



Ministry
of Justice

Electronic Monitoring of Domestic Abuse Perpetrators on Licence

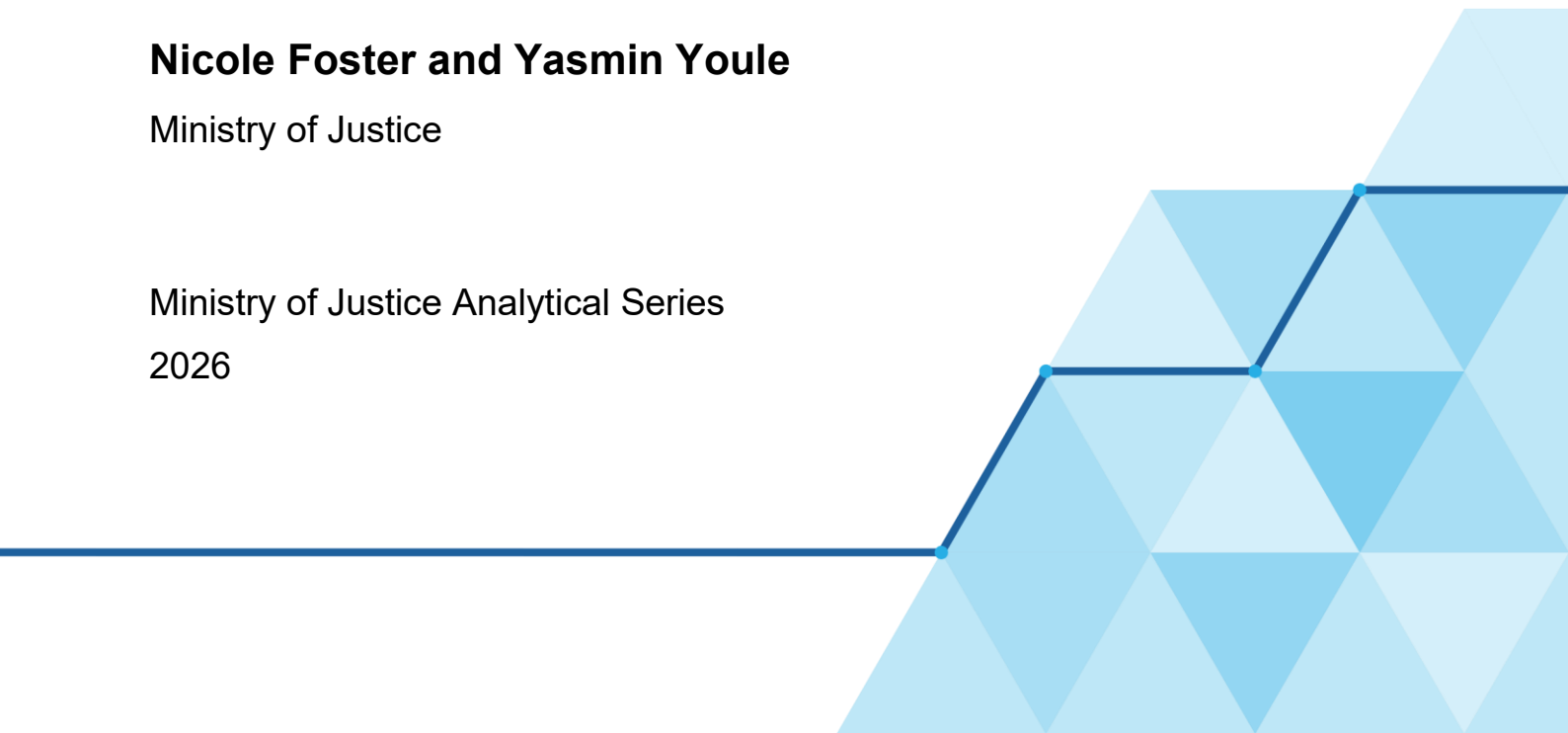
Process and Interim Impact Evaluation

Nicole Foster and Yasmin Youle

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Contents

List of tables

List of figures

Electronic Monitoring of Domestic Abuse Perpetrators on Licence	1
Process and Interim Impact Evaluation	1
Contents	3
List of tables	5
List of figures	5
1. Summary	1
1.1 Evaluation Objectives	2
1.2 Key Findings	3
2. Background	5
2.1 Domestic Abuse Interventions in the UK	5
2.2 What is Electronic Monitoring	6
2.3 The Domestic Abuse Perpetrators on Licence Electronic Monitoring Scheme	7
2.4 Interventions for Victim-survivors	8
3. Methodology	9
3.1 Research Design	9
3.2 Research Methods	9
3.3 Limitations	16
4. Use of the Scheme Including Perceived Benefits and Barriers	19
4.1 Process of Submitting DAPOL Orders	19
4.2 Using DAPOL to Manage Domestic Abuse Risk	20
4.3 Staff Confidence in Tag Data and Risk Management	22
4.4 Quality of Equipment	24
4.5 Findings which Build on the 6-month DAPOL Pilot	25
5. Perceived Compliance and Recidivism	28
5.1 Perceived Impacts by People on Probation	28
5.2 Interim Impact Measure: Domestic Violence Incidents	30
6. Victim-survivor Experiences and Support	32
6.1 Understanding of DAPOL orders	32

6.2	Impact of Delays to Tag Fitting on the Victim-survivor	34
6.3	Timely Notifications of Breaches	34
6.4	Consequences for Breaches	35
6.5	Well-being and Reassurance	36
7.	Conclusion	39
	References	42
	Appendix A	43
	Propensity Score Matching Methodology	43
	Glossary	46

List of tables

Table 3.1 Fieldwork Participation and Response Rates	14
Table 5.1 Comparison of Domestic Violence Incidents Rates	31

List of figures

Figure 4.1 Perceived Benefit to Risk Management	21
Figure 4.2 Probation Practitioner Confidence in DAPOL Processes	23
Figure 5.1 Perceived Impacts to People on Probation	29
Figure 6.1 Confidence in DAPOL Admin Processes	33
Figure 6.5 Perceived Benefit to Victim-Survivors	37
Figure A.1 Numbers of Orders in the Treatment Group	45

1. Summary

This report is the second in a series of evaluations to assess the Domestic Abuse Perpetrators on Licence (DAPOL) scheme.¹ DAPOL commenced in August 2023 in two probation regions in England: the East Midlands and the West Midlands. Following a period of monitoring and evaluation, it was further rolled out across six more probation regions in England and Wales in May 2024. These were the East of England; Kent, Surrey and Sussex; London; South Central; South West; and Wales.

The DAPOL scheme requires adult offenders at risk of committing domestic abuse to wear an electronic monitoring (EM) tag upon leaving prison, if assessed as necessary and proportionate through the formal licence planning process.² The scheme aims to strengthen offender management, help victim-survivors feel safe following the release of the perpetrator, and to prevent further reoffending.

As of 31 March 2026, there were 2,700 monitored individuals on the DAPOL EM caseload. Between June 2025 and March 2026, 6,638 new DAPOL orders were issued.³

An evaluation of DAPOL was commissioned by His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS). This involved a process and impact evaluation.⁴ The purpose of this report is to build on the findings from the previous process evaluation following the

¹ 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](#).

² 'Necessary' means that the electronic monitoring is necessary to manage the risks identified and no other less restrictive condition will be enough. 'Proportionate' means that any restriction or loss of liberty because of the electronic monitoring is proportionate to the level of risk presented by the individual. For more detail see [Licence Conditions and how the Parole Board use them](#).

³ This is a subset of data published in the Electronic Monitoring Statistics published quarterly. These figures represent activity over the period specified and should not be directly compared with the caseload at a single point in time. See publication for more detail on data use and limitations: [Electronic Monitoring Statistics Publication - GOV.UK](#)

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. For more detail see [Electronic Monitoring in the Criminal Justice System](#).

schemes expansion to more probation regions and to explore an interim impact measure ahead of the full impact evaluation.⁵

1.1 Evaluation Objectives

The research period spanned from 2023 to 2025, capturing the two-phase roll out of DAPOL across the eight probation regions. It was carried out by Ministry of Justice (MoJ) analysts. The data were derived from all DAPOL orders that were completed across England and Wales between August 2023 and February 2025. The fieldwork included victim-survivors, probation staff, EM Provider staff and those on probation (following release from prison) in 2024 to 2025. The evaluation aimed to address three research objectives:

- To collect evidence on how DAPOL was used by practitioners including benefits and barriers to its use (see section 4).
- To understand changes to perceived compliance and recidivism including descriptive exploratory analysis of reported domestic violence incidents (see section 5).
- To further capture the victim-survivor experiences of DAPOL and the support received (see section 6).

The research comprised two strands: primary data collection through interviews and surveys with victim-survivors, operational staff working with DAPOL and people on probation, and an interim impact evaluation comparing samples of those on DAPOL to a control group. By triangulating findings across these data sources, the research team aimed to build the evidence on the use of DAPOL.

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.

1.2 Key Findings

- **Probation practitioners appreciated the broad eligibility criteria for DAPOL and the flexibility of its use, citing it as a valuable tool for risk management.** Practitioners could apply the DAPOL order even when domestic abuse was not the individuals index offence, widening its use for high-risk offenders. Similarly, they could choose to apply exclusion zones, a curfew and / or 24/7 remote location monitoring. The range of capabilities enabled a tailored approach to monitoring depending on the device wearers circumstance. However, some practitioners reported uncertainties around the process of submitting DAPOL orders. This could lead to late or incorrect order details on the initial licence.
- **Operational staff found the ability to observe trends in location data improved their understanding of the device wearer.** Similar to the 6-month DAPOL pilot, staff said the data provided reassurance as they could corroborate this information with the accounts of people on probation. However, staff lacked confidence accessing and interpreting the data, particularly timings around location data. This could make them cautious in using it to evidence non-compliance. Additionally, the processes required to access the data often resulted in delays, impacting its effectiveness to manage domestic abuse risk. Some probation staff suggested having direct access to a portal would improve how they access and use tag data.
- **The introduction of the DAPOL scheme was said to improve the victim-survivors confidence in the criminal justice system.** Both Victim Liaison Officers (VLOs) and Domestic Abuse Safety Officers (DASOs) valued the tags' ability to evidence the perpetrator's whereabouts, removing the onus from the victim-survivors to provide evidence of breaches. However, there were concerns around the delivery of the tag, with some reporting delays to tag fitting resulting in

periods where perpetrators were unmonitored and victim-survivors feeling disappointed that their whereabouts was not known from the point of release.⁶

- **VLOs and DASOs shared victim-survivors concerns that the consequences for breaching licence conditions did not always feel adequate**, as some felt breaches were not always enforced or they felt responses from probation practitioners were too lenient. However, practitioners themselves sometimes felt breach information was limited or they received it too late to enforce properly. Moreover, both VLOs and DASOs often felt out of the loop in regard to details around a perpetrators DAPOL order, limiting their ability to support victim-survivors. They felt more awareness around the tagging process and updates about non-compliance would help them in their roles, but they did recognise probation practitioner's workload may limit the feasibility of this.
- **Experimental analysis of interim impact suggested the addition of the DAPOL requirement did not significantly affect domestic violence incident rates during the tagging period.**⁷ It is worth noting there were limitations to the impact methodology which means conclusions cannot yet be drawn. The method used was a novel, experimental approach and intended as a trial of whether earlier indications of impact were possible using a sub-set of offences (domestic violence) rather than a fuller domestic abuse outcome which will be available at a later date. This means the experimental impact findings do not capture emotional abuse or coercive control and conclusions should not yet be drawn relating to the utility of the DAPOL tag against the initial aims. Further impact analysis on a wider range of outcomes is planned.

⁶ See section 4.5 'Delays to tag fitting' for further detail around the expectations and concerns around tag fitting

⁷ Domestic violence typically refers to physical violence or threats of violence within an intimate relationship or among family members. Whereas domestic abuse encompasses a broader range of abusive behaviours including emotional abuse or coercion. Due to the way intelligence reports are made to the PND, this aspect of the research captures domestic violence and hence may not capture incidents of abuse recognised within the DAPOLs tags intention.

2. Background

2.1 Domestic Abuse Interventions in the UK

Domestic abuse remains a significant and persistent issue across the UK, with an estimated 3.8 million individuals aged 16 and over experiencing domestic abuse in the year ending March 2025.⁸ In response, the UK Government has implemented a series of strategic interventions aimed at reducing the prevalence and impact of domestic abuse, with an increasing emphasis on victim-centred approaches.

Key among these strategies is the Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy, introduced in 2021,⁹ and further supported by the Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan in 2022.¹⁰ These initiatives collectively aim to halve incidents of violence against women and girls within a decade and to enhance public confidence in the criminal justice system.¹¹

Professionals delivering domestic abuse support services play a central role in providing both practical and emotional assistance to victim-survivors. However, the availability and consistency of support can be affected by resource constraints. In this context, the development and deployment of new tools and policies, such as EM of domestic abuse perpetrators, are increasingly being utilised to enhance victim protection and offender management.

⁸ See more detail on domestic abuse statistics [Domestic abuse prevalence and trends, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics](https://lordslibrary.parliament.uk/domestic-abuse-supporting-victims-and-survivors/).<https://lordslibrary.parliament.uk/domestic-abuse-supporting-victims-and-survivors/>

⁹ The Government's Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy follows the Government's previous 2010, 2016 and 2019 Strategies which set out our approach to tackling crimes which disproportionately affect women and girls [Tackling violence against women and girls](#).

¹⁰ The Government's Violence Against Women and Girls 2021 strategy was supplemented by the Tackling Domestic Abuse plan in 2022 [Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan - Command paper 639 \(accessible\) - GOV.UK](#).

¹¹ More information on the strategy [Tackling Violence against Women and Girls \(VAWG\) - Committees - UK Parliament](#).

2.2 What is Electronic Monitoring

EM is an established tool used in England and Wales to monitor compliance with court or prison orders. Individuals subject to EM are required to wear a device, commonly referred to as a 'tag'. A monitoring unit may also be installed at a designated location, usually the individual's home or an approved premises.¹²

This evaluation considers two primary types of EM technology: curfew tags and location tags.¹³

Curfew Tags

Curfew tags check that the device wearer is where they are meant to be during their curfew hours, for example, at their home. The tag will send an alert to a monitoring centre if the wearer is not home when expected. Both Radio Frequency (RF) and Global Positioning System (GPS) technologies are employed for this purpose.

Location Tags

Location tags utilise GPS to continuously record an individual's movements. This data can be used to assess compliance with exclusion zones, attendance at mandated appointments or programmes, and adherence to curfew conditions. Location tags enable 24/7 remote monitoring and data collection on an individual's whereabouts.

Breaches

When a device wearer has a confirmed act of non-compliance of their licence conditions that results in enforcement action, this is called a breach. Probation practitioners are responsible for enforcing breaches, using their discretion to do so. This can include considering factors such as the severity of the breach and risk management. For example,

¹² 'Approved premises are residential units in the community which house and closely monitor people with an offender history in the community.'

¹³ Alcohol tags are also used in Probation Practice. Alcohol tags were not an explicit part of the DAPOL scheme, but there were DAPOL cases that were also required to wear an alcohol tag.

they may provide a warning letter, vary the licence, such as changing exclusion zones or apply an alcohol abstinence or monitoring order, through to considering recall.

Other terms such as 'violation' are often used interchangeably by both probation and EM staff as well as people on probation. Unlike breaches, a violation is a confirmed alert of non-compliance by the tag wearer, but enforcement action may not be taken.

2.3 The Domestic Abuse Perpetrators on Licence Electronic Monitoring Scheme

The DAPOL scheme is one aspect of the wider EM expansion programme. It aims to improve the supervision of high-risk domestic abuse perpetrators following their release from prison.¹⁴

Probation practitioners can impose either RF or GPS technologies to monitor the individuals licence conditions, regardless of the individuals index offence(s),¹⁵ using structured risk assessments.

Monitoring can be applied for a minimum of one month and up to a year, with quarterly review. Conditions may include:

- Curfew monitoring – restricting movement during set hours
- Exclusion zones – preventing access to specific locations or individuals
- Attendance monitoring – ensuring compliance with appointments or programmes
- Trail monitoring – tracking movement patterns over time

Moreover, an individual can be dual-tagged which means they can also be in receipt of an alcohol monitoring or abstinence requirement, monitored through an alcohol tag.

Crucially, DAPOL is designed to complement, not replace, broader rehabilitative and safeguarding efforts. Its effectiveness is amplified when integrated with multi-agency risk management and victim liaison services. As such, it plays a vital role in a wider strategy to

¹⁴ See section 4 for more information [Electronic Monitoring in the Criminal Justice System - GOV.UK](#).

¹⁵ The index offence is the offence that has been prosecuted by the Police and proven through conviction.

reduce reoffending, enhance public protection, and protect victim-survivors of domestic abuse.

2.4 Interventions for Victim-survivors

A critical component of domestic abuse interventions is ensuring victim-survivors are kept informed of key stages in the offender's sentence, such as if they move prisons, when they will be released, and sometimes their location after release. Details shared are proportionate to the risk. The victim-survivors voices may also be sought in decisions which affect their safety and well-being, particularly as the offender nears release.

Subsequently, numerous roles exist within the Probation Service with the intention of supporting victim-survivors of domestic abuse.

Where a victim-survivor has engaged with the Probation Service Victim Contact Scheme (VCS), they will be assigned a VLO. They would ensure the victim-survivors concerns were considered during the application of DAPOL licence conditions, such as whether the perpetrator has a curfew or exclusion zones.¹⁶ If the perpetrator has been ordered to complete the Building Better Relationships (BBR) accredited programme in the community, the victim-survivor may also receive support from a DASO.

VLOs and DASOs both work for the Probation Service. VLOs work with victim-survivors of violent or sexual offences who have chosen to opt in for contact with the Probation Service for updates about the perpetrator and their sentence. DASOs have a similar role but are linked to the BBR accredited programme. Support may vary for both roles, including both telephone and in-person communication with the victim-survivor.

¹⁶ More details on the Victim Contact Scheme is available from [Information about the Victim Contact Scheme](#).

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

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

- Management information data from the monitoring provider and HMPPS
- Interviews and surveys with victim-survivors, probation practitioners, staff working with EM and people on probation¹⁷

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

Interim Impact Methodology

Proven reoffending rates cannot be calculated for at least 18-months after the DAPOL order has been completed.¹⁸ Therefore, an experimental outcome variable has been developed to assess the interim impact ahead of necessary data becoming available for the later impact evaluation.

¹⁷ People on probation and staff working in probation attended both surveys and interviews. Staff working with EM and victim-survivors completed online surveys.

¹⁸ 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](#).

Ideally, the interim impact measure would have looked at the frequency of domestic abuse, to align with the DAPOL tags intent. However, due to the difficulty obtaining this data, the research used for the first time crime intelligence reports on the Police National Database (PND) via the Home Office, which includes reports of domestic violence.

Domestic violence typically refers to physical violence or threats of violence within an intimate relationship or among family members. Whereas domestic abuse encompasses a broader range of abusive behaviours including emotional abuse or coercion. This means the interim impact measure risks not capturing all aspects of abuse; although as crime intelligence reporting to the PND does not require a formal victim police report, it may provide a more accurate estimate of domestic violence related behaviour than what is formally reported.¹⁹

The interim impact measure used Propensity Score Matching (PSM) to estimate the effect of DAPOL on future incidents of domestic violence. By using the same planned quasi-experimental method as the future impact evaluation, it has enabled identification of potential limitations within the methodology, which will enhance scoping and design of the final impact methodology used in the final phase of evaluation.

Data Selection: A daily caseload dataset was used relating to individuals with orders ending between August 2023 and February 2025, capturing the initial DAPOL Pilot and a significant proportion of the DAPOL Pathfinder. This contained details of offenders supervised by the Probation Service.²⁰

Due to resource constraints, power calculations were conducted to establish the necessary sample size of 225 in the treatment group and 225 in the control group, totalling 450 individuals.

The creation of the treatment group required numerous decisions to be made. For example, only those where the order had ended were included as this enabled the start

¹⁹ The ONS estimates around 20% of victims report incidence of domestic abuse to the police. We anticipate this number to be similarly low for domestic violence. See Figure 1 [Domestic abuse in England and Wales overview - Office for National Statistics](#)

²⁰ The dataset was a snapshot of individuals on the Probation Service's case management system (nDelius) each day.

and end date of the tagging period to be ascertained. Furthermore, for individuals with multiple DAPOL orders, the data comprises the order with the longest time an individual was tagged. This removes duplicates of individuals.

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 from standard determinate sentences, in the equivalent time period to the treatment group and from the pilot regions. Further cleaning included those that were eligible for DAPOL, but it was deemed not appropriate.²¹

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: This analysis used PSM as a quasi-experimental approach.²² 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.²³ 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

²¹ Releases were identified through the digital tool Effective Policy Framework 2 (EPF2), where individuals were eligible for DAPOL 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. For more information on EPF2 see [The Probation Service: Effective Proposal Framework - GOV.UK](#)

²² A PSM can be used where a randomised control trial (RCT) approach is not possible or practical. In this case a RCT could not be conducted due to resource, subsequently, PSM was the next most robust evaluation design to RCT.

²³ Variables were chosen based on factors that were known to be relevant to offender outcomes along with those that were relevant to the DAPOL intervention.

was then used to predict the probability of the individual receiving DAPOL as a licence condition.

Once each release had received a propensity score, the control group was made by matching those who received DAPOL to the control, based on the proximity of these scores.²⁴ Further detail regarding the matching quality can be found in Appendix A.

Outcome Variable: Recognising that not all incidents of domestic abuse result in a formal report or charge, analysts have developed an innovative interim impact measure which explores frequency of domestic violence crime intelligence reports on the PND. The PND captures reports from a range of partner organisations, including reports which may not come from the victim-survivor themselves. This enables a broader understanding of a perpetrator's behaviour.

A count of the number of domestic violence incidents on the PND was taken using the order period for the treatment group and the proxy order period for the control group. A two-tailed significance test was then performed to compare the domestic violence frequency outcomes for both groups during this period.

PND Search: To create a count of domestic violence incidents for those in the treatment and control groups, an encrypted list of the 450 individuals was shared with a specialist team in the Home Office.

This team searched for any recorded incidents related to domestic violence, not just those that resulted in further arrest or convictions. Criteria for searching was established between MoJ and Home Office analysts, alongside wider consultation with stakeholders.

The output from this search was a list of each individual alongside the count of how many domestic violence related incidents that person had recorded, which could be zero. To reduce searcher bias, the original list shared did not include details of whether the individual was in the treatment group or the control group.

²⁴ 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.

Survey, Interview and Focus Group Methodology

Sampling: Fieldwork comprised surveys, semi-structured interviews and focus groups. Although stratified sampling was primarily used, convenience sampling was used to boost response rates. Invitations to participate were sent to HMPPS operational staff including probation practitioners, VLOs, DASOs, EM provider monitoring staff and field monitoring officers, alongside people on probation, and victim-survivors.

For operational staff, invitations for interviews, focus groups and surveys were sent by email. The EM provider distributed surveys to their staff via their communications team. In both cases, the research team had targeted those involved in delivering DAPOL. People on probation were accessed via their probation practitioner who requested permission for the research team to contact them directly.²⁵

Hwang, Simpson & Butler (2021) recognised the victim-survivors perspective is underrepresented in research,²⁶ often due to low uptake as victim-survivors reported concerns of being 're-traumatised' during research. Subsequently, this evaluation tailored its sampling approach, actively sampling more VLOs and DASOs to understand second-hand accounts of victim-survivor experiences and opted to sample victim-survivors by surveys only. This was following a discussion with the MoJ Ethics Advisory Group. VLOs and DASOs were contacted by email, the HMPPS Gateway system and a presentation of the previous research was also delivered to operational colleagues.²⁷ Acknowledging the potential for the research to cause harm to victim-survivors through exploring challenging topics, victim-survivors were reached via their VLO or DASO.²⁸ Despite this, response

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 DAPOL cases that the research team asked probation practitioners to invite. It is likely that the response rate is an underestimation of the proportion of people on probation who expressed an interest after being told by their probation practitioner about the research.

²⁶ The initial 6-month DAPOL pilot did not include feedback from victim-survivors or DASOs. However there was some feedback from VLOs [Electronic Monitoring of Domestic Abuse Perpetrators on Licence - Process Evaluation](#)

²⁷ Gateway is a system run by HMPPS which responds to requests for fieldwork participants for research with operational staff.

²⁸ Victim-survivors were not sampled directly as we do not access their information. When interviewing VLOs and DASOs we shared the victim-survivor survey link with them to distribute to clients who would be appropriate to complete the survey. It is not possible to establish how many victim-survivors were invited to the research.

rates for victim-survivors remained low, therefore we also worked with the Domestic Abuse Commissioner to advertise the survey on the ‘Voices’ platform, which is a platform victim-survivors of domestic abuse can access to share their feedback via various pieces of research available.²⁹

Table 3.1 outlines the number of people contacted to participate and the subsequent response rate. Overall, 25 criminal justice practitioners participated in an interview or focus group,³⁰ 226 completed a survey. 13 surveys and 9 interviews were completed by people on probation. 3 surveys were completed by victim-survivors.

Table 3.1 Fieldwork Participation and Response Rates

	Surveys			Semi-Structured Interviews & Focus Groups		
	Total contacted	Response Rate		Total contacted	Response Rate	
		<i>n</i>	%		<i>n</i>	%
EM Provider Staff	31	18	58.1%	-	-	-
People on probation ^a	1567	13	0.8%	1567	9	0.6%
Probation practitioners	1686	162	9.6%	1686	8	0.5%
Victim Liaison Officers and Domestic Abuse Safety Officers	268 ³¹	46	17.2%	268	17	6.3%
Victim-survivors	~	3	~	-	-	-

Note. Values reflect participants who fully completed surveys, interviews, and focus groups. Dash (-) indicates the method was not used with that respondent group. A tilde {~} indicates it is unknown how many victim-survivors were contacted due to the method used. ^a People on probation were invited to participate if they were registered on the scheme during, or prior to, January 2024 and had not been recalled at the time of recruitment. A further 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. This table is also supplied as an Excel datasheet – see corresponding worksheet within the ‘data tables’ file.

²⁹ The Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England and Wales is the independent voice for victims and survivors of domestic abuse [Home - Domestic Abuse Commissioner](#)

³⁰ Probation practitioners completed both interviews and surveys, VLOs and DASOs completed interviews, focus groups and surveys, the EM provider completed surveys only.

³¹ It is not possible to establish how many extra VLOs and DASOs were reached via extra methods of engagement, such as liaising with operational management staff and promoting our research in team meetings.

Surveys: Surveys were developed in consultation with criminal justice practitioners to ensure the use of appropriate terminology. Surveys were delivered over a 12-month period in batches, to capture feedback from each respondent group. All surveys opened with an overview of the scope and eligibility of DAPOL, a brief description of the overarching survey aims, an outline of the evaluation and how the data would be used, and a contact for further questions. Respondents were advised that participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time prior to submitting their responses. Surveys were completed online, anonymously, and included a mix of quantitative fixed-response questions and optional, open-ended qualitative questions.

Semi-structured Interviews/Focus Groups: A written participant information sheet was sent to prospective interview and focus group participants prior to 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 and focus groups were conducted by phone or video call and were recorded and transcribed using Microsoft tools.³² A topic guide was used to structure interviews and focus groups. The probation practitioner interviews and focus group centred on understanding the use and perception of the DAPOL scheme, including barriers and impacts, managing domestic abuse risk and working with stakeholders e.g., the EM provider or other probation staff.³³ VLOs and DASOs questions followed similar themes, although centred on empowering and protecting victim-survivors. EM provider questions focused on service delivery and working with other staff. Interviews with people on probation focussed on their experience of wearing a tag, their view on how this impacted

³² 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.

³³ VLOs and DASOs were asked their experience of working with the probation officer. Probation officers were asked of their experience of sharing information with the VLO.

their desistence journey, and their relationship with the EM provider and probation. Interviews/focus groups 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. The initial coding framework for the pilot was developed between two researchers to enhance reliability. This was tailored for the pathfinder evaluation recognising the addition of the victim-survivor voice. 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 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:

- Caseload data were drawn from administrative systems. While the analytical team aimed to produce high quality analyses, it is not always possible to detect errors in administrative data that occur at source. Decisions to exclude data due to concerns around reliability are made clear in the report.
- Some administrative data are not static. They can be changed or revised, for example, when a probation practitioner reassesses a person on probation's risk levels. Where the report includes data that can be updated like this, details of the time period is provided.
- Sampling for interviews and surveys was non-random, as all participants volunteered for the evaluation research. This voluntary participation may affect the generalisability of the findings, 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 on other characteristics that may have influenced the likelihood of receiving DAPOL as a licence condition or the likelihood of having a recorded domestic violence incident on the PND. While the matched control 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 domestic violence incidence found in this analysis, reflect differences in the characteristics associated with people on probation and their offences that could not be captured by the data used.
- This was further highlighted during quality assurance which presented challenges in identifying an appropriate counterfactual group for this cohort specifically when applying quasi-experimental methods. While findings have been reported in this publication, they indicate the need for further exploration of the variables that should be incorporated into the full impact evaluation.
- Further, the interim impact methodology was unable to take account of all DAPOL orders created. Therefore, the two groups examined in the interim impact analysis are subsets of their total populations, so care should be taken in generalising results. This was due to the nature of the PSM exercise as well as the sampling bias introduced by applying the order length of the treatment individual to the matched control individual. Similarly, the data selection for the PND search of domestic violence incidents was limited by analytical resource. This resulted in the treatment and control groups being capped at 225 individuals each.

- The interim impact measure could only capture domestic violence and not domestic abuse and hence did not consider emotionally abusive or coercive behaviours after release. It also could not capture non-reported incidents of domestic violence. Moreover, it assumed that recorded domestic violence incidents served as reliable indicator of desistance, whilst waiting for 18-month proven reoffending data to become available for the full impact evaluation. Particularly as measuring recorded domestic violence incidents is a novel and innovative measure, it is feasible that the full impact evaluation could reach a different conclusion to the interim findings presented here.

4. Use of the Scheme Including Perceived Benefits and Barriers

This section describes broader qualitative and quantitative findings on the use of the scheme including perceived benefits and barriers derived from survey and interview data. Although this section includes some views of VLOs and DASOs, the majority of responses are from probation practitioners, the EM provider and people on probation. Section 6 includes more feedback from the victim-survivor experience.

Earlier themes included in this section explore new insights into the processes and use of the scheme, staff confidence and risk management, and quality of equipment. Later themes build on findings from the 6-month DAPOL pilot and include: tag fitting and charging; perceptions of others about the tag; attitudes towards offending and domestic abuse; compliance; and tag data.

4.1 Process of Submitting DAPOL Orders

Probation practitioners would often consult other staff when determining whether an EM order should have a DAPOL condition. For example, practitioners would sometimes liaise with the VLO to discuss the risk towards a victim-survivor and whether DAPOL was appropriate.

It was felt DAPOL filled a gap in tagging previously experienced by probation practitioners, who struggled to tag certain high-risk offenders:

"Pinged my interest right away because I have felt there has been a gap for this type of offending because of the type of tags we can have at the moment, they're very rigid in what we can have [...], so DAPOL, [...] it kind of filled that gap in in quite a risky area that we definitely needed. So yeah, I was. I was excited when it was coming out."

However, when submitting licence details to prison offender managers, probation felt it was not always clear what the order type chosen was. This could result in a prison leaver

not getting a DAPOL requirement. Since fieldwork was conducted, systems to submit an EM order have been updated. All forms are now digital using a platform called 'Create an EM Order' (CEMO), with licence conditions being selected from a specific list. This should improve clarity on order type.

Issues with submitting DAPOL orders was said to cause delays to tag fitting as the EM provider needs to contact probation for more information. A staff member from the EM provider suggested colour coding to differentiate order types and a system whereby priority cases are highlighted, such as high-risk cases, including DAPOL.

Some practitioners raised concerns around gaps of knowledge around the process of ordering a DAPOL tag for a licence, and there was some confusion around whether the responsibility of notifying the EM provider of the DAPOL order was with prison or probation staff. It was added that at this stage of the pilot some prison staff may not be aware of DAPOL, which was said to impact the initial processing:

"The prison admin staff also do not appear to have a good understanding of DAPOL when completing the initial notification form to [the EM provider]. This can cause delays with getting the tag fitted and [the EM provider] requesting further information for clarification."

There were also some comments about practitioners not knowing the process for setting up an exclusion zone, meaning there were periods where a perpetrator may not have been monitored. A VLO said they had noticed this on a case, which was further corroborated by a probation practitioner:

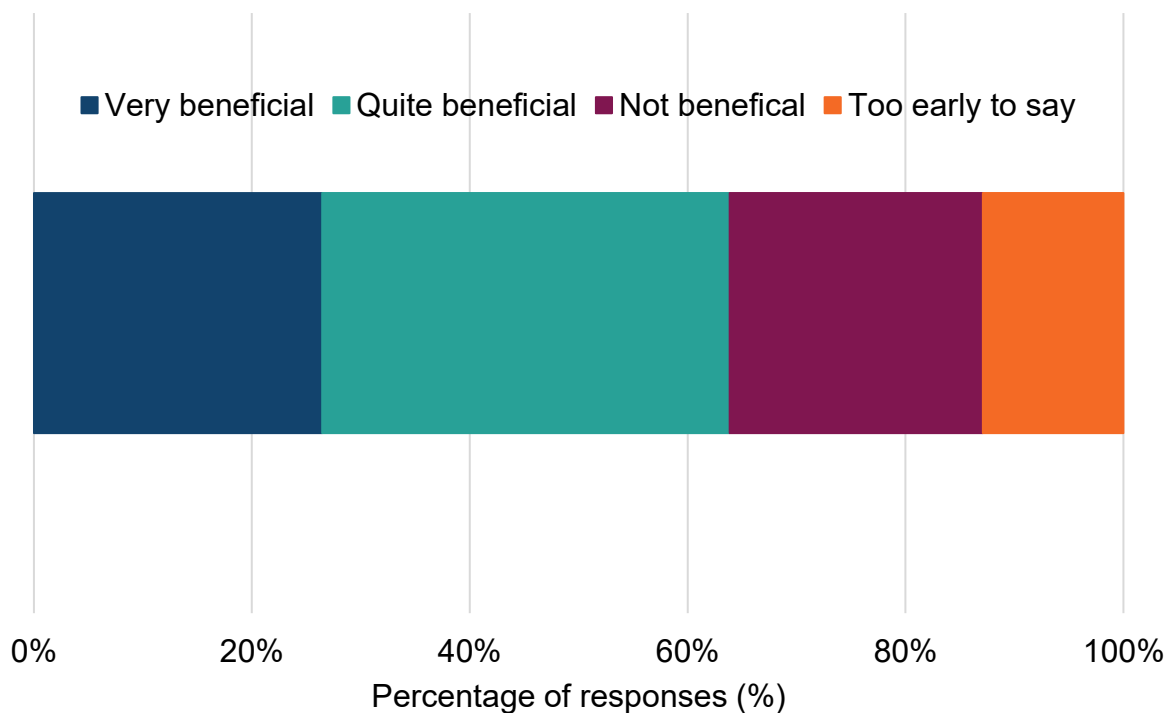
"And we also discovered on that date that the probation practitioner hadn't realised that the exclusion zone wasn't automatically monitored. So [they] hadn't ticked the box, whatever that box is that they have to tick to say that the exclusion zone should be added to the tag. [They] just assumed that was an automatic thing."

4.2 Using DAPOL to Manage Domestic Abuse Risk

Probation practitioners who had added DAPOL as a licence condition ($n=155$) were asked how beneficial they found DAPOL to support the management of day-to-day domestic

abuse risks (see figure 4.1). Almost two thirds of probation practitioners found that the DAPOL condition was beneficial to managing day-to-day domestic abuse risks ($n=99$; 63.9%), however almost a quarter found that it was not beneficial ($n=36$; 23.2%) and the remainder stated it was too early to say ($n=20$; 12.9%)

Figure 4.1 Perceived Benefit to Risk Management



Note. Data reflect probation practitioners' responses to the question "How beneficial have you found DAPOL to support managing day-to-day domestic abuse risks?". Four fixed response options were available, starting with 'Very beneficial' through to 'Too early to say'. This figure is also supplied as an Excel datasheet – see corresponding worksheet within the 'data tables' file.

Probation practitioners who viewed DAPOL as a beneficial tool to aid risk management for domestic abuse reflected on its multiple uses, including enforcing exclusion zones, curfews and 24/7 location monitoring. The 24/7 location monitoring was thought to exceed the utility of the probation service, as the data collected can serve as proof if further crimes are committed. VLOs and DASOs shared this sentiment, mentioning how DAPOL can be used to evidence violations of restraining orders.

Moreover, practitioners spoke positively about the "wide suitability criteria" for DAPOL which they benefited from, by enforcing the tag for perpetrators with a risk of domestic

abuse, regardless of their index offence. It was also thought to aid honest conversations during probation appointments as practitioners could corroborate information shared by the person on probation:

“I was able, at least to ascertain that [they] did not go into the areas that I, you know, I never wanted [them] to go, but also it also confirmed the information that [they] gave me because s/he gave me a particular address that [they] was [at] and [the data] shows you the addresses, which is really brilliant [...], it give you it gives you the start [...] and the end of the trail and actually it shows you where where there is a loss of signal, which is it's very clear it's on the map.”

Many probation practitioners felt the tag itself acted as a deterrent for further offending, due to the fear of getting caught. One DASO noticed a difference in compliance when the perpetrator had been tagged, and put this down to a curfew reducing alcohol consumption, which was a perceived to be present in domestic abuse behaviour:

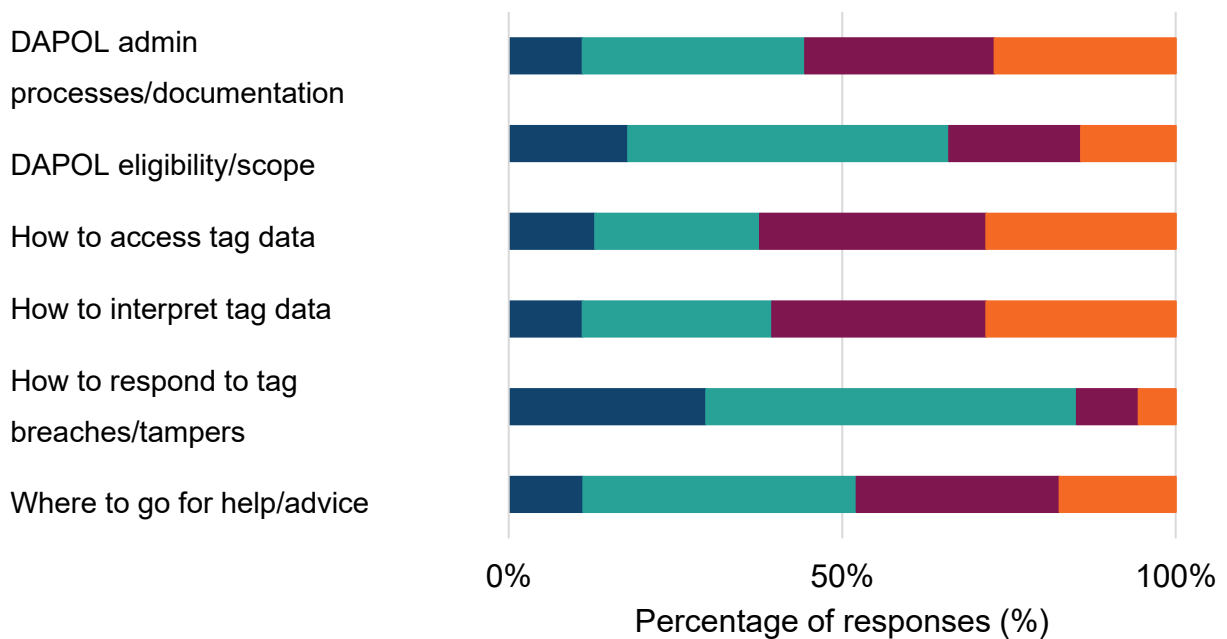
“[People on probation] seem to offend when they're fuelled with alcohol, so hence if they're, if they're in the house wherever [they're] curfew[ed], they know they're safe to go to the shop, shopping out with the children. [...] they know they're not in the local pub. They know they're not going to get drunk and come knocking on the on their door.”

However, it was recognised that certain types of domestic abuse may not be appropriate for the tag, such as psychological abuse or online harassment and stalking behaviours. It was suggested that some will continue to be a risk regardless of being monitored by a tag.

4.3 Staff Confidence in Tag Data and Risk Management

Probation practitioners were asked to reflect on their confidence levels on various processes involving the tag data (see Figure 4.2). When asked about their confidence in accessing tag data, of the 162 probation practitioners who completed the survey, over half felt 'somewhat unconfident' ($n=52$; 32.1%) or 'very unconfident' ($n=46$; 28.4%). Similar findings can be seen when probation practitioners were asked about their confidence in interpreting tag data with over half feeling 'somewhat unconfident' ($n=55$; 34%) or 'very unconfident' ($n=46$; 28.4%).

Figure 4.2 Probation Practitioner Confidence in DAPOL Processes



■ Very confident ■ Somewhat confident ■ Somewhat unconfident ■ Very unconfident

Note. Data reflect probation practitioners’ responses to the question “How confident is your understanding of the areas listed below?”. Four fixed response options are shown, starting with ‘Very confident’ through to ‘Very unconfident’. Two other response options were also available to participants, ‘N/A’ and ‘Prefer not to say’ which are not included in this figure. This figure is also supplied as an Excel datasheet – see corresponding worksheet within the ‘data tables’ file.

There were mixed views around the accuracy and timeliness of breach notifications received by probation staff. Some raised concerns suggesting previous known errors would impact how they made important decisions such as recall:

“So when I've had breach information, you need to act on that quite quickly if you're going to enforce it. But I'm not given information that I'm confident is a breach and it turns out it wasn't a breach because [the EM provider] haven't phoned the right person. [...] and I should be able to trust the information I'm having from [the EM provider] and then act on that.”

Whereas another practitioner described the process as “excellent” as the breaches were flagged “straight away” by the EM provider.

It is worth noting during the period of conducting fieldwork with staff, the EM provider changed the process of sharing breach details with probation practitioners which may explain differences in views.³⁴

As mentioned, the terms ‘breach’ and ‘violations’ are often used interchangeably, and it is not always clear throughout the fieldwork which term the participant is referring to.³⁵

Differences may also be seen due to the numerous stages in the process delays may occur. For example, individuals may not open their emails regularly or may be on annual leave, suggesting some alerts may not be seen immediately.³⁶

One practitioner suggested more detail would improve breach notifications, such as a breakdown of timings spent at each location alongside the map. This could help them determine whether the device wearer was spending time with a certain person, aiding risk management, particularly of those entering into a new relationship.

4.4 Quality of Equipment

Some practitioners praised the equipment saying it was “effective” and “functioning well”. However, EM provider staff shared concerns regarding the overall quality of the equipment being distributed to people on probation, such as low-quality charging cables which “break a bit easily”. It was thought this could affect ease of charging the equipment, resulting in breaches.³⁷

³⁴ Previously probation practitioners were required to request further breach information after receiving a breach notification to confirm whether a breach took place. Since February 2025, The EM provider now send a further breach pack containing information on the breach by midday the following day.

³⁵ 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.

³⁶ Notifications should be sent to the responsible officer (probation practitioner) and to the Probation Delivery Unit (PDU) mailbox. However, this is not always the case. When an email is only sent to the responsible officer it may be missed when they are on annual leave.

³⁷ A portable charger is provided with GPS tags as well as the standard plug-in charger. Portable chargers are not presently available for RF and Remote Alcohol Monitoring (RAM) tag technologies.

Additionally, some people on probation reported issues with their equipment, such as the box ringing throughout the day or night,³⁸ indicating they were not at their resided address. This caused distress for people as it would wake them up:

“I’ve had the issues with the box going off and the sleep deprivation that you get from that is a bit [...], yeah it’s just been a living hell.”

4.5 Findings which Build on the 6-month DAPOL Pilot

Other themes found in the previous process evaluation were mirrored in this report:

Delays to tag fitting

Probation practitioners suggested delays completing the EM order form on time were said to impact the timeliness of tag fitting. The EM provider similarly expressed workload pressures meant prioritisation of DAPOL cases was not always achievable.

Delays to tag fitting was exacerbated when the device wearer would not be at their registered address, resulting in no shows.³⁹ Many felt tags should be fitted at the prison,⁴⁰ to avoid gaps in monitoring.

It is important to note that fieldwork occurred alongside the EM provider contract change. This resulted in further delays to tag fitting as new systems were implemented. Internal monitoring of the EM providers performance has shown improvements to delays; however, they are still prevalent. The Ministry of Justice have conducted a pilot to assess the feasibility of tagging prison leavers upon their release in six prisons across England and Wales.

Charging the tag

³⁸ Those with a curfew requirement will have a Home Monitoring Unit (HMU) installed at their registered address. This enables the EM service provider to call them and check if they are home when expected.

³⁹ See section 8.1 of the 6-month DAPOL pilot [Electronic Monitoring of Domestic Abuse Perpetrators on Licence - Process Evaluation](#)

⁴⁰ There is currently a scheme tagging prison leavers on their release from prison in six prisons across England and Wales

People felt sustaining a charging routine for the tag was a burden and questioned why the equipment did not have a battery percentage indicator.⁴¹ However it is worth noting portable chargers are now provided alongside GPS tags to support device wearers maintain better routines with charging.

Perception of others about the tag

People on probation felt the tag was too large which caused anxiety around the perceptions of others. For some, it would affect them taking part in activities such as going to the gym due to the clothing typically worn during sport activities.⁴²

Attitudes towards offending and domestic abuse

Nancarrow, H., & Modini, T. (2018) noted the importance of device wearers understanding the impact of controlling or violent behaviour and why they are ordered to wear a tag, highlighting the necessity of this to reduce reoffending. However, some people on probation continued to minimise their offence or behaviour towards the victim-survivor.⁴³

"There's a few people like me [...] in for this coercive behaviour, which is a daft new law which I can't believe, you know what I mean, cause my partner went everywhere."

Others felt their conditions were not proportionate to their offence, viewing the tag as "overkill".⁴⁴

DAPOL supporting compliance

The tag was useful for helping a person on probation maintain "focused" on a positive routine of going to work and returning home, therefore keeping them out of prison.

⁴¹ See section 8.1 of the DAPOL 6-month pilot [Electronic Monitoring of Domestic Abuse Perpetrators on Licence - Process Evaluation](#)

⁴² See section 8.1 of the 6-month DAPOL pilot [Electronic Monitoring of Domestic Abuse Perpetrators on Licence - Process Evaluation](#)

⁴³ See section 8.3 of the 6-month DAPOL pilot [Electronic Monitoring of Domestic Abuse Perpetrators on Licence - Process Evaluation](#)

⁴⁴ It was not clear whether probation practitioners explained to the person on probation why they have received the DAPOL order. This may exacerbate the difference in understanding the eligibility criteria. Alternatively, people on probation may not agree with the criteria.

However, numerous people on probation put positive change down to their own “initiative” as opposed to the tag.⁴⁵

Tag data

Practitioners described concerns in the process for requesting tag data itself, as they were required to specify a time-period of data, which often felt like ‘guessing’ and made it difficult to see patterns of behaviour over a period. Like the 6-month DAPOL pilot, probation practitioners felt a portal would be more effective, giving them direct access to the data.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ See section 8.3 of 6-month DAPOL pilot [Electronic Monitoring of Domestic Abuse Perpetrators on Licence - Process Evaluation](#)

⁴⁶ See section 8.2 of the 6-month DAPOL pilot [Electronic Monitoring of Domestic Abuse Perpetrators on Licence - Process Evaluation](#)

5. Perceived Compliance and Recidivism

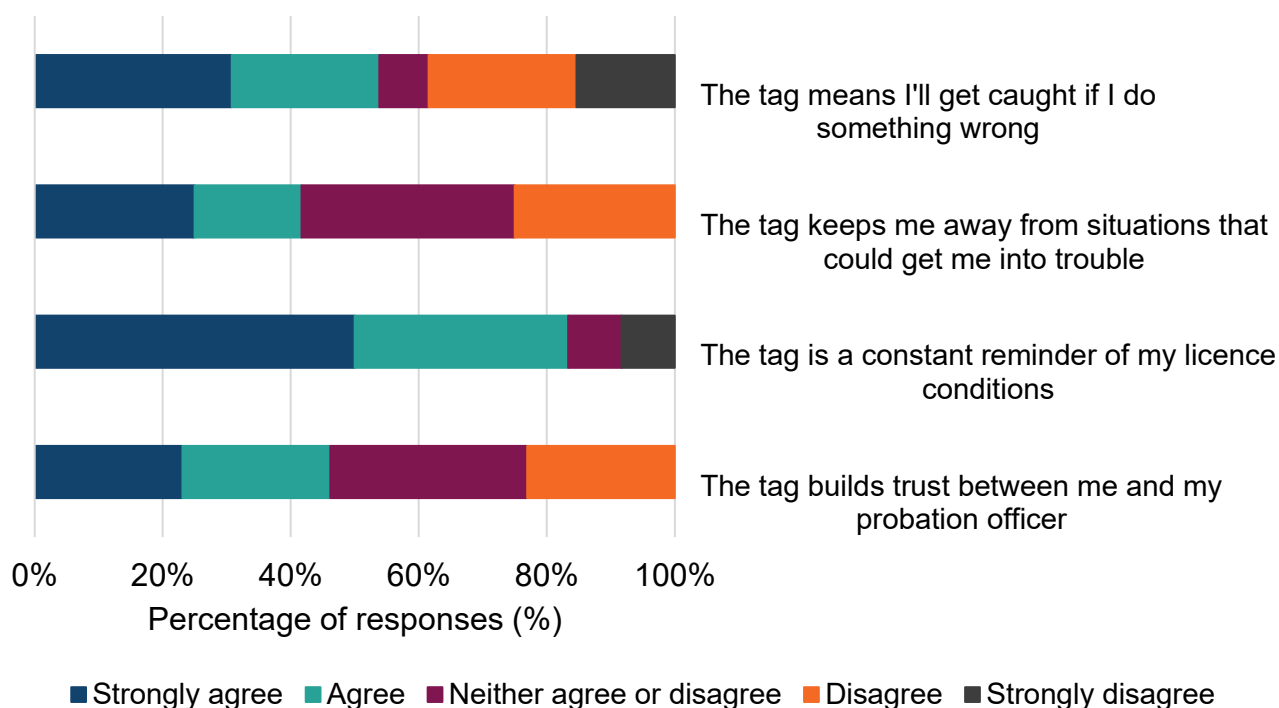
This section describes qualitative and quantitative insights into short and perceived longer-term compliance, including behaviour and attitude changes due to the tag. These findings were derived from surveys and interviews, encompassing views from probation practitioners and device wearers. This section also explores an innovative interim impact measure of domestic violence frequency using PND intelligence reports,⁴⁷ comparing the treatment group to a statistically matched control group.

5.1 Perceived Impacts by People on Probation

People on probation were asked to reflect on four statements which assessed how well they thought the tag could support their rehabilitation in the community. There was mixed agreement with whether the tag could support rehabilitation (see figure 5.1). Of the 13 responses received, the majority felt the tag was a constant reminder of their licence conditions ($n=10$; 77%). Around half felt the tag would catch them if they did something wrong ($n=7$; 53.9%). When asked whether people on probation felt the tag kept them away from situations which could get them into trouble, around two fifths agreed ($n=5$; 38.5%), one third reported to 'neither agree or disagree' ($n=4$; 30.8%), and one fifth disagreed ($n=3$; 23.1%). It is important to reiterate this was a small sample size and therefore may not be representative of the whole population.

⁴⁷ Domestic violence typically refers to physical violence or threats of violence within an intimate relationship or among family members. domestic abuse encompasses a broader range of abusive behaviours including emotional abuse or coercion. Due to the way intelligence reports are made to the PND, this aspect of the research will capture domestic violence and hence may not capture incidents of abuse recognised within the DAPOLs tags intention.

Figure 5.1 Perceived Impacts to People on Probation



Note. Data reflects people on probation’s responses to the survey question “Has wearing a tag made it easier or harder to meet your needs in the areas listed below?”. Five fixed-response options are shown which described a range of outcomes, starting with ‘Strongly Agree’ through to ‘Strongly disagree’. The response option ‘N/A’ was also available to participants but is not shown in this figure. This figure also supplied as an Excel datasheet – see corresponding worksheet within the ‘date tables’ file.

Although some felt the tag wasn’t necessary for their own perceived risk level, one person on probation still viewed the tag as useful for keeping in a positive routine of going to work and returning home which therefore kept them away from prison.

Some people on probation appeared to take onus of their own behaviour suggesting a positive attitude towards offending, expressing they were worried about breaching their conditions unintentionally, such as going through an exclusion zone when in public transport.

Furthermore, the tag was said to increase accountability for people on probation and help combat their perceived irresponsibility towards licence conditions prior to being tagged.

This was hoped to encourage compliance and therefore reduce re-offending towards the victim-survivor:

"I find that victims of repeated incidences of breach of restraining order have little faith that the restrictions work, as the offenders often have flagrant disregard for them."

Some tag wearers we spoke to felt their behaviour change was not down to the tag alone and put this down to their own changes they had made. Similarly, although some probation practitioners felt the tag itself could act as a deterrent for further offending, due to the fear of getting caught, most felt long-term behaviour change of people on probation requires additional interventions, such as changes to family support.

5.2 Interim Impact Measure: Domestic Violence Incidents

An interim impact analysis was conducted to compare the number of individuals with one or more domestic violence incidents in a subset of the DAPOL orders with a matched control group. Table 5.1 shows that there were approximately nine more individuals with one or more domestic violence incident in the treatment group than the control group. Although there were more individuals reporting at least one domestic violence incident in the treatment group, the difference was not statistically significant, indicating that the addition of DAPOL as a licence condition did not affect domestic violence rates.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ 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 5.1 Comparison of Domestic Violence Incidents Rates

Size of Group		
	Treatment Group	225
	Control Group	225
Number of Individuals with at Least One Domestic Violence Incidents Observed		
	Treatment Group	98
	Control Group	89
Total Number of Domestic Violence Incidents		
	Treatment Group	173
	Control Group	195
Mean Number of Domestic Violence Incidents Per Individual With at Least One Recorded Incidents		
	Treatment Group	1.8
	Control Group	2.2
Domestic Violence Incidence Rate (%) – Proportion of Group with at Least One Incident		
	Treatment Group	44
	Control Group	40
Estimated Difference in Domestic Violence Incident Rate (%)^a		+4.0 (-5.1, 13.1)
p value		0.39
Statistically Significant Result		No

Note. ^aNumbers 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.

Although the difference between the two groups was not statistically significant, it is worth noting that almost two thirds of the treatment group ($n= 136$; 60%) had no domestic violence incidents recorded during their licence period. Of those that recorded at least one incident of domestic violence, a single incident was most common.

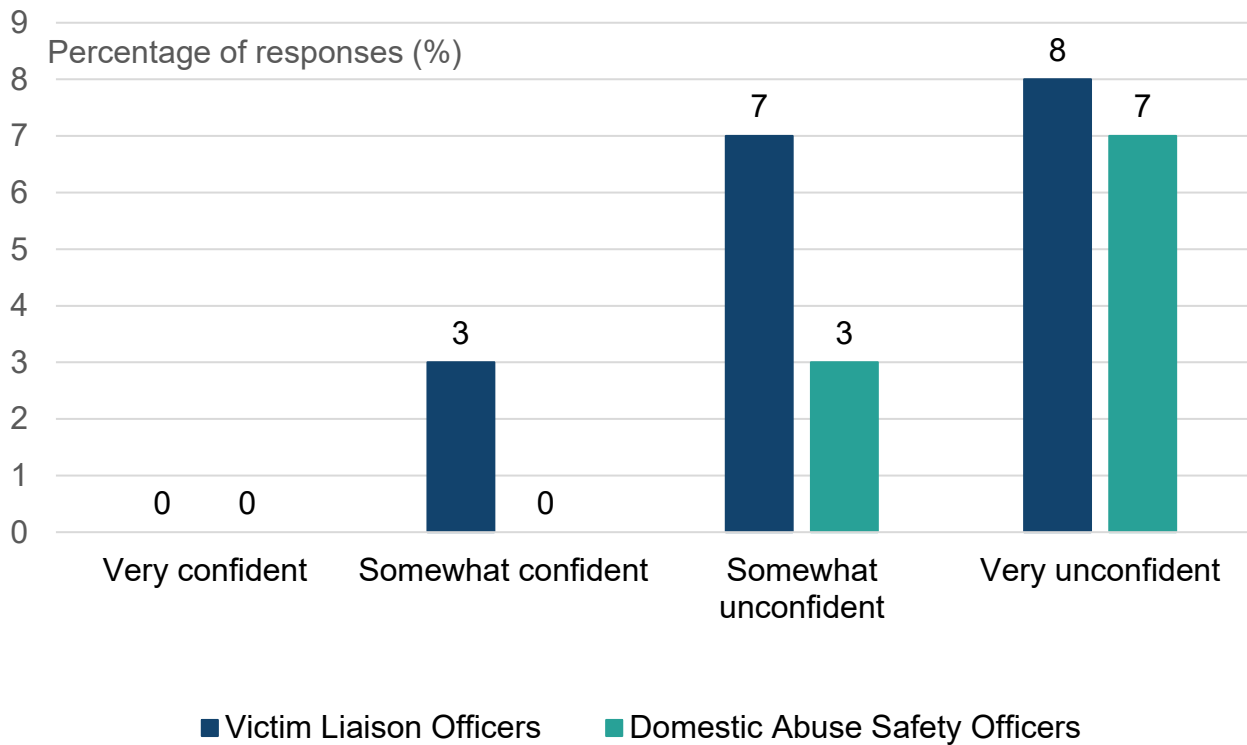
6. Victim-survivor Experiences and Support

This section summarises findings which are victim-survivor focussed, derived from interviews and surveys with probation practitioners, VLOs, DASOs, and surveys with victim-survivors themselves. Various themes were identified specific to these groups, which present findings related to the roles of VLOs and DASOs to support victim-survivors. These include how they work alongside the DAPOL tag, their perspectives on the effectiveness of the DAPOL tag for providing reassurance and protection from non-compliance, such as breaches. Other issues around the tag such as tag fitting delays from the victim-survivors perspective and the overall wellbeing and reassurance for both staff and victim-survivors are also covered in this section.

6.1 Understanding of DAPOL orders

The majority of VLOs and DASOs reported a lack of confidence in DAPOL admin processes and documentation, or that it was not relevant to their role (see Figure 6.1). Of the 33 VLO respondents, just under half reported feeling 'somewhat unconfident' ($n=7$; 21.2%) or 'very unconfident' ($n=8$; 24.2%). Of the 13 DASO responses received, the majority reported feeling 'somewhat unconfident' ($n=3$; 23.1%) or 'very unconfident' ($n=7$, 52.8%).

Figure 6.1 Confidence in DAPOL Admin Processes



Note. Data reflects VLOs and DASOs responses to the question “Confidence in DAPOL admin processes and documentation by respondent group”. Four fixed response options are shown, starting with ‘Very confident’ through to ‘Very unconfident’. Response options ‘N/A’ and ‘Prefer not to say’ were also available to participants but are not shown in this figure. This figure is also supplied as an Excel datasheet – see corresponding worksheet within the ‘data tables’ file.

Although staff shared overall positive views about the concept of tagging domestic abuse perpetrators, both VLOs and DASOs felt knowing more about the tags would help them be “more effective” at supporting their clients. VLOs describe how they inform victim-survivors about the technology behind the tag, due to concerns that some victim-survivors believe breach notifications are instant and therefore could provide a false sense of security. Subsequently, the onus is on the VLO to develop this understanding:

“It’s not a protective measure. You know, you’ve still got to safeguard yourself. You’ve still got to call the police. It just provides the evidence. Because I don’t want people thinking they’re safer than they are.”

To improve VLOs and DASOs understanding, and to in turn aid victim-survivors understanding, it was felt guidance needed to be more tailored to the victim-survivor perspective. This contrasts with the current guidance available which was thought to be “generic” and aimed at probation practitioners who work with people on probation.

6.2 Impact of Delays to Tag Fitting on the Victim-survivor

Probation practitioners, VLOs, and DASOs all shared their concerns about delays to tag fitting causing anxiety to victim-survivors, which could reduce their confidence in the criminal justice system and the working relationship with the victim-survivor:

"I am aware of a significant backlog where offenders are not being tagged in good time. That is incredibly frustrating as we are saying to victims about the tag and that it is a good tool for safeguarding and monitoring purposes, but in reality, people are sometimes spending days upon days not being tagged and therefore not being monitored."

Moreover, the growing use of tags left one VLO to question if there was more dependence on tag data to prove a breach, which subsequently would be missed if the tag wasn't fitted before a breach occurred.

6.3 Timely Notifications of Breaches

VLOs and DASOs shared the importance of receiving timely information from the probation practitioner about breaches. It is worth noting VLOs and DASOs are unable to disclose explicit breach information to victim-survivors, however, they can develop safety plans with them in the event of a breach.

VLOs and DASOs showed dedication to their roles, often going the extra mile to chase probation staff for updates when they had not received them, with the intention to keep the victim-survivor safe:

"I was emailing practically every day, do you realise the risk that my client is under? If we don't get [the tag] on, [the perpetrator] could be there. [They] could strangle [them]. [They] already that was the offence intentional strangulation. Next step, [they] could kill [the victim-survivor]. Come on, help."

However, although VLOs reported feeling reliant on practitioners to share information, they recognised their heavy workloads, which could impact their ability to handle breaches. In some instances, VLOs spoke about how they tried to improve the working relationship with probation practitioners, encouraging them to think of the victim-survivor, by being present in team meetings and sharing victim-survivor perspectives in Professional Qualification in Probation (PQiP) training.

6.4 Consequences for Breaches

An appropriate response to EM breaches can improve victim-survivors' perception of the criminal justice system as cases are perceived to be taken seriously (Carter & Grommon, 2016). However, there were some concerns raised that consequences of breaches were not proportionate to the potential risk placed against the victim-survivor. One VLO outlined how this was an ongoing issue:

“I think it's just a general issue around enforcement. We had it before tags. You know where we were putting breaches and people weren't responding or or taking action. So I think it's just. It's it's. Yeah, it's a culture thing about. A lack of, I think a lack of recognition of what a breach does to a victim.”

It was thought practitioners may excuse certain behaviour as they are viewing a situation from the person on probation's perspective, as opposed to the victim-focused approach the VLOs and DASOs may take. For example, a DASO raised their concerns about the lack of accountability from a person on probation who was continually breaching:

“[They'd] not charged [the tag] I think about 11-12 times, so we had whole days where we didn't know where this [tag wearer] was and we had a reported breach of an exclusion zone, and all [they] had is a written warning....there's there's a there's a real culture in probation to try and not recall and to get people through at all costs.”

This caused concerns victim-survivors would refrain from reporting further breaches due to lost hope of them being dealt with properly.

However, probation practitioners shared their frustration of receiving breach notifications from the monitoring provider too late,⁴⁹ meaning they cannot be enforced appropriately. It cannot be confirmed at what stage there was a delay to receiving the tag data.

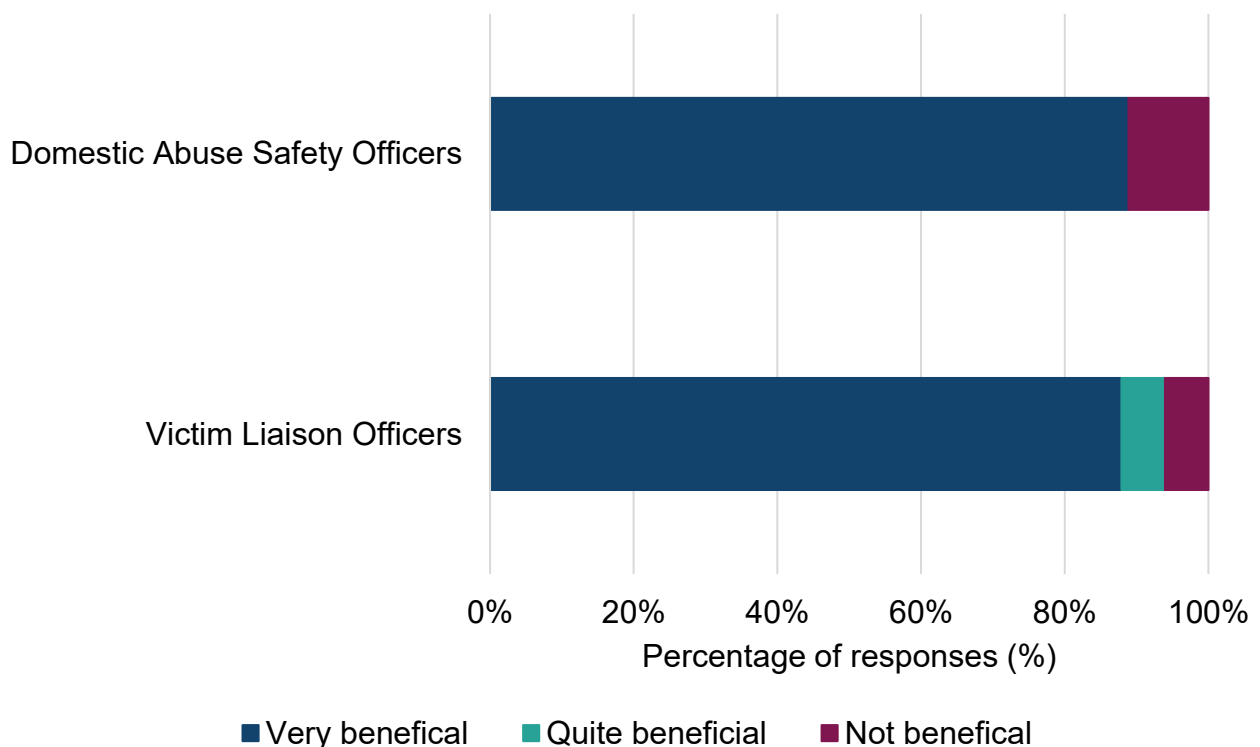
There are various ways a probation practitioner can enforce a breach, varying from warning letters, varying the licence, such as changing of the exclusion zones or ordering an alcohol tag, through to a recall. Depending on the seriousness of the incident it is the probation practitioner's discretion to choose a response suitable.

6.5 Well-being and Reassurance

The majority of VLOs or DASOs who responded to the survey said they had supported a victim-survivor where the perpetrator had been ordered to wear a DAPOL tag ($n=42$; 91.3%). They were asked how beneficial they thought the inclusion of EM was in providing reassurance to the victim-survivor (see Figure 6.2). The majority of DASOs ($n=8$; 88.9%) and VLOs ($n=29$; 87.9%) felt that the inclusion of electronic monitoring was very beneficial in providing reassurance to the victim-survivor.

⁴⁹ The probation practitioner would receive an automated breach notification via email by 10:00 the next day. If the breach is confirmed they will receive a breach pack by 12:00 with violation details. These are also sent to the designated PDU mailbox

Figure 6.5 Perceived Benefit to Victim-Survivors



Note. Data reflect DASOs and VLOs responses to the question “How beneficial was the inclusion of electronic monitoring in providing reassurance to the victim?” Three fixed response options were available, starting with ‘Very beneficial’ through to ‘Not beneficial’. Response options ‘Too early to say’ and ‘N/A’ were also available to participants but are not shown in this figure. This figure is also supplied as an Excel datasheet – see corresponding worksheet within the ‘data tables’ file.

The tag was described as an “extra layer of security”, where victim-survivors felt “listened to”. It was acknowledged the tag could evidence attempts to contact or be near the victim-survivor, which historically were said to be hard to prove.

Additionally, a DASO claimed the tag increases victim-survivor’s overall feelings of safety, as completing everyday tasks can cause worry:

"Anxiety of bumping into offender [...] having this added safety measure allows them to go about their everyday life with less fear of this happening – examples, going outside of property, hanging washing out, playing with children or sitting in garden, school run, shopping, work, visiting family friends, local activities for children and themselves."

The tag was also useful for evidencing compliance by the perpetrator, which could provide peace of mind to the victim-survivor if the tag wearer is abiding by their conditions.

Additionally, the tag was thought to bring reassurance to VLOs and DASOs that there was another measure in place to safeguard victim-survivors. However, a DASO shared the impact of working alongside the tag had on their wellbeing:

"Having the tag gave my client the reassurance [they] was relatively safe and [the person on probation] could be monitored. For me, it was stressful having to chase all the necessary people to chase up the tag being fitted. As I have said about it was nearly 3 weeks before this actually happened."

Although the tag brought reassurance, some felt this did not compare to the perpetrator being in prison. Additionally, it was thought the sentencing for domestic abuse breaches were not severe enough, as one VLO described the consequences as "minimal".

Some raised concerns the tag was a temporary solution to protect victim-survivors, and additional measures were needed to be put in place once the tag was removed to protect the victim-survivor:

"S/he's OK for right now, but [they're] having to put in extra measures with regards to [their] home, [their] child/ren, [their] whole life, [their] work, everything. Even though, yeah, there is this tag. It's it's just only for so long, isn't it? You know, so there's still that anxiety, but it just relieves that for a little while really."

Furthermore, tag fitting delays can affect victim-survivors confidence in the criminal justice system:

"I thought [they] had a tag and felt much more happy and safe, but I found out towards the end of [their] probation period that the tag was never fitted due to 'complications' but I was never told, therefore my confidence in the criminal justice system is now nil."

7. Conclusion

This report presents a process and interim impact evaluation of the DAPOL scheme, which aims to improve the supervision of high-risk domestic abuse perpetrators following their release from prison. Interim impact findings were drawn from management information data and process findings from fieldwork conducted with tag wearers, people working to deliver the service, victim-survivors and probation staff who support victim-survivors.

The research built on the initial 6-month process evaluation and further expansion of the scheme, highlighting elements of DAPOL that were working well, areas for improvement, and an initial exploration of the impact on domestic violence incidence using quasi-experimental methods.

Early analysis demonstrated that the inclusion of DAPOL as a licence condition did not have a statistically significant impact on the number of domestic violence incidents. It is worth noting these insights are provisional ahead of the planned full impact evaluation. Despite this, qualitative insights echoed the importance of interventions such as DAPOL to ensure high-risk offenders can be managed in the community. This is due to factors such as its wide eligibility criteria, a notable benefit of the scheme reported by probation.

Exploring victim-survivor feedback in more detail, this report also highlighted the importance of the pilot for improving victim-survivors experience of the Criminal Justice System after experiencing domestic abuse. Both victim-survivors and staff in supporting roles felt the scheme provided reassurance to the victim-survivor as their perpetrator was being monitored. However, concerns over the timeliness and actions taken when enforcing breaches was raised, which could affect some victim-survivors confidence in the system.

This report concludes with several **implications** which if addressed could enhance the ongoing delivery and future rollout of DAPOL across England and Wales:

- **Tags were not always fitted in good time which resulted in high-risk device wearers being unmonitored.** VLOs, DASOs and victim-survivors reported feeling disappointed with this. A pilot is currently underway to trial tagging device wearers as they leave prison rather than at their registered address. It is thought this could

improve victim-survivor's feelings of safety and VLOs and DASOs wellbeing as they are reassured that the perpetrator is being monitored when they enter the community. Similarly, since the initial DAPOL pilot a platform to submit EM orders digitally called 'CEMO' has been developed. This aims to reduce delays to tag fitting, however it was not rolled out until completion of fieldwork and hence its utility has not been assessed in this report.

- **Administrative processes, such as accessing the tag data requires streamlining to aid risk management:** Similar to the initial 6-month process evaluation, probation staff reported delays in receiving location data. On occasions this impacted the ability to evidence non-compliance and hence enforce breaches or to trigger a recall as both must be done in a timely manner. Additionally, the method of having to retrospectively request data from a specific timeframe raised concerns as probation practitioners did not always know specific information about suspected breaches. This could cause further delays. Staff suggested a portal where they could have access to location data to assess breaches would be beneficial.
- **VLOs and DASOs expressed concerns that the enforcement of breaches was too lenient by probation practitioners.** They felt there was a lack of awareness into the impact of breaches on victim-survivors and proposed victim-survivor focussed training and guidance to enhance working relationships between VLOs and DASOs and their probation practitioner colleagues. However, probation felt delays in receiving breach notifications or a lack of detail could limit their options around enforcement. Similarly, due to ongoing workload pressures, additional training may not be feasible for probation.
- **Similar to other EM studies, the victim-survivor voice has been underrepresented in this research.** This was due to known challenges in sampling victim-survivors, including ethics and risk of harm to both researchers and victim-survivors. Given the focus on Violence Against Women and Girls in government, it would be beneficial to address this evidence gap as further evaluation into the DAPOL scheme is conducted.
- **The longer-term impact of DAPOL has not been investigated, including recall and reoffending rates.** The interim impact measure explored domestic violence

incidents and the process evaluation focussed on the duration of the DAPOL order. As such, the longer-term impact of DAPOL as a licence condition has not been investigated, such as whether changes to behaviour, including violent or abusive behaviour are sustained beyond the period for which the tag is fitted. There are plans for MoJ to conduct proven reoffending analysis of DAPOL and to build on the methodological learnings from the interim impact measure used in this report.

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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.

Offender Demographics

- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Nationality
- Age (at sentence and at release)
- Year of release
- Probation region
- Domestic abuse history (historic or active marker in nDelius case registrations)
- Eligibility for VCS

Index Offence

- Offence Type (18 index offence categories e.g. robbery, drink-driving etc)
- Sentence length
- Licence length
- HDC release flag

Offending History

- Number of previous events in nDelius

Risk and OASys Assessment

- RoSH
- OGRS score
- RSR score
- Section scores for criminogenic needs (accommodation, employment, relationships, lifestyle & associates, drug misuse, alcohol misuse, thinking & behaviour, attitudes).

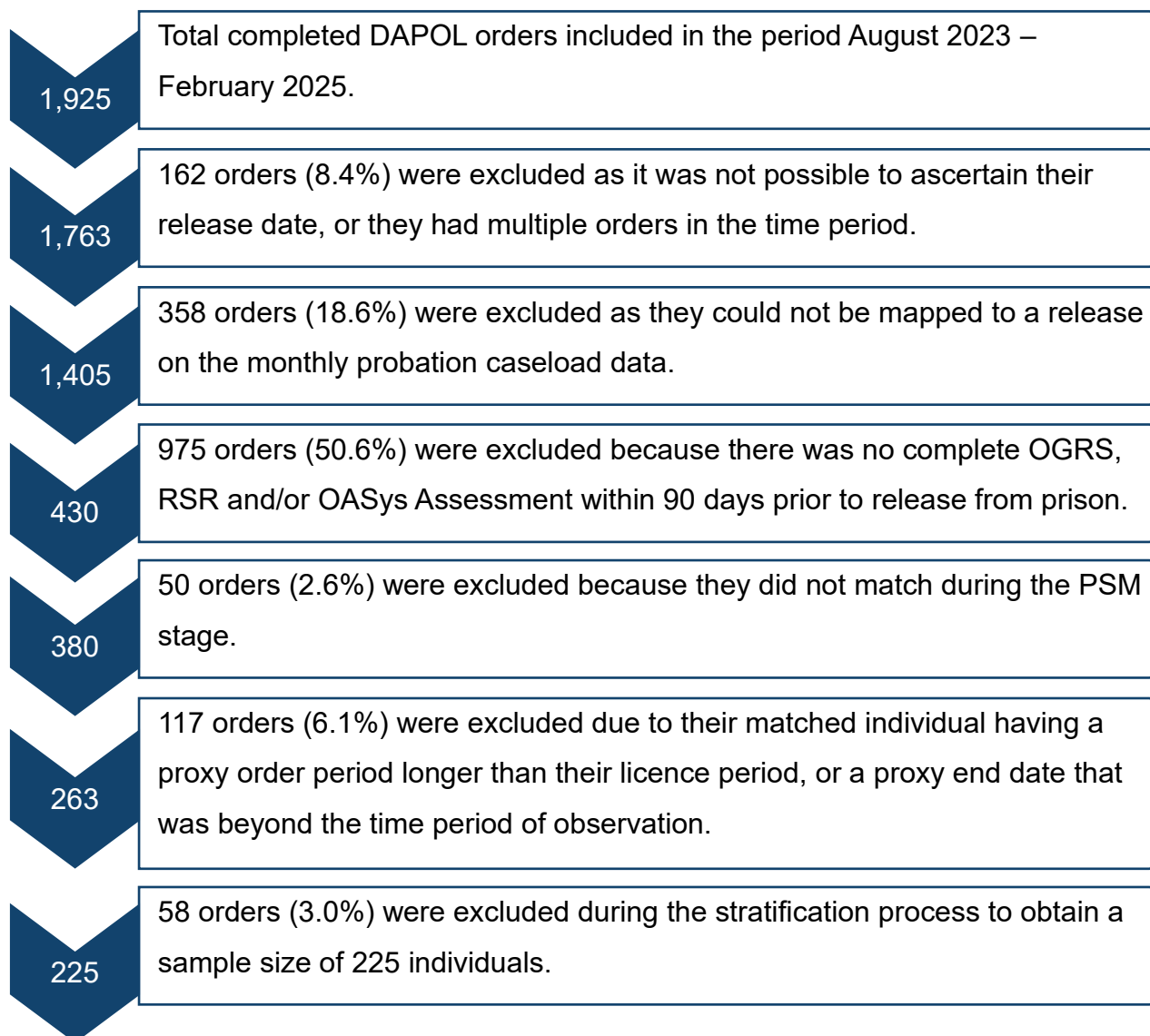
In addition, squared terms were also used for the continuous variable in the model.⁵⁰

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 225 releases in both the treatment and control groups after the matching, with a final attrition rate of 11.7%.

⁵⁰ Squared terms are able to account for any non-linear relationships between variables and the likelihood of receiving treatment.

Figure A.1 Numbers of 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 10%, indicating good matching quality. Across all matches, only three coefficients, relating to the criminogenic needs, had a standardised difference greater than 10%, these were all less than 15% so judged to be reasonable quality.

Glossary

CEMO – Create and Electronic Monitoring Order

CVL – Create and Vary a Licence

BBR – Building Better Relationships

DAPOL – Domestic Abuse Perpetrators on Licence

DASO – Domestic Abuse Safety Officer

EPF2 – Effective Policy Framework 2

EM – Electronic Monitoring

GPS – Global Positioning System

HMPPS – His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service

HMU – Home Monitoring Unit

MOJ – Ministry of Justice

OASys – Offender Assessment System

OGRS – Offender Group Reconviction Score

PDU – Probation Delivery Unit

PQiP - Professional Qualification in Probation

PND – Police National Database

RAM – Remote Alcohol Monitoring

RCT – Randomised Control Trial

RF – Radio Frequency

RoSH – Risk of Serious Harm

RSR – Risk of Serious Recidivism

SARA – Spousal Assault Risk Assessment

SPOC – Single Point of Contact

VAWG – Violence Against Women and Girls

VCS – Victim Contact Scheme

VLO – Victim Liaison Officer