



Ministry
of Justice

Alcohol Monitoring on Licence

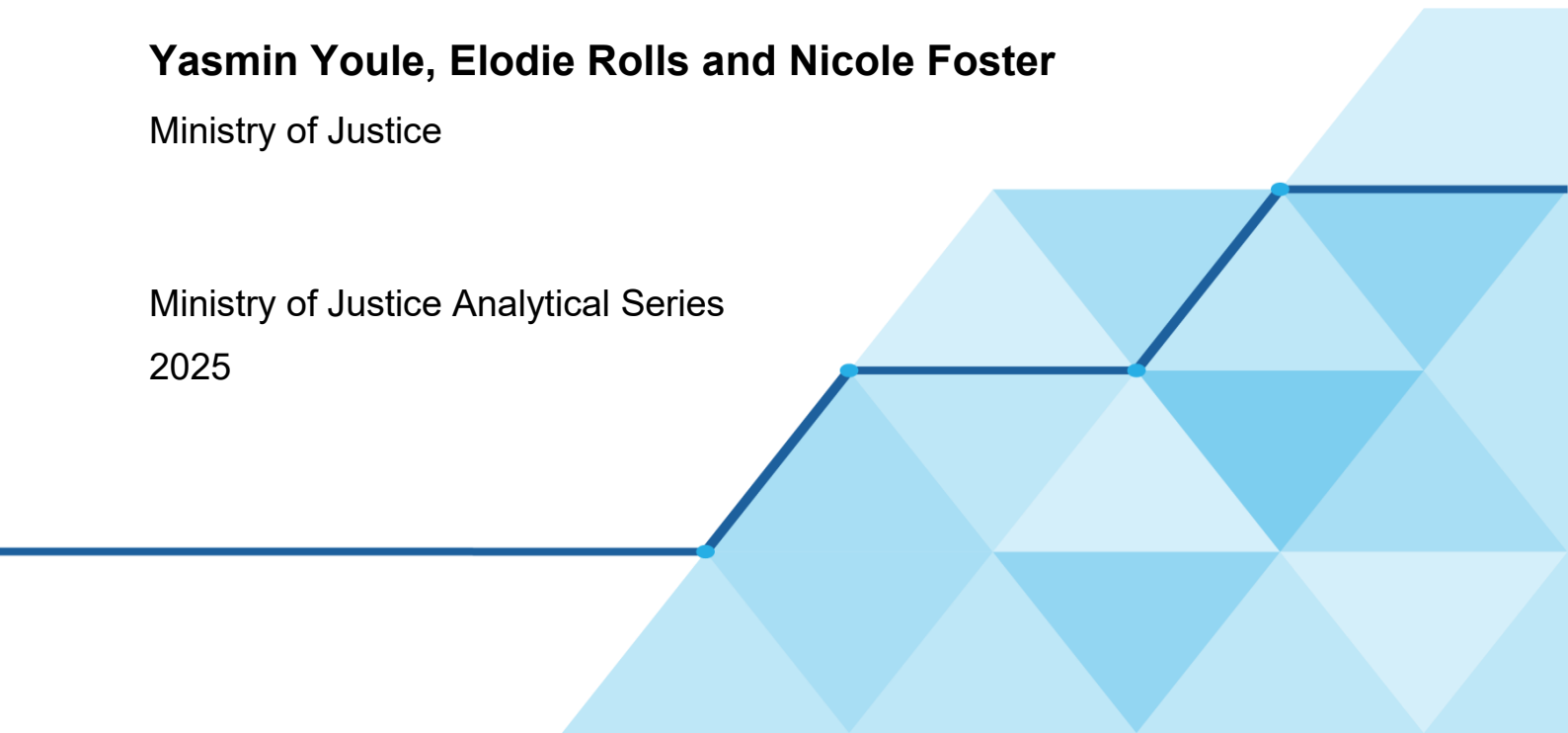
Process and Interim Impact Evaluation

Yasmin Youle, Elodie Rolls and Nicole Foster

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1. Summary

Violent crime and disorder are frequently associated with the consumption of alcohol. Although it is difficult to estimate the prevalence of drinking that is harmful to society, an estimated 41% of violent incidents in England and Wales were committed by individuals believed to be under the influence of alcohol, and just over 20% of criminal damage and hate crime incidents (Office for National Statistics, 2024).¹

The Home Office Alcohol Strategy 2012 committed to addressing alcohol related criminality. This outlined several measures including the use of remote alcohol monitoring (RAM) for individuals where alcohol is considered a risk factor. Following pilot testing of another similar scheme for those serving their sentences in the community,² the Alcohol Monitoring on Licence (AML) scheme was fully introduced in Wales in November 2021 and England in June 2022. AML requires people on probation to wear an alcohol monitoring device upon release from prison, where considered necessary and proportionate.³

An evaluation of AML was commissioned by His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS). This involved multiple types of evaluation, subject to data availability: process, impact, and Value-for-money.⁴ The current report presents findings from the process evaluation and an interim impact evaluation.⁵

¹ Reflects median value across a 10-year period, ending March 2023. See data table 10 from [Nature of crime: violence - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk/crime/violence).

² Alcohol Abstinence Monitoring Requirement pilot in London commissioned by the Mayor of London Office for Police and Crime (2020), see [Harrison et al. \(2020\). Alcohol Abstinence Monitoring Requirement, Final Impact Evaluation](#).

³ 'Necessary' means that the licence condition is necessary to manage the risks identified and no other less restrictive condition will be enough. 'Proportionate' means that any restriction or loss of liberty because of the licence condition is proportionate to the level of risk presented by the individual. For more detail see [Licence Conditions and how the Parole Board use them](#).

⁴ A process evaluation is used to assess what can be learned from how a service or intervention is delivered to identify what worked well and what could be improved. An impact evaluation assesses what difference a service or intervention has made and why. An economic evaluation assesses whether a service or intervention provides value-for-money. For more detail see [Electronic Monitoring in the Criminal Justice System](#).

⁵ The interim impact evaluation presents the short-term impacts of the scheme during the period of the intervention, rather than the long-term impacts after the intervention has been completed. It provides early insights into how a scheme is working, whilst waiting for data to become available for the final impact evaluation. The results of the interim impact evaluation may be different from the final impact evaluation.

1.1 Evaluation Objectives

The research period spanned from 2023 to 2025 and was carried out by Ministry of Justice (MoJ) analysts. The data were derived from all AML orders that were completed across England and Wales during 2023.⁶ The fieldwork included both those on probation (following release from prison) and probation staff in 2024, and Electronic Monitoring (EM) provider staff in 2025. The evaluation aimed to address four research objectives:

- To collect evidence on how AML was used by practitioners (see section 4).
- To provide a descriptive analysis of non-compliance and recall, alongside perceived changes to long term recidivism (see section 5).
- To understand the perceived impact and benefits of AML (see section 6).
- To identify facilitators and barriers to the use of AML (see section 7).

The research comprised three strands: primary data collection through interviews and surveys with people on probation and staff working with AML, analysis of management information (quantitative) data, and an interim impact evaluation comparing a sample of those on AML to a control group. By triangulating findings across these data sources, the research team aimed to capture the complexity surrounding the use of AML. It is worth noting that the interim impact evaluation findings are interim, and the final impact evaluation could draw different conclusions.

1.2 Key Findings

- **While 42% of people included in the interim impact evaluation were recalled during their AML order, very few recalls were associated with AML non-compliance.** These data, coupled with the relatively low violation rate, suggests that broader non-compliance or risk escalation triggered the recall, rather than alcohol per se. Data further demonstrated that four in five individuals did not violate their AML order, however of those who did, most only committed one act

⁶ This timeframe was chosen to minimise any potential impacts of the global Covid pandemic to the delivery of crime and justice provision. For a consideration on such impacts, see [The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the criminal justice system – a progress report – Criminal Justice Joint Inspectorates](#).

of non-compliance. This non-compliant event was most likely to occur within the first 90 days of being on AML.

- **The addition of the AML requirement did not significantly affect recall rates during the AML order duration.** A comparison of a subset of AML orders to a control group found there were approximately two fewer individuals recalled per 100 in the treatment group. However, statistical tests found this difference was not significant, indicating that the addition of AML as a licence condition did not affect recall rates.
- **Alcohol tags were used to manage high risk individuals with complex criminogenic needs.** AML was typically used to manage risks at point of release from prison with individuals who presented high, or very high risk of serious harm. People subject to AML typically had a history of violent offending and had attitudinal and psychosocial risks relating to lifestyle and associates, relationships, and pro-criminality. Almost 30% of cases had a high likelihood of reoffending within two years. Similarly, over 90% of cases had self-reported problems with alcohol misuse prior to their AML order starting, with alcohol misuse being over four times more prevalent in AML cases than seen in the wider licenced population. This suggested that practitioners used RAM to manage risks around harmful drinking identified through structured professional assessment.
- **Both probation practitioners and tag wearers reported AML was beneficial for monitoring alcohol consumption.** This was said to aid risk management as practitioners were able to corroborate tag data with information provided by the tag wearer about their alcohol use. This encouraged honest conversations with people on probation when approached about their drinking behaviour. Some tag wearers agreed and felt the tag supported them towards abstinence and encouraged accountability of their drinking. Others, however, felt they did not need a tag and denied their drinking was an issue. Although the tag data was deemed useful by staff, more guidance was wanted on how to interpret the data, to reduce ambiguity on the reported level of alcohol consumption.

- **Several tag wearers reported experiencing pain or injury due to the fit or size of the tag, its placement on the ankle and its material.** The pain or discomfort was said to disrupt day-to-day activities such as sleep and exercise. Some described discomfort with the “*heavy*” equipment hitting against their ankle bone. Others reported discomfort with the sensation of the equipment vibrating as alcohol readings were taken. Moreover, some tag wearers questioned if the tags were fitted correctly as the tag would rub the skin. In some cases, this would result in the tag being removed early during the licence period.

2. Background

2.1 What is Remote Alcohol Monitoring (RAM)?

RAM is used in England and Wales to monitor alcohol consumption as part of a prison or court order. It is one of three EM tag technologies used in England and Wales.⁷ The person being monitored is required to wear a device, often referred to as a 'tag'. The device is attached around the individual's ankle and measures the level of alcohol in the wearer's sweat every 30-minutes. This provides remote, 24-hour monitoring of alcohol consumption. A base station is also installed in a place that the wearer can access, usually the tag wearer's home, an 'approved premises', or at a Probation Office.⁸ The tag wearer is required to be within 10 metres of the base station at a certain time every day, as this enables the alcohol readings to be sent from the tag to the EM provider.

RAM is used to support the wearer to comply with a condition not to consume alcohol (abstinence requirement), or to limit their consumption (monitoring requirement).

2.2 The Alcohol Monitoring on Licence Scheme

The AML scheme is used with people on probation on licence,⁹ at the point of release from prison, or as a licence variation part way through their supervision period. It enables probation practitioners to impose a ban on drinking any alcohol, or to impose monitoring of alcohol use. AML can be applied as an Additional Licence Condition alongside the

⁷ Curfew and location tags are also used in Probation Practice. These tags were not an explicit part of the AML scheme, but there were AML cases that were also required to wear one of these devices. Further information on other types of electronic monitoring can be found via [Electronic tags - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/electronic-tags)

⁸ 'Approved Premises' are residential units in the community which house and closely monitor people with an offending history in the community.

⁹ Being released 'on licence' means that an individual is released from prison into the community prior to the completion of their sentence. A probation practitioner will outline a number of licence conditions that they must follow for the remainder of their sentence. These can vary per individual and can include wearing a tag.

Standard Licence Conditions for all, or part of, the person on probation's licence period, for a minimum of one month and a maximum of one year, with quarterly review.¹⁰

The requirement can be applied to eligible individuals regardless of their index offence(s)¹¹ to enable practitioners to manage existing or emerging risk around alcohol misuse.¹²

People on probation can be moved between an abstinence or monitoring requirement within the licence period to dynamically manage ongoing risks.

RAM can be thought to enable honest conversations between a person on probation and their probation practitioner concerning their compliance and alcohol consumption. This is as it notifies the EM provider about non-compliance. RAM may also be used to help enforce elements of an alcohol related programme or workplan.

AML is applied on a case-by-case basis, where the probation practitioner establishes it is necessary and proportionate to:

- Reduce reoffending
- Enhance public protection
- Assist successful integration into the community

If a tag wearer breaches their licence conditions they could be taken back into custody. This is known as being recalled.

¹⁰ Licence conditions are the set of rules individuals must follow if they are released from prison but still have a part of their sentence to serve in the community. For more information on Standard Licence Conditions and Additional Licence Conditions, see [Licence Conditions and how the Parole Board use them](#).

¹¹ The index offence is the offence that has been prosecuted by the Police and proven through conviction.

¹² An abstinence requirement would not be applied for someone who is alcohol dependent. However, a monitoring requirement can be applicable for people on probation who have undergone a detox in custody and/or are undergoing ongoing treatment for alcohol dependence.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The evaluation used a mixed methods approach derived from several data sources:

- Management information data from the EM provider and HMPPS; and
- Interviews and surveys with people on probation, probation practitioners, and staff working with EM.

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

3.2 Research Methods

Management Information Analysis

This aspect of the evaluation focused on data from AML orders that ended in 2023. Eligibility for inclusion in the evaluation centred on having a completed order during 2023. Consequently, the data comprises two groups:

- Individuals whose order ended following adherence to the requirements, resulting in removal of the AML requirement from their Additional Licence Conditions.
- Individuals whose order ended earlier than the intended order end date. This may have been due to recall to prison, lack of homeowner consent or medical

reasons.¹³ Subsequently some AML orders may not have resulted in a tag being fitted.

Management information from the EM provider was collated for individuals eligible for inclusion in the evaluation. This included data on the number of completed AML orders, and how long the individual's order was for. The evaluation also drew from the Probation Service's case management system (nDelius) and Offender Assessment System (OASys). Data included tag wearer demographics, wider offending characteristics, and information around non-compliance.

Interim Impact Methodology

Data Selection: A monthly probation caseload dataset was used in this analysis. This contained details of individuals supervised by the Probation Service.¹⁴ The data consisted of release occasions rather than individuals, to account for individuals with multiple releases.

To create the control group, cleaning processes were carried out to ensure the data reflected a suitable and eligible group of people on probation. This included ensuring the dataset reflected those that were being supervised post release from custody in the equivalent time period to the treatment group.¹⁵ Further cleaning included the exclusion of individuals that would have not been eligible for RAM (e.g. those with fewer than 30 days on licence at point of release) and those that were eligible for RAM but it was deemed not appropriate.¹⁶

¹³ Consent is required from the homeowner to install the home monitoring unit at the property. Medical exemptions include physical disabilities, nickel allergies and health conditions that may cause the ankle to swell.

¹⁴ The dataset was a snapshot of individuals on the Probation Service's case management system (nDelius) at the end of each month. Data was taken for all months in 2022 and 2023 calendar years.

¹⁵ Releases that occurred at any time during the 2022 and 2023 calendar years were included in the control group as this reflected the same time period of releases in the AML cohort of interest.

¹⁶ Releases were identified through the Effective Proposal Framework 2 tool (EPF2) which provides a shortlist of possible licence conditions during pre-release planning. Individuals were removed from the control group where they were eligible for AML, but it was not applied to their licence. Reasons for this may be due to the probation practitioner deeming it to be not necessary or proportionate, or exemptions due to medical reasons.

To create the treatment group dataset, only the AML orders where the RAM requirement was added within 30 days of their release date were included.¹⁷ This facilitated the creation of a more uniform subset of the AML orders.

For all individuals included in the interim impact analysis, the OASys assessments and Actuarial Risk Assessments (Offender Group Reconviction Scale (OGRS) and Risk of Serious Recidivism (RSR)) were included if they were completed in the 90 days prior to the release date. This enabled the most accurate reflection of risk at the point of release. A flowchart detailing the attrition rate for the treatment group can be found in the appendix (Figure A.1).

Matching Process: The analysis used Propensity Score Matching (PSM) as a quasi-experimental approach.¹⁸ The PSM approach first involved creating a conditional probability of receiving the intervention (a propensity score between 0 and 1), using factors associated with the likelihood of receiving the intervention and the outcome. The variables selected included demographic information, offence information and OASys variables.¹⁹ A full list of variables can be found in Appendix A. Only releases where there was complete data across all variables of interest were included in the matching process. A logistic regression using these variables was then used to predict the probability of the individual receiving AML as a licence condition.

Once each release had received a propensity score, the control group was created by matching those who received AML, to individuals that didn't receive AML based on the proximity of these scores.²⁰ Further detail regarding the matching quality can be found in Appendix A.

¹⁷ This is due to the differing risk factors between those where AML is added soon after release from custody and those where a licence variation is applied at a later point during their licence.

¹⁸ A PSM can be used where a randomised control trial (RCT) approach is not possible or practical. PSM was the next most robust evaluation design to RCT, as the evaluation design was finalised after the national roll out of AML.

¹⁹ Variables were chosen based on factors that were known to be relevant to outcomes along with those that were relevant to the AML intervention.

²⁰ Nearest neighbour matching was used, with a calliper width of 0.2. The calliper width determines the proximity of the propensity scores for the matched individual and the individual in the treatment group. A calliper width of 0.2 was chosen to strike a balance between the quality and quantity of matches.

Outcome Variable: Proven reoffending rates are not able to be calculated for at least 18 months after the RAM requirement has been completed,²¹ therefore an alternative outcome variable was chosen to measure the interim impact ahead of this data becoming available for the later impact evaluation.

For the interim impact evaluation, the outcome variable chosen was the proportion of individuals that were recalled during their AML order. For those individuals in the matched control group, the order length duration was taken from their matched individual in the treatment group and applied from their release date. This provides proxy dates for the individual in the control group. It was then observed whether the control individual was recalled during this proxy order period. Both matched individuals were excluded where the proxy order period was longer than the licence period for the control individual. A Chi-squared test was performed to compare the recall outcomes for both groups during this period.

Survey and Interview Methodology

Sampling: Fieldwork comprised surveys and semi-structured interviews. Interviews took place August to November 2024. Surveys were completed between July 2024 and February 2025. Although stratified sampling was primarily used, convenience sampling was used to boost response rates.²² Invitations to participate were sent to probation practitioners, case administrators,²³ EM provider monitoring staff and field monitoring officers,²⁴ and people on probation. For operational staff, invitations to participate were sent by email. The EM provider distributed surveys to their staff via their communications team. Where fieldwork involved HMPPS staff, the research team targeted those involved in delivering AML. People on probation were accessed via their probation practitioner who

²¹ A proven reoffence is defined as any offence committed in a one-year follow-up period that leads to a court conviction, caution, reprimand, or warning in the one-year follow-up or within a further six-month waiting period to allow the offence to be proven in court. For further information on Proven Reoffending Statistics, see [Guide to proven reoffending statistics](#).

²² The initial response rates for people on probation and the EM provider was none or very low, when using stratified sampling. Convenience sampling was then used to ensure a wide range of views was gained.

²³ Case administrators work for HMPPS alongside probation practitioners. They complete administrative tasks, some of which relate to the tag, such as checking the data portal for alcohol tag violations.

²⁴ EM provider staff refers to staff employed by Serco providing the electronic monitoring service for AML.

requested permission for the research team to contact them directly.²⁵ Additionally, the survey was advertised in a newsletter aimed at people on probation in one region.²⁶ Table 3.1 outlines the number of people contacted to participate and the subsequent response rate. Overall, 136 surveys and 1 interview were completed by operational staff. 8 surveys and 11 interviews were completed by people on probation.

Table 3.1 Fieldwork Participation and Response Rates

	Surveys			Semi-Structured Interviews		
	Response Rate			Response Rate		
	Total contacted	<i>n</i>	%	Total contacted	<i>n</i>	%
EM Provider staff	30	28	93.3	-	-	-
People on probation ^a	1,399	8	0.6	1,399	11	0.8
Probation practitioners	789	83	10.5	-	1 ^b	-
Case administrators	117	25	21.4	-	-	-

Note. Values reflect participants who fully completed surveys / interviews. Dash (-) indicates the method was not used with that respondent group. ^a People on probation were invited to participate in two rounds, the first consisted of those that had completed an order during 2023 and were still under probation supervision in August 2024. A second round of invitations were for those tagged in October 2024. A further four people on probation initially expressed an interest in participating but later declined or did not respond to three contact attempts from the research team. ^b Invitations to take part in an online survey or focus group were sent to probation practitioners. One respondent requested to take part in an online interview instead of a focus group, which was facilitated by the research team using the focus group topic guide. No probation practitioners opted to take part in the focus groups. This was not followed up as the survey response was adequate. This table is also supplied as an Excel datasheet – see corresponding worksheet within the ‘data tables’ file.

Surveys: Surveys were developed in consultation with criminal justice practitioners to ensure the appropriate terminology. Surveys were delivered over a 7-month period in batches, to capture feedback from each respondent group. All surveys opened with an

²⁵ It is not possible to establish how many practitioners invited tag wearers to participate in the evaluation. References to response rate refer to the overall number of AML cases that the research team asked probation practitioners to invite. It is likely that the response rate is an underestimation of the proportion of people on probation who expressed an interest after being told by their probation practitioner about the research.

²⁶ To attempt to boost response rates, the survey link was advertised on a newsletter in Greater Manchester aimed at people on probation.

overview of the scope and eligibility of AML, a brief description of the overarching survey aims, an outline of the evaluation and how the data would be used, and a contact for further questions. Respondents were advised that participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time prior to submitting their responses. Surveys were completed online, anonymously, and included a mix of quantitative fixed-response questions and optional, open-ended qualitative questions.

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

Interviews were conducted individually by phone or video call and were recorded and transcribed using Microsoft tools.²⁷ A topic guide was used to structure interviews. The practitioner interview centred on understanding the use and perception of the AML scheme, including barriers and impacts. Interviews with people on probation focussed on their experience of wearing a tag, their view on how this impacted their desistance journey, and working with the EM provider and probation. Interviews lasted on average around 30 minutes.

Analysis: Quantitative survey data were collated to summarise findings across respondent groups and question types. All interview and free-text survey data were analysed using thematic analysis. A deductive-inductive approach was taken, using latent and semantic interpretation. A coding framework was developed between two researchers to enhance reliability. This guided initial analyses. This comprised codes for different types of stakeholders and a set of relevance criteria. The data were reviewed line-by-line and coded in meaningful sections. This allowed multiple codes to be applied, where appropriate. A second researcher reviewed a random selection of transcripts to ensure

²⁷ Telephone interviews were recorded using Microsoft Word Online. Video interviews were recorded in Microsoft Teams. Both systems provide automatic transcription. In some cases, the lead researcher would amend these where transcriptions had obvious errors.

consistency in its application. The data were then summarised using the Framework Method (Gale et al., 2013) and a series of matrices. Coding review demonstrated a good level of agreement between analysts for survey and interview data.

3.3 Limitations

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting these findings:

- Management Information data were drawn from administrative systems. While the analytical team aimed to produce high quality analyses, it is not always possible to detect errors in administrative data that occur at source. Decisions to exclude data due to concerns around reliability are made clear in the report.
- Some administrative data are not static. They can be changed or revised, for example, when a probation practitioner reassesses a person on probation's risk levels. To mitigate this, data was drawn from 2023 and analysed in late 2024. Where the report includes data that can be updated like this, details of the time period is provided.
- Management information data from the RAM provider included the order start date and order end date of the AML order, which may not accurately reflect the total number of days that an individual was monitored for in all cases. This may be due to the inability to tag an individual, for reasons such as a medical exemption, housing or delays in the processing of the order and fitting of the device.
- Sampling for interviews and surveys was non-random, as all participants volunteered for the evaluation research. This voluntary participation may affect the generalisability of the findings, particularly when convenience sampling was used. We might expect those with particularly strong views or opinions to contribute to the research findings. Tag wearers were approached through their probation practitioner within the Probation Service. However, not all tag wearers may have been asked to participate in interviews. Responses from surveys and interviews represent the participants' perceptions and may not accurately reflect operational practices, particularly where response rates were low.

- The PSM methodology was limited to the person on probation and offence characteristics available on nDelius and OASys databases. It was unable to draw upon other characteristics that may have influenced the likelihood of receiving AML as a licence condition or the likelihood of recall. While the matched comparison group was formed using a large number of variables, it is not possible to discount completely the influence of an unmeasured factor that has not been controlled for. It is therefore possible that some of the differences in the recall rates found in this analysis reflect differences in the characteristics associated with people on probation and their offences that could not be covered by the data used.
- The interim impact methodology resulted in attrition of orders. Therefore, the two groups examined in the interim impact analysis are subsets of their total populations and care should be taken in generalising results. This was due to the nature of the PSM as well as the sampling bias introduced by applying the order length of the treatment individual to the matched control individual.
- The interim impact findings assume that 'recall' serves as a good indicator of long-term behaviour change, whilst waiting for reoffending data to become available for the full impact evaluation. It is feasible that the full impact evaluation could reach a different conclusion.

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

This section describes findings on how and when RAM was used by probation practitioners to manage risk. It includes management information data to describe the characteristics of individuals monitored under the scheme, such as their offending histories, risks and needs, and quantitative information on the duration of the AML order. This section also includes responses from surveys and interviews with EM provider staff, probation staff and tag wearers. This details the understanding of the eligibility of applying AML conditions.

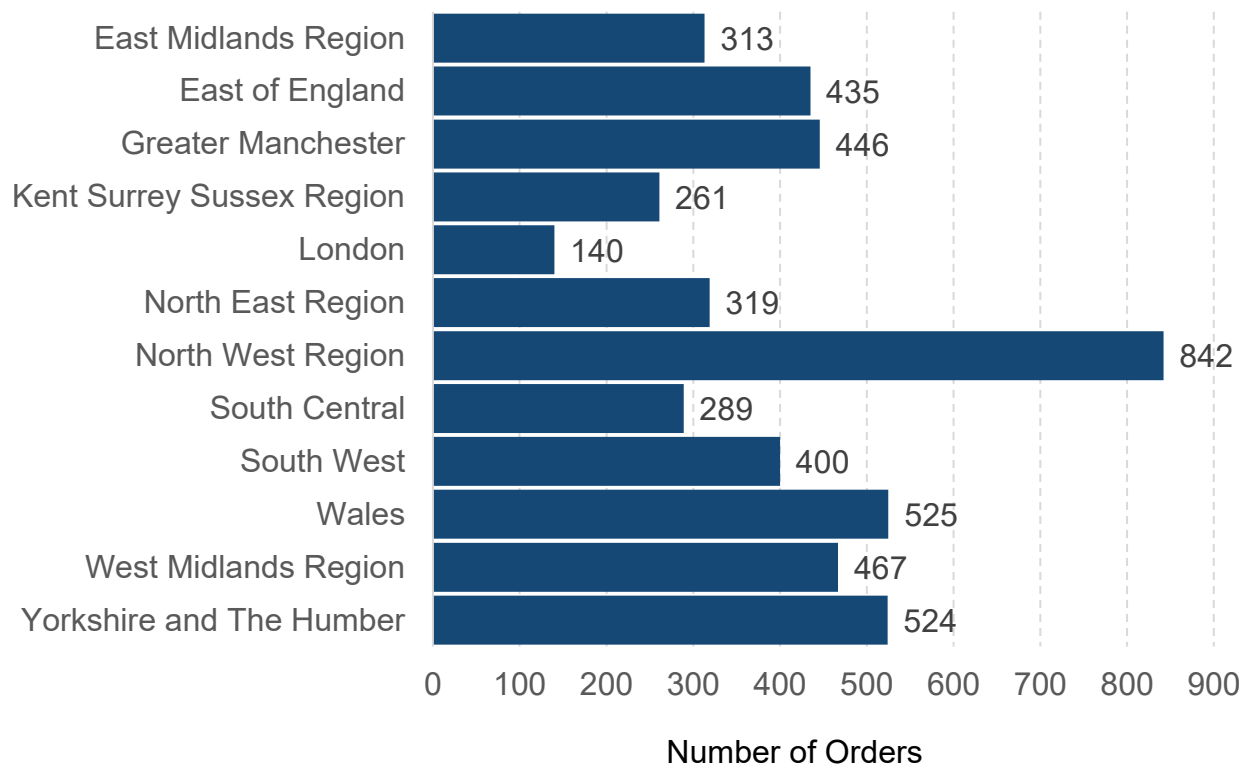
4.1 Volume of AML Orders

There were 4,961 AML orders that ended during 2023, comprising 4,646 unique individuals.²⁸ This highlights that some people on probation received multiple AML orders within the evaluation period.

Figure 4.1 shows the split of AML orders by probation region. This highlights that the greatest number of orders during the evaluation period were in the North West Region ($n=842$; 17.0%). London had the fewest ($n=140$; 2.8%).

²⁸ Cases supervised by the National Security Division (NSD) were removed from the evaluation data. The NSD provides the enhanced monitoring of terrorists, serious organised criminals and very high-risk individuals. Note that there were more orders than people included in the evaluation as some individuals received multiple AML orders. These would have occurred at different stages in the individual's licence. To be included in the evaluation, the order must have ended in 2023, but may have commenced in either 2022 or 2023.

Figure 4.1 Number of AML Orders per Probation Region



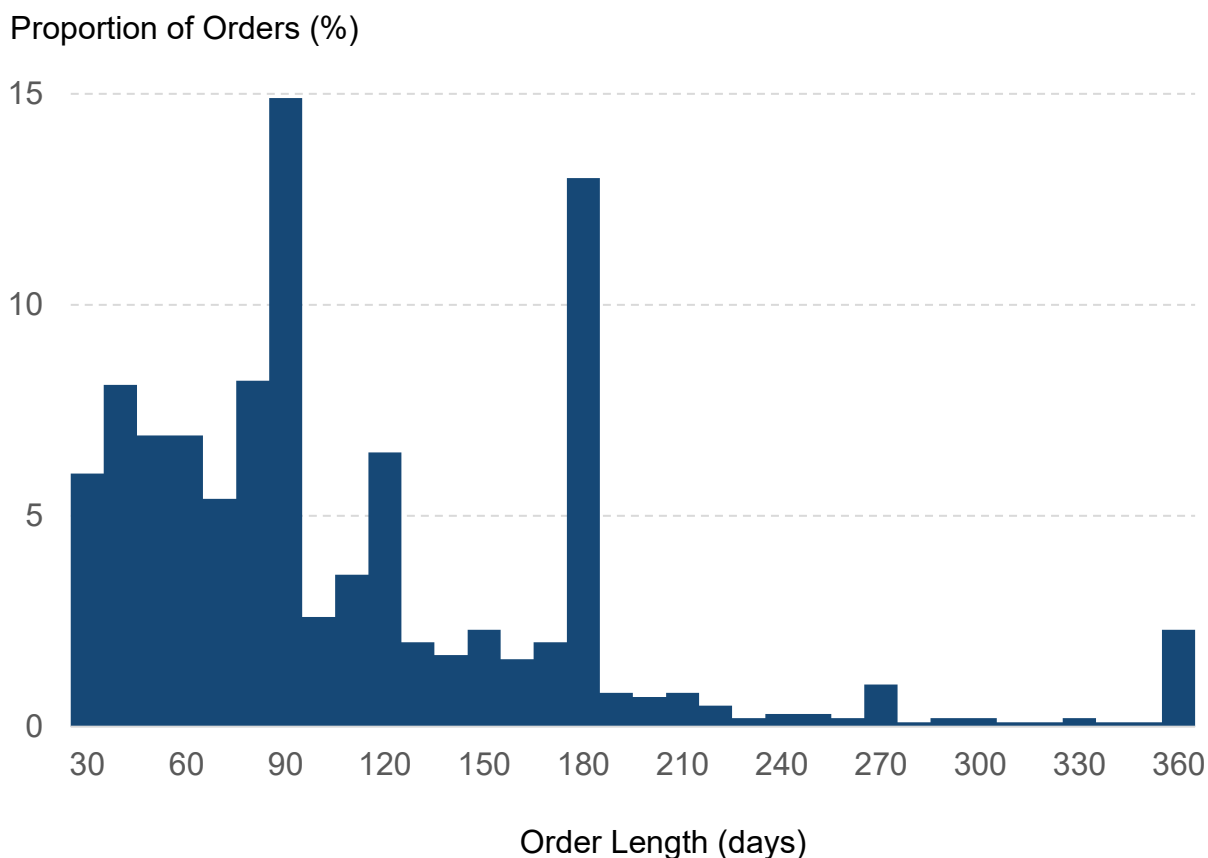
Note. This figure is also supplied as an Excel datasheet – see corresponding worksheet within the ‘data tables’ file.

4.2 AML Order Timing and Lengths

For those AML orders where the release date was identifiable in nDelius, the majority commenced within a month of release from prison ($n=4,464$; 94.0%). The remaining orders were added later during the licence period. Use of AML later in the licence period indicates that RAM was used to mitigate an increase in risk perceived by the probation practitioner.

Figure 4.2 shows the distribution of the AML order lengths for individuals that were not recalled prior to their order end date and had an order length of at least 30 days ($n=2,473$). The majority of these orders were less than six months in length ($n=2,254$; 91.1%), with three months (90-99 days; $n=369$; 14.9%) and six months (180-189 days; $n=322$; 13.0%) being the most frequently observed. There was a small proportion that received an AML order for the longest available duration of a year (360-364 days; $n=58$; 2.3%).

Figure 4.2 Distribution of AML Order Lengths



Note. Data compiled from those with an order length of at least 30 days and were not recalled prior to their order end date. The intervals in the histogram are set to 10 days each. This figure is also supplied as an Excel datasheet – see corresponding worksheet within the ‘data tables’ file.

Where possible, data around the wider licence duration was extracted from nDelius and linked with AML order length data from the EM provider.²⁹ This suggested that probation practitioners added an AML licence condition that mirrored the duration of the Standard Licence Conditions period in almost a quarter of cases ($n=1,030$; 23.1%). Of the remaining AML orders, the order period reflected only a part of the wider licence period. Given that AML was predominantly added at the point of release from prison, and that order lengths were typically shorter than the wider supervision period, this suggests that RAM was typically being used to manage the immediate, shorter-term risks on release.

²⁹ In a small number of cases, it was not possible to match data across systems ($n=503$; 10.1%). Such cases were excluded from reporting around AML order length and wider Standard Licence Condition period.

4.3 Characteristics of People who Received an AML Order

Table 4.1 summarises the characteristics of individuals who received an AML order. The majority were male ($n=4,687$; 94.5%) and the most common age group to receive an AML order was 30-39 years old ($n=2,119$; 42.7%). The proportion of males is in line with those generally on licence in the community (93.8%).³⁰ Almost two thirds of individuals had at least one active or historic Domestic Abuse (DA) marker on their case management record,³¹ at the start of their order ($n=3,160$; 63.7%).³² The table also highlights that 16.0% ($n=796$) of individuals were also subject to electronically monitored location and/or curfew requirements during their AML order.

³⁰ Based on the caseload populations at the end of 2023. For further information and statistics, see [Offender Management Statistics](#).

³¹ The active DA perpetrator marker is used for any offender who presents evidence of DA, however a conviction is not necessary to trigger this marker. A historic DA marker is used to denote a history of DA where there are no current concerns.

³² Data on DA are reported as international evidence highlights that alcohol is an established risk factor for DA. See [What factors are associated with recent intimate partner violence?](#)

Table 4.1 Characteristics of People who Received an AML Order

Characteristics	<i>n</i>	%
Sex		
Male	4,687	94.5
Female	274	5.5
Age		
18-20	107	2.2
21-24	316	6.4
25-29	751	15.1
30-39	2,119	42.7
40-49	1,090	22.0
50-59	440	8.9
60-69	115	2.3
70+	23	0.5
Ethnicity ^a		
Arab	8	0.2
Asian or Asian British	151	3.0
Black or Black British	111	2.2
Mixed	155	3.1
Other Ethnic Group	18	0.4
White	4,511	90.9
Not stated/Unrecorded	7	0.1
Case Registrations ^b		
Domestic Abuse History ^c	3,160	63.7
Additional Electronic Monitoring		
Location monitoring and/or Curfew	796	16.0

Note. Data derived from the case management system, nDelius, based on information at the start of the order. Column percentages may not total 100% due to rounding. ^a The ethnicity “white” includes white British/English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish, Irish, Gypsy and Irish Traveller. ^b Case registrations are logged in nDelius to record information regarding an individual’s risk. ^c Domestic abuse history reflects a historic or active marker. This table is also supplied as an Excel datasheet – see corresponding worksheet within the ‘data tables’ file.

Offending History

Where possible, the individual’s index offence was extracted from their probation records and mapped to the relevant Home Office offence group.³³ The most common index

³³ In a small number of cases there was no match ($n=213$; 4.3%). This was either due to no release being present prior to the order start date, or individuals having multiple offences attached to their release

offence associated with an AML order was 'violence against the person', reflecting 50.5% ($n=2,507$) of the cases that were mapped to an nDelius record. The next most common was 'public order offences' ($n=437$; 8.8%). All other Home Office offence groups reflected less than 7% of the cases that were mapped.

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

- **'Violence with injury'** ($n=1,178$; 47.0%) - index offences such as assaults occasioning actual bodily harm, intentional strangulation and wounding, or inflicting grievous bodily harm.
- **'Violence without injury'** ($n=720$; 28.7%) - index offences such as common assault and battery and making threats to kill.
- **'Stalking and harassment'** ($n=463$; 18.5%) - index offences such as breach of restraining orders, controlling or coercive behaviour and stalking.

Risks and Needs

Table 4.2 summarises the key risks and needs of the people who received an AML order, as ascertained through formal practitioner assessment. This highlights that, of the 4,737 AML orders with a Layer 3 OASys assessment, alcohol misuse was identified as a criminogenic need in almost three-quarters of cases ($n=3,347$; 70.7%). This is over four times more prevalent than those generally on licence in the community (15.9%).³⁴ Within the alcohol misuse section of the OASys assessment, the majority of individuals self-reported either 'some problems' or 'significant problems' with the frequency and level of alcohol misuse in the past ($n=4,431$; 93.5%).

Across the wider OASys assessment, the most common criminogenic needs were:

making it infeasible to ascertain the index offence. More information on Home Office offence groups is available from [Home Office Crime Recording Rules](#).

³⁴ Data on criminogenic needs are recorded in the OASys which is an operational database used to assess the risks and needs of eligible individuals in prisons and probation trusts across England and Wales. Data reflect Layer 3 assessment conducted prior to release from prison. Additional assessments continue as part of routine Probation Practice. For further information and statistics, see: [Identified needs of offenders in custody and the community from the Offender Assessment System](#).

- **‘Lifestyle & Associates’** ($n=4,200$; 88.7%) - includes activities that encourage offending, influenced by criminal peers, recklessness/risk taking behaviour, lifestyle and associates linked to offending behaviour.
- **‘Relationships’** ($n=4,158$; 87.8%) - captures relationships with family, childhood experience, relationship with partner, previous relationship experience, domestic violence: perpetrator or victim, parental responsibilities, relationships related to offending behaviour.
- **‘Attitudes’** ($n=4,135$; 87.3%) - centres on pro-criminal attitudes, attitude to supervisions, attitude to community/society, motivation to reduce offending, attitudes linked to offending behaviour.
- **‘Thinking & Behaviour’** ($n=4,088$; 86.3%) - centres on interpersonal skills, impulsivity, temper control, problem recognition, problem solving, awareness of consequences, understanding the views of others, thinking and behaviour linked to offending behaviour.

When compared to the wider population of those on licence in the community, the AML cohort had higher prevalence across all criminogenic needs.

Table 4.2 also shows that a large proportion of individuals on the scheme were assessed as having a high or very high Risk of Serious Harm (RoSH) rating at the start of their AML order ($n=3,455$; 69.6%).³⁵ Data were also obtained from two key Actuarial Risk Assessment instruments, the OGRS,³⁶ and the RSR.³⁷ The table shows that 39.6% ($n=1,964$) of the AML cohort had an RSR of above 3% and therefore a higher likelihood than typical of being convicted of a further serious harmful offence. This table also highlights that 29.9% ($n=1,482$) of the cohort had an OGRS 2-year score greater than 75%

³⁵ As part of the public protection process, individuals in custody or on the community probation caseload are assessed to determine the level of risk of serious harm they present to others. These ratings are made by practitioners, observing national risk of serious harm guidance ([Risk of Serious Harm Guidance](#)). For further information and statistics, see: [The Risk of Serious Harm of the prison and probation caseload](#).

³⁶ OGRS is the calculated percentage chance of reconviction within 2 years.

³⁷ RSR predicts the likelihood of an individual committing a seriously harmful offence that results in conviction two years post release. An individual with an RSR below 3% has the risk profile that is typical for the majority of those supervised in the community.

and therefore viewed as having a high likelihood of reoffending within two years. These data indicate that this cohort typically had a high-risk profile.

Table 4.2 Risks and Needs of People who Received an AML Order

	<i>n</i>	%
Structured Professional Assessments		
OASys Layer 3 Assessment Completed	4,737	95.5
Criminogenic Needs ^a		
Accommodation	3,361	71.0
Alcohol Misuse	3,347	70.7
Attitudes	4,135	87.3
Drug Misuse	2,575	54.4
Employment	3,137	66.2
Lifestyle & Associates	4,200	88.7
Relationships	4,158	87.8
Thinking & Behaviour	4,088	86.3
Risk of Serious Harm (RoSH)		
Low	45	0.9
Medium	1,437	29.0
High	3,287	66.3
Very High	168	3.4
Data unavailable	24	0.5
Actuarial Risk Assessment Instrument Estimates		
Offender Group Reconviction Scale (OGRS) - 2-year score		
24% or less	463	9.3
25% - 49%	1,001	20.2
50% - 74%	1,907	38.4
75% - 89%	1,290	26.0
90% or more	192	3.9
Data unavailable	108	2.2
Risk of Serious Recidivism (RSR)		
3% or less	2,820	56.8
3% - 6.89%	1,512	30.5
6.9% or more	452	9.1
Data unavailable	177	3.6

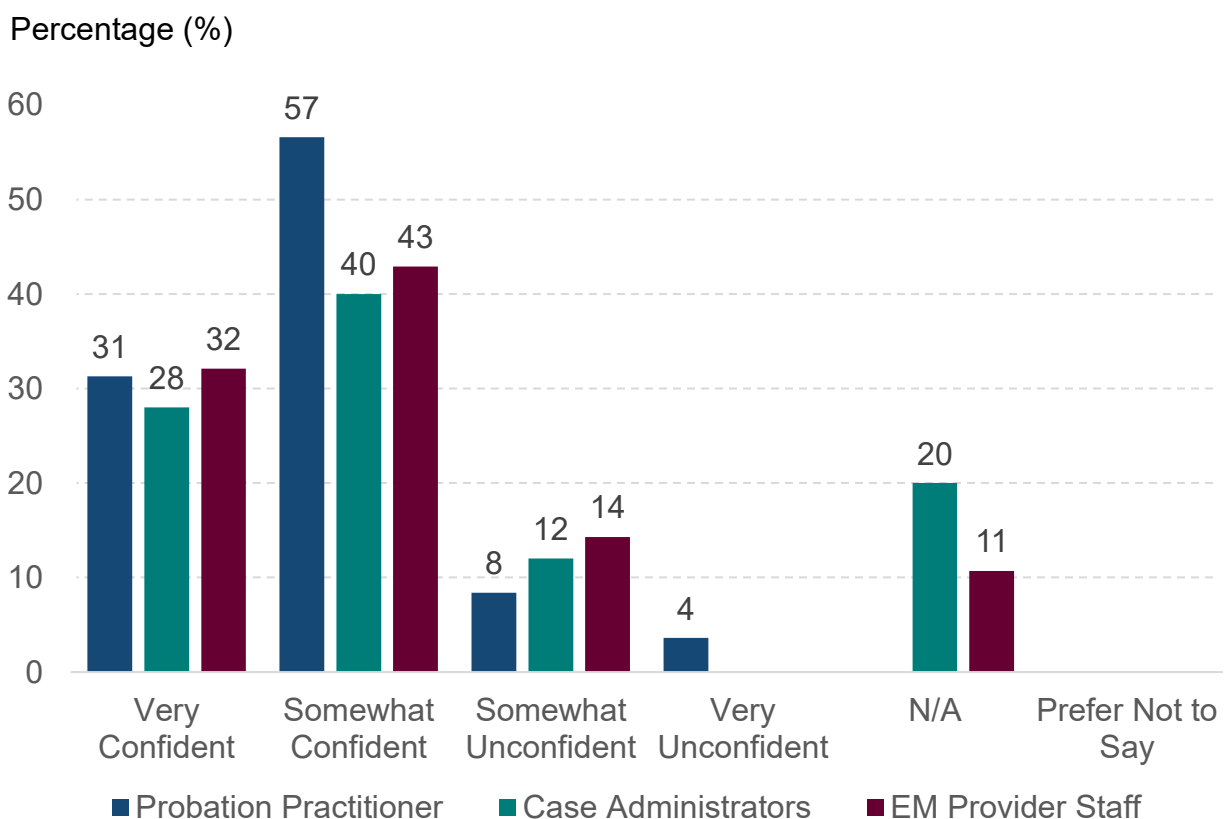
Note. Data compiled from multiple sources including nDelius and the OASys based on information at the start of the order. Data compiled reflects AML orders and not individuals. Column percentages may not total 100% due to rounding. ^a Criminogenic needs were extracted from the Layer 3 OASys assessment. Percentages reflect the number of individuals with a Layer 3

Assessment completed prior to the order start date, not the overall number of individuals on AML. This table is also supplied as an Excel datasheet – see corresponding worksheet within the ‘data tables’ file.

4.4 Eligibility for the Tag

All staffing groups were asked to reflect on their confidence on the eligibility and scope of AML. Figure 4.3 illustrates a similarity in confidence among operational staff, with 68.0% ($n=17$) of case administrators and 75.0% ($n=21$) of EM provider staff reported feeling ‘very confident’ or ‘somewhat confident’. Probation practitioners reported feeling slightly more confident, at 87.9% ($n=73$).

Figure 4.3 Staff Confidence in Eligibility and Scope



Note. Data reflect staff responses to the question, “How confident is your understanding of AML eligibility/scope?” This figure is also supplied as an Excel datasheet – see corresponding worksheet within the ‘data tables’ file.

To aid decision making, the Probation Service provides an ‘Effective Proposal Framework 2’ (EPF2), which is a tool used by probation practitioners to support pre-release planning

of individuals. This helps identify requirements, licence conditions and interventions for individuals based on their risk and needs profile.

Alongside the EPF2 tool, practitioners rely on other methods to determine if tagging is appropriate. Including various risk assessments exploring alcohol use and previous offending history. In some cases, this would create ambiguity, as eligibility decisions came down to “experience on the job”. This was particularly felt regarding the application of differing order types, in this case alcohol abstinence versus alcohol monitoring.

This was echoed by several people on probation who questioned the application of the tag to their licence as they felt it was not proportionate to their offence. This was particularly the case when they felt they did not regularly consume alcohol. Even some who saw benefits of the tag remained certain they did not need it:

“It does keep you mindful if you know that you're one wrong decision away from potentially getting a recall for breaching a licence condition I think in the long run, yes wearing a tag can keep you out of prison. Not so much for someone like me, but I can understand it [for] people that are a little bit more free spirited.”

In contrast, some people on probation would ask themselves to be monitored, as they saw the benefit of proving themselves to be compliant:

“I have a history of chronic alcoholism, and my offending was directly related to drinking...I asked for the tag to give me increased accountability on release as I strive for abstinence from alcohol.”

Furthermore, some people on probation expressed gratitude for the tag being applied to their licence, as they recognised it was a “second chance” to prove compliance, instead of being recalled to custody. In both circumstances, the flexibility of the tag’s application was seen as beneficial but demonstrates the complexity of applying the AML order.

5. Findings: Non-Compliance, Recall and Recidivism

This section summarises findings on rates of non-compliance with AML. It includes an overview of violation and recall statistics derived from management information data. Including a comparison to violation rates captured in other England and Wales EM evaluations. This section also includes stakeholder perspectives related to recidivism derived from surveys and interviews. This encompasses views from probation practitioners, tag wearers and monitoring staff.

5.1 Non-Compliance

To understand wider compliance with RAM, violation data were analysed.³⁸ Alerts generated by the tags were recorded by the EM provider as potentially actionable tag alerts. These alerts can be triggered due to the tag wearer's behaviour, for example, by consuming alcohol, or tampering with or removing the device.

Approximately one in five individuals received at least one confirmed violation during their AML order ($n=1,092$; 22.0%).³⁹ In total, there were 4,053 confirmed violations, highlighting that some people on probation received multiple violations during their AML order.

Further analysis was completed to observe the frequency and type of violations for those AML orders that received a violation. The most common number of violations attributed to a single AML order was one ($n=441$; 40.4%). A further 36.6% received between two and four violations during their AML order ($n=400$). The data suggests minimal non-compliance

³⁸ Violation alerts are initially verified by the EM provider. Once confirmed, the supervising probation team review the violation event to ascertain if the occurrence is considered 'unacceptable' within the licence parameters. Non-compliance is defined as the violation being confirmed by the probation practitioner.

³⁹ Confirmed unacceptable violation events are those that have been logged as unacceptable by a probation practitioner and logged in nDelius. For evaluation purposes, only those alerts that have been verified and marked as unacceptable are counted and described as 'violations'. This uses a different measure of non-compliance to the [Alcohol Abstinence Monitoring Requirement 'sober day rate'](#). AML measures individual violations as opposed to an aggregate of sober days.

with AML. Table 5.1 shows the breakdown of the types of violations. Over three quarters of the violations were due to the consumption of alcohol ($n=3,127$; 77.2%).

Table 5.1. Violation Type and Count of All Confirmed Violations

Violation Type	<i>n</i>	%
Alcohol Consumption	2,396	59.1
Alcohol Consumption and Tamper/Obstruction	731	18.0
Tamper/Obstruction	612	15.1
Other ^a	314	7.7

Note. Column percentages reflect proportion of each violation type of all confirmed violations. ^a Other includes multi-day alcohol consumption, removal of the tag, and loss of communication between the tag and the base unit. This table is also supplied as an Excel datasheet – see corresponding worksheet within the ‘data tables’ file.

The overall proportion of individuals with violations was significantly lower than other EM pilots conducted in England and Wales which used GPS and RF technologies.⁴⁰ Comparisons of compliance data,⁴¹ and research with both probation practitioners and people on probation suggested this may be due to the difference in battery life of the devices.⁴²

A process evaluation exploring EM GPS technology noted that battery violations were often “accidental”, as tag wearers described the GPS tag battery to “not last for as long as advised” and “experienced difficulties with the charging cable not being long enough to sit comfortably during charging”.⁴³ Another process evaluation exploring both GPS and RF

⁴⁰ 71.9% ($n=318$) of individuals considered during the Domestic Abuse Perpetrators on Licence (DAPOL) process evaluation had at least one violation page 29-31: ([Electronic Monitoring of Domestic Abuse Perpetrators on Licence - Process Evaluation](#)). Similarly 70.9% ($n=356$) of individuals considered during the Home Office GPS Pilot for Immigration pilot had at least one violation ([GPS expansion pilot evaluation - GOV.UK](#)).

⁴¹ The majority of violations reported during the DAPOL process evaluation were related to battery breaches (61.4%, $n=698$). The Home Office GPS pilot found similar, with battery violations the second most common type. 23.9% ($n=120$) of those tagged reported battery violations, with a further 10.4% ($n=52$) reporting strap and battery violations.

⁴² GPS and RF EM devices require charging every 24 hours. This differs from the current alcohol monitoring devices used in England and Wales, which requires a battery replacement every 90 days ([SCRAM CAM Help - SCRAM Systems](#)).

⁴³ Home Office Analysis and Insight (2025). GPS Expansion Pilot Evaluation of Electronic Monitoring as a Condition of Immigration Bail. Source: [GPS expansion pilot evaluation - GOV.UK](#).

technologies similarly described that tag wearers “struggled to formulate a consistent charging routine” which in turn could lead to violations.⁴⁴

Surveys with probation practitioners described notable positives of the AML tag, particularly around the flexibility of not having to charge it daily.⁴⁵

“[It] provides additional flexibility by not requiring a charging regime. It is for that reason it is quite popular among practitioners to use it as a tool in their licence conditions.”

This was corroborated by a person on probation who had experienced wearing both the AML and GPS tag:

“I’ve had a GPS one [...] that was just a nightmare trying to charge it up.”

Enforcement action can be taken by the probation practitioner as a result of a violation occurring. In almost 40% of the violations, a warning or licence compliance letter was issued to the individual ($n=1,538$; 37.9%). In 5.9% ($n=240$) of violations, a recall to prison was initiated by the probation practitioner. The remaining violations did not have any recorded enforcement action ($n=2,275$; 56.1%). These instances could reflect a delay in data logging or cases where a verbal warning was given by the practitioner.

“Survival” analysis was undertaken to further explore the time to first violation. This analysis plotted the proportion of individuals who had received a violation over time (Figure 5.1). By determining the probability of receiving a first violation in increments, this analysis describes how the risk of committing a first violation changes over time.

Figure 5.1 initially shows a steep gradient, indicating a high risk of violation at the start of the order. By three months – a common AML order length – the probability that an individual had received their first violation was about one in four (25.4%).⁴⁶ This risk then decreases, as indicated by the reduced steepness of the curve. The probability of an individual receiving their first violation between three and six months was around one in

⁴⁴ Rolls, E. Youle, Y. and Hartwright, C. (2024). Electronic Monitoring of Domestic Abuse Perpetrators on Licence. Source: [Electronic Monitoring of Domestic Abuse Perpetrators on Licence - Process Evaluation](#)

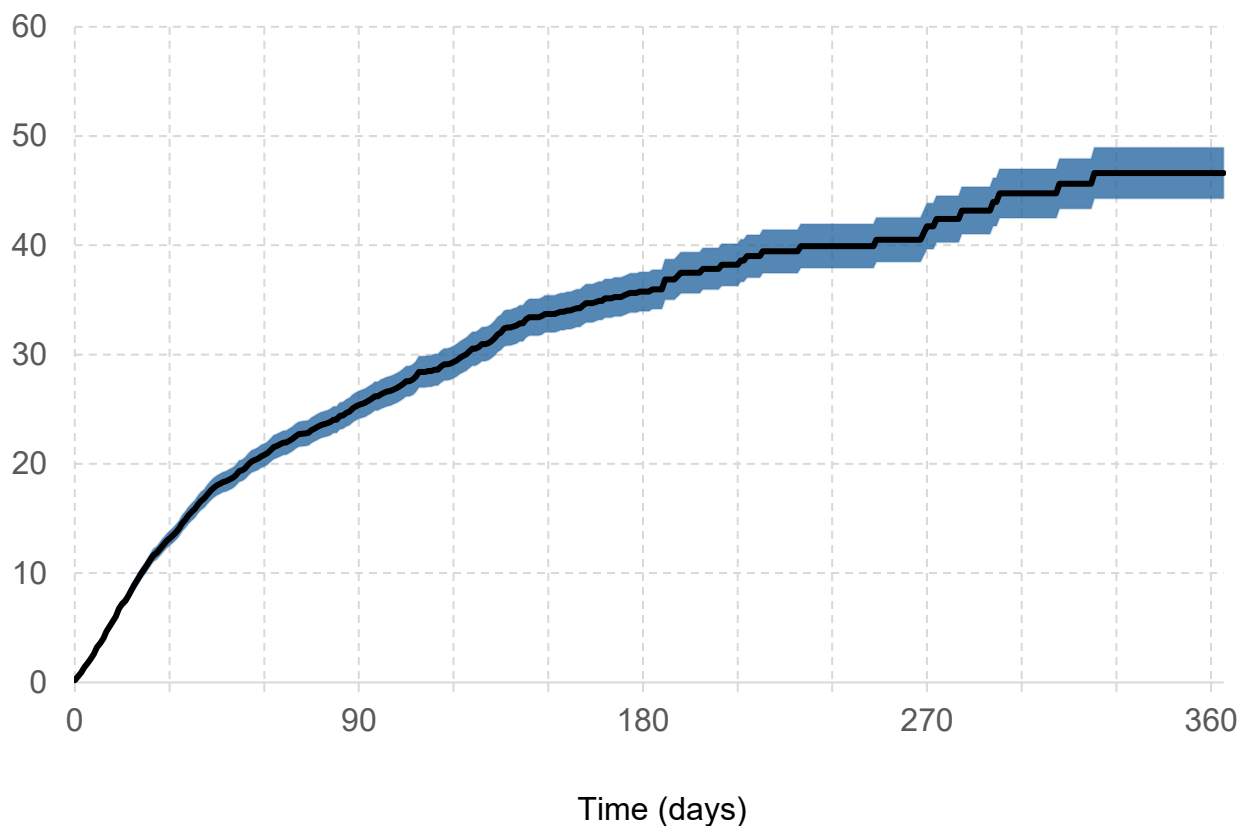
⁴⁵ See reference 43.

⁴⁶ Probability at day 90 = 25.4%; 95% CI [23.9%, 26.8%].

ten (10.4%). This figure was similar for the six-to-twelve-month period (10.8%).⁴⁷ This analysis highlights that, if an individual is going to violate their AML order, the violation is more likely to be committed early in the order. Risk levels then stabilise later in the licence period.

Figure 5.1 Event Probability for Time to First Violation

Time to First Violation Probability (%)



Note. The shaded area represents the 95% confidence interval for the probability. This figure is also supplied as an Excel datasheet – see corresponding worksheet within the ‘data tables’ file.

5.2 Recall

Of the 4,961 AML orders that concluded in 2023, over half of the people on probation ($n=2,664$; 53.7%) were not recalled during their order.⁴⁸ However, 42.0% were recalled to

⁴⁷ These values are calculated by the difference in event probabilities between the three and six month points; and the six and twelve month points. Probability at day 180 = 35.8%; 95% CI [33.6%, 37.9%]. Probability at day 364 = 46.6%; 95% CI [41.4%, 51.4%].

⁴⁸ In a small number of cases, it was not possible to ascertain if a recall had occurred due to match failure across data systems ($n=213$; 4.3%). Such cases were excluded from reporting around recall. The data

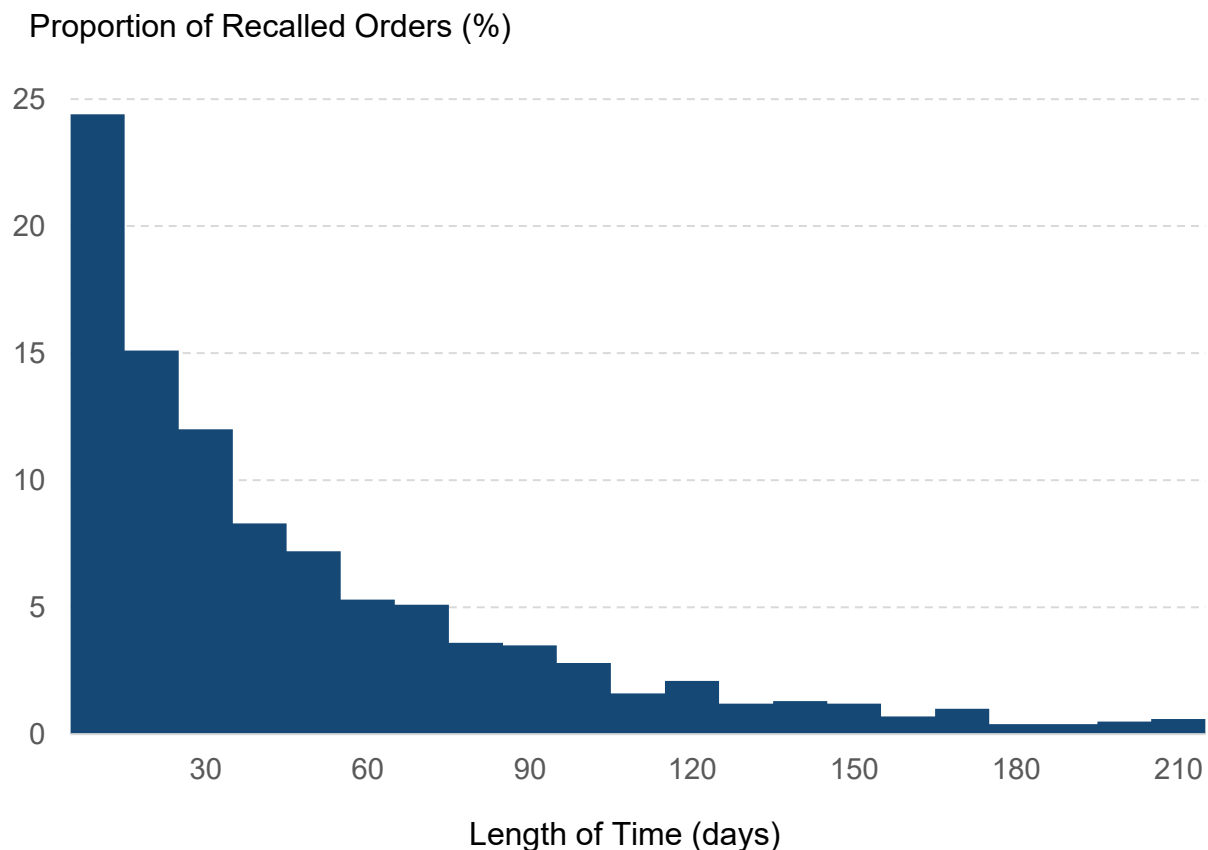
prison either during their AML order, or within 13 days of the order end date ($n=2,084$).⁴⁹ As outlined previously, few recalls were initiated following non-compliance with AML, suggesting recall reflected wider risk escalation ($n=240$; 5.9%). The characteristics, offending history and order types for those recalled largely mirrored those of the wider cohort.

The length of time between an individual's order start date and recall date was around 28 days (median = 28 days). Figure 5.2 illustrates the typical duration a person was enrolled on the AML scheme before being recalled. Almost a quarter of individuals that were recalled during their order, were recalled within the first ten days of their AML order commencing ($n=508$; 24.4%).

comprise individuals not recalled within 13 days of their AML order end date. This accounts for delays in reporting on administrative systems, without including any fixed term recalls of 14 days. Recall of individuals after this time period are not considered.

⁴⁹ Individuals who are released from prison on licence to continue serving their sentence under supervision in the community can be recalled to prison if they fail to comply with the conditions in their licence. This includes requirements to be of good behaviour, not to commit further offences, to live and work only as approved by the supervising officer and not travel abroad without permission. For wider information and statistics on recall, see [Offender management statistics quarterly](#).

Figure 5.2 Duration Between AML Order Start Date and Recall Date



Note. The intervals in the histogram are set to 10 days each. Values of greater than 210 days are not shown as these reflected 0.5% of the data or less. This figure is also supplied as an Excel datasheet – see corresponding worksheet within the ‘data tables’ file.

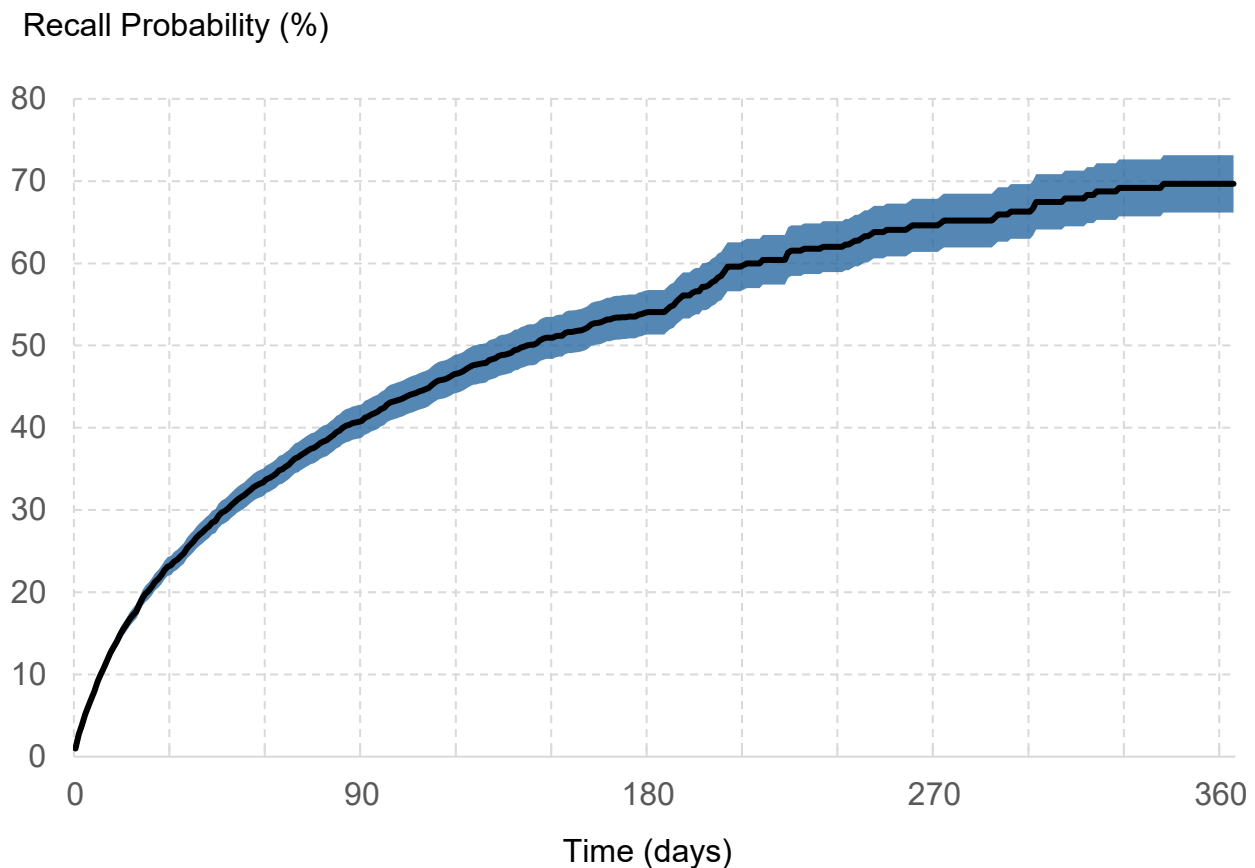
“Survival” analysis was undertaken to further explore the time to recall after the order start date. This analysis plotted the proportion of individuals who had been recalled during their order over time (Figure 5.3). Similar to the violation data, the curve shows a steep gradient initially, indicating a high risk of recall at the start of the order. By three months the probability that an individual had been recalled was about two in five (40.8%).⁵⁰ This risk then decreases, as indicated by the reduced steepness of the curve. The probability of an individual being recalled between three and six months was around one in eight (13.2%). This figure was slightly higher between the six-to-twelve-month period (15.6%).⁵¹ This

⁵⁰ Recall probability at day 90 = 40.8%; 95% CI [39.3%, 42.3%].

⁵¹ These values are calculated by the difference in recall probabilities between the three and six month points; and the six and twelve month points. Recall probability at day 180 = 54.1%; 95% CI [52.1%, 55.9%]. Recall probability at day 364 = 69.7%; 95% CI [65.8%, 73.1%].

analysis highlights that, if an individual is going to be recalled during their AML order, it is more likely to occur early in the order.

Figure 5.3 Event Probability for Time to Recall



Note. Only the duration of the AML order has been considered rather than the wider licence duration. The shaded area represents the 95% confidence interval for the probability. This figure is also supplied as an Excel datasheet – see corresponding worksheet within the ‘data tables’ file.

An interim impact analysis was completed to compare the recall rates during the order period in a subset of the AML orders with a matched control group. Table 5.2 shows that there were approximately two more individuals recalled per 100 in the control group than in the treatment group. This difference was not statistically significant, indicating that the addition of AML as a licence condition did not affect recall rates.⁵²

⁵² Statistical significance is typically assessed at a threshold of 0.05, meaning there is less than a 5% chance that the observed result is due to random variation. The p-value is much greater than the threshold, indicating that the observed difference in recall rates is not statistically significant and may have occurred by chance.

Table 5.2 Comparison of Recall Rates

Size of Group		
	Treatment Group	900
	Control Group	900
Number of Recalls Observed		
	Treatment Group	213
	Control Group	227
Recall Rate (%)		
	Treatment Group	23.7
	Control Group	25.2
Estimated Difference in Recall (%) ^a		-1.5 (-5.5, 2.4)
p value		0.476
Statistically Significant Result		No

Note. ^a Numbers in brackets represent the 95% confidence intervals. The alpha value used for statistical significance was set at $p < 0.05$. This table is also supplied as an Excel datasheet – see corresponding worksheet within the ‘data tables’ file.

Further analysis was carried out to compare the two groups, including a survival analysis and a sensitivity analysis. There were no statistically significant effects identified in either of these analyses.

5.3 Perceived changes to long term recidivism

In qualitative interviews and surveys, probation practitioners raised some concerns regarding long term recidivism. It was felt that people on probation typically complied during the tag wearing period by abstaining or reducing their alcohol intake. However, once the tag was removed, it was thought some reverted quickly to previous drinking habits. This was also demonstrated by cases where there were delays to tag fitting:

“[The] alcohol [tag is] not always fitted on time, [people on probation] have then relapsed and been recalled before [the] tag [is] fitted.”

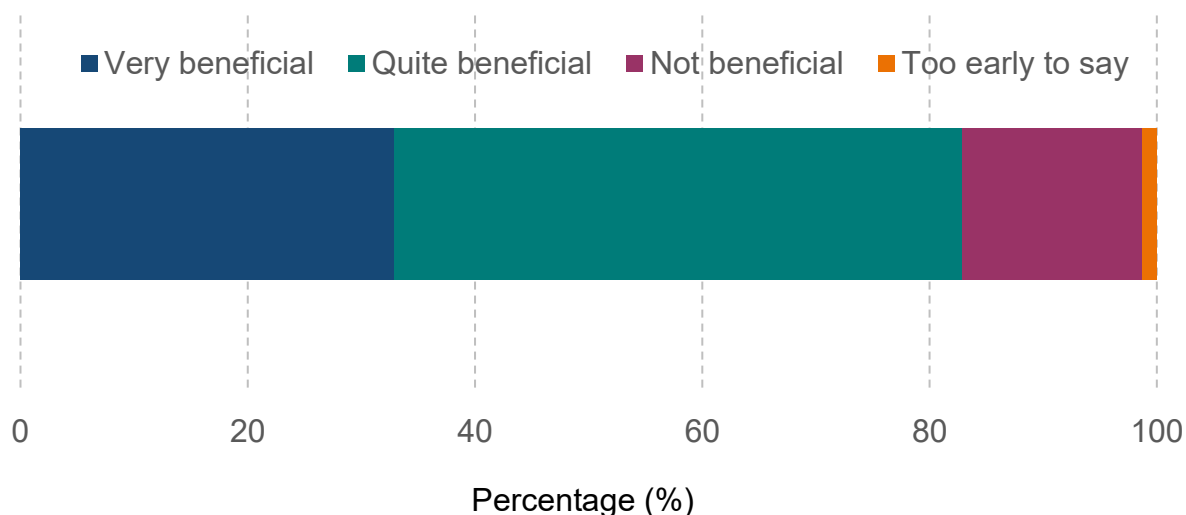
More details on how tag wearers progress through the licence period, including their views on long term drinking behaviour can be found in section 7.3.

6. Findings: Perceived Impact and Benefits of the Scheme

This section uses survey and interview data to demonstrate the perceived benefits and impact of AML on risk management and resettlement into the community. Findings reflect views from probation practitioners and tag wearers.

To understand staff perceptions of the scheme for risk management, the survey asked probation practitioners how beneficial they felt the scheme was for managing day-to-day alcohol risk. Of the 76 probation practitioners that had added AML as a licence condition in this research, Figure 6.1 shows that the majority felt AML was either ‘very beneficial’ or ‘quite beneficial’ for managing day-to-day risks relating to alcohol (82.9%; $n=63$).

Figure 6.1 Perceived Benefits to Alcohol Risk Management



Note. Data reflect probation practitioners’ responses to the question, “How beneficial have you found AML to support managing day-to-day risks relating to alcohol?” This figure is also supplied as an Excel datasheet – see corresponding worksheet within the ‘data tables’ file.

This was echoed in interviews with probation practitioners and people on probation who spoke mostly positively of AML in relation to risk management.

A probation practitioner observed the utility of being able to monitor the tag wearers daily alcohol use. In some cases, they used this to set goals for the licence period:

“People on probation generally do not accurately report their level of alcohol use and therefore having access to data around their use is very helpful both in managing risk of harm [...] but also in having an open discussion with the [tag wearer] around their use.”

The ability to move between monitoring and abstinence orders further aided how probation practitioners used AML for risk management. One probation practitioner spoke positively about the monitoring order as it enabled them to observe patterns of drinking. This allowed them to be more proactive in offering support, particularly when drinking events increased.

Similarly, when it came to abstinence, some probation practitioners felt the tag would help people on probation remain “focused” and “motivated”, aiding their resettlement back into the community, as they were able to do positive activities supporting their rehabilitation.

From the tag wearers perspective, some felt the tag helped them implement positive stress management techniques as they had to learn alternative coping mechanisms to drinking alcohol. Others spoke of it providing a “cool down period” as it acted as a physical reminder to them not to drink. Where conditions allowed tag wearers to drink, some highlighted that the tag made them more mindful of their alcohol consumption:

“So, I have learned an awful lot from it, and I think the tag does work. It just keeps your mind...I've been out for a couple of meals, and I've always been very mindful when I go to have that third drink [...] I don't wanna push my luck.”

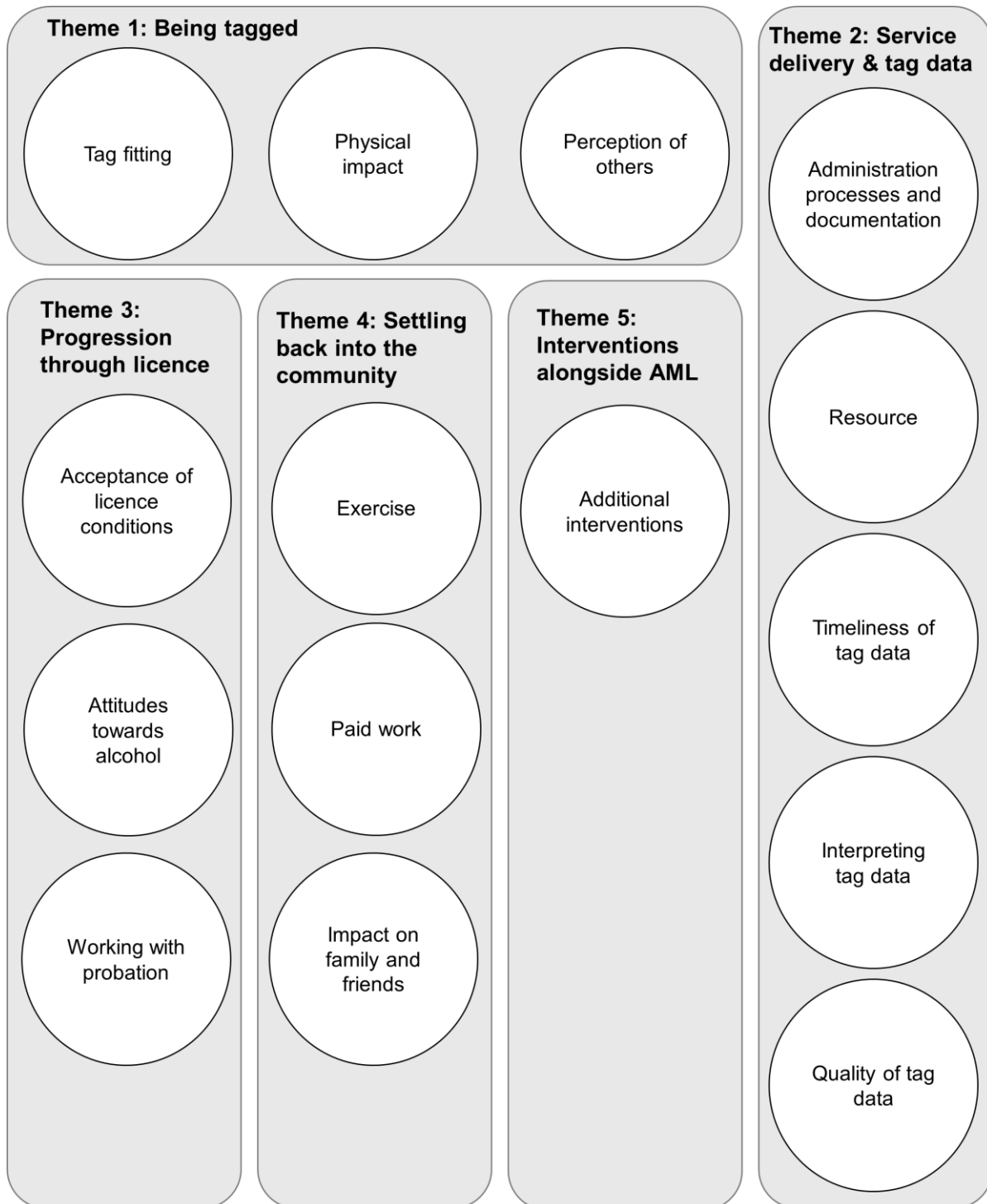
Nevertheless, many felt that the decision of whether to drink was ultimately down to the individual and their own personal motivations. But the tag encouraged honesty due to the evidence the tag data provides:

“Whilst ultimately the decision whether to take a drink or not is mine and the tag alone would not stop me from doing this, what it does mean is I cannot lie as alcoholics do, if I drink, it will be known, and I would face the consequences.”

7. Findings: Facilitators and Barriers within the Scheme

This section describes broader findings on facilitators and barriers derived from survey and interview data. Five overarching themes were identified: 'Being Tagged', 'Service Delivery & Tag Data', 'Progression Through Licence', 'Settling Back into the Community' and 'Interventions Alongside AML'. The themes demonstrate the complexities of using AML as a risk management tool, including the tagging process, the use of tag data by staff and the wider needs of people on probation as they settle into the community. As illustrated in Figure 7.1, most of the themes comprised subordinate themes to further distil the data.

Figure 7.1 Themes Identified Through Fieldwork Analysis



Note. Rectangles represent the five superordinate themes. Each theme comprised subordinate themes, as indicated within the circles. This figure is also supplied as an Excel datasheet – see corresponding worksheet within the ‘data tables’ file.

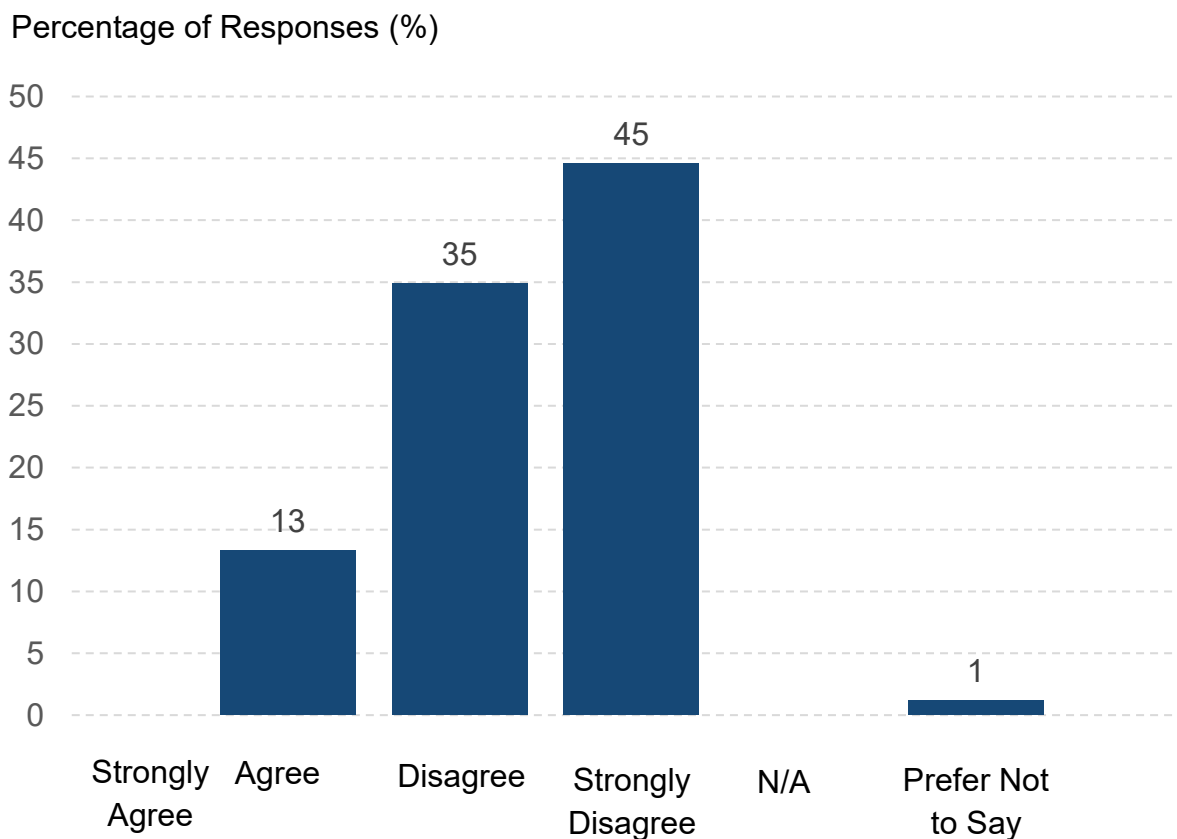
7.1 Theme 1: Being Tagged

This theme centres on views on the issues raised around fitting the tag, the physical impact of wearing the tag, and views on how others might perceive a person wearing a tag.

Tag Fitting

Probation practitioners were asked whether AML tags were fitted in good time. As shown in Figure 7.2, over three quarters disagreed with this statement (79.5%, $n=66$), reporting to either 'disagree' (34.9%; $n=29$) or 'strongly disagree' (44.6%; $n=37$).

Figure 7.2 Probation Practitioner Agreement on Timeliness of AML Tag Fittings



Note. Data reflect probation practitioners' responses to the question, "Please rate your agreement with AML tags are fitted in good time" This figure is also supplied as an Excel datasheet – see corresponding worksheet within the 'data tables' file.

Surveys with probation practitioners further explored the impact delays to tag fitting had, including on risk management. The EM provider was expected to fit tags within three days of the order start date; however, this was not always achieved.

Several practitioners mentioned extended periods of time people on probation were not monitored:

"In the cases I have managed that have had AML, it has been weeks before the tag has been fitted. These are high risk cases where alcohol monitoring is vital for risk management."

This resulted in some people on probation feeling able to drink while they were waiting for their tag to be fitted or fixed, as they were not being monitored. Case administrators echoed these concerns, and noticed visits were not always followed up by the EM provider if the initial attempts were unsuccessful, causing further delays. This was particularly an issue for those with short AML orders, which can occur when a person on probation has limited time left on their licence:

"[The EM provider] are so bad at getting [tag fitting visits] completed that if the two mandatory visits are unsuccessful then it almost feels like you might as well write it off as a risk management tool sometimes, especially when the person on probation only has a short condition for AML."

A solution to this was to have the tags fitted in prison prior to their release, to ensure they are monitored from leaving the prison gates and to "avoid gaps or delay to monitoring". However, this was only feasible as an exception where it was deemed proportionate to the risk present and if the prison facility allows this.

A second concern of tagging delays raised by both probation practitioners and tag wearers was the impact it had on wellbeing, with several people on probation reporting feeling anxiety whilst waiting for staff to show up. For one person on probation, they felt the

uncertainty around tag fitting appointments led them to drink as they waited for a new tag to be fitted.⁵³

“I really did cut down when I was on the tag but when they wouldn’t turn up and bring the tag it’s then affecting me because then I’ve just gone out and drank. Do you know what I mean? Because I didn’t know when they were coming.”

Additionally, the timing and organisation of the fitting appointments led to people on probation getting frustrated. In many cases, the EM provider gave a large window of time for the appointment. For some this disrupted their routine such as work, an activity which helps them reintegrate into society. It was suggested the EM provider should give a smaller time window prior to the appointment, to allow people on probation to manage their time and attendance of appointments. Additionally, some suggested receiving a text message or phone call from the EM provider prior to a visit, so they could better prepare and be available. Suggestions from the EM provider staff to reduce failed appointments included more daytime appointments or enforcing curfew on people on probation for fitting and tag removal periods, to increase attendance and reduce “no shows”.⁵⁴

Despite issues related to the organisation of tag fitting appointments, tag wearers described the EM provider staff to be pleasant and informative during appointments:

“They’re quite respectful they’re mindful, they don’t make it a daunting experience they try and have a laugh with ya you know, we’re all human, that sort of thing.”

Physical Impact

Both operational staff and tag wearers highlighted various issues which occurred due to the physical aspect of the tag. Many felt the alcohol tags were “large in size”, particularly in comparison to the GPS tags,⁵⁵ which often disrupted daily routine.

⁵³ New tags may be fitted for a few reasons, including if there are issues with the original tag such as it not recording alcohol readings correctly, its battery or how it is fitted, and if a new order is applied.

⁵⁴ Under the current scheme people on probation had a temporary curfew requirement to allow for fitting the tag. This was not the case for removals.

⁵⁵ There were instances of people on probation being dual tagged with both GPS tag and an alcohol tag. Each tag would have different licence conditions for the risk management required.

People on probation also presented mixed views of the tag fitting itself, and whether it was too loose or too tight. It was thought this could impact whether a tag wearer would experience injury. One tag wearer described being given the choice of how tight they wanted it fitted:⁵⁶

“When [the EM provider] come out to fit it they do give you the option when they fit it on how tight or loose you want it. A couple of [people on probation] that I see had to go to hospital because [they] had skin irritation and that's how it got cut off because they ended up having it on too tight...so I opted to have mine on relatively loose.”

There was also discussion around the material and shape of the tag. Some tag wearers reported the tag would rub against their skin, others, mentioned it hitting the ankle bone causing pain. In some cases, this would cause swelling and bruising of the skin. Attempts to alleviate this discomfort included the use of sweatbands, cotton or tissues, to act as a barrier between the tag and the skin. However, many were wary of doing this in case the added material would show as a tamper and cause a violation.

Similarly, the EM providers guidance states the tag may cause itchiness if not washed correctly,⁵⁷ however some struggled to wash around the tag, resulting in irritation around their leg.

Moreover, some tag wearers raised concerns around the noise the tag would make when taking the alcohol reading. Although this was primarily a vibration, one person on probation mentioned it disrupting their sleep. Another person on probation experienced their tag box making a beeping sound. This added to their anxiety as they were worried about being accused of tampering with the tag and therefore being recalled to prison:

“When my monitor bleeps and says network failure I have a little bit of a panic because I think I don't want them to think that I'm tampering with [it] because I haven't touched it.”

⁵⁶ RAM technology needs to be fitted as per guidelines to ensure successful monitoring of alcohol consumption. This involves the tag having contact with the skin.

⁵⁷ SCRAM systems provide guidance for tag wearers to wash the ankle around the tag to prevent mild skin rashes: [SCRAM CAM Help - SCRAM Systems](#).

Perception of Others

The size of the equipment meant some people on probation felt the tag was too visible to the public. It was felt this could draw unwanted attention to tag wearers:

“I think some people must think oh we’re criminals we deserve to wear it which yeah, I’m not saying I shouldn’t have it on. I just feel like the sheer size of it. I feel like you know those cows that have those big bells round their neck, that’s what I feel like, I feel like everyone is looking at me.”

The physical aspect of the tag was said to cause shame or embarrassment to some people on probation, affecting what they wore:

“Well, I’m disgusted with it really. I think it’s shameful, I always wear baggy trousers and pull them right over it. I don’t want to advertise to the general public about it.”

In some cases, this prevented tag wearers from engaging in activities that were good for their health and wellbeing, such as going to the gym:

“Well, when I was in prison I was going to the gym and stuff like that’s good for mental health trying to get myself better and then like now I’ve come out I can’t carry it on cause I don’t wanna be seen with it because it’s that big on my leg.”

Some tag wearers suggested having a more “discreet” device worn on the wrist instead of the ankle, similar to a digital sports watch.

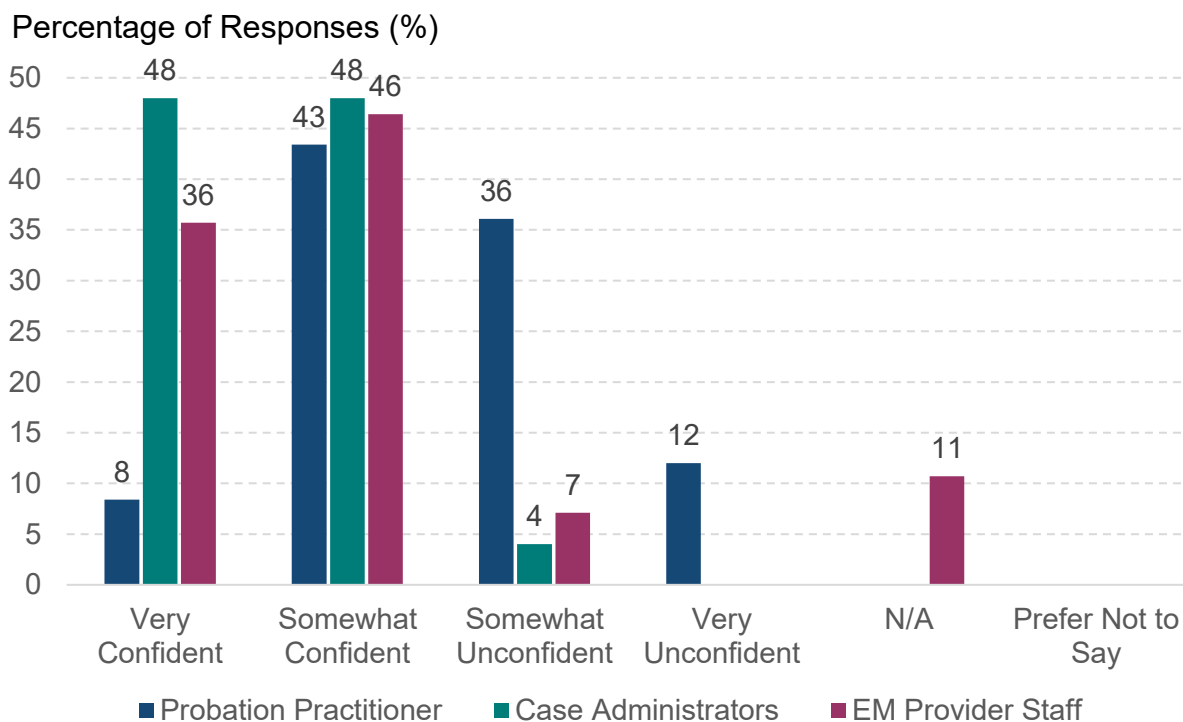
7.2 Theme 2: Service Delivery and Tag Data

This section describes findings on how operational staff involved in delivering AML understood general processes of applying the tag and data access procedures. This section also explores the quality of the tag data for risk management, including the time it took to receive data and how staff were able to interpret the data. Feedback includes stakeholder perspectives derived from surveys and interviews, and encompasses views from probation practitioners, case administration and EM provider staff.

Administration Processes and Documentation

The survey asked operational staff to reflect on how well they felt they understood the AML administration processes and tag data access procedures. This was important, given their roles typically require them to be at the forefront of decision-making or application of AML. All three staffing groups were asked how confident they felt with AML administration processes and understanding AML documentation as illustrated in Figure 7.3. Of the 25 responses from case administrators, the majority reported feeling ‘very confident’ or ‘somewhat confident’ (96.0%; $n=24$). Similarly, the majority of EM provider staff also reported feeling ‘very confident’ or ‘somewhat confident’ (82.1%; $n=23$). Probation practitioners were slightly less confident with this, with 51.8% ($n=43$) reporting feeling ‘very confident’ or ‘somewhat confident’.

Figure 7.3 Staff Confidence in Admin Processes and Documentation



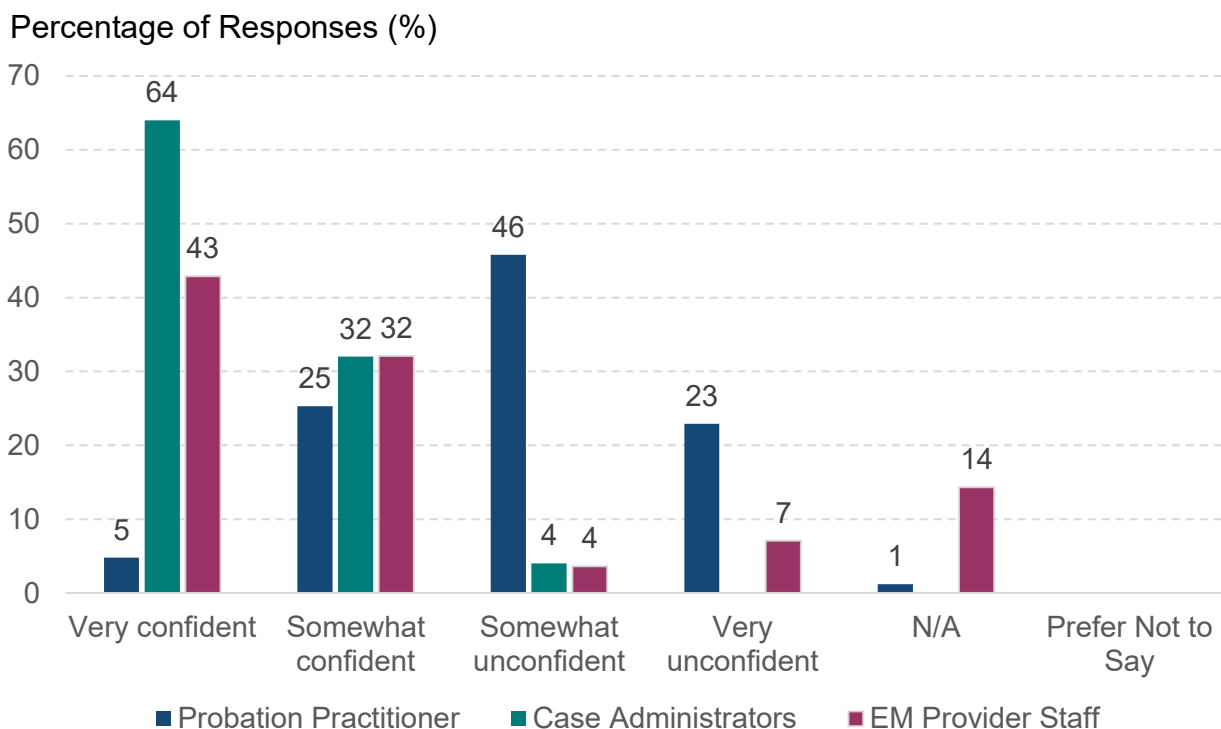
Note. Data reflect staff responses to the question, “How confident is your understanding of AML admin processes / documentation?” This figure is also supplied as an Excel datasheet – see corresponding worksheet within the ‘data tables’ file.

EM provider staff reflected on the administration processes within their role with AML. Views on these were very mixed, for example, some staff felt the paperwork processes or

systems used to administer AML could be improved, as the current system was described as “slow”. However, others found the current system to be working “well”, such as the order processing of equipment.

When asked about accessing tag data, both case administrators and EM provider staff appeared to be confident with this process. Figure 7.4 shows that the majority felt ‘very confident’ about accessing the tag data (64.0%; $n=16$ and 42.9%; ($n=12$) and around a third felt ‘somewhat confident’ (32.0%; $n=8$ and 32.1%; $n=9$). Probation practitioners appeared less confident with this process, with less than a third of respondents feeling ‘very confident’ or ‘somewhat confident’ with accessing and interpreting the tag data (30.1%; $n=25$).

Figure 7.4 Staff Confidence in Accessing Tag Data



Note. Data reflect staff responses to the question, “How confident is your understanding of how to access AML tag data?” This figure is also supplied as an Excel datasheet – see corresponding worksheet within the ‘data tables’ file.

Differences in confidence may be a result of the staffing group’s role in accessing and interpreting the tag data. Responses highlighted case admin staff would access the tag data via an online portal managed by the service provider, accessing the data directly.

They would then forward violation notifications to probation practitioners to enforce. Case admin staff seemed relatively positive about this process:

"I access [the alcohol data] daily and notify the practitioner of violations through internal processes. I've never had any issues with [alcohol data system] and if I have a question the customer support team are quick to respond and really helpful."

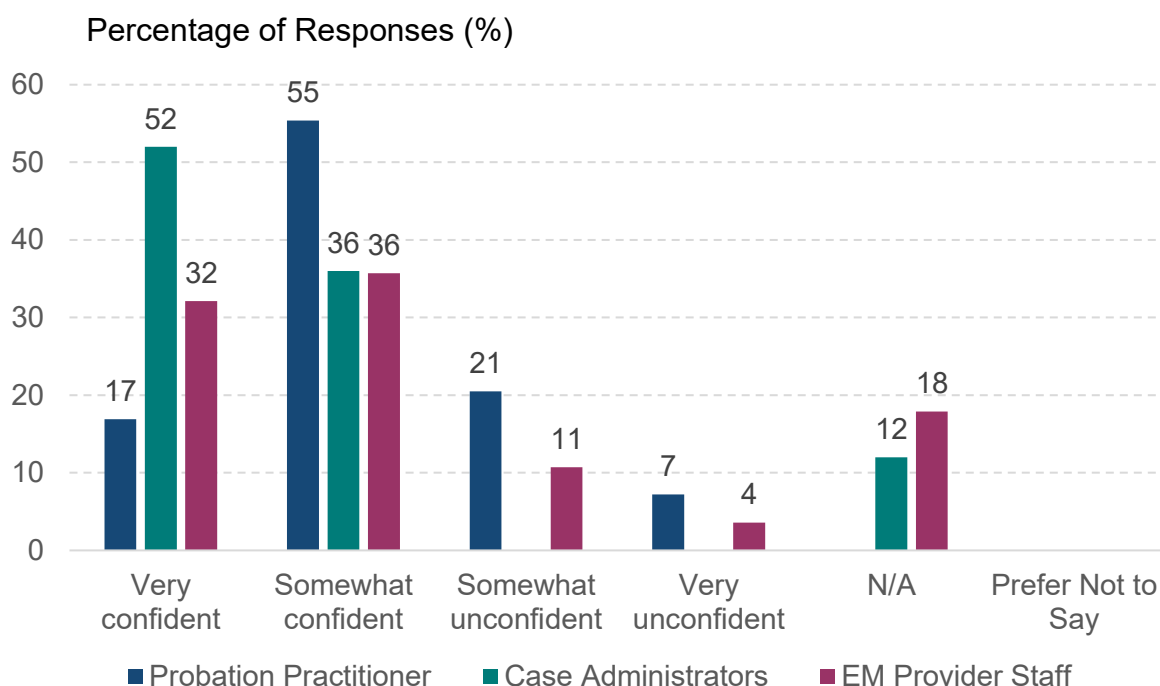
Some probation practitioners spoke of the difficulties with the information received by case admin staff as this was said to "confuse matters" and "duplicate paperwork". However, others, felt supported by their case admin team:

"My admin colleague in the office updates me quickly when there are any breaches of the tag.⁵⁸ I can then respond to the alert."

In all staffing groups, the majority felt 'very confident' or 'somewhat confident' when asked about responding to drinking events or tampering with the tag (Figure 7.5): probation practitioners (72.3%; $n=60$), case administrators (88.0%; $n=22$), and the EM provider staff (67.8%; $n=19$).

⁵⁸ The terms 'breach' and 'violation' are often used interchangeably by both probation and EM staff as well as people on probation. A violation is a confirmed alert of non-compliance by the tag wearer. Whereas a breach is a confirmed act of non-compliance which may result in an enforcement action such as recall to prison. In this case, the term 'violation' was probably intended by the participant.

Figure 7.5 Staff Confidence in Responding to Drinking Events and Tag Tamperers



Note. Data reflect staff responses to the question, “How confident is your understanding of how to respond to drinking events / tag tamperers?” This figure is also supplied as an Excel datasheet – see corresponding worksheet within the ‘data tables’ file.

Despite this, some probation practitioners presented feeling less confident when dealing with non-compliance, as one described feeling “perplexed” by the paperwork following a violation of AML conditions.

To combat this, some felt the guidance on AML could be improved. It was described as “confusing” and “complicated”, due to the number of agencies involved in the tagging processes. For example, multiple probation practitioners felt there needed to be more clarification on who to contact, as there were lots of “different contacts for different queries.” One suggested a way to streamline this would be to add contact numbers on the forms used to apply the licence condition.

Resource

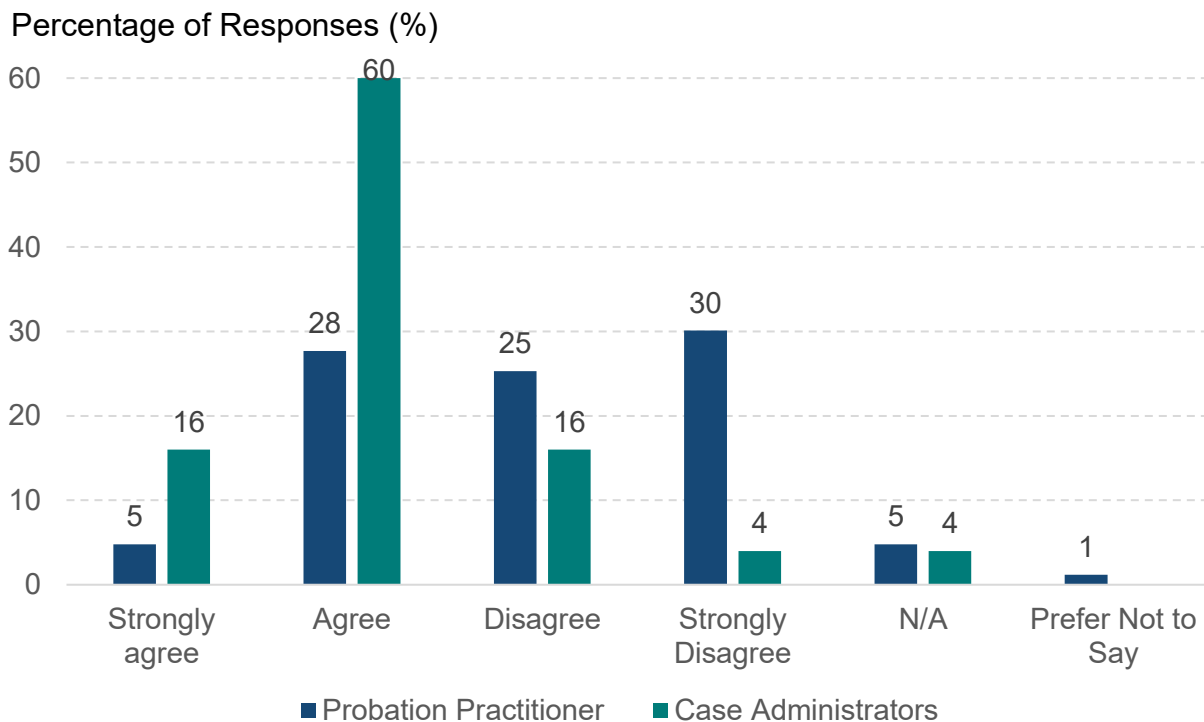
Some voiced concerns over resource for fitting AML tags, which was thought to be the root of some of the issues probation practitioners faced. This caused practitioners to consider whether it was an appropriate method of risk management:

"It's clear that we can't keep up with demand, the service is poor. The tags are installed weeks after releases, it is a good idea in principle, but I feel that it was underestimated how many [people] would actually need it."

Timeliness of Tag Data

Both case administrators and probation practitioners were asked whether they felt AML notifications were received in good time.⁵⁹ As shown in Figure 7.6, case administrators had a higher level of agreement with this (76.0%; $n=19$) compared to probation practitioners (32.5%; $n=27$).

Figure 7.6 Staff Agreement on Timeliness of AML Notifications



Note. Data reflect probation practitioners' responses to the question, "Please rate your agreement with AML notifications are received in good time." This figure is also supplied as an Excel datasheet – see corresponding worksheet within the 'data tables' file.

Some probation practitioners expressed concerns about the timeliness of receiving AML notifications, with some receiving it late after the incident. This made it difficult to use the

⁵⁹ Case administrators are responsible for checking the EM providers data portal for any violations (such as non-compliance). These are then shared with probation practitioners, including a description of the alert and when it occurred.

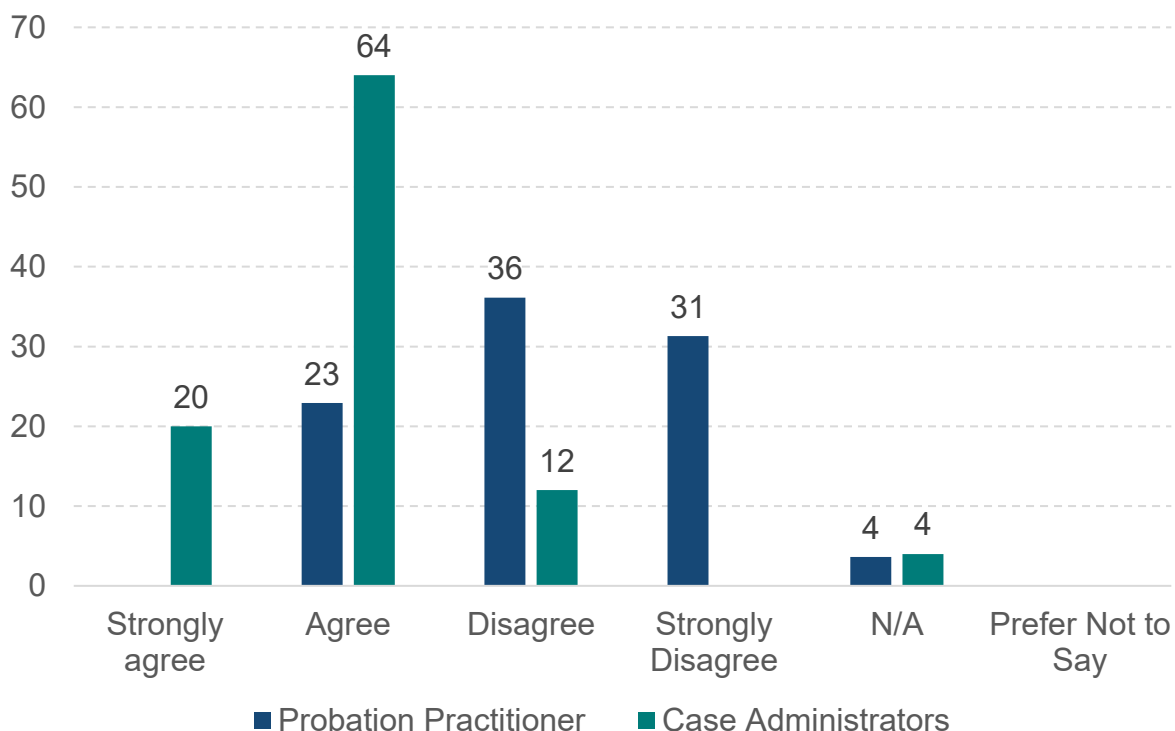
data proactively to inform conversations with the tag wearer about their alcohol use and subsequent risk. It was thought quicker notifications were needed to enable practitioners to enforce action with the person on probation, such as a warning or recall. It was not confirmed which stage of the process the delay occurred.

Interpreting Tag Data

Probation practitioners and case administrators were both asked how easy they found the AML tag data to understand, as illustrated in Figure 7.7. The majority (84.0%; $n=21$) of case administrators ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ that the data was easy to understand. Probation practitioners reported finding the data less easy to understand, as less than a quarter ‘agreed’ it was easy (22.9%; $n=19$), and slightly over two thirds ‘disagreeing’ or ‘strongly disagreeing’ with the statement (67.4%; $n=56$).

Figure 7.7 Staff Agreement on Ease of Understanding the Data

Percentage of Responses (%)



Note. Data reflect probation practitioners’ responses to the question, “Please rate your agreement with it’s easy to understand the AML data.” This figure is also supplied as an Excel datasheet – see corresponding worksheet within the ‘data tables’ file.

This was corroborated by free-text survey responses from probation practitioners which highlighted difficulties understanding the tag data. The data is sent to probation practitioners in graphs, which aims to present alcohol consumption of the wearer. Some requested more guidance to support interpreting the alcohol readings:

“I have absolutely no idea, neither do my colleagues, as how to ‘read’ the data when a subject has alcohol.”

Probation practitioners further cited needing more clarification on the level of risk matched with the alcohol consumption, as opposed to the vague descriptions of “low, medium and high-risk alcohol use” on the graphs. One practitioner raised this may differ per person, and it would be helpful to receive more detail on how many units they had consumed to better understand their drinking habits.

Quality of Tag Data

There were issues raised about the quality of the equipment, which was said to impact effectiveness of the tag data for risk management. There were instances of tags not picking up alcohol consumption, despite tag wearers admitting to practitioners about having a drink.

“[Person on probation] has told me s/he has drank daily, nothing has shown on [the data portal] several times. Emailed [the service provider]⁶⁰ to ask [...] why this is happening and advised [person on probation] is likely untruthful which is not the case.”

Additionally, there were concerns highlighted about false alcohol readings, which doubted the reliability of the tag data for risk management. One practitioner shared they didn’t know whether to believe the monitoring company who claimed there had been a violation, or the person on probation who insisted they had not had a drink, which was further corroborated by a breathalyser test. Furthermore, tag wearers felt reassured by the ability to prove a

⁶⁰ It cannot be confirmed which service provider this quote is in reference to, as both Serco and SCRAM systems provide services for AML. Serco provide the tag devices and SCRAM systems provide the online data portal.

negative result through a breathalyser test, suggesting the additional technology should be considered alongside AML for occasions like these:

“Basically [my probation officer is] trying to tell me I’ve had a drink when I haven’t, but one good thing is they breathalysed me on both days in the [approved premises], and that come back saying 0 so they’ve sent an email to my probation officer saying well [I haven’t] had a drink so I don’t know what’s gone wrong there.”

A lack of reliable data made it harder to have honest conversations with people on probation, as they would dispute claims of alcohol use. This made it difficult to assert whether the tag wearer was drinking, therefore making it hard to enforce a breach.

7.3 Theme 3: Progression Through Licence

This theme centres on people on probation and their own attitudes towards their offending behaviour in relation to alcohol risk, their progression through their licence and working relationships with their probation officer.

Acceptance of Licence Conditions

Tag wearers alcohol use would be assessed as a part of their release, which in turn could influence their licence conditions. There were mixed views from people on probation about the tag in relation to their alcohol risk, and whether they felt it was proportionate to their offence. For example, there were instances of people feeling their alcohol use had been misinterpreted, or their offence was not linked to alcohol therefore they did not feel they warranted a tag.

“My offence wasn’t alcohol related; it was drug related. And it’s an abstinence instead of monitoring which I also think isn’t fair.”

Attitudes Towards Alcohol

People on probation discussed their relationship with drinking whilst wearing the tag, and the link between their offending behaviour and alcohol. It was thought abstaining from alcohol whilst wearing the tag could help them avoid certain situations which would result in recall. Others reported a change in their thinking which they had not done previously.

One tag wearer saw themselves continuing their abstinence from alcohol once their tag was removed:

“I think it's good me not being able to drink because I think even when the tag comes off me not drinking now, I think I won't go back to it I don't think. But [...] it's teaching me to be around it and to be able to not feel influenced and to just join in if you know what I'm saying? [...] Even though I can't drink, it's teaching me the ways that even when it's coming off, I can say no.”

Others recognised how the tag had helped them with their alcohol consumption, as one tag wearer shared they would seek alternative methods of support once the tag was removed:

“When it does come off [...] I'll probably link in with an [alcohol support] group or whatever services they have round here just to have that support there or that reminder.”

However, some felt they had been on the tag long enough to show they did not have a drinking problem. Others felt they had proved their compliance, warranting its removal. This demonstrates a disconnect between some tag wearers understanding of AML and its use to aid reduce future reoffending.

For example, one person on probation spoke about their plans to drink once the tag was removed, as they felt the tag had proved they were not alcohol dependent, presenting “healthy” drinking habits. Therefore, they did not perceive themselves to be a risk:

“It's legal as long as I'm not taking drugs and committing any offences there's no real reason why somebody who's an adult shouldn't be able to have an alcoholic drink as long as they're not an alcoholic.”

Moreover, some felt that their change in lifestyle came from an improvement in their own motivation, as opposed to the tag, presenting a sense of personal responsibility.

Working with Probation

There were discussions around positive working relationships between people on probation and their probation practitioner since wearing the tag. For example, one tag wearer spoke about their change in attitude towards probation:

“I thank probation, for this head that I’ve got on my shoulders right now, it’s been good having them in my life where previously I don’t think I was that honest with them about my drinking you know I’d say everything was fine cause I’d want to get out the door as soon as possible so I could go to a bar. But now I’m a little bit more open with what I’m feeling how I’m feeling about the drinking culture.”

This was echoed by probation practitioners, with some reporting the ability to monitor drinking patterns allowed them to have a more honest relationship with the person on probation about their drinking. Additionally, the ability to identify drinking habits allowed some probation practitioners to be more proactive in providing support to the tag wearer. This is because they could identify when their alcohol intake increased and therefore direct them to support to mitigate the risks associated with this.

There were instances of tag wearers feeling supported by their probation officer, such as to reach the end of their sentence. Others felt supported with various issues around the tag, such as the difficulties faced around discomfort. However, others did not feel this support if they felt they were not included in the decision making around the tag and licence conditions.

7.4 Theme 4: Settling Back into the Community

This theme centres on people on probation settling back into the community after their prison sentence and how the tag has impacted this. Areas include exercising, paid work and relationships with family and friends.

Exercise

Several people wearing the tag felt that they stopped doing exercise or physical activity due to the size and fit of the tag, as this caused pain during movement. This risked wider negative impacts such as on their mental health and ability to engage in community

activities. The technology of the device also limited access to swimming as it cannot be submerged into water:

“So that’s another thing. I think like it should be waterproof as well because a lot of people go swimming and things like that, you shouldn’t be banned from activities especially for your mental health just because you’re wearing one of these so they should really be waterproof.”

Paid Work

Some people on probation who were previously in employment felt the tag disrupted their access to work. For example, a couple of tag wearers said it prevented them from wearing the shoes necessary to return to their previous job. Additionally, one person on probation mentioned the pain the tag caused was preventing them from going to work due to the discomfort:

“Some days I’ve not been in because it’s caused me mental health to go through the roof really because of how sore it’s been.”

Others who were looking for employment felt the tag had an impact, as the size could deter employers from hiring them. However, one tag wearer observed that they would need to disclose their offences to a future employer anyway.

Impact on Friends and Family

Views on the impact of the tag on close relations varied. When looking at behaviour change, some felt it had a positive impact on relationships where alcohol had previously caused problems.

“Because [...] it was affecting relationships. It was affecting my relationship with my mum, my dad, my friends and stuff. Because of me drinking because of the way that I acted when I was drinking.”

Despite this, issues regarding the physical aspect of the equipment, were said to negatively impact relationships with loved ones. One tag wearer shared their experience of sleep deprivation due to the size and discomfort of wearing the tag:

“Yeah. I mean I'm waking up at [early hours in morning] I wake up, I wake my [family member] up...I kick myself [with the tag], it's night after night basically it's verging on sleep deprivation.”

Similarly, the vibrating and beeping of the tag was said to also disrupt sleep, which had an impact on family in the same household:

“This beeping it's like an alarm going off and it's waking up other people in the house.”

7.5 Theme 5: Interventions Alongside AML

This theme focusses on the additional interventions those on AML have received, how this has impacted on their experience of AML, and how they have proceeded through the criminal justice system.

Additional Interventions

Time in prison was spoken of positively by some, as this gave them time to reflect on how their behaviour impacted relationships, encouraging behaviour change upon release. For some, interventions paired with changed thinking patterns, appeared to benefit some more than the tag itself. One tag wearer referenced wider counselling they received, which allowed them to understand the root cause of their drinking and subsequent offending behaviour:

“I was working with the psychology services in custody and when I got released I was working with a [counselling service] and I think that's been the game changers for me, I have had underlying issues relating to childhood trauma and I'm starting to think that's probably the reason I have drank in the past or drank to the degree that I have. So, the fact that I've talked about that spoken about that... I can understand that. That's probably the most important part of me understanding that, I think that's yeah, it's led to the right decisions.”

8. Conclusion

This report presents a process and interim impact evaluation of the AML scheme, which aims to reduce problem drinking and consequently, reduce the risk of reoffending where alcohol may be a contributing factor. Findings were drawn from management information data and fieldwork conducted with tag wearers and people working to deliver the service. The research aimed to highlight elements of AML that were working well, areas for improvement and an initial exploration of the impact on recall using quasi-experimental methods.

The quantitative data demonstrated that one in five individuals violated their AML order, which was significantly fewer than recorded violations of EM schemes using different technology.⁶¹ It is thought this was due to the longer battery life of the device. Furthermore, the data indicated that very few recalls during the order period were associated with AML non-compliance, suggesting that alcohol was not a significant contributor to recall. Statistical tests also demonstrated that the inclusion of AML as a licence condition did not affect recall rates. Collectively, this suggests that AML promotes compliance for the duration of the order period.

The qualitative research showed that the scheme was generally well-received by both operational staff and the people on probation who participated in the research. Most felt it was a useful tool to aid risk management, as it helped monitor alcohol consumption and enabled honest conversations with tag wearers. For staff, where they identified negative patterns, usually an increase in alcohol consumption, they said it allowed them to offer support to the person on probation. Likewise, people on probation described it giving them a greater sense of accountability, which in turn positively affected their short-term drinking behaviour.

This report concludes with several key **recommendations** to enhance the ongoing delivery of AML across England and Wales:

⁶¹ See section 5.1.

- **Streamline administrative processes to aid risk management:** Probation practitioners highlighted the need to streamline administrative processes, particularly in accessing data. The current process involves the data passing through multiple systems before reaching the probation practitioner, which many felt resulted in delays. This affects risk management as alcohol use is not being monitored in a timely manner, with some probation practitioners receiving reports of a violation days after the event. Moreover, the data itself was sometimes said to be confusing and hard to understand. Suggested improvements included more training or guidance from the EM provider to probation staff about the information shared in the graphs. It was felt more detail should be provided alongside these, particularly what is meant by 'low', 'medium' and 'high' alcohol consumption.
- **Improve tag technology and data quality to enhance the monitoring of alcohol consumption:** Staff raised concerns about the tag technology and data quality. It was not clear whether this was due to issues in how the data was shared with probation practitioners mentioned previously, or the RAM technology itself. There were numerous instances where people on probation disclosed alcohol consumption, yet probation practitioners did not receive an alert. Similarly instances of false alcohol readings were also reported which were backed up by negative breathalyser tests. This created uncertainty for staff, with data quality issues impacting how they used the data in conversations with people on probation to manage risk. Suggested changes included improving the tag technology and assessing the condition they are in at the point of tagging an individual.
- **Enhance communication around tag fitting appointments to reduce second visit attempts:** Tag fitting appointments caused frustration for people on probation, probation practitioners, and EM provider staff. Delays to tag fitting were widely reported, which resulted in people on probation not being monitored. In some cases, the person on probation would drink during this period, further affecting risk management. The organisation of visits seemed to exacerbate issues around fitting. Many felt a text or phone call prior to the visit from the EM fitting service would alleviate these issues, or a clearer timeframe in which the tag

fitting appointment would be. This could reduce no shows and therefore the need for second attempt visits, which put a strain on the service, resulting in further delays to fitting.

- **Modify tag design and fitting to minimise skin irritation or injury:** Several tag wearers experienced skin irritation or injury, due to the bulkiness and the placement of the tag. This is as it would rub against the ankle. A smaller and less invasive design could reduce the number of tags requiring removal or replacement, which presently increases the burden on probation staff and the EM provider. Additionally, improving knowledge and training of fitting tags could help reduce skin irritation and mental wellbeing.
- **Maximise the probation practitioner to person on probation relationship to observe risk escalation and enhance risk management:** The relationship between probation practitioners and people on probation is seen as complementary to AML. This was demonstrated through multiple reports of the tag allowing for positive conversations around alcohol consumption. Data also showed relatively low violation rates and that few recalls were associated with AML non-compliance. This suggested broader risk escalation triggered the recall, as opposed to alcohol. Survival analyses demonstrated that there was a higher risk of both non-compliance and recall at the start of the order period. This reinforces the importance of the probation practitioner in observing the changes in risk escalation using the data, particularly in the first 90 days, and taking a guided view on risk management of the tag wearer. Ensuring probation staff have the tools and resources to deliver AML effectively is essential to continuing this.
- **Investigate long-term impact of AML on reoffending rates:** Both the interim impact evaluation and process evaluation focused on the duration of the AML order. As such, the longer-term impact of AML as a licence condition has not been investigated, such as whether changes to drinking patterns are sustained beyond the period for which the tag is fitted. There are plans for MoJ to conduct proven reoffending analysis of AML and a Value-for-money evaluation, subject to data availability.

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Appendix A

Propensity Score Matching Methodology

Variables Used in Propensity Score Matching

The below details the variables that were used in the linear regression as part of the PSM for the interim impact analysis. Exact matching was carried out on the alcohol misuse criminogenic need.

Demographics

- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Nationality
- Age in years (at sentence and at release)
- Year of release
- Probation region

Index Offence

- Offence Type (18 index offence categories e.g. robbery, drink-driving etc)
- Sentence length (factorised into 5 categories: less than or equal to 6 months, more than 6 months to less than 12 months, 12 months to < 4 years, 4 years to 10 years, more than 10 years)
- Licence length (months)
- Home Detention Curfew (HDC) release flag

Offending History

- Number of previous events in nDelius⁶²

Risk and OASys Assessment

- Risk of Serious Harm (RoSH)
- Offender Group Reconviction Score (OGRS) score
- Risk of Serious Recidivism (RSR) score
- Section scores for criminogenic needs (accommodation, employment, relationships, lifestyle & associates, drug misuse, alcohol misuse, thinking & behaviour, attitudes).

Other

- Domestic abuse history (historic or active)

In addition, squared terms were also used for the continuous variable in the model.⁶³

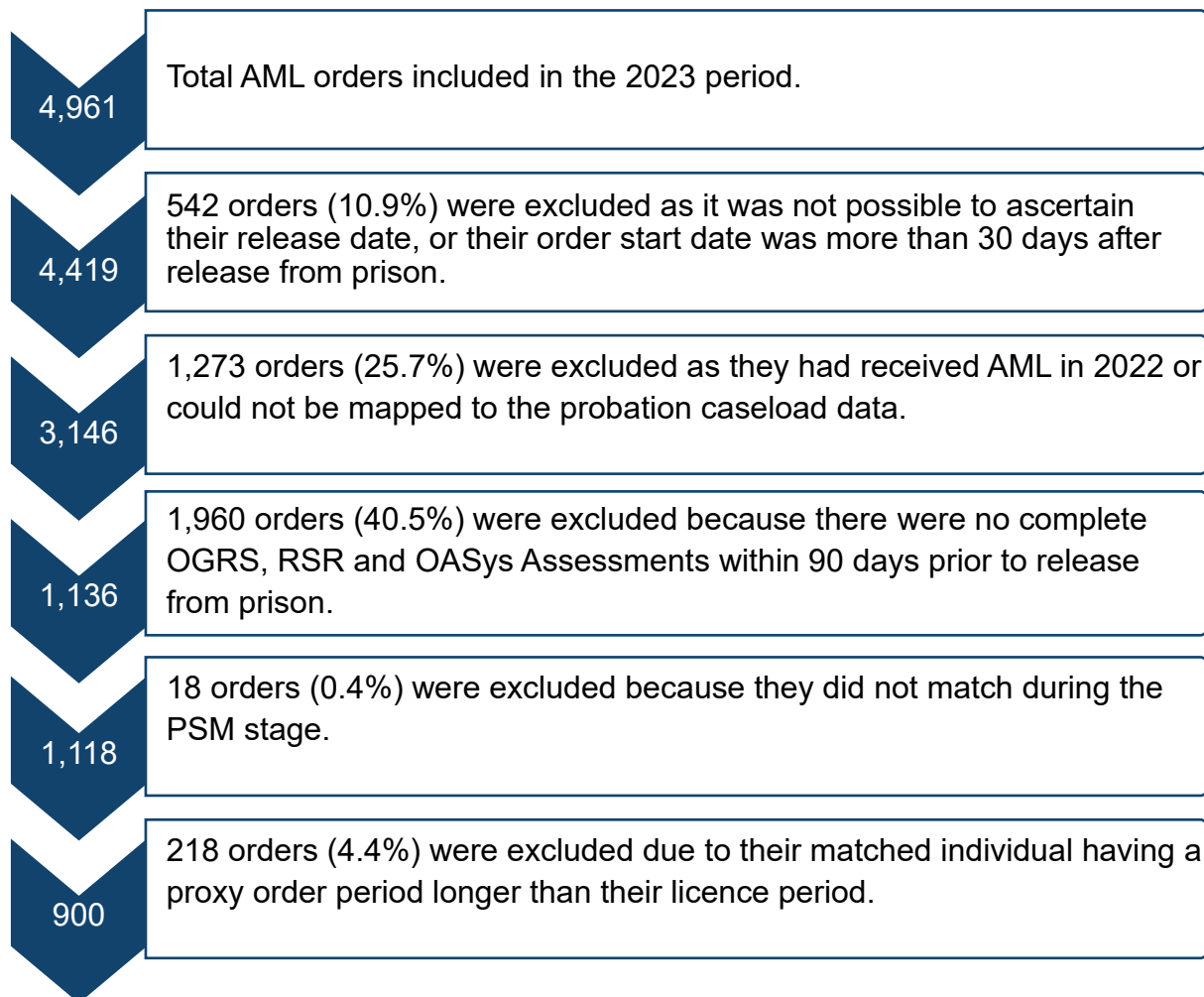
Data Cleaning and Matching Process

During both the data cleaning and matching process some releases were lost as seen in Figure A1. There was a total of 900 releases in both the treatment and control groups after the matching, with a final attrition rate of 18.1%.

⁶² An event in nDelius is typically a sentence either community order, suspended sentence or custodial sentence. This has been used to approximate the volume of previous offences.

⁶³ Squared terms are able to account for any non-linear relationships between variables and the likelihood of receiving treatment.

Figure A.1 Numbers of AML Orders in the Treatment Group



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

Matching Quality

For the majority of matches, the standardised difference was less than 5%, indicating good matching quality. Across all matches, only eight coefficients, relating to the criminogenic needs, the probation region and cohort year, had a standardised difference greater than 5%, these were all less than 7% so judged to be reasonable quality.

Glossary

AML – Alcohol Monitoring on Licence

CI – Confidence Interval

DA – Domestic Abuse

EM – Electronic Monitoring

EPF2 - Effective Proposal Framework 2

GPS – Global Positioning System

HMPPS – His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service

MoJ – Ministry of Justice

nDelius – Probation Service's case management system

NSD – National Security Division

OASys – Offender Assessment System

OGRS - Offender Group Reconviction Score

PSM – Propensity Score Matching

RAM – Remote Alcohol Monitoring

RoSH – Risk of Serious Harm

RSR – Risk of Serious Recidivism