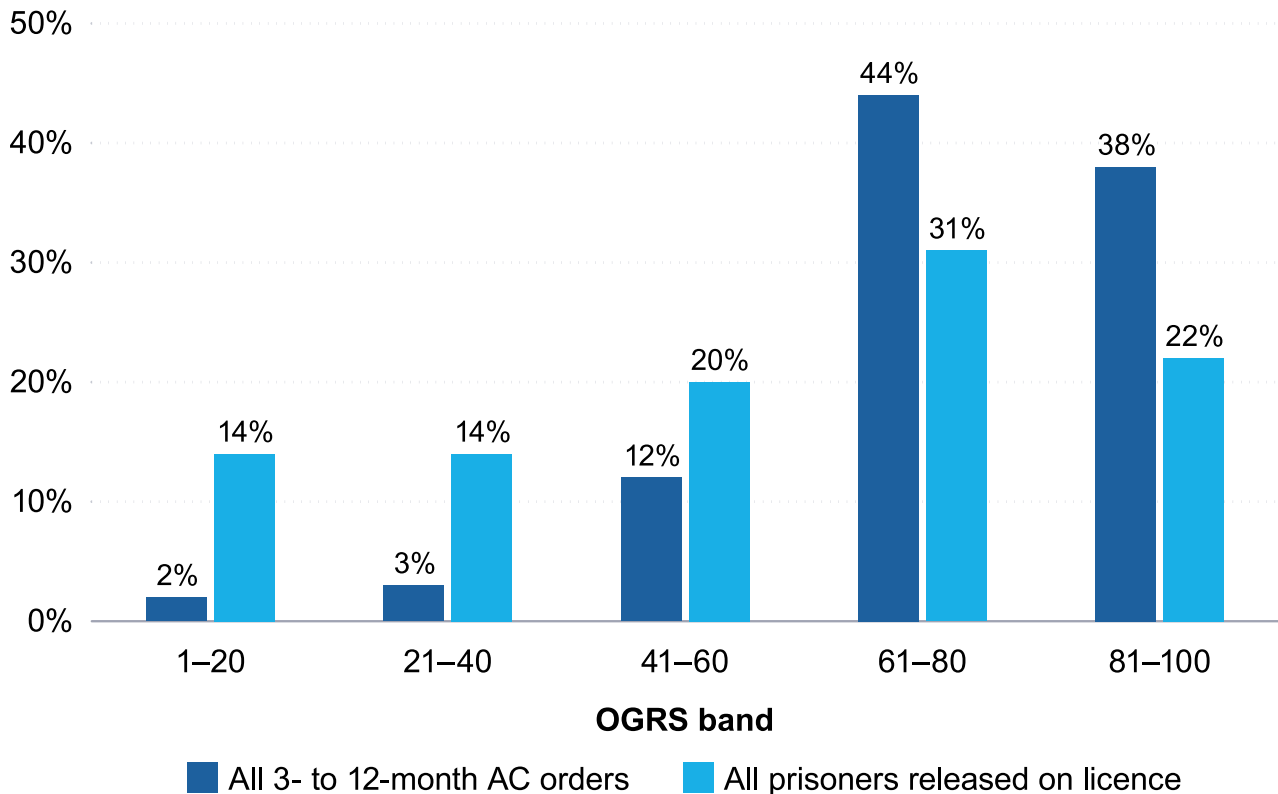
The likelihood of reoffending within 24 months can be measured using the Offender Group Reconviction Scale (OGRS). This is a predictor of reoffending that is based on static risk factors – notably, age, sex and criminal history.²² The predictor is expressed as a number between one and 100, where higher value numbers represent a greater probability of reoffending.

OGRS estimates have been obtained for the people on probation enrolled in the AC Project in terms of order starts, as well as a comparator of all prison leavers released on an adult licence between late October 2022 and December 2023, using the management information recorded on nDelius.

²² It is a statistical risk score based on a logistical regression analysis of data of a large sample of offenders who have been convicted in the recent past, where a two year history of reconvictions can be traced through official records. Dynamic risk factors (e.g., substance misuse) are not included. See <https://core.ac.uk/download/1556521.pdf> for more information.

Figure 4.5 presents the range of estimated OGRS values within 24 months across five bands of all 3–12m AC order starts²³ and all prison leavers²⁴ released on an adult licence, where recorded, which shows that the most common likelihood band among both groups was 61–80.

Figure 4.5: Distributions of OGRS values by band, October 2022 – December 2023



Overall, the group of 3–12m order starts in the AC Project had a higher reoffending risk than all prison leavers on adult licences: the average OGRS value of the former was 72 and was 57 among the latter, which was a statistically significant difference ($p < 0.01$). The respective medians were 77 and 63.

The largest difference between the two groups was in the 81–100 band of OGRS values, where the group of 3–12m AC order starts was 16 percentage points more likely ($p < 0.01$) to be represented than all prison leavers on adult licences. This was followed by a 13

²³ N=286 after excluding the two AC order starts for which no OGRS estimate was recorded.

²⁴ N=82,081 after excluding the 2,028 prison leavers for whom no OGRS estimate was recorded.

percentage point greater likelihood ($p<0.01$) of the 3–12m group featuring in the 61–80 band.

In contrast, all 3–12m AC order starts were 12 percentage points less likely ($p<0.01$) to be in the 1–20 band, 11 percentage points less likely ($p<0.01$) to be in the 21–40 band and eight percentage points less likely ($p<0.01$) in the 41–60 band of OGRS values than all prison leavers on adult licences.

RoSH

The Risk of Serious Harm (RoSH) is the conditional probability that a future offence – if one occurs – will result in serious harm, which is defined as “the likelihood of a life-threatening and/or traumatic event” from which the victim’s recovery is “expected to be difficult or impossible”.²⁵ An individual’s RoSH is normally represented as one of five broad categories that range from “low” to “very high”, although the latter has been combined with the “high” category in this chapter so as to prevent the risk of identifying individuals.

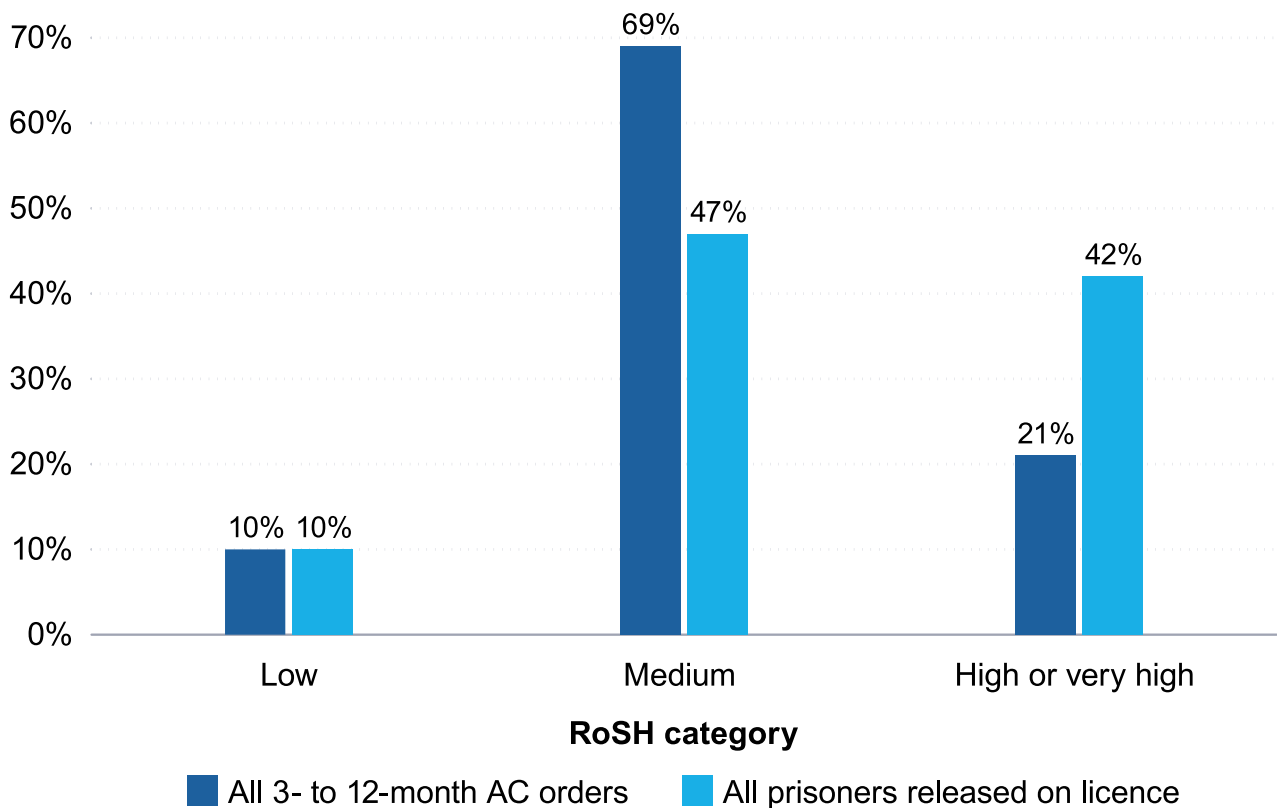
Figure 4.6 shows a comparison between the distribution of RoSH among the group of 3–12m AC order starts²⁶ and all prison leavers²⁷ released on an adult licence, where recorded.

²⁵ [Risk of Serious Harm Guidance v3.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

²⁶ N=281 after excluding the seven AC order starts for which no RoSH estimate was recorded.

²⁷ N=80,600 after excluding the 3,449 prison leavers for whom no RoSH estimate was recorded.

Figure 4.6: Distributions of estimated RoSH, October 2022 – December 2023



A majority of the 3–12m AC order starts were judged to be of medium risk of serious harm in terms of any future offence (69%), followed by high or very high risk (21%) and low risk (10%).

With respect to all adult licence prison leavers over the same time period, the same ranking was of RoSH categories was observed: medium (47%), high or very high (42%) and low (10%).

Only the differences between the groups' shares in relation to medium and high or very high RoSH were statistically significant. Relative to all prison leavers released on adult licences, the largest differences among the 3–12m AC order starts were the 22 percentage point greater likelihood ($p < 0.01$) of being in the medium RoSH category and the 21 percentage point lower likelihood ($p < 0.01$) of being in the high or very high RoSH category.

These results of this section indicate that individuals within the group of 3–12m AC order starts were generally more likely to reoffend within 24 months than prison leavers released

on an adult licence, but generally less likely to be at a higher risk of causing serious harm in a future offence.

4.5 Protected characteristics

Descriptive statistics are presented below for the various protected characteristics of all 3–12m AC order starts between 26 October 2022 and 31 December 2023. The distributions of this group are compared to those of all prison leavers released on an adult licence across England and Wales during the same time period.

The estimates were based on the available management information from the main EM service provider or the Probation Service, where data were recorded.²⁸ Estimates were rounded to the nearest one per cent and therefore might not always sum to 100 per cent.

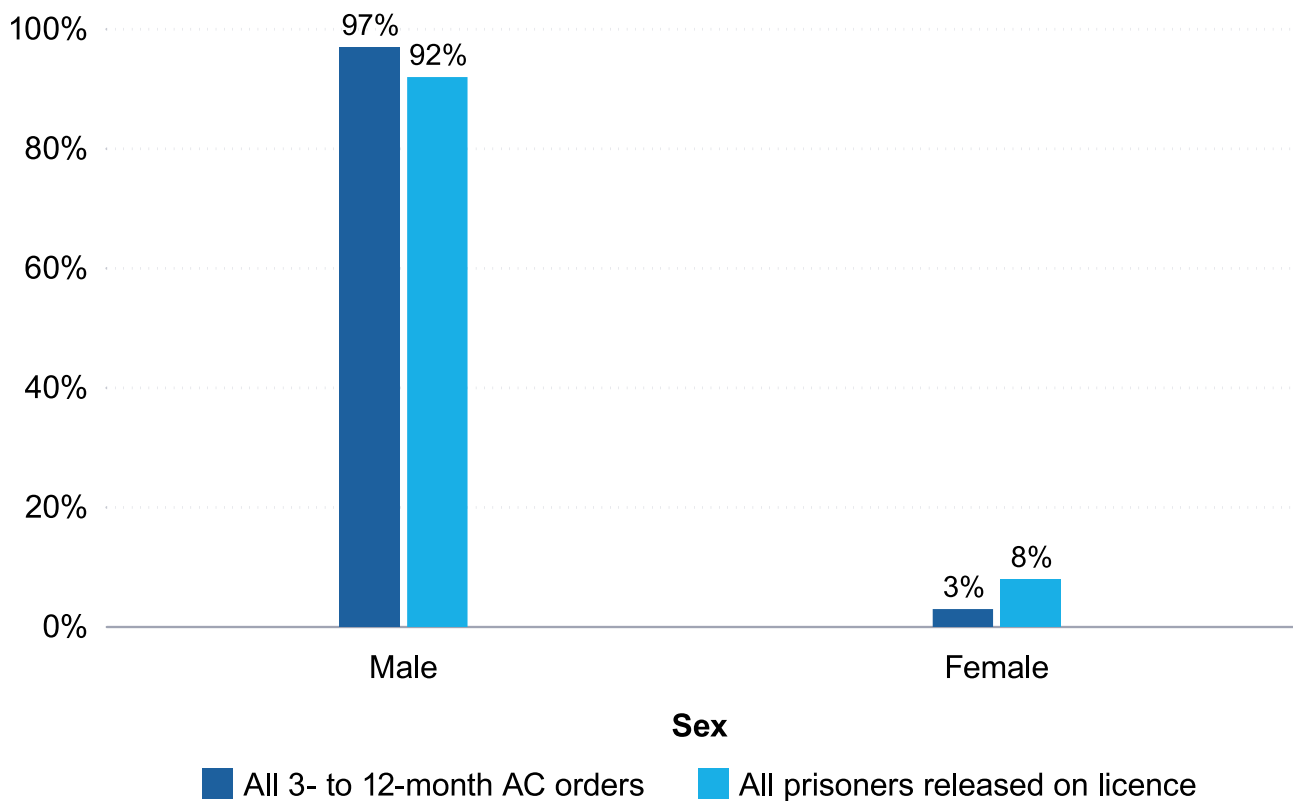
Sex

Figure 4.7 shows that the group of 3–12m AC order starts²⁹ was almost entirely male. Only three per cent of the group was female.

²⁸ The available MI from the main EM service provider only records the protected characteristic of sex specifically, although age can be derived using the date of birth listed. For other demographic variables, datasets were joined with data from nDelius.

²⁹ N=288. There were no missing data with regard to sex.

Figure 4.7: Distribution by sex, October 2022 – December 2023



Compared to all prison leavers³⁰ released on an adult licence, the group of 3–12m order starts was five percentage points more likely to be male ($p<0.01$).

Age

Figure 4.8 presents age distributions of all 3–12m AC order starts³¹ and of all prison leavers³² released on an adult licence. The former was based on recorded AC order start dates and the associated dates of birth, while the latter was based on the recorded dates of release and the available dates of birth.

The largest age group among all 3–12m AC order starts was 35–44 years old (40%) followed by those aged 25–34 (31%). The smallest age group was 55+ years old (3%).³³

³⁰ N=84,030 after excluding the 19 prison leavers for whom no sex was recorded.

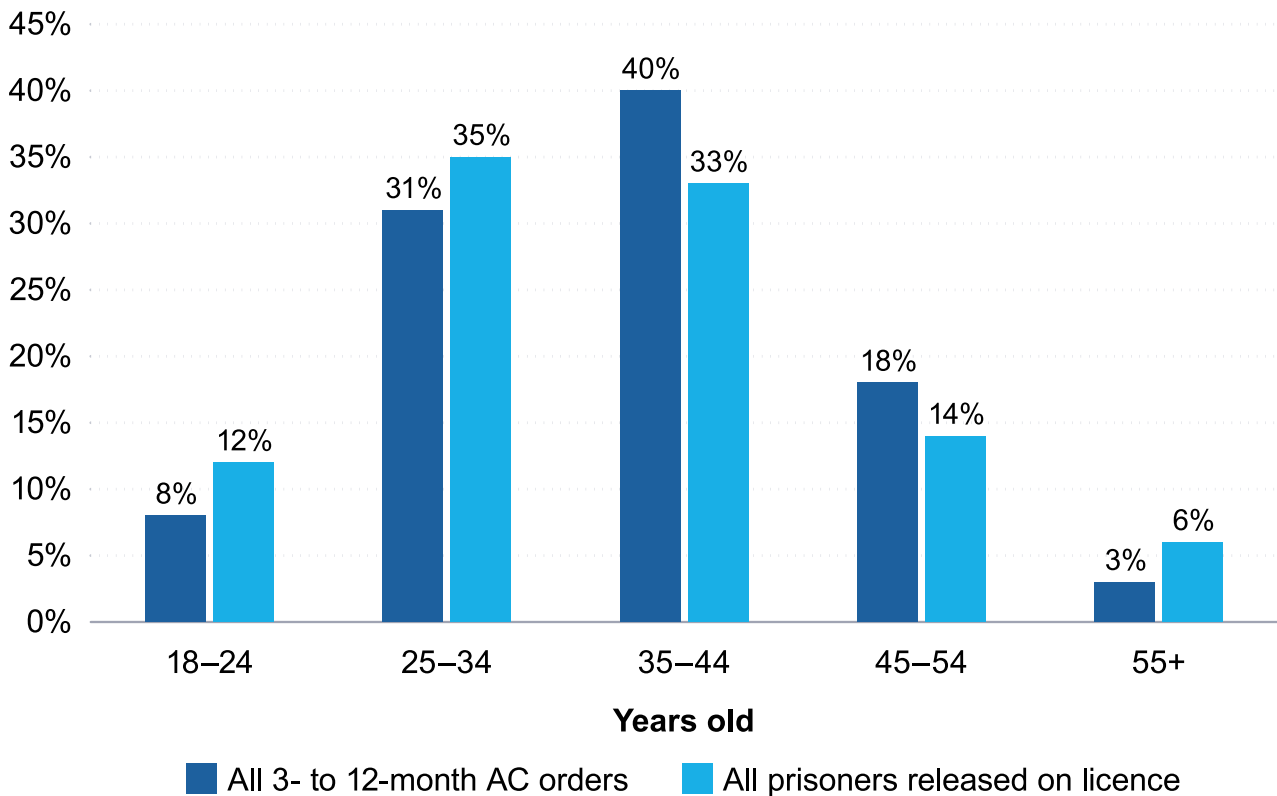
³¹ N=288. There were no missing data with regard to age.

³² N=82,074 after excluding the 1,975 prison leaver for whom no date of birth was recorded.

³³ The 55–64 and 65+ year old age groups were combined for the purposes of discussion to prevent the potential identification of individuals.

In contrast, the most common age group of the adult licence prison leavers was 25–34 years old (35%) followed by 35–44 years old (33%) over the same time period. Equally, the 55+ year old age group was smallest (6%).

Figure 4.8: Distributions by age group, October 2022 – December 2023



The age distributions of the two groups had several similarities: the average age among all 3–12m AC order starts was 37 years old and 36 among all prison leavers on adult licences, which was not a statistically significant difference; and the median ages were 37 and 35 respectively.

The largest difference was that the group of 3–12m AC order starts was seven percentage points more likely ($p < 0.01$) to be 35–44 years old than prison leavers on adult licences. In contrast, all 3–12m AC order starts were four percentage points less likely ($p < 0.05$) to be 18–24 years old.

The only other statistically significant difference was that the group of 3–12m AC order starts was four percentage points more likely ($p < 0.05$) to be aged 45–54 years old.

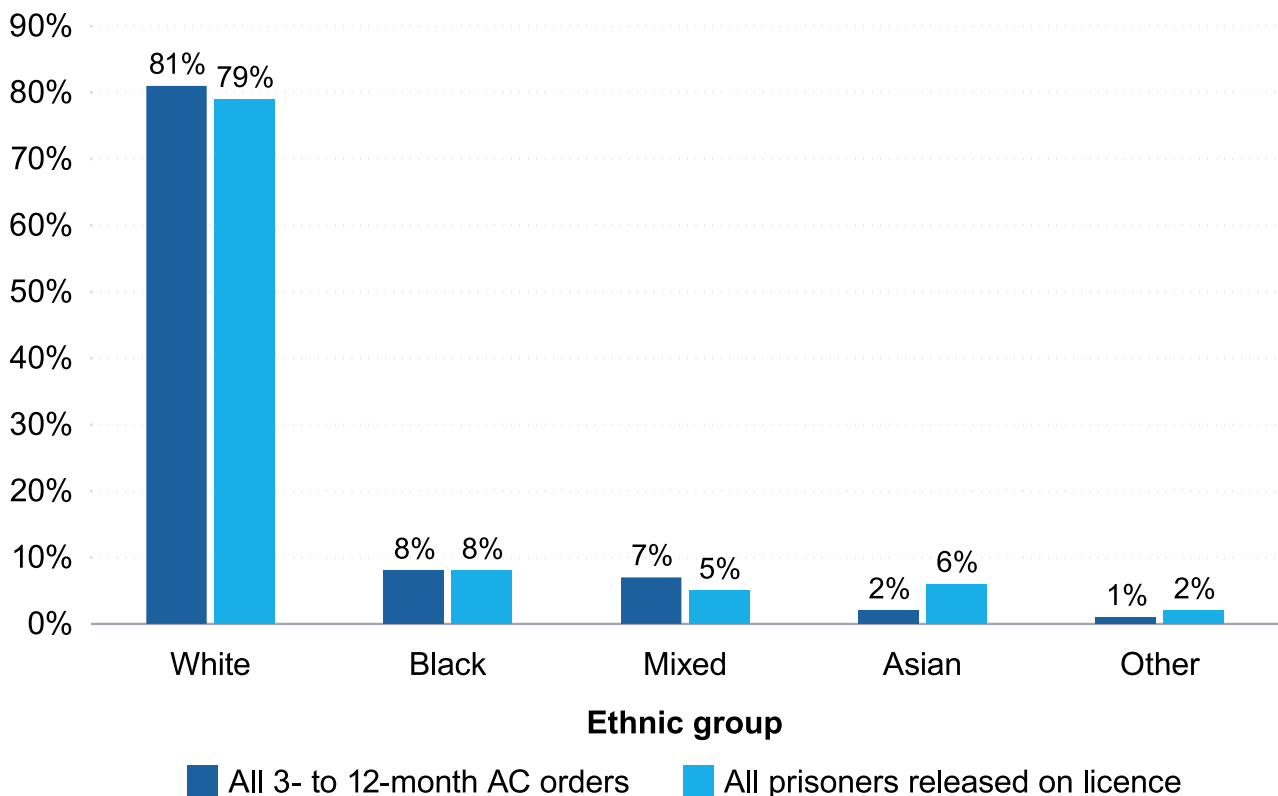
Ethnicity

Figure 4.9 shows the distribution of ethnicities among all 3–12m AC order starts³⁴ and all prison leavers³⁵ released on an adult licence, where recorded.

In terms of the former group, the most common ethnicity was White (81%). The next most common ethnicities were Black (8%), Mixed ethnicity (7%), Asian (2%) and “Other” (1%).

Among all prison leavers released on an adult licence, the recorded ethnicities were White (79%), Black (8%), Asian (6%), Mixed ethnicity (5%) and “Other” (2%).

Figure 4.9: Distributions by ethnicity, October 2022 – December 2023



There was only one statistically significant difference between the ethnic groups: the proportion of Asians was four percentage lower ($p < 0.01$) among 3–12m AC order starts than all prison leavers released on adult licences.

³⁴ N=286 after excluding the two AC order starts for which an ethnicity was neither recorded nor disclosed.

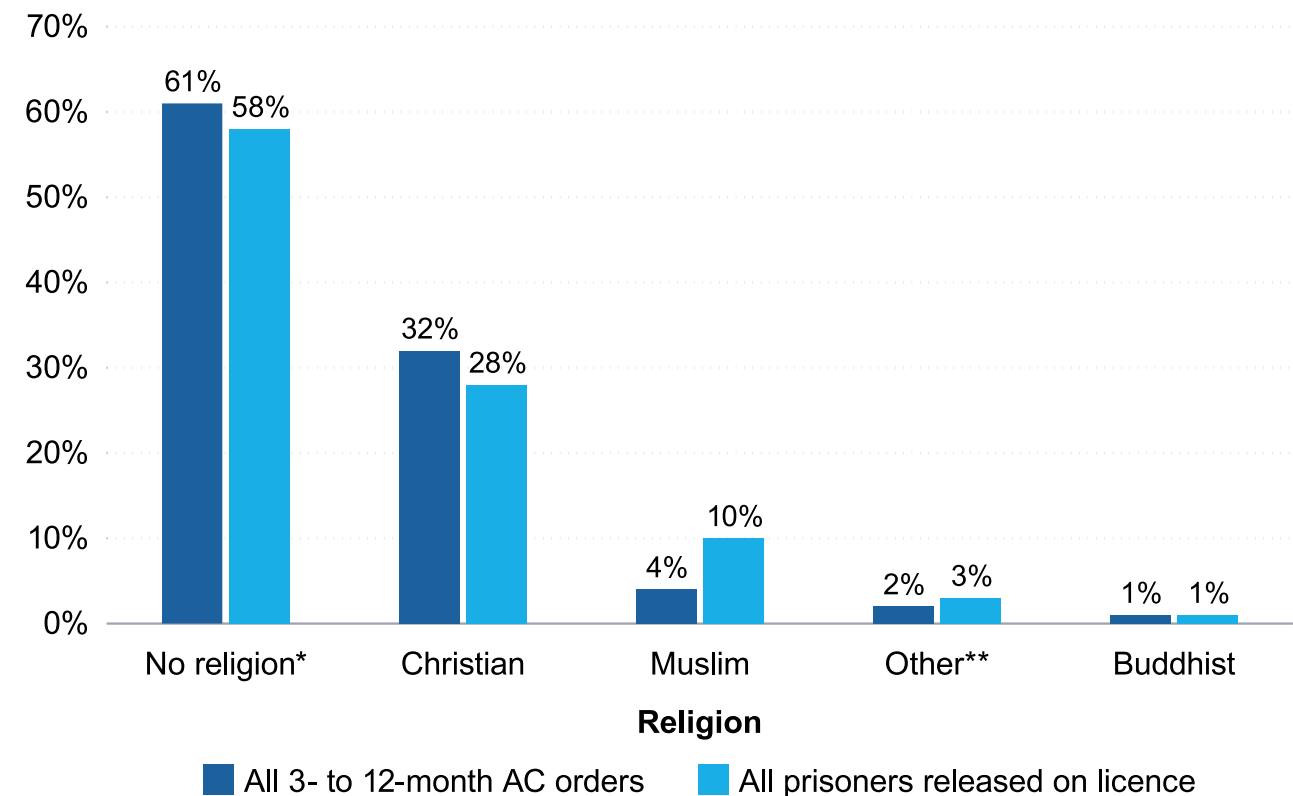
³⁵ N=82,459 after excluding the 1,590 prison leavers for whom an ethnicity was neither recorded nor disclosed.

Religion

Figure 4.10 shows that, where recorded, the most common religious groups among 3–12m AC order starts³⁶ were “no religion” (61%), followed by Christians (32%), Muslims (4%), “Other” (2%) and Buddhists (1%).³⁷

In descending order, the religious groups among all prison leavers³⁸ released on an adult licence were “no religion” (58%), Christians (28%), Muslims (10%), “Other” (3%) and Buddhists (1%).

Figure 4.10: Distributions by religion, October 2022 – December 2023



* Includes “agnostic” and atheist

** Includes Hinduism, Sikhism and Judaism

The most notable disparity between the distributions was that Muslims were six percentage points less likely ($p < 0.01$) to be represented among 3–12m AC order starts

³⁶ N=264 after excluding the 24 AC order starts for which a religion was neither recorded nor disclosed.

³⁷ Hinduism, Sikhism and Judaism were included within the “Other” category so as to prevent the potential identification of individuals.

³⁸ N=72,733 after excluding the 11,316 prison leavers for whom a religion was neither recorded nor disclosed.

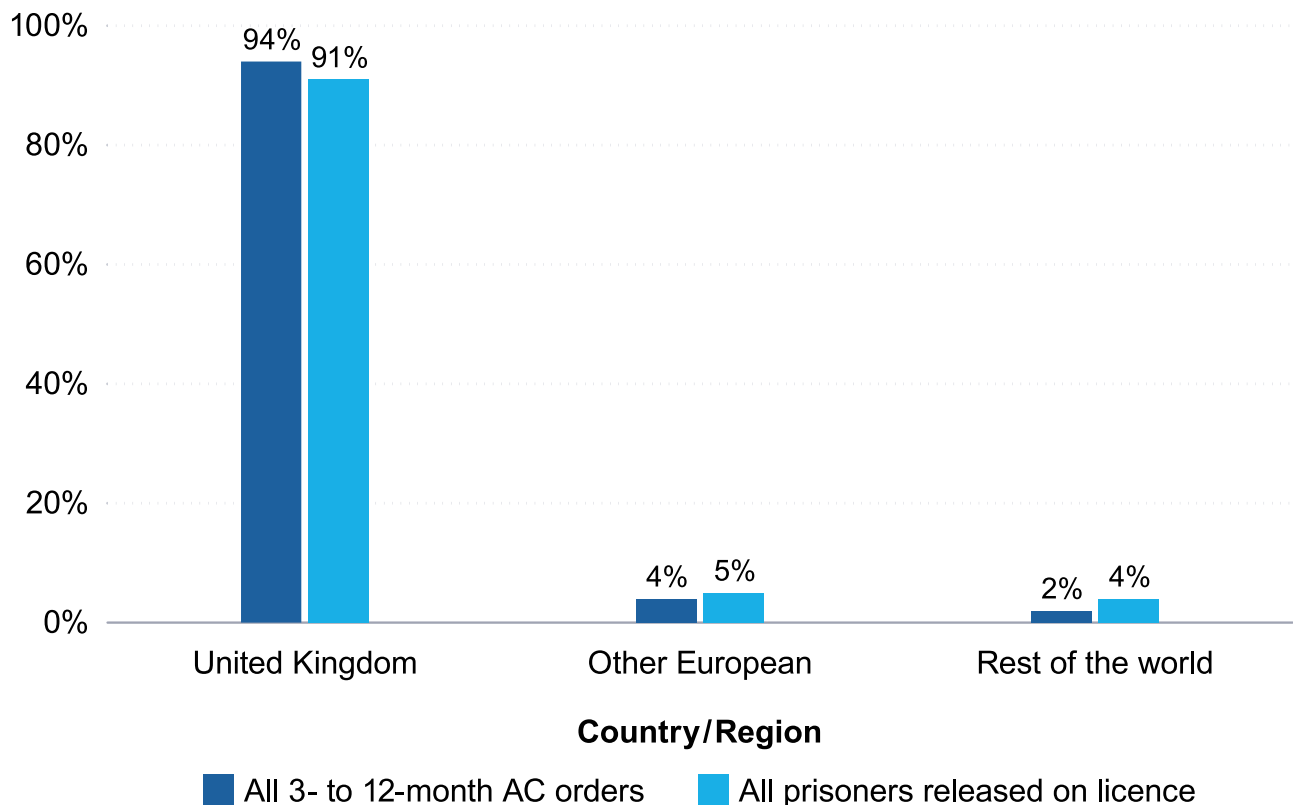
than all prison leavers released on adult licences. There were no other statistically significant differences between the groups' religious faiths.

Nationality

Figure 4.11 shows that nearly all individuals within the group of 3–12m AC order starts³⁹ were British citizens (94%), where a nationality was recorded. The nationalities of the small minority of remaining cases were other European (4%) and the rest of the world (2%).

The nationalities of all prison leavers⁴⁰ released on an adult licence was similar in that they were mostly British (91%). Among the remaining nationalities, the proportions of other European (5%) and the rest of the world (4%) were similar.

Figure 4.11: Distributions by nationality, October 2022 – December 2023



³⁹ N=285 after excluding the three AC order starts for which a nationality was neither recorded nor disclosed.

⁴⁰ N=82,158 after excluding the 1,891 prison leavers for whom a nationality was neither recorded nor disclosed.

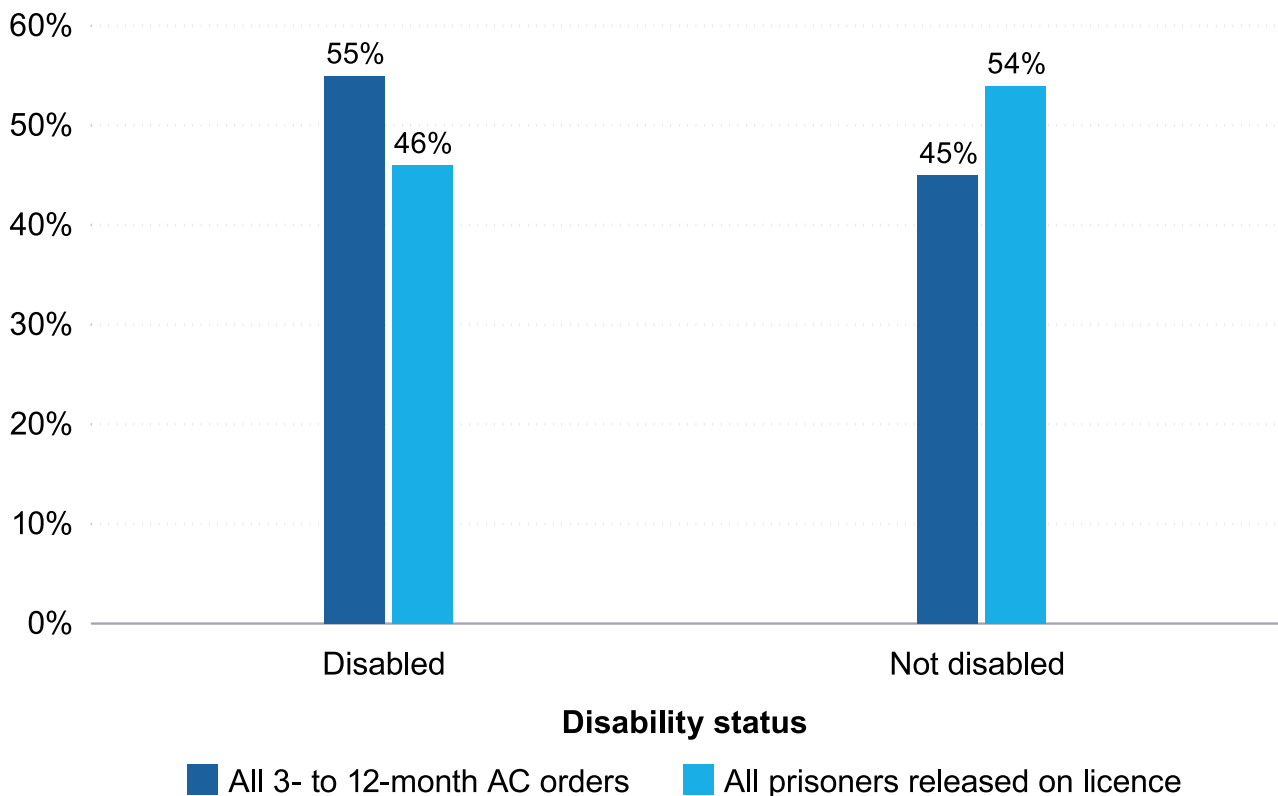
None of the estimated differences between the groups' nationalities was statistically significant.

Disability

As shown in Figure 4.12, 55 per cent of all 3–12m AC order starts⁴¹ were associated with at least one kind of disability on release from prison – e.g., autism, dyslexia, hearing, learning, mental, mobility, disfigurement, speech and/or sight. The remaining 45 per cent was not recorded as having any disability on release.

In contrast, 46 per cent of all prison leavers⁴² released on an adult licence over the same period were recorded as having a disability of some kind and the remaining 54 per cent was not.

Figure 4.12: Distributions by disability status, October 2022 – December 2023



The group of all 3–12m AC order starts was nine percentage points more likely ($p < 0.01$) to have a recorded disability than prison leavers on adult licences, which was a statistically

⁴¹ N=288. There were no missing data with regard to overall disability status.

⁴² N=84,030 after excluding the 19 prison leavers for whom no overall disability status was recorded.

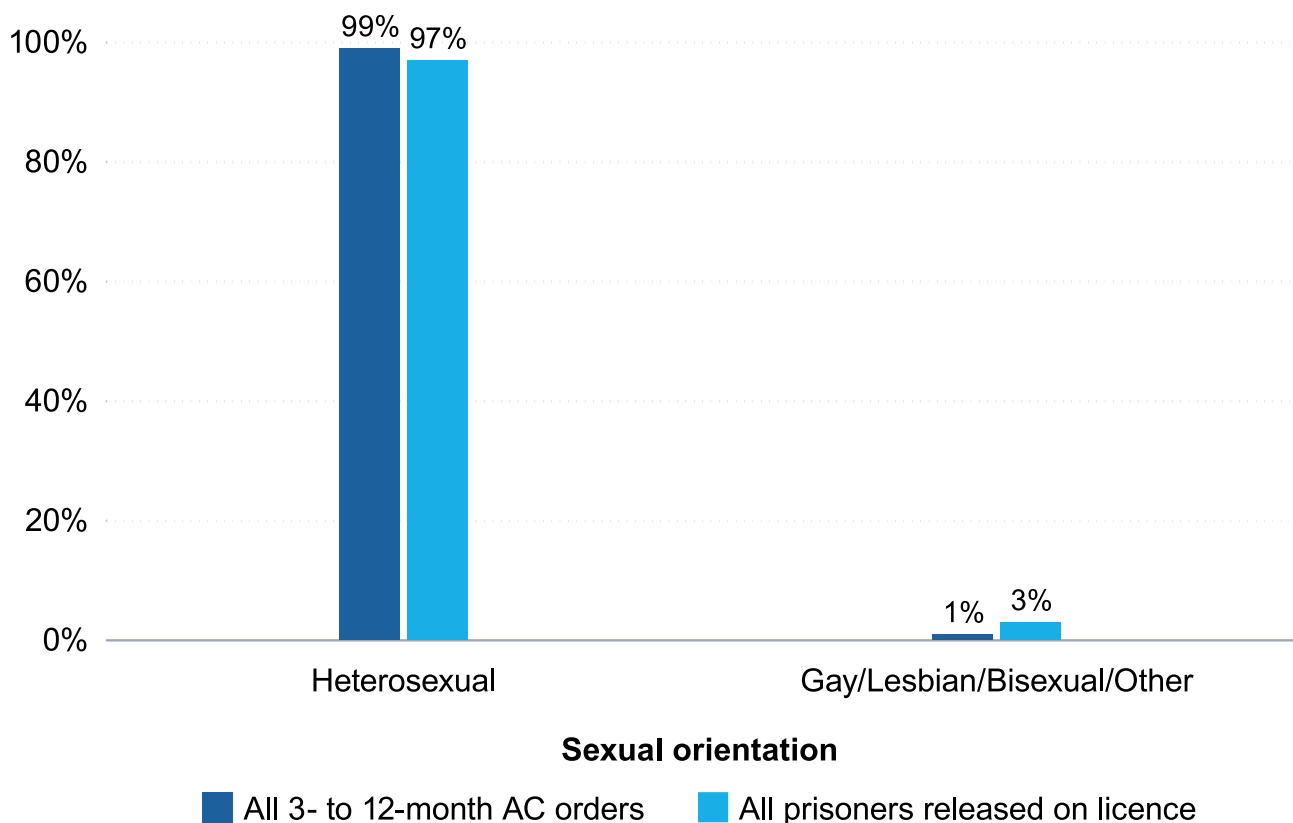
significant difference. Conversely, the group of 3–12m AC order starts was nine percentage points less likely ($p<0.01$) to be recorded as having no disability.

Sexual orientation

Where a sexual orientation was recorded, Figure 4.13 shows that 99 per cent of all 3–12m AC order starts⁴³ were described as heterosexual, while one per cent had a different sexual orientation.

A similar distribution was recorded among prison leavers⁴⁴ released on an adult licence in that 97 per cent was described as heterosexual and the remaining three per cent had another sexual orientation.

Figure 4.13: Distributions by sexual orientation, October 2022 – December 2023



⁴³ N=266 after excluding the 22 AC order starts for which a sexual orientation was neither recorded nor disclosed.

⁴⁴ N=76,857 after excluding the 7,192 prison leavers for whom a sexual orientation was neither recorded nor disclosed.

There was no statistically significant difference between the two groups' sexual orientations.

Gender identity

Given the risk of identifying individuals, it is not possible to present estimates of the share of 3–12m AC order starts whose members had a different gender identity to that of their legal sex, or to compare that explicitly to the corresponding share among all prison leavers released on an adult licence over the same time period.

Combinations of protected characteristics

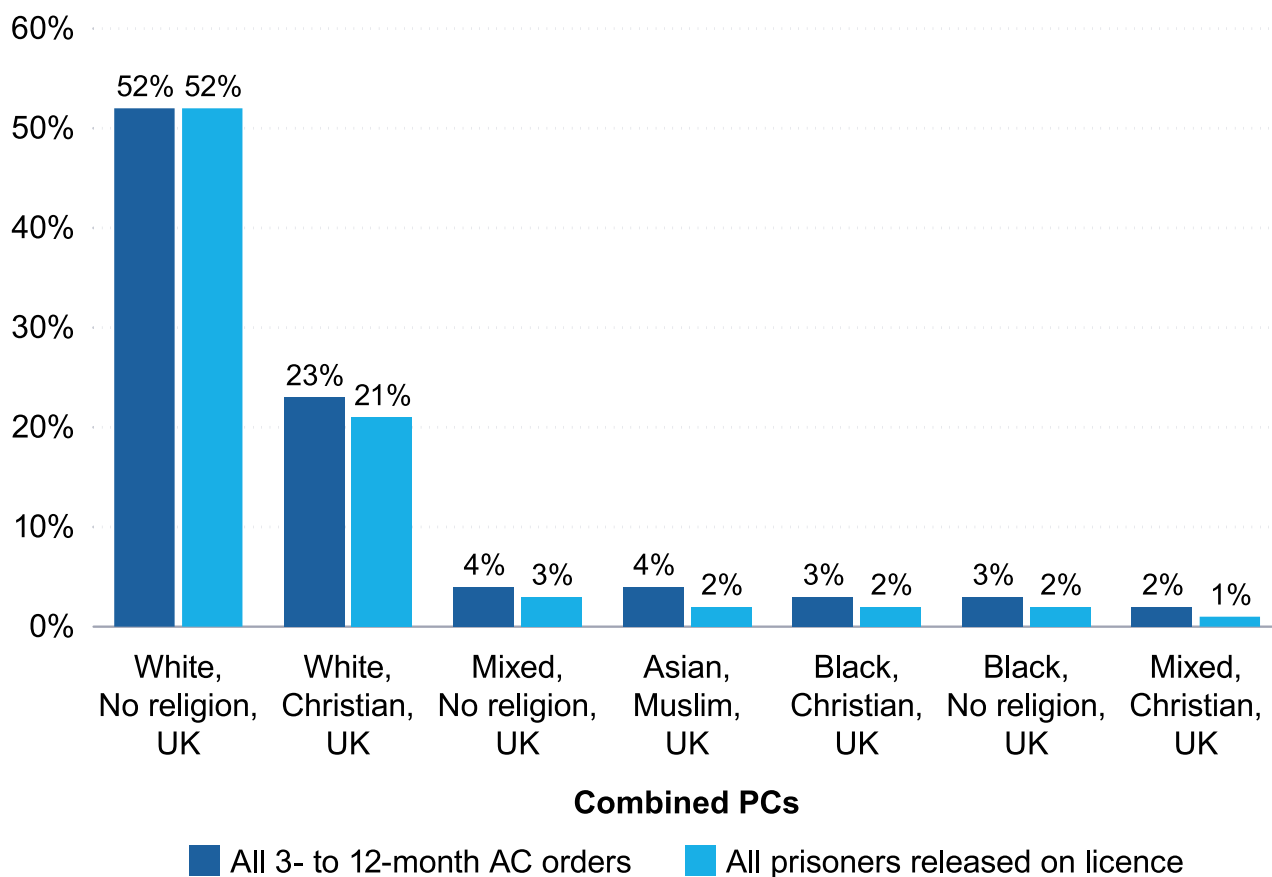
Given the relationship between ethnicity, religion and nationality in particular, Figure 4.14 illustrates the distribution of the seven most common combinations⁴⁵ of these three protected characteristics (PCs) within the group of 3–12m AC order starts⁴⁶ and the corresponding shares among all prison leavers⁴⁷ released on an adult licence, where there was an explicit ethnicity, religion or nationality recorded in combination.

⁴⁵ More than the seven most common combinations would have resulted in just one or two members of each subgroup among the identified 3–12m order starts, which would have risked the identification of individuals.

⁴⁶ N=264 after excluding the 24 AC order starts for which at least one of these three PCs was neither recorded nor disclosed.

⁴⁷ N=72,014 after excluding the 12,035 prison leavers for whom at least one of the three PCs was neither recorded nor disclosed.

Figure 4.14: Most common PC combinations distribution, October 2022 – December 2023



White, no religion, British citizens made up the largest share (52%) among 3–12m order starts and all prison leavers on adult licences (52%).

The most common non-White combinations among 3–12m AC order starts were Black, Christian, British citizens (4%) and Mixed ethnicity, no religion, British citizens (4%).

There were no statistically significant differences between the two distributions in relation to the most common combined sets of ethnicity, religion and nationality PCs.

Overall, the top seven combinations across 3–12m AC order starts represented 90 per cent of cases in this AC cohort, which was seven percentage points greater ($p < 0.01$) than among the associated combinations of prison leavers on adult licences over the same time period.

5. Summary of qualitative data

5.1 Probation

The 11 Integrated Offender Management (IOM) probation practitioners who contributed to the research held fairly positive views overall.

Respondents discussed the perceived positive outcomes resulting from effective communication with the police, as well as the belief that the GPS tag acted as a deterrent with regard to reoffending. Probation practitioner respondents said that the roles and responsibilities could be better understood through more training being provided to them. It was felt that this would encourage better caseload management and equip stakeholders with the necessary knowledge for the AC Project.

Several respondents discussed that their role differed since managing people on probation in the 3–12m cohort as opposed to the 12m+ cohort. Probation practitioners felt these changes had a significant impact on their workload, requiring increased involvement and resources. These respondents, however, largely discussed aspects of the AC Project in relation to both the 3–12m and 12m+ cohorts. Therefore, unless otherwise specified, the themes incorporate insights of the entire project with respect to both cohorts.

Theme: Probation practitioner's responsibilities changed in managing the 3–12m cohort compared to the 12m+ cohort

Respondents commented that their responsibilities differed since the project was expanded to include the 3–12m cohort.

They expressed that they played a more active role in monitoring and providing support to people on probation in the 3–12m cohort as these individuals were reportedly more likely to exhibit chaotic behaviour. This was in line with a study by Stewart (2008) where a higher level of need was found among those individuals who had served a short custodial sentence in comparison to those who had served longer sentences. It was found those individuals on a shorter custodial sentence were more likely to be homeless, unemployed and have higher levels of alcohol and drug misuse.

Probation practitioner respondents reported using the Self-Service Portal⁴⁸ more frequently with the 3–12m cohort in comparison to the 12m+ cohort in order to monitor compliance of non-EM licence conditions. It was also mentioned that there have been several issues with the portal since the cohort's expansion.

“I feel like we've had a lot more issues with the portal since it's rolled out, but I'm assuming that's because we've got more people on it.”

IOM probation practitioner

A recurring concern raised by respondents was the labour-intensive nature of managing the 3–12m cohort following a short custodial spell.⁴⁹

“For the three to 12 months especially because it's all quite last minute and you panic because we need to get someone allocated before they get released from prison. So, it's a lot of checking. As I said, it's not necessarily me that does the work anymore as we used to with the 12 month cohort. It's more my colleague who's now our own coordinator. It's a lot of her checking offences, having to check the results, and having to liaise with the court.” **IOM probation practitioner**

It was argued that, in terms of the 3–12m cohort, this group of people on probation often displayed different behaviours to those on longer sentences.

“...I don't feel like it's changed too much other than it being a bit more chaotic.”

IOM probation practitioner

Some respondents said that this new AC cohort had resulted in an increase in the frequency of recalls to prison.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ A tool available to probation practitioners to manage monitored people on probation under the AC Project. It is used to check their compliance against licence conditions. The software was supplied by Airbus.

⁴⁹ With respect to preparations for the EM tag to be installed prior to a prisoner's release, probation practitioners are responsible for providing the prison with the compulsory and appropriate licence conditions prior to the individual's release from prison. Once the licence has been generated, the prison is then responsible for initiating the tagging installation of the individual. However, in instances where the prison leaver is released with no fixed abode, the probation practitioner is responsible for initiating the EM installation once suitable accommodation has been obtained by the person on probation. (More information on project roles are detailed in Appendix B.)

⁵⁰ This assertion will be examined in the planned impact evaluation.

Furthermore, respondents highlighted the need for additional support with the 3–12m cohort, expressing concerns about the AC Project’s expansion despite staffing constraints within the Probation Service:

“...it’s chaos with short sentences and there’s not much time to really be monitoring someone on a GPS tag. I suppose that that would be a lesson. But also, yeah, that we’re quite short staffed bringing in new schemes can be quite difficult sometimes.” **IOM probation practitioner**

Insufficient probation practitioner staff resources were also a common finding from the 12m+ cohort evaluation. A recent report published by HM Inspectorate of Probation after the 2021 reunification⁵¹ of the Probation Service concluded that every probation region in England and Wales was understaffed.⁵² Furthermore, the report also found reductions in the frequency of reoffending when probation delivery was of a high-quality nature. Probation staffing constraints could, therefore, potentially have an effect on reoffending among individuals enrolled in the AC Project.

Theme: Positive views of the AC Project

GPS tag as a deterrent

Probation practitioner respondents believed that use of the GPS EM tag deterred reoffending. They said that the person on probation’s knowledge they were subject to location monitoring promoted compliance with their licence conditions, which discouraged them from engaging in crime. It was argued that the GPS tag allowed probation practitioners to engage in meaningful conversations with monitored people on probation and served as a reminder to make them refrain from committing future offences.

⁵¹ [Strengthening probation, building confidence](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/94444/strengthening-probation-building-confidence.pdf) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

⁵² [HM Inspectorate of Probation Annual Report 2022/2023](https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmip/annual-report-2022-2023/) ([justiceinspectorates.gov.uk](https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk))

“...[the] type of person that’s wearing the tag, they’re obviously prolific offenders and the fact that we’re getting information to come through, you know, that suggests that they’re in the area of a crime, even if we can’t necessarily collate enough evidence to secure a charge. What it does allow us to do is it allows us to have conversations with those individuals to say, look, you know you’ve come up on this proximity alert. So just a reminder for them and maybe a bit of a psychological impact on them to probably think twice about committing an offence.”

“I think it’s potentially my anecdotal information from some people and probation is that it is deterring them as well... I’ve spoken to a couple of people with the tags across the region and they have actually said yes, it has stopped me from reoffending.”

IOM probation practitioners

Stakeholder engagement

Most respondents reported positive outcomes from the IOM arrangements implemented as part of the scheme.

Probation respondents specifically highlighted the effectiveness of communication channels established with the police, which was also a finding from the 12m+ process evaluation. It was mentioned that regular meetings have been valuable in providing support for case management and in providing general updates regarding the AC Project.

“I think our liaison with the police is pretty good. I think our co-working with them is good. We are pretty good at liaising, I would say.” **IOM probation practitioner**

Self-Service Portal

Some probation respondents highlighted the usefulness of the Self-Service Portal providing accurate information for effective case management. One person described how the live location feature on the portal has been beneficial in facilitating enforcement action.

“In terms of what else is working with the portal...it’s accurate information...and it’s been able to be used for a couple of cases in terms of enforcement action.”

“[The Self-Service Portal] is working quite well. I think it’s given probation officers the information they need.”

IOM probation practitioner

Theme: Lack of understanding of the AC Project

Probation respondents stated that the guidelines for information sharing with the police and EM service providers were unclear. This was attributed to insufficient training and support.

“I think they [probation practitioners] could probably do with some additional training around like data sharing and the roles and responsibilities of the probation practitioner... I think just some more guidance around exactly what information should and shouldn’t be shared.” **IOM probation practitioner**

Uncertainty around what data can be shared by probation with the police was also a finding from the 12m+ process evaluation. Furthermore, responses from probation practitioners highlighted there was not enough understanding in how to use the Self-Service Portal for effective case management. To address this issue, recommendations were put forward by some respondents, such as e-learning platforms to enhance practitioners understanding of using the portal.

“But I think specific training from the national team so that all the probation practitioners are really clear on what’s required or...before they get to register on the portal or access it, they have to complete like a data security sheet or 5 to 10 minute e-learning just to say this is what you can do with this data so that it’s clear.” **IOM probation practitioner**

A similar finding from the 12m+ process evaluation was that probation practitioners felt they required more help with how to interpret the data on the Self-Service Portal as they were unsure of how to do so.

A suggestion put forward was to implement collaborative training sessions with EM service providers to establish a clearer understanding of the roles and responsibilities of both organisations.

“I think some sort of joined up training with the provider would be useful because we have our probation training, we’ve got EQuIP and [Microsoft] Teams training. But that doesn’t involve EM service providers, and I think it needs to so they can give their point of view and support because the two need to join up and I think we’re working in two separate camps.” **IOM probation practitioner**

Theme: Relationship with EM service provider

Respondents discussed a lack of clarity regarding roles and responsibilities with EM service provider staff. It was proposed that there appears to be uncertainty surrounding who is responsible for dealing with battery breaches.

“...there’s a lot of challenges with EM service providers...with the liaison in terms of breaches and whose responsibility it is to check the breaches, I’m finding breaches that EM service providers aren’t and then actually six months later I’m getting the breach through and I’m thinking well, it’s a little bit too late now because it’s six months after. So, I think again the lines are blurred on the responsibility on that aspect.”⁵³ **IOM probation practitioner**

Probation respondents also stated there were delays with EM service provider staff responding to queries regarding whether an EM tag had been installed. Respondents raised concerns that the reported EM service provider delays adversely impacted their work in effectively managing offenders.

⁵³ In the MoJ guidance for stakeholders on the AC Project, it states the main EM service provider is responsible for reporting battery breaches and that probation staff are then responsible for determining the outcome of the breach.

“The speediness from EM service providers in terms of responding to business issues. Sometimes it’s: yeah, we’ll pop out this evening [to fit the tags] and they’re brilliant. Sometimes it can be 10 days later, and they’ve not gone out... This falls into our sort of risk management plan of being able to monitor someone and we’re not able to because [EM service providers] have not been able to go out [to tag an offender].”

“I think the communication with EM service providers is quite poor. ... I’ve got someone else who was released... [and] they’ve been fitted with the electronic tag, not trail monitoring, despite having the licence. I’ve emailed them four times and still no one has got back to me to talk about changing it.”

IOM Probation Practitioner

Concerns about the timeliness of EM service provider responses and of fitting tags were also findings of the 12m+ process evaluation.

5.2 Police⁵⁴

Police respondents held a generally positive view overall. However, they typically expressed unhappiness about resource constraints in the Probation Service and not having direct access to probation’s Self-Service Portal in the AC Project.

Most respondents stated that they did not distinguish between the 3–12m and 12m+ cohorts as being relevant to their work. The themes presented below are therefore generated based on police respondent views of both AC cohorts, unless otherwise specified.

Theme: Additional 3–12m cohort

All respondents discussed the AC Project more generally as they stated that the different cohorts did not make a difference to how they work.

⁵⁴ There are more findings for the police in comparison to probation due to police respondents generally having more to discuss regarding the AC Project in their interviews.

“If it’s a 12 month or a 3 month, it [the MoJ Hub] just tells you that there’s been a proximity alert from a person that’s on the scheme wearing the GPS tag.”

Police officer

There was a comment that the addition of the 3–12m cohort had simplified the project for police officers.

“You can basically now...brief [the team and] say just about every car crime, every theft from motor vehicle, every robber is going to end up on a tag as opposed to having to say every burglar who comes out who has got a sentence of 12 months or more will get a tag...you [now] just say every burglar will have a tag.” **Police officer**

Respondents said that there was a greater volume of offenders within the 3–12m cohort (in comparison to the 12m+ cohort), where some said this was evident in their increased caseload of work.

“I think the 3–12 month cohort captures more volume. They’re actually the ones that cause the most disruption...because they’re constantly in and out of minor offending doing something [then going] back in [to prison and then] back out. So, actually, I think potentially it will actually have a bigger impact on neighbourhood crime.” **Police officer**

Theme: Positive effects of the tag

Police respondents held a positive view of the AC Project, where most believed the location monitored acted as a reoffending deterrent. This is also in line with findings from the 12m+ process evaluation.

“[We have had] good results from offenders who are quite prolific prior to being tagged and who now basically are very quiet since being tagged and it’s obviously doing its job and has prevented him going out and committing crime.” **Police officer**

Some respondents stated that the AC Project has also assisted them in their work by sometimes shortening the time taken to detect potential reoffending.

“It definitely does curb fresh offending. As soon as they know that they’re on a tag, then it is keeping them at bay to a certain level, and it’s an easy hit for us. So as soon as they decide they’re not going to [comply], they cut the tag off. So it’s not like we’re having to wait three or four weeks with them clearly committing offences before we start finding out they are because they know that their tags on, they’re going to get pinged; and so if they’ve got the tag off, we’re immediately then aware... they’re up to no good...so it’s giving us a quicker input into it.”

Police officer

Another perceived positive was that police were reportedly able to eliminate those prison leavers enrolled in the AC Project from investigations earlier than otherwise.

“He [offender wearing a tag] was able to say to us, actually, I was on the bus that day, which completely matched...so I was able to feed back to him by saying... that’s good because actually this is the sort of crime you committed...had you not been on this tag, we would have been looking at you potentially, been bringing you in for question and things like that.” **Police officer**

Information about battery breaches of EM tags was also seen as a useful feature.

“Once they start breaching that battery, they are going downhill again so we can put things in place to try and catch it and, like, one lad was doing it, so we got him in to a rehab centre before it ended up in recall.” **Police officer**

There other examples given by police respondents about monitored people on probation. It was stated that some of the latter had asked to be put on the Buddi tag⁵⁵ at the end of their AC Project location monitoring period because they viewed the tag as supporting them in desisting from crime.

Theme: Further roll-out of the project

Some police respondents said that they wished for the AC Project to be more widely available.

⁵⁵ A voluntary EM tagging system to encourage rehabilitation. The Buddi tag is operated and funded by individual police forces.

“I think particularly from what I can gather from [named a neighbouring police force area], they’re crying out to be allowed to have it. I think they look up to us with very envious eyes.” **Police officer**

Respondents commented that they would like the project to be rolled out to further crime types such as domestic abuse, attempt offences, taking without owners’ consent (TWOC) offences and vehicle interference offences.

“Any attempt doesn’t qualify. So, if you get convicted of an attempted burglary, you’ll go to prison...and you’ll come out and you’re not eligible for the criteria because it’s an attempt. I find that a little bit bizarre...and certainly some of the motor vehicle crime where you’ve got theft from motor vehicles, you’ve got theft of motor vehicles, but not TWOC or aggravated TWOC.” **Police officer**

Theme: Suggested changes to crime mapping

Respondents were generally positive about crime mapping, where some stated that it can save them time with respect to investigations and can provide evidence that police can use to support a conviction. Some suggestions were provided by respondents to enable crime mapping to be more effective in their view.

“Then I could go look at where the offender is and actually had that location on the proximity alert just been 20 metres to the right, it would have picked up that he was there as well... so I always have to go back and get the extra data [from the MoJ Hub] to come back to tell me he was at this extra point as well. So I feel like if we had more data in the initial report, like a bigger surface area that would be useful.”⁵⁶ **Police officer**

However, other respondents said that the current crime mapping radius worked well. One suggestion was to have an algorithm that could automatically assess a monitored individual’s time spent within the crime radius circle as there can be a lot of ‘white noise’ otherwise.

⁵⁶ A senior manager in the MoJ Hub has subsequently made clear that they do not alter the 100 metre crime radius search. Instead, on request, the Hub completes a contextual report, which is a follow up to a proximity alert such that it effectively expands the window of opportunity for police investigation – e.g., a request for further movement data after the reported crime to aid investigation.

“I think if they’re [people] passing along the motorway at 70 miles an hour, they’ll [the MoJ Hub] disregard it, but if somebody’s riding a bike or walking through an estate then that could almost be disregarded as well.” **Police officer**

There was a proposal to increase the duration of the 12 hour window around a crime needed on the grounds that opportunities could be missed for crimes such as burglaries occurring over the course of a week.

“We’re missing that opportunity to identify offenders at locations. I think that’s a major thing which needs to be looked into.” **Police officer**

This proposal contrasts with the 12m+ process evaluation where some police respondents stated they wanted the 12 hour window to be reduced. Another suggestion related to automatic notifications to make it easier to detect the person on probation’s activities.

“One thing we do on the Buddi tag is set up notifications if they go into certain areas and go to certain addresses, so I don’t know if that’s a possibility with the [AC tag] but that’s a good advantage of the Buddi tag.” **Police officer**

Theme: Stakeholder relationships

MoJ Hub

Police respondents were asked about their relationships with other stakeholder groups while working on the AC Project. Respondents expressed they were happy with the proximity alert product they receive from the MoJ Hub because this is sent to them in a format that can be used in court. They were pleased with the communication from the MoJ Hub and stated that it was often quick to respond to queries.

EM service providers

Respondents generally remarked they did not have a lot of interactions with EM service providers due to not often needing to liaise with them directly. There were mixed views from those who had interacted with EM service providers, where some said that a delay to tag installation was commonplace, which was also a finding from the 12m+ process evaluation.

“I’ve not had loads of conversations with EM service providers myself. We’ve had certainly a lot of issues around fitting of tags...they’ll come out to fit a tag and then after a few days someone’s battery keeps going flat...we’ll phone the EM service provider and...then it’s very slow getting out to them [the person on probation].”

Police officer

Furthermore, others commented that some monitored people on probation do not know how to charge their tag due to not having been informed how to do so by EM service provider staff or probation staff. Others stated that the relationship with EM service providers was good and that the dedicated telephone line they now have should make contacting them easier. However, there was a comment that the product they receive from EM service providers during out of hours, when the MoJ Hub is not able to provide proximity alerts, lacks key details.

“[From the MoJ Hub proximity alert reports] you can follow them around on a map and...you can work out from their speed he’s probably walking really quickly or he’s basically...going 20 kilometres an hour [so] he’s probably got onto a bus or into a vehicle. Whereas the EM service provider one, it plots the positions on a map [and] doesn’t tell you which is the first, which is the last...so you can’t tell which direction he’s gone.” **Police officer**

Probation

Although some respondents noted their relationship with probation was good and, in some instances, has improved as probation staff have become more experienced in the use of the Self-Service Portal, others noted issues with the breadth and quality of available data.

“Our relationship has always been good with probation, but I think we still experience the exact same issues now that we experienced previously and that is around the accuracy of the data, and the tag wearers and who’s got them [a tag] on and where they live, if they’ve been released from prison with a tag or not because sometimes they are listed as wearing one when they haven’t actually got one on or vice versa.” **Police officer**

The main issue reported by police respondents was their view that probation staff do not sufficiently carry out compliance checks on offenders, which poses a problem for the

police. Most respondents proposed that probation staff constraints were one of the factors why probation may not carry out checks on the Self-Service Portal as frequently as the police would like.

“So this lad...was drug dealing and, when we got probation to look at his portal, he was spending hours at between 2:00 and 3:00 in the morning on Sainsbury’s car park, dotting about all over the place... Would it have been pertinent for probation to start looking at his snail trail to say, ‘What is it that you’re doing between 2:00 and 4:00 o’clock on Sainsbury’s car park every night of the week?’ As opposed to just accepting ‘yeah, I’m at home’... But again have they got the time and the capacity?” **Police officer**

Police respondents stated that probation staff check the portal when they are available, when asked by police. However, respondents expressed their frustration with not having direct access to the Self-Service Portal themselves⁵⁷ because they believed this access would assist with wider policing, which was also a finding from the 12m+ process evaluation.

“I think they’ve given the wrong people the access because, as far as probation are concerned, unless they’re flagging for a breach of their licence, they’re not really interested in where they’re going, whether they’re connecting with any crime hotspots or anything like that...[but] from a police point of view...so say one of our offenders...is showing what we think is going to be a good description for that’s our offender...and if the actual probation officer that’s managing them aren’t on duty, we can’t get access to any data other than going via the EM service provider, which then takes forever.” **Police officer**

It was also argued that probation staff might see the benefit of police having direct access to the portal, which may save probation time by reducing the need to provide information to the police.

⁵⁷ There is currently no legal power that permits such data sharing with the police.

“They’ll sort of have a quick look [when the police ask them] and then they have to try and cut and paste it to send us the details over. It’s just so time consuming and almost a hassle for them because they’re like, well, it isn’t actually serving anything to do with their [offender] management.” **Police officer**

Theme: Staff resources

Most police respondents stated that they currently had enough staff resources to deliver the AC Project. However, some felt that they did not have capacity to take on many more cases of this nature.

“I think one of the issues that’s never really addressed with anything new that comes out is there’s never really a lot of thought given to how is that going to impact on the team that’s going to have to manage it because it’s extra work. But there’s never any extra resources that comes with that extra work. So, you know, this is just one of a number of initiatives that come into IOM.” **Police officer**

There were also mixed findings regarding staff resources in the process evaluation of the 12m+ cohort.

A common view among police respondents was of a resource constrained Probation Service and the perceived impact of this constraint.

“They’re critically short of staff and that does have an effect on [their] performance.” **Police officer**

It was also commented that probation staff who were trained in using the portal appeared to have too much work.

“So, the sticking points I have is where we don’t have access to it [the Self-Service Portal] and we obviously do work some weekends. Some probation staff are trained in it and some aren’t, so the flaws we found is that the probation staff who are trained seem to have an abundance of too much work.” **Police officer**

5.3 People on probation

As most monitored people on probation would typically not be able to compare the experiences of being in the 12m+ and 3–12m cohorts, no questions were asked of these respondents to contrast their experiences during fieldwork.

Similar to the 12m+ AC process evaluation, this stakeholder group proved challenging to engage. The small number of respondents in this group means that the findings may not be representative.

Of the five people on probation in total who contributed to the research (two interviews and three surveys), most respondents said they had positive experiences of being monitored. Where a reason was articulated, wearing an EM tag was seen as a deterrent against reoffending and/or helpful in proving that the person was not in the vicinity of an alleged offence.

However, some of the respondents reported issues or complaints they had with the EM tag.

Theme: Issues with the tag

There was a comment that the tag moved around too much on the ankle and, in one example, became a problem when exercising.

“I used to be able to go for a jog. I used to be quite into my fitness... but... unless you put, like, two pairs of socks so it's tight around your ankle, it moves about so much it can cause sores on your foot and on your leg.” **Person on probation**

Another study by Vanhaelemeesch et al. (2014) found the physical nature of the tag was problematic where participants reported discomfort with an electronic tag while sleeping. Similarly, it was found in the 12m+ process evaluation that some respondents reported the tag to be too heavy, uncomfortable and that it gets in the way of daily activities such as the gym. It was proposed that the tag should be made smaller due to its perceived impracticality.

Another reported issue with the EM tag related to battery depletion, sometimes unexpectedly.

“The signal is so poor where I am...I think that [the tag] is fighting to connect for so long and then [I] wake up...in the morning and it’s stone dead.”

Person on probation

Although respondents were generally positive about the amount of information they received regarding the EM tag, there was one reported instance where a person on probation said that they had not been informed prior to release from prison about the need for a tag and only found out about this on the day of release when presented with their licence conditions.

5.4 MoJ AC Hub

Among the eight individuals who contributed to the research, the MoJ Hub respondents had a generally positive view of the AC Project and the work of the Hub.

All respondents stated that there was largely no change to their role with respect of the 3–12m cohort. The themes below are therefore, based on their view of the whole project rather than the 3–12m cohort specifically, unless otherwise stated.

Theme: Additional 3–12m cohort

Every respondent said that their role had not changed since the expansion to the 3–12m cohort, although some stated that there had been an increase in their workload.

“My role hasn’t changed at all...we’ve seen a slight increase of volumes of crimes coming to us, but you’d expect that anyway if more people are wearing tags.”

Hub staff

It was remarked that the only impact of the larger volume was the need to ensure there were sufficient staff resources for the team in response to the increase.

“So, all the processes have remained the same and we have seen a little uplift in numbers, but because we’ve got quite a comprehensive team, it hasn’t affected our daily work to the point that we can’t handle it.” **Hub staff**

However, there was a comment that, due to the addition of the cohort, more crime mapping proximity alerts were being generated for the police to review.

“Obviously a lot more noise (more proximity alerts) has come into the system because the parameters are not as tight as we would like them because you’ve increased the volume of wearers within the cohort.” **Hub staff**

Theme: Crime mapping

MoJ Hub respondents stated that the crime mapping process worked well from their perspective and that they were meeting their service level agreement of submitting proximity alerts to the police in a timely manner. Respondents said that the crime radius of 100 metres should remain at this distance, although they noted issues with the locations related to some offences.

“So we get the coordinates of a crime and the landmark for that crime comes out as the centre of wherever that crime is so, for example, if you had somebody reported being robbed in Hyde Park in London, which is a vast park, it would put the landmark in the centre of Hyde Park, whereas the person who was robbed could have been robbed a mile away from that location and then that wouldn’t get picked up by our criteria...somebody wearing a tag would have to be within 100 metres of the crime, the reported crime...so they could have been involved in that crime but not picked up because the landmark shows them a mile difference to where it occurred.”⁵⁸ **Hub staff**

Some Hub respondents mentioned how the crime mapping process had become more automated, which they felt had brought about positive changes. For example, the crime mapping tool now has a slide bar at the side of the map that provides more functionality.

“When we’re doing a contextual report and the police require more information, we’ve got more tools on the sidebar to help us change the dates and times, whereas before we’d have to keep coming out of it and putting in a complete new report...we’ve now got a slide bar at the side that we never used to have so we can really easily just change the times as to when we need it.” **Hub staff**

⁵⁸ A similar statement was included in the 12m+ report from the same respondent.

The increased functionality includes a 360 degree view of the crime map which can be provided to police to assist them in their investigation.

At the beginning of the AC Project one respondent explained that the Hub caseworkers used to determine the relevancy of speed and movements within the crime radius, but noted the tool now did this for them. However, another respondent noted a disadvantage of the automation.

“You have a burglary which occurs over a 12 hour period [so] if a wearer goes into the proximity of that three or four times, the system continuously writes the report for 12 hours. It doesn’t review each entrance and exit to that crime scene.⁵⁹ So what happens is you get a lot of overwriting – lots of dots and arrows moving backwards and forwards. It’s really, really complex for a stakeholder to understand; and if that actually moves to a prosecution format, it’s also very difficult for the police to review that proximity alert and for courts and juries to understand that.” **Hub staff**

It was noted that Hub staff have suggested some improvements so each movement in and out of a crime zone can be individually represented.

Theme: Working with stakeholders

Respondents mainly discussed working with the police and EM service providers on the project, where their view of working with stakeholders was largely very positive.

Some respondents did, however, state that they wanted more interactions with probation and prisons.

Police

Respondents commented that, overall, they worked well with the police in receiving the daily crime data and resolving any data quality issues plus that having a direct line of contact with police forces was helpful. Respondents also felt that the police were very satisfied with the work of the Hub.

⁵⁹ Since interviews were conducted, the crime mapping tool now records separate entry and exit trails.

It was suggested that some training for the police would be helpful for them because it was thought that the police may not fully understand the workings of the MoJ Hub.

“The constabularies are not really that familiar with, you know ... our process. So, it’s usually just one person or two people who submit data to us and when they’re off or they’re on leave or someone else steps in, it could cause some issues and it just creates a backlog of work for us.” **Hub staff**

Early engagement with police forces was seen as an important factor by some respondents if the AC Project were to be rolled out further and that directly liaising with IOM teams from the onset would be the most beneficial route to do so.

“We need to be going to the Integrated Offender Management units rather than the top people in the police. We need to be working with them and embedding the skills they are going to need to read our reports because they’re the people going to be looking at them and speaking with the PCs [Police Constables] to say this is what you’re looking at, this is how to read our report.” **Hub staff**

Respondents from the MoJ Hub as part of this research were more positive about the relationship with the police in comparison to findings from the 12m+ process evaluation, which were more focused on the issues with data received from the police.

EM service providers

Some respondents were positive about their relationship with EM service providers, although it was stated that they were sometimes slow to reply with issues that the Hub required resolving. However, greater automation has reportedly helped.

“From also being able to speak to Airbus, we’ve got them to ... put in place a system where if the batch [crime data sent by police] fails, an e-mail is sent directly to the constabularies bullet pointing what is making the batch fail.” **Hub staff**

Findings from the 12m+ process evaluation were different with respect to the MoJ Hub’s relationship with EM service providers, where the focus was the accuracy of data being sent to the Hub.

Theme: Staffing

MoJ Hub respondents believed that the roles and responsibilities of the Hub staff were well understood. This contrasted with the findings from the 12m+ process evaluation, where some respondents stated the roles and responsibilities at that time were not clear.

Respondents were pleased with the performance of the Hub and noted that they believed stakeholders felt the same.

Most respondents believed that staff resources were sufficient, which was in line with findings for the 12m+ cohort. They stated that the Hub had the capacity to deal with the workload increasing slightly, although it was felt that more staff would need to be recruited if AC volumes were to increase significantly, which was also a finding from the 12m+ process evaluation.

“The only reason you would need to add maybe resources into the team is like if we have expansion into more constabularies.” **Hub staff**

5.5 EM service providers

Interviews and a focus group were conducted with 10 participants in total from two EM service providers, Airbus and EMS Capita.⁶⁰ The respondents consisted of five field officers, three electronic monitoring staff and two senior members of staff.

All field officers who participated in the focus group held negative views overall, which were not necessarily specific to the AC Project. In contrast, other staff members and senior staff members held largely positive views of the project, which also reflects the findings from the 12m+ process evaluation. With respect to the 3–12m cohort, respondents expressed the view that there was largely no change to their roles since the addition of this AC cohort.

Theme: Additional 3–12m cohort

Similar to other stakeholders who participated in the research, all EM service provider respondents said that their roles remained the same with the 3–12m cohort in comparison

⁶⁰ G4S, which provides the tagging equipment, were not interviewed for this process evaluation.

to the 12m+ cohort. Some respondents stated that the only change was an increase in the number of cases, although they did not express any concerns with this change.

“Overall, really from an EM service provider point of view, we have just seen an increased number of cases to be monitored and [also] requests to set up the monitoring.” **EM service provider staff**

There was a comment that there had also been an increase in queries from stakeholders regarding clarification of the eligibility criteria.

Theme: Stakeholder engagement

EM service provider respondents reported a positive working relationship with the MoJ Hub and emphasised the importance of collaboration in ensuring the project met its objectives.

Respondents said that the IOM arrangements had encouraged positive interactions with stakeholders, which had enabled the development of the crime mapping system.⁶¹

“Both the MoJ [Hub] and ourselves have a good relationship where we’re open and honest about issues and call them out rather than try and push over those things on both sides. And I think that’s really positive.” **EM service provider staff**

This contrasts with findings from the 12m+ process evaluation, where EM service providers generally felt communication with stakeholders could improve.

Theme: Challenges of the AC Project

Field officers installing the EM tag

During the focus group session with EM field officers, respondents expressed concerns regarding tag installation, but they commented that there were no material differences between the 3–12m or 12m+ AC cohorts from their perspective. They said that in some instances probation practitioners had failed to notify people on probation in advance that a field officer would be attending their home address. Respondents commented that, because the installation of tags is normally carried out between the hours of 7pm and

⁶¹ The crime mapping system is provided by the EM service provider Airbus to compare the recorded locations of monitored people on probation against the location data of crimes recorded by police forces.

midnight, this sometimes interrupted residents' sleep and could therefore result in aggressive behaviour on the part of the resident.

Focus group respondents noted that they sometimes received incorrect home addresses, which led to instances of hostility from residents upon attending addresses.⁶² Furthermore, respondents stated that they were required by their company to request the homeowner's details to complete a consent form so as to ensure their address was removed from their IT system and not visited again. Some respondents said, in cases where they had escalated that the intended recipient of an EM tag did not live at the given address, the problem would sometimes occur again in relation to that case.

"Another thing that we do come across quite regular [is that] nobody's checking that the subject lives where they live...we can't withdraw consent until we see someone. We might be knocking on their door maybe half past 11 or just before midnight...they're getting angry with us and this subject has never lived at the address. Therefore, we are getting abused because we are knocking at someone's door late, then we have to explain if you give me your name, I can send this off as withdrawing consent. If it gets back to the judge...the subject will give the same address and we will go back to be abused again."

"They can send us to another address which again is wrong, and we can have three or four addresses for one person".

EM field officers

The consensus among field officer respondents was that implementing an address verification process whereby a mobile phone number was required prior to a home visit would improve the process of installing or removing the EM tags.

"We get phone numbers and then they'll tell us they had that number 10 years ago. No one's verifying addresses or telephone numbers." **EM field officer**

⁶² Focus group participants spoke more generally around not always receiving correct addresses for people on probation rather than this issue being specific to the AC Project.

Field officer identification

The field officer focus group highlighted that the legitimacy of their identification was sometimes questioned by the person on probation when making a home visit.

To address this issue, respondents recommended that their field officer identification should include information about the commercial relationship between EM service providers and the MoJ. It was suggested that having identification bearing an MoJ logo could give greater confidence to the person on probation when field officers attend a home address for an EM tag installation or removal.

“I’ve recently had a door slammed in my face showing my ID and the person was just not accepting this...if there is something that says EM service providers in partnership with MoJ or different logos. They do not respect it when we attend, and I think it will make our jobs easier when we attend these installations.”

EM field officer

6. Cross-cutting themes

Some themes were identified across stakeholder groups. These are summarised below.

Addition of 3-12 month cohort

The police, MoJ Hub and EM service provider respondents generally remarked that there was no change to their roles with respect to the expansion of the project to the 3–12 month cohort. These stakeholder groups stated that the only significant change was an increase in numbers of people being enrolled in the AC project, although this was generally not seen as a negative.

In contrast, probation respondents believed that their workload increased with the expansion to the 3–12-month cohort because it was perceived that this group generally required more monitoring as they were reportedly likely to exhibit more chaotic behaviour than the 12m+ cohort.

View of the tag as a deterrent

Both police and probation respondents generally shared a view that use of the GPS tag was a reoffending deterrent. This was in line with the cross-cutting findings of the 12m+ report where police and probation respondents also believed the tag acted as a deterrent.⁶³

Staff resources

Generally, the MoJ Hub, the police, and the EM service provider felt they had enough staff resources to deliver the project, which was also a cross-cutting theme from the 12m+ evaluation.

However, probation respondents largely stated they did not have enough staff resources, which was also noted by police respondents. Perceptions of probation staff constraints was also a cross-cutting theme of the 12m+ evaluation.

⁶³ It is important to note some respondents were interviewed for both the 12m+ and 3–12m evaluations and may have expressed this belief during both interviews.

Relationship with the EM service provider

Probation and some police respondents said that there were delays with the EM service provider installing tags in a timely manner, which was also a cross-cutting theme from the 12m+ evaluation.

Both probation and the MoJ Hub respondents expressed a view that the main EM service provider was also slow in responding to queries.

7. Implications

The suggestions below are based on the quantitative data and from the qualitative feedback obtained from respondents, including the focus group, that were conducted as part of the process evaluation of the 3–12m AC Project across all stakeholders.

General perceptions of the project on the part of respondents were often positive, although there are areas where improvements could be made if the AC Project were to be rolled out further across England and Wales.

With the exception of probation staff, stakeholders generally stated that there was no difference with their day-to-day role with respect to the 3–12m cohort in comparison to the 12m+ cohort. Consequently, the recommendations derived from respondents apply to the entire project and are not specific to the 3–12m cohort. The MoJ aims to review these suggestions and decide how to respond to them.

Cohort identification

The absence of a project reporting mechanism to distinguish between the AC 12m+ and 3–12m cohorts meant that there was a need for manual checks of all AC order starts since late October 2022. This was a labour-intensive activity carried out by HMMPS staff who had access to the necessary management information that permitted identification of the custodial sentence length associated with the eligible acquisitive offence.

It is therefore recommended that an efficient reporting mechanism is put in place that routinely and reliably differentiates between the 12m+ and 3–12m cohorts enrolled in the AC Project.

Quality assurance

The aforementioned manual checks of around 2,600 AC order starts between late October 2022 and the end of December 2023 revealed that almost 12 per cent of them were out of scope, which was due to the enrolment of ineligible prison leavers. There was a similar finding in the 12m+ cohort evaluation of a non-trivial proportion of AC designated cases being invalid.

HMPPS has put in place measures during 2024 to improve its quality assurance so as to help ensure accurate and consistently lawful enrolment of prison leavers in the AC Project.

Stakeholder communication

The need for improved stakeholder communication was apparent from the feedback.

Several respondents mentioned that responses from EM service providers were frequently slow, which at times impacted on stakeholders' work. Furthermore, police respondents proposed that crime mapping proximity reports could be improved by including information about the sequence of movements on the map, which would help determine the direction in which the monitored person on probation was travelling.

Police respondents also argued that communication on the part of probation staff could be improved. However, they recognised that this issue could be caused by resource constraints within the Probation Service. Police respondents recommended that they are given direct access to the AC Self-Service Portal so as to avoid delays to law enforcement activities.⁶⁴

The MoJ Hub staff expressed overall positive views of working with stakeholders. However, they suggested that further training could be provided to the police and EM service provider staff to enhance their understanding of how the MoJ Hub operates. This group of respondents specifically mentioned that training may be beneficial for those individuals who must submit data on behalf of the police in place of the usual point of contact during the latter's absences.

EM service provider respondents stated that they would like to have improved support from police forces when submitting crime data to ensure smooth integration into the system.⁶⁵ EM service provider respondents also proposed that it would be beneficial for

⁶⁴ The Self-Service portal is currently inaccessible to police due to legislative constraints around data sharing under the Data Protection Act 2018.

⁶⁵ The EM service provider Airbus have put in place a system whereby if the crime data sent by the police fails, an email is sent directly to the police force bullet pointing why the data has failed.

prison staff to have a better understanding of how to complete the notification forms for prison leavers to initiate the electronic monitoring of the individual.⁶⁶

EM service provider respondents further stated that they would like improved communication with both probation and the MoJ Hub. They wanted to be informed clearly by probation as to the licence type because this was not reportedly being done routinely.

EM field officer respondents asked for address verification to be undertaken ahead of home visits to ensure correct addresses are used in every case.

Respondents also wanted better communication between EM service providers staff and the MoJ Hub to address any failures in data being ingested into the system promptly. It was suggested that a dashboard to track the progress of the data ingestions would allow for better monitoring.

Staff constraints

Stakeholders were generally of the view that they would require more staff resources if the AC Project were to be expanded further. Probation respondents made clear that existing staff constraints have made it challenging to engage fully with the project, which has been observed by other stakeholders – notably the police.

The further roll-out of the AC Project to the 3–12m cohort has compounded this issue. It was reported that individuals in the new cohort generally require greater management on the part of probation staff.

It is therefore suggested that consideration is given to an increase in probation staff resources, not least to enable probation practitioners to engage fully with the AC Project. This finding also aligns with the suggestions drawn from the 12m+ process evaluation.

Crime mapping

Police and MoJ Hub respondents suggested that the 100 metre crime radius should remain the same. The MoJ Hub respondents reiterated the importance of police data on offence location being accurate in every case to increase the probability of a successful

⁶⁶ Prisons are responsible for sending the licence and notification form to the EM service provider so as to organise the installation of the GPS tag.

match to prison leavers enrolled in the AC Project. It is therefore suggested that the police and MoJ Hub continue to work together to ensure that the most accurate information is routinely submitted by the police to the MoJ Hub.

The MoJ Hub respondents also stated the automation of the crime mapping system has overwritten entrance and exit movements of monitored people on probation resulting in their movements being difficult to understand.⁶⁷ Since the process evaluation fieldwork was conducted, changes have been made where each movement in and out of a crime zone is now individually represented.

Police respondents suggested that it would be helpful to have an algorithm that could automatically assess an offender's time spent within the crime radius circle to reduce the "noise" caused by irrelevant movements. Additionally, police respondents proposed that the 12 hour time window of a crime could be increased due to detection opportunities being missed such as burglaries occurring over the course of a week. Another suggestion put forward by the police was to set up notifications for the police if an offender enters prohibited areas. This feature, which is included in the Buddi tag, was acknowledged as useful. These reforms should be considered.

Project roll-out

Police respondents were keen for the project to be expanded to further police force areas, as well as to further offences. It is suggested that such a move could be considered should there be any decision to roll out the existing AC Project more widely across England and Wales, albeit subject to a further pilot.

Training

Most stakeholders stated that either they or other stakeholder groups would benefit from additional training in terms of understanding each group's role in the AC Project.

⁶⁷ This can occur when a monitored person on probation is within the proximity of a crime numerous times, resulting in the system re-writing the report. This is because the automated crime mapping system continuously re-wrote reports for 12 hours. It did not review each entrance and exit to that crime scene.

EM field officers requested additional training and support in effectively handling confrontational situations in their role due to occasionally experiencing hostility during home visits.

General changes to EM

Although some feedback from EM field officers was not solely specific to the AC Project, respondents suggested that the procedure for when they have attended an incorrect address should be changed.

They described how, when attending an incorrect address, they require the resident's details at that address so as to update their records to reflect an incorrect address, which can often be met with reluctance by residents.

Field officers also recommended that a robust verification process to validate addresses. These respondents also suggested changing their company's ID to include a visible MoJ logo on to enhance credibility and prevent instances of hostility during visits. These reforms should be considered.

In line with findings from the 12m+ cohort evaluation conclusions, monitored people on probation suggested that the EM tag should be much smaller for an easier wear. Some respondents also commented that they had not been shown properly how to charge the tag, or they had not been forewarned until the day of their release from prison they would be enrolled in the AC Project.

It is recommended that all prison leavers are informed prior to their release date regarding the future use of an EM tag in all instances.

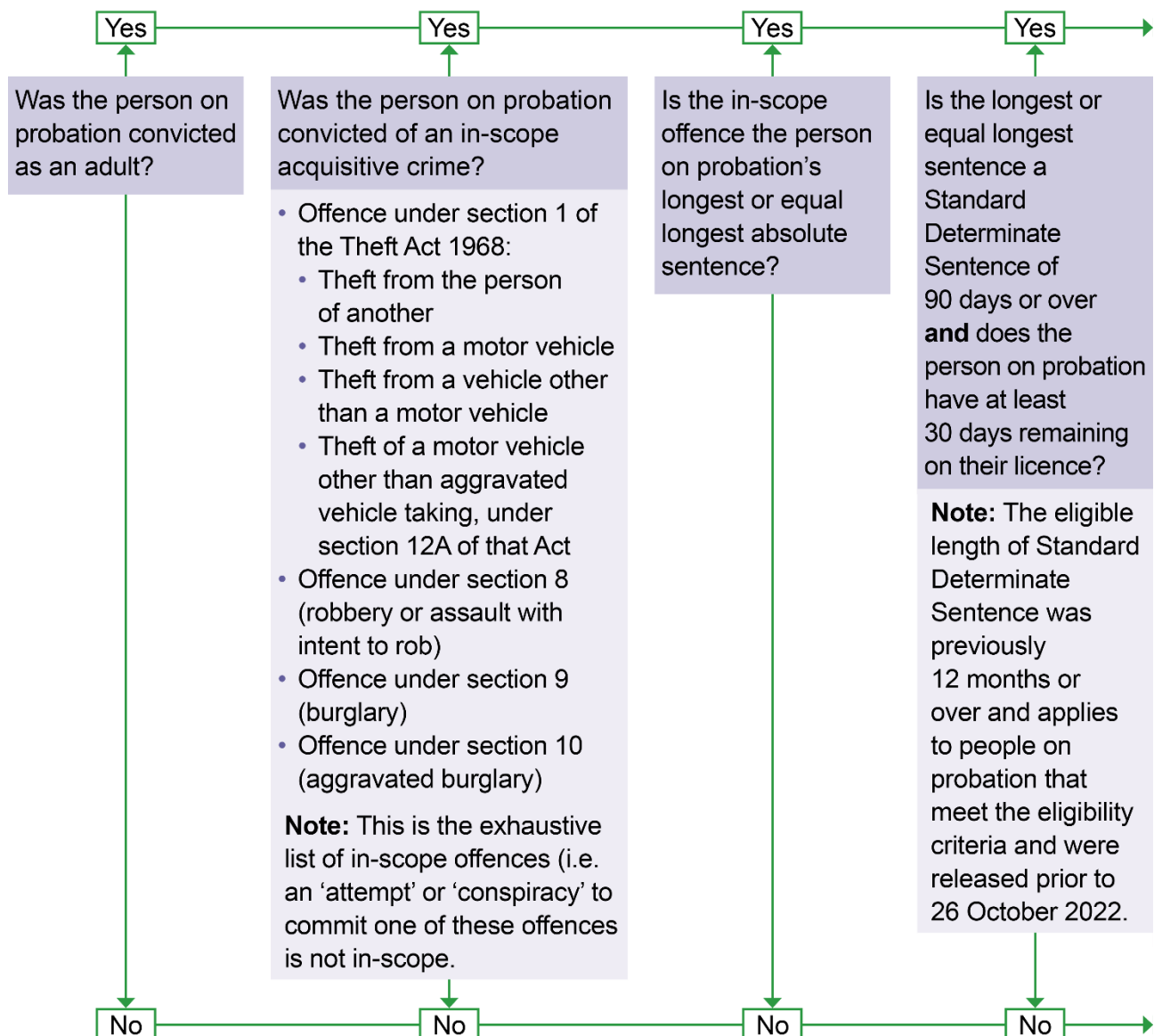
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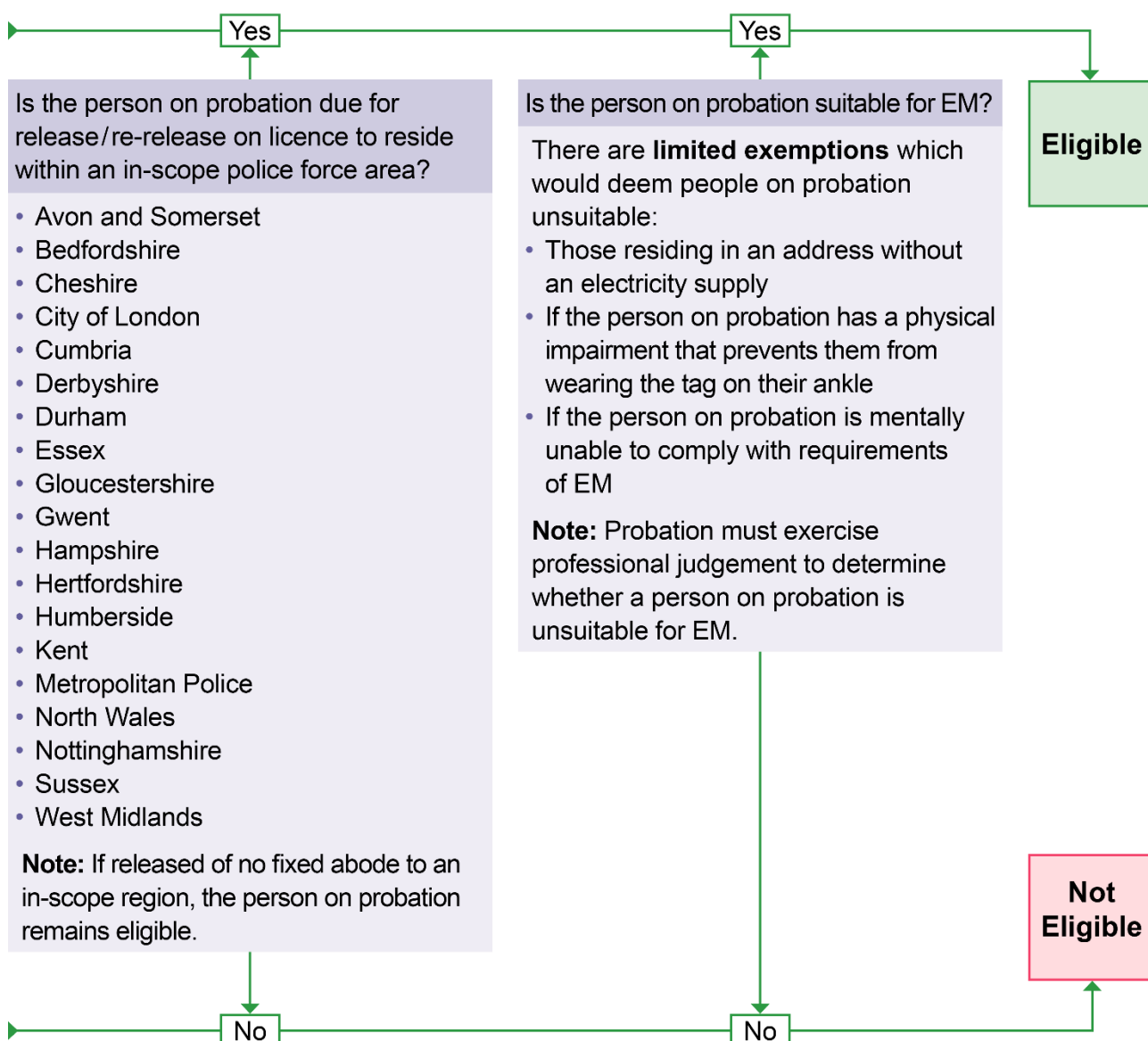
Appendix A

Eligibility criteria for the Acquisitive Crime Project⁶⁸

To be in-scope for the Acquisitive Crime project, the person on probation must meet **all** of the following criteria. If the person on probation does meet the eligibility criteria, they **must** be tagged for the compulsory trail monitoring conditions and will take precedent over other EM cohorts (i.e. Alcohol Monitoring on Licence). For further detail, please see the **EM Acquisitive Crime – Probation Guidance**



⁶⁸ The infographic has been produced and provided by the MoJ's AC Project Business Change Team.



Appendix B

Overview of project roles

The AC Project takes a multi-agency approach by aligning with the IOM strategy. As the responsible officers for the acquisitive crime cohort, the Probation Service can collaborate with other agencies, such as the police and MoJ Hub, through the IOM framework to enable a cross-agency response to crime. The sections below provide the project role descriptions of stakeholders involved in the project. The information should be considered in conjunction with the findings presented in this report.

Probation

Probation staff were responsible for identifying prison leavers who should be enrolled in the AC Project. This is a compulsory licence condition, defined in legislation, where the people on probation who meet the eligibility criteria must have their movements and whereabouts electronically monitored unless they are specifically exempt. Once they have been identified, the appropriate EM conditions must be added to the licence.

Probation practitioners should work together with Prison Offender Managers to ensure that eligible individuals are prepared for release from prison with the EM tagging conditions. The Probation Service is responsible for supervising and managing the whereabouts of eligible people on probation and collaborating with IOM partners.

Probation practitioners have access to the dedicated Self-Service Portal, which supports the management of monitored people on probation in the community.

Probation practitioners are also responsible for amending or ending the AC order. The compulsory tagging period is for the duration of the licence, up to a maximum of 12 months. This is not at the discretion of probation staff, so there are limited reasons for varying these conditions – e.g., if the person moves to an out-of-scope area.

The GPS location monitoring data are automatically inputted into the Self-Service Portal to support the work of probation practitioners, alongside supporting the police with the identification of re-offenders.

Prisons

Prison staff, as the “responsible officers”, should support the Probation Service to ensure that the prison leaver meets the AC Project’s eligibility criteria and that the licence is populated with the correct information. Prison staff are responsible for calculating the AC order end date, which must be added to the prison leaver’s licence.

Prison Offender Managers should collaborate with probation practitioners to ensure that eligible individuals are sufficiently prepared for enrolment in the AC Project upon release. Prison staff are responsible for sending the licence and notification form to the main EM service provider so as to organise the installation of the GPS tag.

EM service providers

EMS Capita

EM field officers were employed by EMS Capita, which operated under contract to the MoJ during the study period as the main EM service provider. The field officers were responsible for installing and removing EM tags under the AC Project. Visits were typically carried out between 7pm and midnight.

This company also provided the location monitoring service and reporting on instances of EM non-compliance, which were conveyed to probation practitioners via the Self-Service Portal or via email. The main EM service provider would also liaise with monitored people on probation such as in cases where a tag’s battery dropped to 20 per cent.

Field officers would visit a person on probation such as when it is suspected they have tampered with their tag. If the person were not available for the EM equipment to be installed, field officers would make a second attempt. If they were unable to install the equipment on this second attempt, it would be recorded as an instance of non-compliance.

The main EM service provider also provided caseload data to Airbus.

Airbus

Airbus was contracted during the study period by the MoJ to provide the project's crime mapping capability, which was overseen by the MoJ Hub.

The Airbus crime mapping tool 'matched' data received from the police of locations where acquisitive crimes took place and location data from monitored people on probation around that time. These were cross-referenced by the crime mapping tool to see whether a prison leaver enrolled in the AC Project was within 100 metres of a crime taking place.

In addition, Airbus also provided the Self-Service Portal technology which enabled probation practitioners to see the locations of the people on probation enrolled in the AC Project.

G4S

G4S was contracted by the MoJ to provide the GPS tagging equipment. No one from G4S was interviewed for the 3–12m cohort's process evaluation.

MoJ AC Hub

The results from the AC crime mapping tool are broken down into two sub-sections: "matched crimes" – namely, a crime search that locates an individual within two consecutive pings and a 100 metre crime radius, both of which are within 10 minutes either side of the reported crime time horizon; and "unmatched crimes" – those crime searches that have not met the criteria for crime matching).

The matched crimes are allocated to MoJ Hub Caseworkers so as to create a proximity alert report and to check the tag wearer's details on the crime date against the tag wearer caseload provided by the main EM supplier. Once complete, the proximity alert report is quality assured by a Hub Manager. Following quality assurance, the report is sent to the police force that submitted the crime search.

After a proximity alert is issued, the Hub can provide further data in form of a contextual report, which allows for up to 12 hours of data to be requested by the police force to support their ongoing investigation.

Alongside contextual reports, the Hub also deal with urgent crime mapping requests from police forces. These requests are usually when there is either immediate risk to the public or a crime has missed the daily submission. An urgent request can only be accepted if there is not a named suspect.

The goal of the MoJ Hub was to supply a proportionate amount of information to the police to assist their investigations. It should be noted that the MoJ Hub is not responsible for servicing External Agency Requests.⁶⁹ This is a matter for the main EM service provider.

Police

The police received information through the crime mapping service to assist them with identifying acquisitive re-offenders. If any monitored person on probation were found to be in the vicinity of a given crime, the police would receive a report from the MoJ Hub to support their investigation.

The police forces participating in the AC Project could also make other queries regarding monitored people on probation to ascertain their whereabouts at a particular time or live location using an External Agency Request.

⁶⁹ An External Agency Request (EAR) is a request for EM data relating to a person on probation that would not routinely be disclosed. Under the Data Protection Act 2018, there are strict conditions that have to be met in order to share data for law enforcement purposes.

Appendix C

Glossary

Term	Meaning
12 hour time frame	The time window in which an offender's location could be matched to an acquisitive offence.
Acquisitive crime	<p>An offence where the perpetrator obtains an illicit material gain. Those individuals enrolled in the AC Project will have committed any of the following principal offences:</p> <p>Offences under section 1 of the Theft Act 1968:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theft from the person of another • Theft from a motor vehicle • Theft from a vehicle other than a motor vehicle • Theft of a motor vehicle other than aggravated vehicle taking, under section 12A of that Act • Offence under section 8 (robbery or assault with intent to rob) • Offence under section 9 (burglary) • Offence under section 10 (aggravated burglary)
Contextual Movement Reports	A report provided by the MoJ Hub to the police following the issuing of a proximity alert. The report provides further evidence to the police over a wider period of time to support ongoing investigations.
Crime mapping	Where location data are matched against police crime data to determine whether a monitored person on probation was in the vicinity of the crime.
Crime radius	This is defined for the AC Project as a 100 metre radius around the reported coordinates of a crime. At the AC Project's inception this was 150 metres but was later reduced to 100 metres in September 2021.
Curfew	A curfew requires an individual to be present at their home during specified hours (for example 8pm to 8am).
Electronic Monitoring	EM (sometimes known as 'tagging') is a technology used for enforcement purposes within the criminal justice system of England and Wales – notably, curfews, location monitoring, exclusion zones and/or sobriety.
Electronic Monitoring (EM) service providers	The providers of EM services for the AC Project were EMS Capita, Airbus and G4S. For the purpose of this report, 'EM service providers' refer to both EMS Capita and Airbus. (G4S were not interviewed as part of this evaluation).

Term	Meaning
Field officers	Field officers are EM service provider staff and are responsible for installing and removing the GPS monitoring at the offender's address or supported accommodation.
GPS tag	An electronic tag fitted around an individual's ankle. The tag uses signals from GPS satellites to calculate its location, which is then sent over a mobile network to a central monitoring centre.
Integrated Offender Management (IOM)	IOM refers to a multi-agency response to crime where different agencies work together to identify and manage offenders.
Landmark	The centre of a crime location such as a park or a house.
People on probation Person on probation	In the context of this report, a person on probation refers to an individual serving a sentence in the community and being managed by the Probation Service. Eligible people on probation are those who meet the criteria for the AC Project to be electronically monitored.
Probation practitioner	Refers to both frontline probation officers and senior probation officers.
Proximity report	The MoJ Hub provide proximity reports to the police which details when a monitored person on probation has been within the (100 metre) vicinity of a crime. This is for the purpose of assisting police investigations.
Self-Service Portal	A tool owned by the EM service provider Airbus for probation staff to view the locations of monitored people on probation.
Standard determinate sentence	Where the court sets a fixed length for a custodial sentence following conviction.