



Ministry
of Justice

Probation Reset Implementation Evaluation

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Glossary

AcP – Accredited Programmes. Offending behaviour programmes aiming to change the thinking, attitudes and behaviours which may lead people to reoffend.

APs – Approved Premises. Residential units providing a temporary placement in the community for high-risk and complex people on probation and offer enhanced supervision and rehabilitative support to individuals following their release from prison.

CAS – Community Accommodation Service. Contracted service providing short-term accommodation for those who have no suitable accommodation and may otherwise be held in custody.

CAS3 – Community Accommodation Service Tier 3. Provides temporary accommodation for up to 84 nights for individuals leaving prison who are at risk of homelessness, along with support to help them transition to permanent housing.

CO – Community Order. A community order is a sentence served in the community under the supervision of a Probation Trust. It is imposed for offences that are serious but not so serious as to warrant custody.

CRS – Commissioned Rehabilitative Services. CRS are part of the probation system and provide flexible, tailored, and responsive services at a local and regional level, aiming to support and address areas of need associated with reoffending (such as education, training and employment, personal wellbeing, and accommodation).

DRR – Drug Rehabilitation Requirements. Court-ordered requirement within a community or suspended sentence that requires an offender to undergo structured drug treatment and regular testing to address dependency and reduce reoffending.

ECSL – End of Custody Supervised Licence Scheme. Introduced in October 2023, allowing releases from prison up to 18 days early. This was amended in March 2024 to extend the period to 60 days early, and in May 2024 to extend the period to 70 days early.

HMPPS – His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service.

IOM – Integrated Offender Management. A cross-agency approach to coordinating the management of offenders in the community.

MAPPA – Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements. A system to ensure the successful management of violent and sexual offenders, involving partnership working across criminal justice services.

MHTR – Mental Health Treatment Requirement. Court-ordered requirement within a community or suspended sentence requiring offenders to receive psychological treatment to address mental health needs.

MoJ – Ministry of Justice.

nDelius – National Delius. The management information system used by probation.

OASys – Offender Assessment System. Used by HMPPS to measure risks and needs of offenders under supervision.

PDU – Probation Delivery Unit. An operational unit comprising a probation office or offices.

PO – Probation Officer. A fully qualified member of staff appointed to supervise people on probation.

PSO – Probation Services Officer. The term for a probation practitioner who was originally recruited with no professional probation qualification (the PQiP). Instead, they may access locally determined training and can manage all but the most complex cases, depending on their level of training and experience.

PSS – Post Sentence Supervision. A period of supervision in the community for offenders who receive a custodial sentence of more than one day but less than two years.

RAR – Rehabilitation Activity Requirement. Issued by the courts in community orders or suspended sentence orders, requiring people on probation to participate in activities to reduce their risk of reoffending.

RMP - Risk Management Plans. Structured plan completed by Probation Officers that uses supportive and restrictive processes to reduce the risk and impact of further harm.

RoSH – Risk of Serious Harm. The probability that a future offence will be one of serious harm.

SDS40 – A measure introduced through the Criminal Justice Act 2003, allowing certain prisoners serving a ‘standard determinate sentence’ to be released at the 40% point of their sentence.

SFO – Serious Further Offence. A qualifying violent or sexual offence committed by individuals who are the subject of probation supervision.

SPO – Senior Probation Officer. First line manager within the Probation Service.

SSO – Suspended Sentence Order. A legal arrangement where an individual is given a custodial sentence but does not go to prison immediately, and instead remains in the community, provided they comply with conditions set by the court.

VLO – Victim Liaison Officer. A member of staff working directly with victims as a central point of contact.

WMT – Workload Management Tool. Software providing Probation Practitioners an overview of their own workload, and the workload levels of staff across HMPPS.

1. Executive summary

Probation Reset was introduced from 29 April 2024 to reduce demand on probation staff by focusing Probation Staff's time on those who pose the greatest risk to the public (with some exemptions). It changed the management of individuals in the final third of their Community Order/Suspended Sentence Order or Licence, redirecting staff attention to the beginning of these orders.

This report presents findings from an MoJ implementation evaluation and statistical analysis of Probation Reset. Specifically, it examines:

a) Implementation

- How Reset was implemented (both its barriers and enablers).
- The extent to which Reset was implemented.

b) Perception and experiences

- The perceived difference Reset was making – including the experiences of Probation Staff, people on probation, and criminal justice services during implementation.
- How large-scale organisational changes were received and experienced by probation and operational staff and criminal justice services.

c) Lessons learnt

- Lessons which can be drawn from the evaluation to inform future changes.

1.1 Methods

The evaluation used a mixed methods approach, consisting of semi-structured interviews, conducted between May and August 2025, with Criminal Justice System participants including Probation Practitioners, Police and Parole Board members. A purposive sampling strategy was used to ensure representation across regions.

Two sets of quantitative analysis were also carried out, using monitoring data on practitioner contact hours and recall rates. The first analysis tested whether Reset reduced practitioner contact hours spent on supervision, and the second analysis examined whether Reset affected prison recall rates.

1.2 Key findings

Implementing Reset was challenging for practitioners – with some evidence showing it was not implemented as designed in all cases.

- Participants across groups felt initial details about Reset were communicated at very short notice, though some reported improved understanding as implementation and processes became more embedded.
- Participants noted some post-implementation improvements to Reset guidance – such as quick-reference tools and interactive documents. Although participants reported needing these sooner, to prepare ahead of implementation.
- Many participants felt the exemption criteria were too rigid and highlighted the value of discretionary decision-making based on their professional judgement. Some practitioners continued contact with people on probation beyond what was stipulated in the guidance.

Reset was considered inappropriate for certain eligible cases, reducing practitioners' ability to appropriately manage risk and needs.

- Reset was considered inappropriate for low-risk, but high-need individuals, disproportionately affecting women (as they are more likely to be considered lower risk).
- Many Probation Practitioners felt that stopping contact early made it more difficult to build trust with people on probation and ensure sufficient engagement.

Probation Practitioners' workloads remained high, but many felt this was not accurately credited in the Workload Management Tool (WMT).

- Quantitative analysis suggests median annual contact hours within each supervision tier are close to what is expected in the WMT. Average recorded contact time also appears to have reduced by 75% for the final third of licence/Post Sentence Supervision (PSS) compared with Reset.
- However, many practitioners expressed that reactive management work is not sufficiently credited for cases that remain with the same practitioner in the final third (i.e. where a Reset Hub is not used).
- While recorded contact hours reduced, qualitative evidence indicated that this did not consistently translate into a perceived reduction in workload.

Recent changes in the Probation Service have led to change fatigue, disillusionment, and reduced trust in the organisation.

- Participants felt there was a lack of consultation and engagement ahead of major policy changes.
- Many Probation Staff have struggled to keep up with continuous changes in recent years, which require time to absorb information and understand its implications.
- Many expressed reduced trust in the Probation Service's ability to achieve key priorities of reducing reoffending and protecting the public.

2. Background

The Probation Service has experienced demand pressures and increasingly high workloads, exacerbated by recent prison capacity policies, including changes to the End of Custody Supervised Licence,¹ and the introduction of Standard Determinate Sentences (SDS40)².

Probation Reset measures were introduced from 29 April 2024 as an operational change to probation delivery, to reduce the demand on Probation Staff and allow their time to be focused on those posing the greatest risk to the public. Reset was mandated for all Probation Staff, changing the way people on probation have been managed in the final third of their Community Order/Suspended Sentence Order or Licence to instead focus staff time at the beginning of orders, with some exemptions. The rationale was that resource would be focused on the part of sentence management where it is believed the most impact can occur as, for example, recall is most likely to occur during the first two thirds of the licence of a custodial sentence.

Reset was implemented between 29 April and 1 July 2024. Probation Practitioners had two months to implement requirements and reduce their contact with an individual to align with policy expectations.

The Reset changes were as follows:

- For individuals sentenced to under four years custody, the final face-to-face appointment would be undertaken at the two-thirds point of the licence, unless the individual met the exemption criteria.
- For individuals sentenced to four years custody and over, one further face-to-face appointment, which is enforceable, had to be arranged during the midpoint of the final third of the licence.

¹ The End of Custody Supervised Licence (ECSL) Scheme was initially introduced in October 2023, allowing releases from prison up to 18 days early. This was amended in March 2024 to extend the period to 60 days early, and in May 2024 to extend the period to 70 days early.

² SDS40 allows certain prisoners serving a 'standard determinate sentence' (with a 50% conditional release point) to be released at the 40% point of their sentence. This measure was introduced through the Criminal Justice Act 2003 (Requisite and Minimum Custodial Periods) Order 2024.

- That all Rehabilitation Activity Requirement (RAR) appointments and activity days delivered directly by Probation Practitioners would cease in the final third of the sentence, unless the exemption criteria were met.
- That all sentence management contact under Post Sentence Supervision (PSS) would cease, unless the exemption criteria were met.

The exemption criteria include:

- Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) cases.
- Those directly managed by specialist Probation Practitioners in the National Security Division (NSD).
- Cases with an active child protection flag in place.
- Those assessed as Very High Risk of serious harm.
- Those subject to an Intensive Supervision Court pilot.
- Cases subject to youth sentences.

Whilst sentence management contact ceased for eligible cases, Accredited Programmes and other treatment requirements (like Drug Rehabilitation Requirements) were expected to continue in the final third.

Under Reset, practitioners were expected to undertake 'reactive management' of eligible cases, responding to new information but not proactively seeking it. Sentence management contact in the final third of a RAR/Licence or PSS would be reinstated only if new information indicated that exemption criteria were met.

This implementation evaluation of Reset was commissioned by the Chief Probation Officer to provide analytical insight into the implementation and perception of the large-scale operational change. This evaluation was conducted by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), with fieldwork completed between May and August 2025.

3. Methodology

3.1 Aims and research questions

The overarching aims of the implementation evaluation were to understand:

- how Probation Reset has been implemented, the extent to which it has been implemented, and the perceived difference it has been making; and
- how large-scale organisational changes have been received by probation operational staff and criminal justice services, and lessons which can be drawn from this for future changes.

The research questions the implementation evaluation has intended to answer are:

- 1) Is Probation Reset being implemented as intended?
- 2) How has Reset affected sentence management?
- 3) What are staff and stakeholder views on change management in probation?
- 4) How has Reset affected the role of external stakeholders in sentence management?

3.2 Data collection

A mixed-method implementation evaluation was conducted to understand the views of those involved in and affected by Reset.

Qualitative data

Given the exploratory nature of the research questions, semi-structured qualitative interviews were used for engaging with various Probation Staff and stakeholders on perceptions of Reset implementation.

Interviews were conducted in two phases between May and August 2025, allowing early findings to inform the iterative development of later interviews.

Most interviews were conducted online using Microsoft Teams or via phone calls, with in-person interviews offered to people on probation where viable (take up of this option was very low).

Quantitative data

Monitoring data was analysed to complement the findings and help to provide narrative. This included data on:

- the proportion of the caseload subject to reset,
- breach volumes,
- recalls,
- committals to custody for breach of Post Sentence Supervision (PSS), and
- rerunning analysis that was done before Reset, to investigate the number of contacts taking place with offenders in the community.

3.3 Sampling

Qualitative data

A total of 103 qualitative interviews were conducted with participants across the Criminal Justice System including Probation Practitioners, Parole Board members, Police, people on probation and external stakeholders (see Appendix C for the full outline of participants). Participants were recruited using a purposive sampling strategy (see Annex A for further technical detail).

Quantitative data

To assess the amount of work activity completed on a case prior to the introduction of Reset, the analysis first captured Reset eligible cases across England and Wales that had left the Licence/PSS caseload between August and December 2023. This comprised approximately 10,000 PSS cases and 8,700 Licence cases.

To assess activity following implementation, the analysis examined all cases that left the caseload between May 2024 and May 2025 and had experienced a period on Reset. This included a total of 25,600 Reset 'spells' (see Annex A for further technical detail).

3.4 Analysis

Qualitative data

Interviews were analysed thematically using the qualitative analysis software NVivo. A template analysis approach was utilised, involving identifying and defining themes to create a code template and iterating this as transcripts were coded (King, 2012). It is a systematic and methodical approach, enabling collaboration during the coding process. Amendments to the code after the initial template had been developed were tracked. Quality assurance processes involved conducting inter-rater reliability checks. As part of this, 10% of interview transcripts were re-coded and comparison checks were carried out.

Quantitative data

The quantitative analysis examining the average practitioner contact/admin hours spent supervising a person on probation (PoP) used information derived from the nDelius Probation dataset to capture all the workload activity that was recorded against a PoP during their time on probation.³

Additionally, the analysis of recall rates used the Public Protection Unit Database (PPUD) to access data on the number and date of recalls to prison between July 2024 and August 2025. nDelius was used to determine whether a recall occurred during a period of Reset (see Annex A for the full technical annex).

3.5 Ethics

Prior to the interview, all respondents had the aims/objectives of the research outlined to them within the information and consent forms. They were informed how their data would be stored, handled, and used, and were given a chance to ask questions. They were required to provide informed consent, which they were able to

³ nDelius is the National Probation Service's case management system. Staff use nDelius to record work completed on a person on probation's case.

withdraw at any point up to the commencement of analysis. The MoJ Ethics Advisory Group were liaised with prior to fieldwork commencing.

The research team comprised colleagues from analytical and policy professions at the Ministry of Justice. A reflexive approach was maintained throughout the fieldwork, recognising the potential influence of researcher positionality and organisational context on participant responses. Participants were verbally reminded at the beginning of the interview that no names or identifying data were taken or recorded. Researchers also conducted interviews flexibly, adapting their approach where necessary and providing participants with opportunities to reaffirm their ongoing consent.

A Data Protection Impact Assessment was conducted, covering the data processing activities involved in this project.

3.6 Limitations

While there are strengths within the approach taken to this evaluation, such as the depth of qualitative data gathered from a large number of interviews and the triangulation of data between different groups of people, there are some limitations.

Due to the fast-paced and evolving nature of Reset, there was a need to obtain insight into the implementation within a tight timeframe. This resulted in limitations around the breadth of information that could be collected within the implementation evaluation. This was informed by stakeholder priorities, establishing what data would be most useful for understanding the implementation of Reset and informing future policy changes.

A fixed-term recall policy was introduced in the same month as Reset, making recalls for individuals serving sentences of less than 12 months fixed-term only. This change affects recall rates, making it difficult to isolate the impact of Reset on recalls in the quantitative analysis. This was addressed by ensuring parts of the analysis focused only on sentences of 12 months or longer, which represent 83% of the month-end licence in-Reset population between July 2024 and August 2025.

Overall, the design of this evaluation does not allow for attribution of impact and causality. Additionally, establishing the value for money of Reset was beyond the scope of this evaluation. Instead, findings offer insight into any operational benefits, any unintended consequences, and learning to inform decisions on potential developments.

While not all probation regions were included in the qualitative analysis, the purposive sampling strategy was designed to capture a range of perspectives. Participation in interviews was voluntary and therefore subject to self-selection bias, meaning that qualitative findings in this report are based on perceptions of research participants and are indicative rather than generalisable. As far as possible, the qualitative findings have been supplemented with quantitative analysis.

4. Implementation of Probation Reset

4.1 Quantitative overview

According to the Offender Management Statistics, as at 31 December 2025 there were 42,895 people on the probation caseload with contact suspended. This represents 25% of the total caseload being supervised in the community.

Between October and December 2025, 234 people on probation started a committal for breach of Post Sentence Supervision. This represents a decrease of 12% compared with the same quarter a year ago. However, compared with the same quarter in 2023, this represents a larger drop of 65%, coinciding with the implementation of Probation Reset.

4.2 Preparing for implementation

Communications

Format

The overall understanding of how participants first came to hear about Reset was largely mixed and dependent on whether the participant was an internal member of staff or external stakeholder. Participants rarely expressed an overall positive opinion on how the format of communications enabled them to prepare for Reset, mainly due to inconsistent or unclear communication.

Internal Probation Staff were more likely to have heard about Reset first through a structured approach, either through all staff calls or email briefings. Probation Practitioners across regions, frequently identified their Probation Delivery Unit (PDU) meetings as their first point of exposure to Reset. In these meetings, however, information largely outlined the general purpose of Reset and its rationale. It was typically only after PDU meetings or wider calls that staff were provided with more detailed and practical information. Where this process differed, and Probation Practitioners mentioned that they initially heard about Reset in emails, practitioners found that the information was inconsistent or outdated by the time they reviewed it.

External partners, such as the Police, felt that they relied on informal networks and word of mouth to initially find out about Reset and then were provided with formal documents or email updates from Probation. This approach was thought to delay understanding as staff had to determine themselves what changes meant for their day-to-day duties.

In general, external partners, including the Judiciary, frequently expressed hearing about Reset from their internal sources and then from Probation. Parole Board staff reported that they only received initial communications about Reset through formal emails or briefings from the Board and Probation. Weekly bulletins and guidance documents were sent via email, and these were then uploaded to a central Sharepoint site.

Timing

Probation Practitioners reported difficulties preparing for Reset due to short implementation timelines, with limited time between receiving detailed guidance and implementation. This was compounded by concurrent operational changes and high workloads, which reduced capacity to engage with written guidance, leading some to rely on verbal briefings.

Early guidance was also described as unclear and subject to change, creating uncertainty about managing cases, referrals and communication with people on probation. Specific gaps were identified in areas such as child protection, drug testing, and guidance for Victim Liaison Officers (VLOs). Some VLOs highlighted specifically noted they were not initially informed about what should be communicated to victims regarding Reset at the point of implementation.

Since the inception of Reset, there has been time for understanding to increase and processes to embed. A good knowledge of the processes was generally observed among Probation Practitioners, who expressed that it has become normalised. Nevertheless, some Senior Probation Officers felt that Reset processes were still not fully embedded due to backlogs of cases, variation in staff buy-in, and a lack of knowledge about what information needs to be communicated about those on Reset (e.g. communicating address changes to Homelessness Prevention Teams).

Some external staff expressed an awareness of such challenges faced by Probation Practitioners before and during the implementation of Reset. They reflected, however, that within their own roles, the timelines of Reset felt sufficient for preparation.

Usefulness of guidance

Direction and clarity

While some practitioners expressed that guidance was useful to understand the rationale behind Reset and its core concepts, they also felt that guidance did not cover questions on a larger scale in terms of impact and broader implications. Practitioners across roles described gaps in clarity particularly around the exemptions to Reset. It was felt that a nationally recognised process for managing exceptions was missing and that the process was managed differently depending on PDU. Although exemption criteria were provided to practitioners, it was highlighted as being limited and lacking practical case examples to illustrate how criteria should be applied in more complex situations.

Several Probation Practitioners spoke about these challenges being compounded by guidance covering too many roles and conditional scenarios, making it difficult to interpret. This led to a delayed understanding of the guidance as practitioners were uncertain about which sections or scenarios applied to their specific responsibilities.

Integrated Offender Management (IOM)

IOM was frequently identified as a specific area of concern across roles due to a lack of clarity and formal guidance. Participants reported that frequent changes to guidance created confusion and left practitioners unable to prepare and manage IOM cases effectively. Initially, IOM cases were expected to be excluded from Reset, but this position changed shortly before implementation and interim guidance remained unclear.

This uncertainty was reported to have impacted cross-agency work and how staff managed IOM cases in the lead up to Reset implementation. For example, one Police officer highlighted that it was unclear which agency would be responsible for managing IOM cases if they were not exempt from Reset. Another member of

Probation Staff reflected this ambiguity, explaining that they continued supporting IOM cases until a confirmed position was provided.

Navigating Guidance – Barriers and Enablers

Participants frequently described Reset guidance as lengthy and difficult to navigate. Early guidance was perceived as disorganised and overly detailed, which was considered impractical given practitioners' workloads. Several participants noted that they did not have time to read through all documents, which led to some relying on informal learning approaches and instead learning as they went along.

It was suggested that more concise and "bite-sized" materials would have been helpful, focusing on process-orientated steps. Some improvements were noted post-implementation such as the creation of a 'desk aid' that included Reset specific guidance and quick-reference tools.

Several practices highlighted by Probation Practitioners in Wales and the Southwest were identified as enabling effective preparation for Reset. These included "step by step" reference sheets that had all the relevant information on one-page.

Additionally, practitioners in Wales reported that the manuals they were provided were useful as they were interactive, enabling practitioners to quickly click into the information they needed without navigating through multiple pages.

Engagement and Consultation

Participation in Consultation

A common criticism when preparing for Reset, was that most participants indicated that they had been unable to contribute to guidance or processes before implementation. This was a particular concern for external participants who felt that they did not have a voice in consultations as they were not Probation Service employees. Many expressed concerns that this limited engagement negatively affected practices and processes, especially in specialist areas that external staff provided support to Probation on. For example, one Commissioned Rehabilitative Services (CRS) staff member highlighted the impact on women's services, noting that their workload increased. They felt that, as an external agency, their needs were overlooked and changes made without considering practical implications.

Members of the Judiciary had particular concerns that decisions had been made prior to discussion. They felt that they were notified about what was happening rather than invited to discuss details and their implications. These concerns were echoed by internal participants, despite some Probation Practitioners mentioning that they were included in a pilot for Reset.

Participants who were in senior leadership roles reported being consulted on Reset and involved in shaping guidance. These participants acknowledged that they had the advantage of time to engage with Reset consultation and review guidance. One participant also noted that many changes were implemented at pace, and often outside of normal working hours. This made it difficult to bring staff groups along during the process.

Asking Questions and Clarification

Participants expressed that they had frequent opportunities to ask questions and receive support on Reset guidance prior to implementation. This was mainly through team meetings, workshops, and all-staff briefings. Staff briefings were thought to be particularly useful as they typically included a short question and answer session towards the end. The effectiveness of these opportunities, however, was felt to be limited by knowledge gaps of those facilitating meetings and the willingness of staff to follow up on written questions.

These challenges remained at local levels as line managers often also lacked definitive answers, leaving practitioners feeling unassured about their practices and how they should interpret guidance. Nevertheless, some Probation Practitioners still reported feeling supported by line managers who took the time to engage with their teams to interpret guidance and share practices, enabling staff to feel prepared to manage cases more effectively.

For some external participants, additional contact with Probation was needed to seek clarification beyond internal meetings and briefings. For example, several Police reported seeking clarity directly from Probation and that they received prompt and useful responses that supported their preparation and understanding.

4.3 Implementing the Reset guidance

Different approaches across PDUs

Probation regions have taken different approaches to managing Reset cases, with some cases being kept with the same Probation Practitioner, and others moving to a 'Reset Hub'. Reset Hubs, which were also referred to by interviewees as 'Reactive Management Hubs' and 'Final Third Teams', are teams which are responsible for the reactive management of Reset eligible cases. Once these cases reach the final third of their licence/order, there is handover from the practitioner who held the case under active management to a practitioner or practitioners in the Reset Hub.

Changes to the roles of Probation Staff

Level of change

There was variation in the extent that Probation Staff felt their roles had changed since Reset was introduced. Several Probation Practitioners, particularly Senior Probation Officers, stated that they had not experienced much change in their work following the implementation of Reset. This was also reported by Case Administrators, who relayed that Reset had little effect on their day-to-day tasks. Conversely, there were Probation Practitioners across grades who experienced relatively large changes to their roles. This was especially observed among those who moved to work in a Reset Hub where they only managed cases reactively.

Several Probation Officers spoke about the difficulties of having a higher turnover of cases, with each individual spending a shorter time in active management. This involved condensing their work with each case into a shorter timeframe, with some Probation Officers feeling that this led to additional pressure on them or that the intensity of their work had increased.

Professional judgement

A persistent criticism expressed was that practitioners' ability to exercise professional judgement was reduced by Reset, with their decisions being governed by rigid criteria rather than allowing flexibility based on individual circumstances. Practitioners spoke about developing an understanding of the cases they work with, gaining insight into how best to work with each individual to manage their risk. They

expressed that this knowledge was being disregarded in decisions about whether someone is appropriate for Reset.

“I think it removes a lot of the individual things that we take into consideration with cases. It just boils down cases to being a number on a piece of paper”

[Probation Officer]

A common view among Probation Practitioners was that there should either be the potential to challenge a case’s Reset eligibility, or that it should be left up to practitioners to decide who was suitable to enter reactive management in the final third of their licence/order. Several suggested that this should need to be agreed with the Senior Probation Officer in the team to ensure oversight of the decision.

A benefit of removing professional judgement from Reset eligibility decisions raised by some Probation Staff, was that this would protect practitioners if anything were to go wrong. They relayed messaging from senior management that the risk and accountability would be held by the organisation as a whole in such circumstances. Nevertheless, there was some mistrust expressed by Probation Practitioners around whether they felt they would be protected in the case of a serious further offence (SFO) occurring.

“They’re like, “This is mandatory, it’s the powers that be that have said this, it’s not professional judgement, so it will not fall to you. You will not be responsible.” But I don’t know. It hasn’t happened to me, thankfully. I still don’t trust it...” **[Probation Officer]**

Reduction in job satisfaction

For some Probation Practitioners, Reset reportedly led to a decrease in job satisfaction. For many this appeared to be due to a reduction of in-person engagement with people on probation, which they felt was an important part of understanding and managing their cases. Some suggested that moving to reactive management had removed some of the personalisation and ability to facilitate change, which was viewed as a key part of the job satisfaction for many.

Applying Reset processes

Identifying cases approaching contact suspension

When Reset was first introduced, there was an initial lack of clarity among Probation Practitioners around the exemption criteria and when contact suspension should take place. Examples shared included instances where cases had the wrong flag put on or were terminated incorrectly. At the time of the interviews, this seemed to be less of an issue with some practitioners expressing that the identification of cases approaching the two thirds point of their licence/order was straightforward. There were, however, some practitioners who still did not feel confident in this and mentioned concerns around the potential of getting this wrong. A specific grey area raised was uncertainties around the process required in situations where cases have multiple orders.

Another barrier to identifying Reset cases was the administrative systems; according to Probation Practitioners, nDelius was unreliable in correctly identifying the date for contact suspension. One practitioner also stated that nDelius calculates a date for all cases regardless of eligibility for Reset, adding to the uncertainty. Some Practitioners mentioned that the Practitioner Dashboard was more accurate, so they used the date given on there, rather than the often-different date in nDelius. Others stated that they had been calculating the date themselves as they did not trust the administrative systems to be correct.

Terminating active supervision

Once Probation Practitioners are notified that a Reset eligible case is approaching the two thirds point of their licence/order, they can start the processes required to terminate active supervision. Some Probation Practitioners felt that there was little additional burden created by the Reset administrative processes, stating that these were straightforward processes, that they were handled by administrative staff, or that they were tasks they would have done anyway.

Conversely, there were Probation Practitioners who felt that the administrative processes had created considerably more work, with some suggesting that they could be streamlined. Barriers raised included having a low proportion of administrative staff in post resulting in Probation Practitioners picking up some of their tasks, confusion around updating the systems when someone is recalled, and

late notifications of upcoming contact suspension in the case where people have very short custodial sentences.

One Reset administrative process specifically mentioned as creating unnecessary additional work was the Offender Assessment System (OASys) termination report, used to formally suspend contact with a case. For areas rated as 'red' indicating significant risk/pressure levels, there was reportedly a concession in place where they would only need to complete a light touch OASys process to suspend contact. This only required a date to be entered, rather than proceeding through each OASys section.

Some Victim Liaison Officers (VLOs) raised that they were not always informed when contact was suspended with a person on probation under Reset. However, they spoke about being able to see information on the date at which this would happen on nDelius.

Handing over cases to Reset Hubs

Where Reset Hubs were used, these cases are transferred over from the original Probation Practitioner to one or multiple practitioners working in the Hub. A barrier mentioned by some practitioners working in Hubs was the variation in quality in the recording of information as part of the handover, with some lacking key information and potentially creating further work for the Reset Hub practitioners.

“It’s either a case of practitioners panicking and doing as much work as they can at that stage, or it’s practitioners thinking, “Oh, we can just dump this case on Reset and we don’t have to worry about doing all that work.”” **[Probation Officer]**

Others spoke about difficulties in taking on the initial wave of cases which were transferred over to the Reset Hub in one go. This reportedly led to some enforcement and breach actions not being taken when they should have been, risk work not being completed, and missing information on areas such as Rehabilitation Activity Requirements (RARs). This appears to have become less of an issue as time progressed, with Hub practitioners from various regions speaking about having two-way handovers with the previous practitioner, and three-way handovers with the previous practitioner and the person on probation before they take on each case.

In Wales, practitioners mentioned that an eight-week window was used to prepare cases for transitioning across to reactive management including setting the expectations of cases, scheduling handovers to a Reset Hub practitioner, and completing the termination OASys. Some spoke positively about this period for helping to ensure they had the relevant information about cases, while others mentioned that there was a tight timeframe to work with individuals to ensure they are ready and that tasks are completed.

Explanation of Reset to people on probation

Understanding

A few Probation Practitioners stated that Reset was initially confusing for some individuals. For example, it was mentioned that people on probation were unaware of the term 'Probation Reset' and did not seem to know about situations that may lead to contact being reinstated, other than if they committed a further offence (see 'Understanding' in section 5.2 'Reactive Management Process'). Nevertheless, when people on probation mentioned that they had been informed about Reset, they reported that practitioners explained it clearly and that they were able to ask their Probation Officer any questions.

Reactions

According to Probation Practitioners interviewed, there were mixed reactions from people on probation in response to being informed that their regular Probation meetings would be coming to an end. Many appeared pleased that they would no longer be having appointments as having to maintain regular contact with Probation was discussed to be disruptive to the lives of people on probation. Some of those interviewed described having to spend time and money travelling in each time, with one person on probation stating that having appointments end was like "a weight lifted off your shoulders". For those who had jobs, Probation appointments were felt to be particularly disruptive, at times requiring them to take time off work or turn down shifts to be able to attend.

Others were reportedly disappointed or upset at losing their support, with mentions that some had suggested they were considering committing further offences so they could continue to receive support. One person on probation mentioned that they would have liked to have known about going on Reset earlier so that there was more

time to advocate to their Probation Officer for things such as “mental health requirements”, as well as some mentioning more time to get used to what the change would mean.

Divergence from the guidance

Some Probation Practitioners and CRS staff mentioned diverging from the guidance. The most common deviation was continuing a level of contact with people on probation beyond that stipulated. This ranged from occasional check ins on cases while contact was suspended to fully ignoring the Reset processes and continuing to work with cases in the final third as if they were not Reset eligible.

“They might have Reset on the label in that case, but they're not Reset case because they're just getting exactly the same service as they were before they went into Reset” **[HM Inspector of Probation]**

Commonly heard reasons for circumventing Reset guidance and continuing work included concerns around:

- The welfare of cases including those with mental health concerns or neurodivergence,
- People on probation experiencing accommodation instability in the final third of their licence/order,
- Probation Practitioners and CRS staff being one of the few or only member of their cases' support network,
- Risks of people on Probation engaging in offending behaviours after the point of contact suspension e.g. cases where there were concerns around child welfare, but an order was not yet in place as the interim care order.

Senior Probation Officers and other more experienced Probation Staff expressed understanding of the difficulties that practitioners were experiencing at the point of contact suspension. Some reportedly supported practitioner's wants to work beyond the stipulated level while contact was suspended. Others expressed that practitioners with Reset eligible cases should refrain from doing work beyond the expectations of reactive management as it was counterproductive to the attempts to reduce their workloads.

4.4 Perceptions of Reset

Overall perceptions of Reset across participant types were largely negative, such as mentioning concerns about the reduction in support offered to people on probation and potential effects on public protection. Positive elements identified included adjusting the focus of resources to account for increased demand in the Probation Service and the view that Reset was appropriate for some people on probation. Amongst the Probation Practitioners interviewed, positive views about Reset were most frequently expressed by those based in regions that adopt a devolved model (i.e. Wales and Greater Manchester) because of a wider breadth of services provided and more professional judgement over access.

Managing demand in the Probation Service

Many participants felt that they understood why Reset had been implemented, with some positive views expressed about the intentions of introducing the change in an attempt to tackle the capacity issues experienced in HMPPS. The view that Reset enabled the Probation Service to absorb the influx of people on probation resulting from recent prison capacity measures was commonly mentioned by various participant types.⁴ Some expressed that existing strains on Probation capacity necessitated a rapid change to withstand the increased demand on the service.

“I think the alternative would have been worse, i.e., we are managing a lot more people in the community, and I think if we hadn't have resorted to Reset, then we would have been managing cases a lot worse than we are.”

[Probation Officer]

An additional perceived benefit was focusing limited probation resources at the start of people's licences/orders. Some felt that the organisational change provided encouragement for Probation Practitioners to start risk reduction work earlier, when individuals may be more receptive to engagement and in greater need of support.

Despite many participants expressing understanding of the capacity issues faced by the Probation Service, some Probation Staff and Parole Board members felt that

⁴ In response to the prison capacity crisis several short-term policy changes have been implemented to reduce the prison population. These include the End of Custody Supervised Licence, SDS40 and the move to Fixed Term Recalls for the majority of the under 12-month custody cohort.

Reset was insufficient to take the pressure off Probation Practitioners given the increase in cases that entered the service over the same period, while for others this was because they felt the approach was unsuitable for managing the risk of people on probation.

Priorities of the Probation Service

Many people interviewed across participant types raised concerns that Reset does not align with organisational priorities. Largely the change was thought to reduce the ability of the Probation Service to rehabilitate people on probation due to the reduction in support offered by the Probation Service. Some voiced dissatisfaction with the change in priorities, feeling the focus had shifted too far towards relieving capacity issues and concentrating on risk, with one Parole Board member reflecting feeling that the service is moving away from “an intervention-based culture”.

An interlinked effect of Reset was a perceived decrease in public safety. Various participants working in the justice system, along with some people on probation, believed that the reduction of oversight and support under Reset would result in increased reoffending and more people being reconvicted. If this were to happen, this was thought to have the potential to counteract some of the positive intentions of tackling capacity issues in probation and prisons.

A further unintended consequence of Reset appeared to be a reduction in confidence in the Probation Service to deliver in line with the sentence of the court. This was frequently discussed by judges, with concerns raised around whether the sentence that had been passed was able to be delivered for Reset eligible individuals.

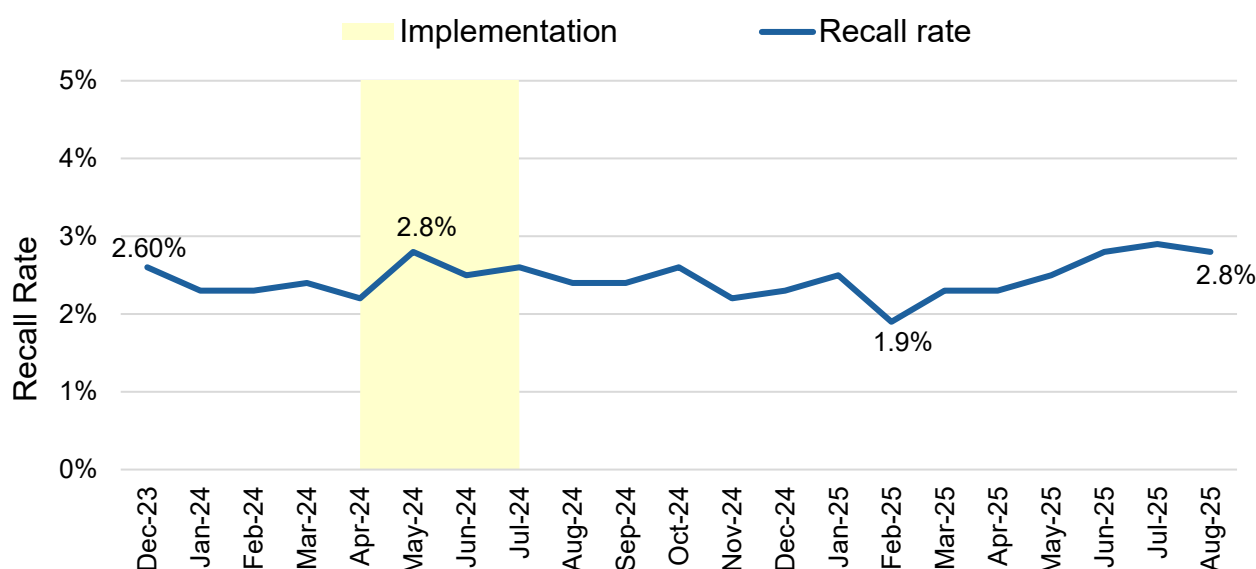
5. Case Management under Probation Reset

5.1 Quantitative overview

Quantitative analysis was carried out to examine whether Reset affected rates of recall to prison. In April 2024, the same month that Reset was introduced, a change to recall policy meant all recalls for individuals serving sentences of less than 12 months would be fixed. As it is not possible to disentangle the effect of the two policies on recall rates, the Reset analysis focused on sentences of 12 months or more.

The recall rate for sentences 12 months or more (see Figure 1), was stable in the months before and after implementation of Reset, suggesting that Reset did not affect rates of recall to prison.⁵ While the pre-implementation period is relatively short, the stability observed across the wider time series provides additional context for this interpretation.

Figure 1: Recall rate for sentences 12 months or more in the final third of licence.

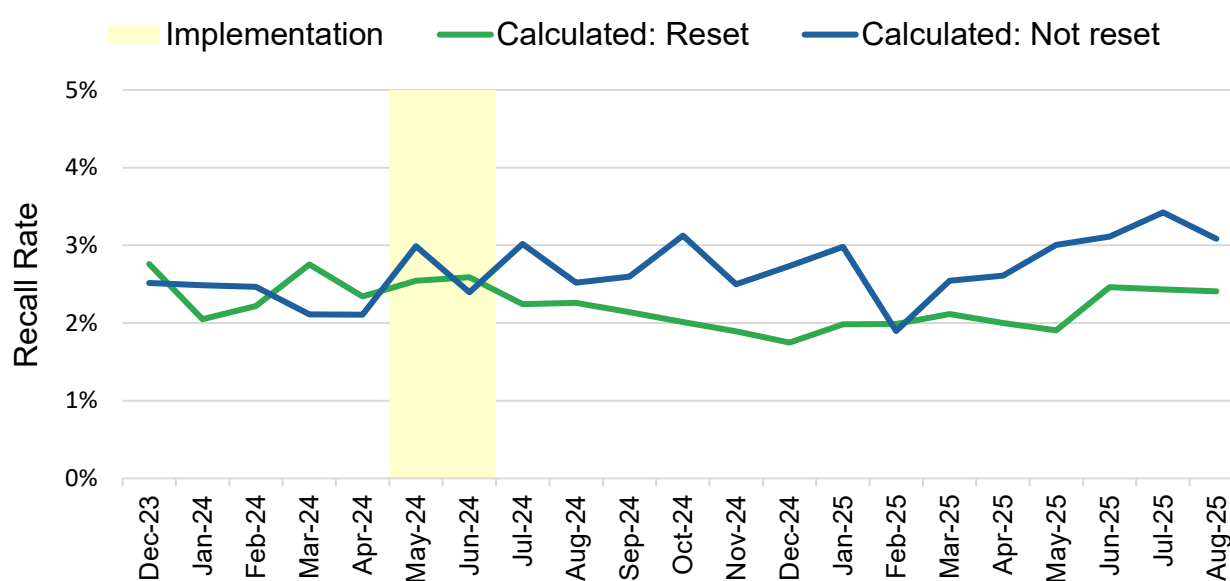


Source: Public Protection Unit Database (PPUD) to source recalls and nDelius to calculate at what point in the licence the recall occurred.

⁵ Calculated as the number of recalls in a month as a proportion of the caseload at month end.

The analysis also compared recall rates for Reset eligible cases with those not eligible for Reset and in the final third of Licence (see Figure 2). While recall rates for the two groups were similar prior to Reset, following policy introduction the recall rate for Reset eligible cases dropped below that of non-eligible Reset cases. However, the recall rate for both groups is so low that real differences are minimal (the difference is less than 1 recall per 100 licences).

Figure 2: Since the introduction of Reset, the recall rate for 'calculated Reset' cases is slightly lower than 'calculated not Reset'.



Source: Public Protection Unit Database (PPUD) to source recalls and nDelius to calculate at what point in the licence the recall occurred.

5.2 Reactive management process

Reactive management is the term used to define the expectation of practitioners during the suspension of contact period for Reset eligible cases. Whilst there remains an expectation that practitioners will respond to new information received, they are not required to proactively seek information in the final third of the licence/order.

Understanding

Good understanding of the elements involved in reactive management was generally observed among the Probation Practitioners interviewed. Examples were given by

some practitioners where they responded to new information received, liaised with partnership agencies, and reinstated contact where a change in circumstances resulted in the case meeting the exclusion criteria. Additionally, case administrators shared examples of escalating new information they received from police to relevant Probation Practitioners. Conversely, some Victim Liaison Officers (VLOs) expressed uncertainties around what reactive management involved, including what enforcement actions could be taken during contact suspension.

While the guidance around reactive management was broadly understood, there were some uncertainties expressed by Probation Practitioners about the extent to which they should respond to risk information they receive during reactive management. This included being unsure whether they had sufficiently engaged with partner agencies or if it was acceptable to check in with people on probation after receiving new risk information.

Various experienced Probation Staff were concerned that less experienced staff may be less likely to know how to react to information appropriately, including knowing what information to share and where to obtain further information when necessary. This highlighted the importance of clear guidance and communications to ensure that risk information is dealt with appropriately and consistently under reactive management.

Sources of information

Reduction in information sources

The main gap in information that was mentioned to exist during reactive management was the loss of observations from face-to-face appointments. Reducing access to informal observations such as changes in appearance, behaviours, routine or “if they smelt of alcohol” [Probation Service Officer]. It was widely believed across participant types that this information could not be substituted for as part of robust risk management.

Generally, practitioners reported feeling unable to rely on updates from people on probation once contact was suspended.

“If someone, let’s say, wanted to change address, kind of disappear, move to a different county, we wouldn’t necessarily know that, so someone can go off radar quite easily.” **[Probation Service Officer]**

Drug testing was mentioned by some practitioners as a means of maintaining oversight of cases. This was also mentioned by a member of the Parole Board who was supportive, as it reassured them that warning signs would be monitored in lieu of active supervision. This was not the case, however, in certain areas where drug testing is either carried out by a substance misuse agency or within a drug testing clinics set up so a small number of Probation Practitioners can test several individuals in one go regardless of whether they are on their caseload.

Information from partner agencies

Some Probation Practitioners mentioned that information from partner agencies facilitated the reactive management of cases. Probation Staff in Wales and the North-West benefitted from receiving daily communications from the police containing reportable incidents.

However, practitioners reported inconsistencies in information sharing and whether information was passed on promptly enough for practitioners to respond appropriately. The importance of strengthening buy-in from partner agencies was expressed by some Probation Staff to improve the effectiveness of reactive management.

Some participants from partner agencies, felt that information about Reset eligibility had not always been shared with them in a timely manner by Probation Practitioners. While for some this appeared to have improved since implementation, other participants from partner agencies felt they would benefit from more proactive communication about eligibility to understand the respective involvement of Probation and their own agencies with cases across their sentences.

Parole Board members also stated that they had observed variation in the extent to which Probation Practitioners engage with partner agencies and the information available to them related to the risk of cases. Such reduced levels of engagement appeared to lower Parole Board members’ confidence that risk was being appropriately managed.

Reacting to new information

Enforcement action

Practitioners spoke about the limitations on actions they were able to take with information obtained during reactive management. Some specifically referred to individuals on Post Sentence Supervisions (PSS) being involved in behaviours they were concerned about, where they were only able to issue warning letters rather than take enforcement action. A lack of enforcement actions was also observed by a Victim Liaison Officer, who viewed this as an indication that risk might not be managed as effectively as it was under active management.

“I’ve had multiple cases now where the offender still in the Reset period, has breached their license conditions quite significantly including exclusion zones and contacting a victim. And he’s not been recalled because they’ve been on Reset, so the offender manager said because they’re on Reset, we can’t recall them” **[Victim Liaison Officer]**

One Probation Practitioner gave an example of a domestic violence case who breached multiple times while contact was suspended, with reports received from multiple victims and concerns over children. Nevertheless, as arrests were not made, and the threshold was not met for a Child Protection Order to be put in place or to increase his Risk of Serious Harm (RoSH) to ‘Very High’; his contact remained suspended with limited enforcement action available to the practitioner.

Reflections that the threshold for reinstatement of contact was too high were common among Probation Practitioners across grades, and that this hindered the ability to effectively manage risk.

Reinstating contact after suspension

Reasons for reinstating contact mentioned by Probation Practitioners included cases going into Child Protection, being resentenced, having their RoSH escalated to ‘Very High’, and being identified as being Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) eligible. For the latter reason, a few practitioners discussed a change in legislation, which widened the scope of MAPPA eligibility to include people convicted of controlling or coercive behaviour and sentenced to 12 months or longer.⁶ This led

⁶ Victims and Prisoners Act 2024.

to a reassessment of cases' eligibility and some cases having active supervision reinstated.

Information prompting reinstatement was typically received from partner agencies such as Children's Services, Social Services, and the police. This required updates to administration systems and notification to the person on probation. In areas using Reset Hubs, cases were transferred to a practitioner working in active management before they were informed of their reinstatement. Practitioners mentioned that, where possible, cases were reassigned to the same practitioner that had been managing the case prior to contact suspension for continuity.

Some people on probation interviewed appeared to be unaware of situations that could result in contact being reinstated during the period of reactive management, other than if they committed a further offence. In a similar vein, when Probation Practitioners informed cases that their contact was being reinstated some individuals were said to have reacted with confusion as they had been under the impression that they would not need to return to appointments. Many of those that were aware of the process, however, were said to have reacted well when they were informed with several practitioners putting this down to an understanding of why reinstatement had occurred. Some people on probation were even said to be pleased to return to active management, welcoming the support they would receive.

Difficulties with explaining reinstatement of contact were said to arise in situations where people on probation did not agree with the reasons for reinstatement and a belief that stopping and later restarting contact can be more difficult than maintaining steady ongoing contact.

“For him, going into Reset then being told to come back is actually going to create a lot of potential risks to staff because he is a very volatile man... where if he'd have just been on probation, he'd have just been seen weekly and it wouldn't have been any different for him.” **[Probation Officer]**

Regional approaches

Finding the right balance between effectively managing risk and managing demand was a challenge that some Probation Staff grappled with. The view that keeping cases with the same practitioner was more effective for managing risks was

prevalent, yet this was thought to increase cognitive load for practitioners and to moderate demand management. The prioritisation of tackling demand and reducing the pressures on practitioners led to regional differences, with some regions opting to use the Hub approach and others keeping cases with their existing practitioner in the final third of their licence/order.

Continuity of practitioner

A reluctance to hand over cases to another practitioner in a Reset Hub was witnessed among Probation Practitioners, often feeling responsibility for the people on probation they had been working with. This included some expressing concerns that a change in practitioner would be more difficult for people on probation than keeping them with the same practitioner. This was thought to be especially detrimental in the context of frequent changes in practitioner being a common experience across sentence management, reducing stability and hindering the development of trusting relationships.

Some viewed the use of a Reset Hub as a mechanism for increasing objectivity, enabling current risks to be weighed up and responded to without being affected by pre-existing views stemming from previous behaviours. Nevertheless, concerns were also raised by Probation Staff across grades that transferring cases away from the practitioner that has developed an understanding of their risks and needs may result in lower quality case management. The consensus was that keeping cases with the existing practitioner would enable more efficient and informed responses to information that arose during reactive management due to the existing knowledge and relationships. This continuity was thought by some to be especially important with women on probation, who often have complex needs.

Practitioners working in Reset Hubs spoke about the challenge of not knowing the people on their caseload. This was exacerbated by the high caseloads in the Hubs, mentioned by some to be over 100 cases. Practitioners working in Hubs discussed the need to spend more time considering the unfamiliar details of the case and information available to them before they felt able to take action. Even then, concerns were expressed that relevant information about risks would be missed, which some found stressful. For some practitioners, this lack of familiarity with cases led to them asking the previous practitioner for information when incidents arose to

enable them to respond to partner agencies, as they felt the information they had access to was insufficient.

Importance of quality handovers to Reset Hubs

In Probation Delivery Units (PDUs) where Reset Hubs are used, there were some reports of inconsistent quality of the risk assessments and sentence management plans handed to practitioners in the Hubs. Detailed high-quality recording was said to be important for ensuring that they had the information required to conduct reactive management effectively.

“How can I write a progress report when I don’t them, you know? So I found myself having to have to go and ask their previous practitioner, you know, and essentially almost use their time so I can write a report for the court. It felt quite disjointed.” **[Probation Service Officer]**

Various practices have been identified as enabling a smooth handover of cases to a Reset Hub. These include the previous practitioner and Reset Hub practitioner having a pre-meeting, using locally developed checklists and templates to ensure sufficient information is captured, and being given the authority to reject the transfer of cases that do not have the required work and information completed. These practices were found helpful in ensuring outstanding work, licence conditions, and factors relating to offending behaviours are understood by the practitioners working in Hubs.

Balancing reactive and active caseloads

Balancing active and reactive caseloads was felt to be a challenging task by various Probation Staff, adding to the already high cognitive loads of practitioners. Some practitioners based in Reset Hubs expressed concerns that practitioners holding both reactive and active cases may struggle to conduct reactive management as prescribed.

In PDUs where Reset eligible people on probation remained with the same Probation Practitioner in the final third of their licence/order, some practitioners appeared to mentally disengage with cases once they entered reactive management. This was illustrated through statements from Probation Officers such as “if they’re in Reset, in my mind, they’re off my caseload”, and using language including “as opposed to my

actual caseload” to distinguish reactive management cases from cases in active management.

A widely reported barrier for Probation Practitioners in areas without a Hub approach was the expectation of a sudden switch from active to reactive management of a case. Probation Practitioners spoke about building a professional relationship with people on probation over time and developing an understanding of their risks and needs. Some practitioners spoke about difficulties retaining people on their caseloads under reactive management, where they still feel responsibility but have much less oversight over them.

While not all were comfortable with the use of Reset Hubs, various Probation Staff felt that they provide the advantage of creating a clear divide between active and reactive management. Hubs were thought by some to be useful for helping practitioners in active management focus on the start of the licence/order, while allowing those in reactive management to be in the right mindset to appropriately react to new information and ensure all relevant processes are completed without actively monitoring cases.

Since the implementation of Impact, however, Reset Hubs in some PDUs have also been used to manage Impact cases.⁷ While this keeps those cases away from Probation Practitioners outside of the Hubs and keeps their caseloads down, for Practitioners situated in the Hubs this reportedly added pressure and complexity. These Practitioners therefore are required to balance reactively managing Reset cases with actively managing Impact cases, adding to their cognitive load.

5.3 Managing risks of people on probation

Risk assessments

In Probation settings, risk assessment is undertaken by Probation Practitioners to examine the risk factors relating to Risk of Serious Harm (RoSH) and make a

⁷ In April 2025, Impact was introduced by HMPPS to further reduce practitioner workload. Impact required practitioners to end supervision for people on probation with a lower risk of reoffending and harm after 16 weeks.

judgement on their risk category. The dynamic nature of risk was spoken about by some Probation Practitioners as an important principle, where the RoSH of a case can change across their licence/order. They therefore use ongoing risk assessments to understand and manage changing circumstances of people on probation.

Changes to assessment of risk

Assessment of risk is expected to continue for people on probation who move into reactive management under Reset, yet this proved to come with difficulties for some. Practitioners across grades mentioned finding it challenging to assess risk using only information provided by criminal justice services, suspecting that they were missing the “personalisation” and disregarding professional curiosity [Probation Officer].

For Probation Practitioners working in Reset Hubs, the quality of risk assessments was regarded as being especially important for careful management of cases as they often had little pre-existing knowledge of the cases when they were transferred into the Hub. Where these were of lower quality, they were said to leave practitioners without the foundations they felt they required for reactive management.

Similarly, HM Inspectors of Probation reported witnessing a reduction in quality of risk assessments for Reset eligible cases in or approaching contact suspension. Including missing information on developments of dynamic risks, suggesting limited understanding of the purpose of the risk assessment, or time pressures. Mixed responses were heard from Probation Practitioners on whether they changed how they determined risk level for Reset eligible individuals. Various Practitioners across grades stated they maintained the same approach of assessing risk, regardless of whether a case would be actively or reactively managed. Others mentioned increased deliberation of whether Reset eligible individuals would meet the exception criteria, with some disclosing they artificially increased the risk level of cases they were concerned about to prevent contact suspension.

One Senior Probation Officer spoke about the initial urge to up-tariff risk had reduced in their Probation Office since implementation, as staff increasingly adjusted to Reset. Additionally, many Practitioners expressed frustration at the high bar needed to meet the Very High RoSH criteria, with some voicing that they did not have the evidence to justify escalation.

Risk management plans

When the change was initially brought in, risk management plans (RMP) could not be seen through, as the expected time to work with cases was cut short. Once they had adjusted to Reset, however, Practitioners spoke about adapting their RMP approach to account for the condensed period they had to work with Reset eligible cases. Some spoke about prioritising addressing the court sentence and risk factors related to offending, considering what can be delivered in the time available. Leading up to contact suspension, practitioners spoke about using the RMP to consider what referrals could be made and ensure that cases were signposted as appropriate, to provide opportunities for support after the supervision meetings stopped.

Some Parole Board members flagged the issue that, in the early days of Reset, for cases up for parole, it was not always clear from their RMP whether they were eligible for Reset and the RMP often did not take into account the lack of supervision when considering how risk would be addressed. It was also suggested by a HM Inspector of Probation that the quality of RMPs has been lower for those with suspended contact. This observation was reflected by a small number of Practitioners who spoke about including less detail when writing RMPs as part of parole reports for those with contact suspended. Conversely, one mentioned including a change in circumstances in the parole report RPM that had not been updated in the OASys risk assessment.

Integrated Offender Management

Reset was thought to have resulted in contradictory messaging around IOM cases. The Probation officers and police who worked with them, expressed that their eligibility to have Probation contact suspended early seemed to clash with IOM-specific approaches where it was “a priority for police and probation to target their offending because of the damage it does to community” [Probation Officer]. The expected continuation of police oversight was also thought to be misaligned with Probation supervision ending, raising questions for some police over how Probation approached risk.

The continued involvement of the police in monitoring IOM cases was mentioned by several Parole Board members as an important factor in determining the risks of cases up for Parole. Some expressed the expectation that police would continue to

keep an eye on cases in the same way as they had prior to Reset, while others expressed this did not always appear to be the case.

Nonetheless, while police often had reduced engagement with Reset eligible cases, several discussed continuing to monitor the cases in the final third of their licence/order, even if information was often missed from cases being less willing to engage with police.

Serious further offences

Caution about the escalation of risk after the point of contact suspension was communicated by some Probation Staff and Parole Board members. There were also concerns that not continuously monitoring fluctuating imminence of risk could lead to a serious further offence (SFO) in cases exhibiting risky behaviours. Concerns were raised about the potential effects on victims, feeling that public protection had reduced.

Repeated recalls can indicate an escalation of concerning behaviours and a potential lack of compliance. As such, Probation Officers, Parole Board members, and police raised concerns about recalls to prison not triggering reactivation of supervision for a person on probation.

“I think it’s wholly inappropriate for people that have been recalled back to prison because if you recall somebody back to prison, as a community offender manager, you’re meant to be recalling them back to prison because the level of their risk of serious harm is so great that it can no longer be managed in the community, right?” **[Parole Board member]**

Engagement of people on probation

Many practitioners have spoken about it taking time to build working relationships with people on probation, and that stopping contact early under Reset made it more difficult to build up trust with them and ensure there is sufficient engagement in the reduced timeframe.

Stopping Probation contacts

Mixed views were observed from people on probation in discussing how helpful they had found their meetings with Probation Practitioners before contact suspension. For

some, these were thought to be “pointless”. This included some people who had completed their requirements and felt meetings had become tick box exercises, along with one individual who expressed that they had not been provided the service they had expected under the court order, with Rehabilitative Activity Requirement (RAR) days not being delivered.

Conversely, some people on probation felt they had benefited from meetings with their Probation Practitioner, obtaining support that they would not have otherwise received. For some this kept them stable or helped them through difficult circumstances, including help to access accommodation, obtain a job, or receive health support. This broadly seemed to align with their views of the Probation Practitioner they had been working with, with those who had built a good working relationship commonly expressing that they had benefited from the Probation meetings. Equally, some people had struggled with experiencing changes in practitioner after building up trust over time.

After the point of contact suspension, some people on probation had no contact with their Probation Practitioner. Others mentioned receiving the occasional check in phone calls or texts from their practitioner. In one situation, a person on probation spoke about receiving a home visit from their Probation Officer to check in with them after contact had been suspended. This was spoken about positively by the person on probation, as they had initially felt abandoned when regular contact stopped and had started engaging in risky behaviours.

Programmes and interventions

The introduction of Reset emphasised the importance of frontloading interventions to ensure delivery at the earliest stage of a sentence/licence and, if possible, conclude delivery before the final third of a licence/order. Some Probation Practitioners felt there were benefits of doing interventions early to “start with the end in sight” [Probation Officer], ensuring that everything is covered and tackling the issues when it is fresh in their mind after sentencing. Others raised that time was required to build trust and stability before commencing risk reduction work.

“They’re quite chaotic at the start of their sentence, you’re not able to start the rehabilitation as effectively as you would if somebody was stable.” **[Probation Officer]**

In many Probation Delivery Units (PDUs), there were reportedly large waiting lists that delayed the start of Accredited Programmes and Structured Interventions. This was mentioned to have been a longstanding issue, meaning that risk reduction work often was not completed before people on probation entered the final third of their licence/order. In other areas, this was reportedly less of an issue with some practitioners stating that they thought most people were completing programme requirements.

Reluctance to start work with cases when the Reset date was approaching was witnessed in some Probation Practitioners, as this left the potential that it would need to be stopped part way through when the individual was in a vulnerable place.

Incomplete RAR days were widely reported by Probation Practitioners and some people on probation interviewed. The reduction in time to work with the cases was raised by many as an issue, leaving insufficient time to complete the work. However, in Wales, where Reset Hubs were used, Practitioners in PDUs stated that they did not accept the transfer of a case into the Reset Hub if less than 50% of the RAR days had been completed. Their reasoning was that, if this threshold had not been reached, “there needs to be management oversight” [Probation Officer] of the case. Some of these Practitioners working in Reset Hubs mentioned that many of the cases only just met the 50% mark when they transferred in, and one shared their suspicions that not all recorded RAR days were RAR activities in reality.

Enforcement action could be taken if people did not attend programme requirements while they were being reactively managed, just as it would if they were under active management. A commonly heard concern among Practitioners, however, was that the wrap around support that would otherwise be there was missing if programmes were carried out after contact was suspended under Reset. This included discussion during the programme and follow up work to address outstanding issues or revisit programme material after programme completion.

Unpaid Work

There were mixed responses from Probation Practitioners and people on probation on whether Unpaid Work hours were being completed in the first two thirds of the licence/order before active management stopped. Some Probation Practitioners spoke about cases that had outstanding Unpaid Work after contact suspension with frustration, mentioning spending time taking enforcement action or extending orders where the hours would not be completed in time.

While Probation meetings were mentioned by some to be useful for prompting people to attend their Unpaid Work or check in where there was non-attendance, several Probation Practitioners and people on probation suggested that Reset did not seem to make a difference to the attendance of Unpaid Work.

5.4 Eligibility of people on probation for Reset

While some CRS and Probation Staff expressed that they broadly agreed with the exclusion criteria for Reset, only a small minority of interview participants felt that these sufficiently covered the appropriate groups to be kept in active supervision. A prevalent view across participant types was that it was not appropriate to apply “a one-size-fits-all approach when we are dealing with anything other than a one-size-fits-all cohort” [HM Inspector of Probation].

Risk-based eligibility

The Reset exemption criteria exclude cases from Reset if they are assessed as Very High RoSH. All other risk categories (Low, Medium and High) were eligible for Reset, if they did not meet any other exemption criteria. It was raised by some Probation Staff that only a small number of cases meet the criteria to be assessed as Very High RoSH due to this category requiring an imminence of risk. As such, concern was expressed by various participant types who were uncomfortable with the level of risk carried by cases subject to Reset and thought this was detrimental to public protection.

Views on Reset eligibility across risk categories can be summarised as follows:

1. **High RoSH cases:** Most commonly considered to be inappropriate for Reset. Practitioners felt that any changes to the imminence of risk would not be identified without careful monitoring.
2. **Medium RoSH cases:** Mostly mixed views, some practitioners expressed that it depends on the individual in these cases. More commonly it was felt that medium RoSH individuals are more likely to offend without active supervision to monitor occurrences of risky behaviour.
3. **Low RoSH cases:** Generally seen as well-suited to Reset, especially where cases are stable and have completed their requirements. Ending active supervision was viewed as beneficial to reducing practitioner workload and to people on probation whose lives may be disrupted by Probation appointments. It was recognised that low RoSH individuals with high needs may rely heavily on probation for stability (see 'Needs-based eligibility' in section 5.4 'Eligibility of people on probation for Reset').

There was broad consensus among Probation Staff and police that Integrated Offender Management (IOM) cases should be excluded from Reset. The risky behaviours, high needs, and repeated offending associated with IOM cohorts were widely thought to necessitate active management. Practitioners frequently expressed apprehension about whether their cases would refrain from reoffending without ongoing supervision, particularly given the range of factors thought to undermine their stability near the point of contact suspension. This included homelessness, mental health issues, addiction, and safeguarding issues.

Needs-based eligibility

People with high needs can struggle to adapt to the reduction in support at the point of contact suspension. Participants mentioned that those higher need individuals rely on probation appointments to give them routine amidst an often-chaotic lifestyle and provide ongoing support. Even where an individual's risk of serious harm has been rated as low, concerns were expressed that they can quickly escalate in terms of both offending and other antisocial behaviours when their needs go unmanaged.

In particular:

1. **Women** were frequently highlighted as being less likely to engage with people or services they did not know once they enter the final third of their licence/order. This was often due to their higher likelihood of experiencing domestic abuse and trauma.
2. **Young adults (18–25-year-olds)** were viewed as needing structure and boundaries. Under the current eligibility criteria, cases subject to youth sentences are exempt from Reset. While this can include young people up to the age of twenty, this was thought by some to be insufficient for young people who do not fit within these exclusions. While some felt Reset could be suitable for those with strong external support networks, most argued eligibility should reflect maturity and not just age.
3. For people with **age-related health issues**, such as dementia, some practitioners suggested that supervision was superfluous, especially if they receive care outside of Probation. Although, it was suggested by a member of the Parole Board that conditions such as Alzheimer's can lead to people becoming more disinhibited, which could add to risks around sex offenders.
4. **Neurodivergent individuals** were thought to be particularly vulnerable to the loss of routine, a change in expectations, and removal of support. Considering this point, a Parole Board member suggested that a lack of Probation contact under Reset could impact their decisions on releasing people with neurodivergence.
5. Individuals with **mental health problems** were felt by some participants to be unsuitable for Reset, as planned mental health interventions often did not always begin in time, meaning people on probation lost access to support once Reset started. Additionally, long waiting lists in some PDUs were said to prevent Mental Health Treatment Requirements (MHTRs) from commencing before contact suspension.
6. Similar concerns were raised for people on probation with **substance misuse issues**. Some people on probation felt abandoned when CRS interventions ceased part-way through their licence. Probation Staff noted that those with substance dependencies also often presented higher risks of harm or reoffending without ongoing supervision.

7. Reset eligible people on probation have not always been able to access **accommodation**, sometimes ending up homeless in the final third of their licence/order. The lack of suitable accommodation was seen by some participants to compound instability and increase the likelihood of reoffending. Parole Board members also noted that they were unlikely to approve release where accommodation was uncertain.

Offence type

While the exclusion criteria do not specify offences, it contains those subject to MAPPA, which includes people on probation convicted of sexual offences and violent offences (HMPPS, 2024). The exclusion of MAPPA cases was widely appreciated across participant types, expressing sentiments that these individuals were “clearly dangerous and need to be monitored”. Police especially expressed the importance of Probation participating in the multi-agency management throughout their licence/order, with one stating that these cases require robust supervision as they are “at the higher end of the scale” in terms of the risk they carry.

Across participants, views varied as to whether and which offence types should determine Reset eligibility:

1. **Domestic abuse offences:** Practitioners expressed discomfort with these cases entering reactive management, citing repeated callouts and ongoing risk.
 - MAPPA referrals can be made for those considered to be dangerous, such as domestic abuse perpetrators (HMPPS, 2024). It was felt, however, by some Probation Staff and Parole Board members that the threshold was too high; these cases rarely meeting the criteria, leaving concerns that a lack of management would lead to risk increasing but escalation going unnoticed.
2. **Sexual offences:** While these cases are excluded from Reset, some participants questioned if this was necessary, highlighting their generally compliant nature compared with other offence types but noting concerns for the impact on victims.

3. **Child protection cases:** Cases with an active child protection flag are exempt from Reset. Some practitioners expressed this should extend to interim care orders or where a case involves someone identified as a 'child in need'.
4. **Lower risk of harm offences:** Some driving and fraud offences were considered appropriate for Reset.
5. **Other offences:** Other offence types mentioned to require active supervision included drug supply, organised crime, and burglaries, acknowledging the ongoing nature of these offences and the harm that can result from them.

Sentence length

1. For **short sentences**, practitioners reported insufficient time to build relationships, complete RAR activities, or stabilise individuals before the final third of their licence/order. Certain individuals on probation were said to have been in a "vicious cycle" [Probation Service Officer] of short sentences, which was affected by Reset. These were said to be individuals who had struggled to meet the requirements of Probation and turn up to appointments due to the chaotic nature of their lives, leading to repeated breaches.
2. For **long sentences**, some felt Reset could be appropriate for individuals who were stable and had completed risk reduction work. Concerns were raised, however, about individuals forgetting licence conditions over long periods of reactive management.

5.5 Effect on Probation Practitioner workloads

Quantitative change in workloads

Quantitative analysis compared the annual average practitioner contact/admin hours spent supervising a person on probation (PoP) during a period of Probation Reset with the average recorded hours in a comparative period prior to the introduction of Reset. This was to test whether Reset has been successful at reducing the work required for managing Reset cases. Actual recorded hours were also compared with expected hours under Reset.

The quantitative analysis found that Reset reduced the average number of recorded practitioner contact/admin hours recorded for a PoP. Recorded hours have been found to be 75% lower on average than hours recorded for the final third of licence/PSS prior to the introduction of Reset.

This analysis only captures formal activities staff carried out and does not take account of any informal and unrecorded work. In addition, while contact hours for a person in Reset are lessened, this may not feel like a workload reduction for the Probation Practitioner as their time is filled with other cases.

Accuracy of the Workload Management Tool (WMT)

A recurring view was that work conducted while cases were in reactive management was not sufficiently credited by the WMT. The effort of some Practitioners was not credited as they continued work beyond what was asked of them for those in reactive management (see 'Divergence from the guidance' in section 4.3 'Implementing the Reset guidance'). The primary complaint about the WMT, however, was that the number of points allocated to tasks required under reactive management were not accurately representing the time required to complete them.

Work that continued but was said to not be appropriately credited under reactive management included liaising with partner agencies, conducting risk assessments, taking enforcement action in response to new information, making MAPPA or Children's Services referrals, conducting pre-release work, and updating risk management plans. For Probation Practitioners working in Reset Hubs, this included handover meetings conducted before people on probation were officially transferred into the Hub and reports completed while a case was in prison following a recall. For some Probation Practitioners, not having this work accurately reflected by the WMT resulted in resentment that their efforts were not being recognised or feeling let down and unappreciated by the organisation.

Perception of workload change

In the early days of implementation, some Probation Practitioners experienced exceptionally high workloads as they tackled bottlenecks in putting the Reset processes in place with little notice (see 'Changes to the roles of Probation Staff' in section 4.3 'Implementing the Reset guidance'). While workload has seemingly

reduced for some, reports that workloads remained high among Probation Practitioners were frequently shared in interviews.

Some Probation Practitioners reported a reduction in workload, and there was acknowledgement that time was saved by not having appointments with cases. Others expressed that this had limited impact as it was just one part of their role; other elements mentioned to be unaffected included intelligence checks, responding to breaches, and administrative work. This seemed to be a particularly common view among practitioners working in Integrated Offender Management (IOM), who spoke about having complex caseloads that were commonly higher risk. IOM cases were also more likely to meet the exclusion criteria and therefore need to continue to be actively managed into the final third of their licence/order, limiting the effect on the workloads of IOM practitioners.

An increase in the number of people entering the Probation Service, along with an under resourced workforce, has meant that time savings due to Reset have not been felt by Probation Practitioners.⁸ Outside of Reset Hubs, a widespread complaint among Practitioners was that, rather than experiencing workload relief when a case moved into reactive management, they would instead be allocated an additional case.

The intensity of case management was perceived to be higher for new cases, compared with those who were approaching the final third of their licence/order who had often completed much of their sentence requirements and were having less regular contact. For some practitioners, the overall complexity of their caseload was increased by being allocated additional cases who were at the start of their licence/order, once their Reset eligible cases had moved into contact suspension.

Many Probation Practitioners interviewed spoke about experiencing cognitive overload. Their roles required balancing Reset processes with various other organisational changes that were implemented around the same time. Ongoing high workloads have made it challenging for practitioners to undertake everyday sentence

⁸ As of March 2025, there were 5,636 FTE Probation Officers in post, equating to 79% of the target staffing level. Additionally, the total number of people on probation in England and Wales increased by two per cent from September 2024 to September 2025.

management tasks alongside understanding new practices and implementing unfamiliar processes.

Reset Hub model

In PDUs where Reset eligible cases stayed with the same Probation Practitioner in the final third of their licence/order (as opposed to being transferred into a Reset Hub), practitioners appeared to find the switch into reactive management difficult. This reportedly led to some practitioners struggling to meaningfully reduce the work they were doing with people on probation, especially those with high needs who they felt required support.

“A whole lot of cases in CAS 3 and beyond the outwork who supports them, he’s having some issues, so they’re coming to me to try and speak to the case. And I’m like, “He’s in Reset, I shouldn’t be doing any of this,” and even though I’ll do it because that’s what being a good practitioner is” **[Probation Officer]**

Utilising Reset Hubs in a PDU helped Probation Practitioners to focus on either active management or reactive management, depending on their role. According to some Practitioners, this enabled a clear divide between the work required for the two different case management approaches (see ‘Regional approaches’ in section 5.2 ‘Reactive management process’), enabling effective management of resources as cases moved into the final third of their licence/order.

In some PDUs where Reset Hubs were used, workload relief for Practitioners in active management was hindered by backlogs of cases that were overdue for transfer to the Hub. This was said to be due to the high workloads of practitioners and competing demands, making it difficult for them to find the time to carry out the processes for suspending contact and transferring them over to the Reset Hub.

While workloads remained high for Probation Practitioners working in Reset Hubs, many commented on experiencing lower levels of stress in the role and finding the work “far more manageable” [Probation Officer] despite holding large caseloads. Some also appreciated having a change of pace and being able to take on a new type of role. Those working in Reset Hubs commonly highlighted the high volume of

work and the administratively heavy nature of the role. There were mixed views, therefore, on whether this was preferable compared with an active management role.

Difference between grades

SPOs commonly reported that Reset had not had much effect on their workloads as they did not hold caseloads. They held mixed views as to whether they thought the workloads of POs and PSOs had reduced as a consequence of Reset. These included the belief that “it did bring them down” to the view that any reduction was offset as “they’re losing cases one end, but then they’re getting new ones with all the associated work, at the front end”.

Practitioners holding caseloads (i.e. POs and PSOs) ranged from stating that they had experienced a small reduction in workload since Reset, to less frequently reporting that their workloads had increased. Generally, however, it was felt that there had been little change in workload overall. Some POs felt that Reset was less likely to have reduced their workloads as their caseloads included Very High Risk of Serious Harm (RoSH) cases and MAPPA cases, which would be excluded from Reset, compared with PSOs who managed lower risk level cases.

5.6 Effects on external Stakeholders

Changes in roles and approaches

Reset involved Probation Practitioners stepping back from active case management in the final third of licences/orders. Several practitioners reported a level of embarrassment when explaining that they would be stepping back from meetings about vulnerable individuals, expressing feelings such as, “we’re just wiping our hands clean a bit” [Probation Officer].

Many reported that they needed to repeatedly explain Reset to external agencies due to insufficient official communication from the Probation Service. Additional measures were also sometimes put in place to maintain some level of supervision once Probation contact was suspended, including requesting increased contact. This raised questions about whether external stakeholders took on more responsibilities or experienced changes in their roles as a result.

1. Members of the **judiciary** reported increased difficulty passing sentences. There were mixed statements on the impact on sentencing decisions, with some judges indicating that they would consider longer orders or avoid passing community sentences. One sentencer mentioned this also affected how they dealt with breaches.
2. **Parole Board members** frequently mentioned a reduced confidence in probation oversight and risk management. Some members were less likely to grant release due to community management concerns, instead considering alternate risk management approaches such as IOM or electric monitoring devices. However, this was not uniform, one Parole Board member stated they did not perceive it to be fair to the individuals up for parole.
3. **Police** working in MAPPA teams felt largely unaffected by Reset, while some IOM police expressed Reset had increased their workload as they were “picking up a lot of the slack” [Police]. IOM police also reported feeling a shift in approach towards “catch and convict” versus rehabilitation.
4. The role of **CRS staff** appeared unchanged following Reset; however, several staff spoke about shorter engagement periods reducing the effectiveness of interventions. As a result, referrals were either turned down or limited to signposting. Late or unclear notification of cases reaching the two-thirds point of their licence/order created challenges for planning and case closure. A lack of clarity on when someone would enter reactive management prompted some to either actively seek information from the practitioners or to calculate the contact suspension date themselves.
5. Some Probation Practitioners highlighted **accommodation providers** having an initial lack of understanding of Reset, with expectations of their Probation Practitioner role persisting. A key change reported was that accommodation providers felt they took on more responsibility for individuals with issues such as mental health even though this is outside of their remit.
6. There were mixed responses on whether **CRS referrals** had been affected by Reset. Some reported no long-term change whereas others reported a considerable decrease, alongside shorter periods supporting people in some

cases. There were some instances raised by CRS staff where Probation Practitioners had referred cases for Reset eligible individuals who were about to enter the final third of their licence/order. There were some reports that MAPPA referrals had increased to avoid Reset eligibility for higher-risk cases.

7. Some **VLOs** mentioned Reset required them to closely monitor victims due to perceived increased vulnerability. Concerns were raised about the lack of action on breaches under reactive supervision. Additionally, as victims are not generally informed that cases are Reset eligible, some VLOs felt that there was a lack of transparency with victims. Particular concerns were raised about victims of domestic abuse, suggested mitigation actions included referrals to external community services, setting up MARAC arrangements and safety planning although their effectiveness was questioned where individuals did not recognise themselves as experiencing domestic abuse.

6. Change management in Probation

6.1 Consultation and engagement

Hierarchy of consultation

Across groups, participants broadly felt that there is a lack of consultation and engagement before large scale policy changes are introduced in the Probation Service. Even more so, participants expressed an uncertainty over who exactly is consulted on changes and whether consultation is used to meaningfully inform decision-making. Consultation on changes was understood as occurring mainly at more strategic or senior levels, with some feeling excluded because of their grade or role. CRS staff, for example, felt their views were less valued due to being in “support worker” roles.

The view that consultation occurs at more strategic or senior levels was largely confirmed by senior grade participants. Probation Practitioners frequently highlighted the frustration and risks of being excluded from consultations, expressing concern that seniors might misrepresent frontline realities and overly focus on targets.

Informed vs Consulted

Participants across groups questioned what ‘consultation’ really means in the Probation Service. Even if staff reported being consulted with, they often felt that the decision to implement a change had already been decided. This sentiment was shared across grades, raising questions around the effectiveness of the consultation process.

6.2 Communications

How organisational changes have been communicated

Participants described multiple channels for communicating change, including Teams calls, workshops, SharePoint notices and email bulletins, with some welcoming more “human” and interactive communication. Despite this, many relied on senior management teams to relay information, which was thought to reduce clarity and consistency as the information is passed through multiple layers - or sometimes not at all.

A widely reported frustration was that practitioners often find out about changes through social media or news platforms before they are communicated internally. This gives very little time for practitioners to understand changes and communicate them effectively. For example, one Victim Liaison Officer expressed how this can make them feel on the “sharp end” as they are left having to explain to victims what they are already privy to on the news, while having little or no additional information themselves.

Enablers and barriers to impactful communication

Where communication worked well, participants attributed this to strong local leadership and supportive line managers. Probation Practitioners felt most supported by their direct line managers and SPOs, rather than senior leaders because they were felt to be closer to operational duties.

Additionally, where strong working relationships existed between different areas of the Probation Service, participants felt better able to discuss and understand the implications of policy changes across the service. Some regional Parole Forums were recognised as playing an important role in creating connections that enabled meaningful engagement.

Where catch-all online approaches were used to communicate change, participants raised concerns about their effectiveness. Staff indicated they would benefit from more opportunities to join briefings, with sessions offered beyond national and regional levels and with more notice. It was also felt that staff should receive more warning for calls, as they have often only been announced a few days before they were due to be held and after practitioners’ diaries were already full. Although calls

were typically recorded, workload remained a barrier to going back and watching recordings.

6.3 Change fatigue

Pace and pressures of change

The pace of change left some practitioners applying guidance in real time rather than fully understanding it before implementation. This was recognised as possibly leading to unsafe risk management practices. One Probation Practitioner spoke about the uneasiness of ongoing changes as they result in the removal of clear boundaries and targets for people on probation. This appears to have led to change fatigue among Probation Staff, with many voicing concerns and expressing trepidation about further upcoming changes and how this will affect the value of their work.

Additionally, some practitioners spoke about being more apathetic to changes and no longer critically engaging with them, as reflected by one Probation Practitioner mentioning “that’s just the way it is”. A Parole Board member raised that staff on the Board have already been struggling to consider the wider context of changes and have only looked at how changes will impact their role and immediate work.

Priority of changes

Participants expressed frequent worry that changes have been introduced simultaneously and without clear prioritisation. This has left staff feeling as though they are “spinning plates” [Health Partner], and unsure which changes to implement and prioritise, with unclear priorities leading to deferred implementation and inconsistent practice. Variations in practice were also attributed to stress, with staff making decisions based on their wellbeing and what they could reasonably manage at the time.

6.4 Priorities of the Probation Service

Direction of change and prioritisation

Some staff linked current challenges to the legacy of Transformation Rehabilitation reforms, citing long-term impacts on resources and strategic direction.⁹ Additional operational reforms including those introduced alongside Reset, such as Impact and Standard Determinate Sentences (SDS40), particularly prompted a sense of cynicism among participants. Changes were felt to be misaligned with the goals of the Probation Service and, for some, diverging from the previous direction of the service.

Relieving prison capacity

Across participant groups, many felt pressures in the Prison Service were being shifted to an under-resourced Probation Service, with insufficient attention given to implementation or staff support. Perceptions of feeling undervalued and overlooked were compounded by frustration that, despite probation taking on challenges previously managed by prisons, practitioners felt that they are often blamed when serious further offences occur.

Frustrations arising from the perceived prioritisation of prisons over the Probation Service have negatively affected morale; in some cases, contributing to confusion, resistance, and disillusionment with some staff questioning the purpose of their work. Some participants expressed their disillusionment especially strongly, suggesting that they or others may leave their jobs in response to recent changes and associated challenges.

This sentiment is particularly concerning given that without retaining existing staff, efforts to expand the workforce will be undermined. Even after meeting recruitment and prioritisation targets, the service is expected to face a capacity gap of around 3,150 FTE sentence management staff by 2026–27 (NAO, 2025).

⁹ MoJ and HMPPS implemented major changes to the Probation Service in 2014 through its Transforming Rehabilitation reforms. These reforms divided the service into private sector-led Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs) and the National Probation Service (NPS).

7. Conclusion

This evaluation explored how Reset was implemented, perceptions of how it affected sentence management, and how staff across the Criminal Justice System experienced large-scale organisational change. Findings draw on the perspectives and experiences of multiple stakeholders including 40 probation practitioners, 13 people on probation, 7 Parole Board members and 8 police.

Is Probation Reset being implemented as intended?

Implementation was inconsistent across regions and often diverged from policy intent, largely because Reset was introduced at pace with unclear guidance. Over time, understanding improved and processes became more embedded.

Despite Reset suspending active supervision in the final third of an individual's licence/order, practitioners reported continuing engagement in some cases. This ranged from informal check ins to maintaining supervision. This often-reflected concerns for individuals with high needs or escalating risks.

How has Reset affected sentence management?

Many participants were concerned that losing active oversight in the final third reduced practitioners' ability to monitor dynamic risk (e.g. changes in behaviour or routine) and sustain engagement. Partner agency information became more important but was not always timely or sufficient.

Collectively these challenges led many participants to doubt whether the Probation Service could still deliver on its priorities of rehabilitation and public protection. Reduced supervision was felt by some to be misaligned with these core principles and limiting practitioner's ability to deliver meaningful work.

There was also a consensus among participants that the eligibility criteria for Reset are too broad, resulting in cases with significant needs or risks, such as those high RoSH or IOM cases, being inappropriately put into Reset. Particular concerns were raised by some Commissioned Rehabilitative Services (CRS) staff that Reset disproportionately affected women as they are more likely to be lower risk but higher

need. Several Probation Practitioners highlighted that planned mental health interventions often did not begin in time, leaving individuals with mental health problems without support once Reset started, making Reset unsuitable in these cases.

Quantitative analysis found that Reset reduced recorded practitioner contact and admin hours, but many practitioners reported little practical relief in qualitative interviews because any capacity gained was absorbed by new cases.

How has Reset affected the role of external stakeholders in sentence management?

There were unintended impacts on external stakeholders, with members of the judiciary, police, CRS, and accommodation providers reporting experiences of practical challenges due to reduced oversight and inconsistent communication about Reset. This included CRS providers reportedly receiving late notifications that supervision had ended for a person on probation, limiting their ability to conclude their work and complicating the management of ongoing support for that individual.

Additionally, there were concerns raised by members of the judiciary and Parole Board members about the reduced oversight of people on probation and how this may influence sentencing and release decisions. Illustratively, some judges questioned whether sentences were being delivered as intended, sometimes reporting adjusting sentence decisions accordingly. Parole Board members were similarly less likely to grant releases due to a reduced confidence in community oversight of people under Reset.

What are staff and stakeholder views on change management in probation?

Participants described change management in probation as rushed, poorly communicated and lacking meaningful consultation. Strong local leadership helped staff navigate change where national communication was unclear.

The roll-out of multiple operational changes at once was said to have left staff little time to absorb any new guidance, with staff often applying changes in real time rather than fully understanding them before implementation. Staff also expressed concern that reforms are introduced simultaneously without clear prioritisation,

leaving them unsure of which processes to follow. Such pace and volume of reforms have reportedly generated change fatigue and a reduction in job satisfaction particularly for Probation Practitioners.

7.1 Implications

- With any large-scale organisational change in the probation service, there is a need for timely, clear and consistent communication, and the building in time for meaningful consultation/engagement before final decisions are agreed.
- Implementation should avoid mixed messages and overlapping systems changes, while recognising regional operational differences.
- Guidance for changes to the management of people on probation management should be practical, accessible and role specific.
- Organisational changes should align with the core values of the Probation Service to maintain morale and retention, as well as stakeholder and public confidence.

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Annex A

Technical Annex

Qualitative Sampling Approach

For the interviews, a purposive sampling strategy was used to ensure representation across probation regions, including devolved regions, variation in staffing gaps, and an urban/rural mix.¹⁰ For Probation Practitioners this was used to ensure inclusion of different grades and caseloads. For people on probation, the aim was to include a varied sample, including a mixture of people approaching the final third of their licence/order and people who are already in the final third of their licence/order.

Quantitative Analysis Approach

Quantitative Overview

The purpose of the quantitative analysis was to compare:

- The annual average recorded practitioner contact/admin hours spent supervising a Person on Probation (PoP) during a period of Probation Reset with:
- The annual average recorded practitioner contact/admin hours spent supervising a PoP prior to the introduction of Reset, for cases meeting the eligibility criteria for Reset and in the final third of licence or PSS.

This was to test whether Probation Reset has been successful at reducing the work required for managing Reset cases. Actual recorded hours were also compared with expected hours under Probation Reset.

¹⁰ Capacity issues/operational demands meant the practitioners from certain regions were unable to participate in the qualitative interviews.

This method captured only recorded activities carried out by staff and did not account for any informal, unrecorded work. As a result, the quantitative analysis may underestimate the total level of practitioner activity.

Data

The analysis used information derived from the nDelius Probation dataset, which captures all of the workload activity recorded against a PoP during their time on Probation. nDelius is the National Probation Service's case management system, used by staff to record work done on a PoP's case.

The analysis also used the 'Workload Measurement Tool' (WMT) to access data on the number of minutes that a particular activity/contact should take. The WMT is used by Senior Probation Officers to allocate cases to practitioners. In the analysis the WMT timings were attached to the recorded contacts in nDelius to enable the calculation of the estimated number of hours that a practitioner spent on a case during a specified period.

The WMT can also be used to create an expected 'annual average number of hours' that should be spent on a case, based on the activities (and associated timings) that should be carried out for a case that has been 'Reset'.

Methodology

To be able to calculate the average amount of time a practitioner spent on an individual case, the analysis only used concluded cases i.e. cases where the PoP had left the caseload. This was so that all activity throughout the PoP's final third of time on Licence/PSS could be included. The analysis included both cases where the sentence was completed and also cases where the probation period ended because the PoP was returned to prison. It was important to include both reasons for departure as enforcement of a breach/recall generates additional work for the Probation Practitioner.

To assess the amount of work activity done on a case prior to the introduction of Reset, the analysis first captured cases that had left the Licence/PSS caseload between Aug-Dec 2023 and met the criteria for Probation Reset. Work activities recorded by the Probation Practitioner during the final third of the Licence/PSS period were then counted. The analysis included c.10,000 PSS cases and 8,700 Licence cases.

To assess the amount of work activity done on a case following implementation of Probation Reset the analysis included all cases that left the caseload between May 2024 and May 2025 that had a spell on Probation Reset. The registration and deregistration dates for the Probation Reset flag were used to identify the length of time that a PoP spent on Reset and supervision activities recorded by the Probation Practitioner for the PoP taking place within that 'Reset spell' were counted. Some individuals had multiple spells due to movement on and off of Probation Reset within the sentence. The analysis included 25,600 Reset 'spells'.

For both datasets, an 'average annual contact time' was calculated by attaching the WMT timings for each recorded activity and then adding up the total time spent on the case during the Reset period, or final third of Licence/PSS for the pre-Reset analysis¹¹. This total was divided through by the relevant length and then scaled up to give an annual figure. Table 1 shows the average timings that were used in the analysis.

Table 1: WMT Activity timings used in the analysis.

Contact Type	Average Minutes
Direct Contact	60 (30 if not attended), responsive time added on which varies by tier
Home Visit	120 (60 if not attended), responsive time added on which varies by tier

¹¹ As the expected WMT timings have been used, the analysis only accounts for changes in the number of activities carried out with a PoP. The analysis does not account for any changes in the amount of time spent per activity.

Responsive Time	Direct contacts and home visits have been multiplied by 20% for tier 1, 25% for tier 2 and 30% for tier 3 to allow for responsive time
Enforcement	120, only if breach is initiated or a decision is needed
Initial Assessment	360 (210 for Tier D)
AP Liaison	150 for a 3-way meeting, 60 for a referral
Drug Testing	10 minutes
MAPP Meeting	120 (Tier A and B Only)
Registration Review	10 minutes
OASys Assessment*	120 (90 for Tier D)
Safeguarding Liaison	120 for a meeting, 15 for an enquiry, 30 for a MARAC referral
Order Supervisor Transfer*	46.5 minutes (46.5 is based on 465 mins for an out of region transfer, which we assume happens in 10% of cases)
Police Liaison	15 minutes

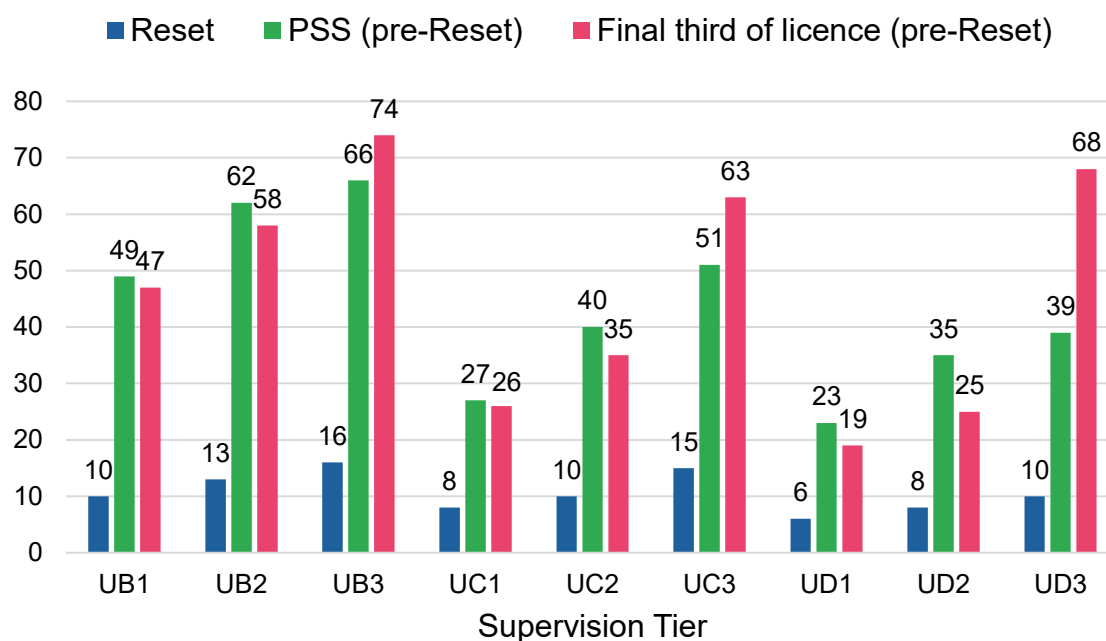
Source: Workload Management Tool.

Findings

The analysis compared the annual average contact hours estimated before and after the introduction of Probation Reset to see if Probation Reset had made a difference to the amount of work hours spent on an eligible case by Probation Practitioners. It also compared the annual average contact hours estimated for cases in Reset to the WMT expectation.

Figure 3 gives the average (mean) activity hours for periods of Probation Reset compared with estimates for the final third of Licence and PSS. This is split by supervision tier, as activity timings in the WMT vary by supervision tier.

Figure 3: Mean contact hours for Probation Reset spells compared with mean contact hours for the final third of licence and PSS prior to the introduction of Reset.

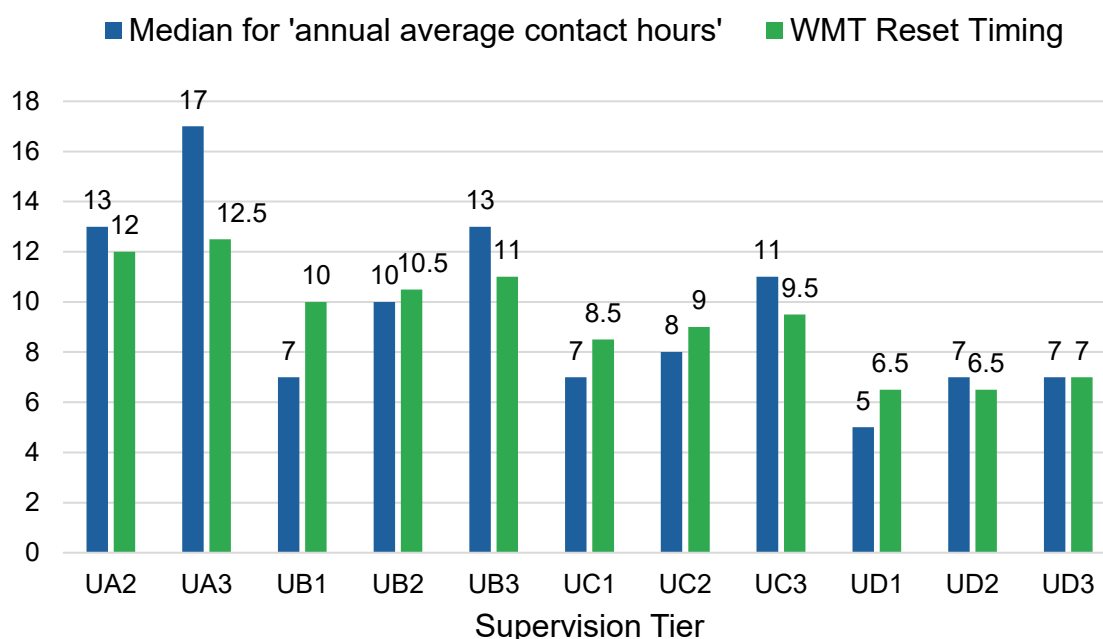


Source: nDelius and Workload Management Tool. Note: Tiers A1-A3 have been excluded due to low sample sizes in the PSS/Licence cohorts.

Figure 3 shows that the introduction of Probation Reset significantly reduced the amount of contact time that Probation Staff have with people on probation in the final third of Licence/PSS. For example, for tier D3 annual average contact was calculated to be 68 hours for the final third of Licence and 39 hours for PSS, whereas for cases in Reset it is calculated to now be just 10 hours.

Average contact time has reduced by 75% on average for the final third of Licence/PSS compared with equivalent 'Reset' cases. Figure 4 shows the median annual contact hours for Probation Reset spells compared with what is expected in the WMT. As with the previous chart, this is split by supervision tier.

Figure 4: Median actual contact hours for Probation Reset spells compared with Work Management Tool (WMT) expected annual hours for Probation Reset cases.



Source: nDelius and Workload Management Tool. Note: Tier A1 is excluded due to a low sample size.

The chart shows that median 'annual average contact hours' for actual contact within each tier are close to the expected WMT average. The exception is Tier A3, where actual hours have been higher than the WMT estimate. This could be due to greater enforcement activity for this tier. The close match between the actual and expected timings suggests that Probation Reset has been successful in reducing the hours spent on cases that have been reset.

The analysis also compared how Probation Reset had changed the type of activities that Probation Practitioners spend time on for Probation Reset cases. Table 2 shows how contact time with Reset eligible people on probation is distributed across different areas of work and compares this with the distribution for those in the final third of Licence/PSS prior to Reset. The chart also gives the 'average annual hours' across the whole caseload for the final third of Licence/PSS compared with Reset.

The table shows that prior to Reset 59-64% of staff time was spent in direct contact with people on probation in the final of Licence/PSS, whereas this is now only 33%. This is reflected in the 'average annual hours' which have fallen from 25 hours for direct contact in the final third of Licence to just 3 hours in Reset.

Enforcement and risk review activities now make up a greater proportion of staff time for individuals on Probation Reset, although the actual time on these activities has also reduced but not to the same extent as 'direct contact'.

Table 2: Proportion of activity hours and mean annual hours spent on each activity type, split by Reset, Final Third of Licence and PSS periods.

Contact Type	Distribution of Contact Hours			Average Annual Hours (hours / supervision days)		
	Reset %	Pre-reset Licence %	Pre-reset PSS %	Reset	Pre-reset Final-third Licence	Pre- reset PSS
AP Liaison	0%	0%	1%	0.02	0.15	0.22
Direct Contact	33%	64%	59%	3.13	19.82	25.23
Drug Testing	1%	0%	0%	0.12	0.14	0.11
Enforcement	10%	4%	7%	0.99	1.36	2.83
External agency liaison	0%	0%	0%	0.00	0.00	0.00
Home Visit	6%	9%	7%	0.58	2.81	3.22
Initial assessment	1%	1%	2%	0.08	0.34	0.97
MAPPa	0%	0%	0%	0.01	0.02	0.06
Police liaison	2%	1%	1%	0.22	0.32	0.48
Registration Review	0%	1%	1%	0.00	0.22	0.24
Responsive activity	0%	0%	0%	0.00	0.00	0.00
Risk Review	32%	15%	18%	3.11	4.53	7.94
Safeguarding liaison	1%	1%	1%	0.12	0.27	0.61
Transfer	13%	3%	3%	1.25	0.84	1.16

Source: nDelius and Workload Management Tool. Note: average annual hours have been calculated by taking the total contact hours and dividing this by the total number of probation supervision days. This has been scaled up to give an annual figure.

Appendix A

Suggestions for freeing up capacity in the Probation Service

As part of the Reset implementation evaluation, participants were asked at the end of their interview for their general suggestions as to how the Probation service can free up capacity. Their responses have been thematically organised and summarised below.

Recruitment and Retention

Recruitment was the most frequently mentioned theme and widely regarded by Probation Practitioners as a critical measure to manage current demand pressures and reduce caseloads.

“It wouldn’t even be about policy changes, it would just be – people would have less cases and we’d have more time to try and do better with the circumstances they have” **[Probation Officer]**

Concerns around recruitment were not limited to just the volume of recruitment but extended to the suitability of candidates and the robustness of training. For example, some Probation Practitioners questioned whether current selection methods were effective, given that recent reports suggest that in some cohorts, 20% of recruits fail to qualify from the trainee probation officer programme (PQiP).¹²

“I think there is an issue in the recruitment. I think that's process that needs to be reviewed. Are we sifting incorrectly? Are we interviewing incorrectly?” **[Probation Officer]**

Similarly, an experienced practitioner believed that trainees often lacked the experience for the role and that this is the reason for poor retention rates. It was felt that the benchmark is considerably lower for new recruits and the sifting process less rigorous.

¹² HM Inspectorate of Probation (2025). A thematic inspection of the recruitment, training, and retention of frontline probation practitioners.

Whilst inexperience may impact retention rates, some Probation Practitioners also expressed that inexperience of new staff increases pressures on existing staff to support them – despite already unmanageable workloads. Tackling inexperience at the point of recruitment was viewed as a way to increase the suitability and retention of new staff, as well as allow existing staff to dedicate more time on their cases.

Allowing Probation Practitioners to work overtime and receive fair pay for this was also suggested as a way to free up capacity. This approach was thought to not only increase immediate workforce availability but also improve attrition rates by ensuring that staff feel financially recognised for managing the increasing workload and responsibility they face.

“Staff attrition rates now are unbelievable, and that is because of the pressures of workload, the low pay for the work that we do and the responsibility that we have” **[Probation Officer]**

Collaboration and Knowledge Sharing

Broadly, across participant groups, the utilisation of specialist services such as education, personal wellbeing and accommodation was considered a useful measure to reduce workload and allow Probation Staff to focus on risk management. It was suggested by Probation Practitioners that increasing links with local specialist services would provide a person on probation with ongoing support and reduce their reliance on the Probation Service.

Several Commissioned Rehabilitative Services (CRS) staff expressed concern that there seems to be a disparity between the number of people on probation versus the number of referrals that are sent to their service. It was felt that CRS staff have the capacity to take on more referrals to alleviate Probation Practitioner workload, but that they were not receiving them or not receiving them promptly.

In contrast, when referrals to specialist services were mentioned by Probation Practitioners, the referral process was viewed as complicated and time consuming, which should or could be completed by other staff.

“We already have so much work to do, actually I think looking at what isn’t necessary for a frontline practitioner to do and having that be done by somebody else” **[Probation Officer]**

While CRS staff see opportunities to reduce practitioner workload through greater referrals to their service, practitioners perceive the referral process as an additional burden.

Processes, Funding and Systems

Participants identified both opportunities and challenges in relation to processes and systems. In some instances, a need to increase the amount of administrative support staff as well as the responsibility of such staff was suggested as a way to free up capacity. However, some Probation Practitioners would feel more comfortable maintaining responsibility for certain administrative processes that relate to risk management.

“Like a Cat 3 referral could be done by a partner agency, or it could be done by admin, um, I’d rather do AP referrals because I know the risks” **[Probation Officer]**

There were also indications of regional variation in administrative practices. Some participants shared examples of local practices that they felt could be scaled up nationally. These included dedicated administration teams in Wales focusing on Sentence Plan objectives on the Offender Assessment System (OASys). Such practices were considered to offer “wiggle room” to manage demand.

Several participants highlighted emerging administrative process improvements currently being trialled in some PDUs. These included the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools to streamline administrative tasks such as transcription services to draft case notes and write up logs for practitioners. These innovations were viewed as having the potential to reduce the administrative burden of using systems such as the OASys, which is widely regarded as being outdated. This could allow practitioners to focus on delivery and risk management, without the immediate need for administrative staff support.

Sentencing Management

Within the context of wider prison capacity pressures and measures, Probation Practitioners overwhelmingly felt that Post Sentence Supervision (PSS) increased their workloads, as they needed to manage additional contact requirements. PSS was widely viewed across this group as ineffective and as only serving to increase workload. It is worth noting, however, that following the Sentencing Review in June 2025, PSS will cease to exist for offenders released from a sentence of less than two years' imprisonment.

Although, pressure points will likely remain. Several participants were worried about sentencing decisions and risk categorisation. Specifically, they felt that current practices lead to overly cautious assessments, which in turn increase caseloads and work. One Probation Practitioner also mentioned worries around Home Detention Curfews and how decisions will add extra work for practitioners.

“We overrisk majority of our medium risk cases” [Probation Service Officer]

Across participant groups, there was a shared view that practitioners should have greater flexibility to apply professional discretion to sentencing decisions and post-release management. Practitioners felt constrained by current policy and guidance, limiting their ability to allocate their time more effectively across their caseloads.

Appendix B

Research Questions

The specific research questions that the implementation evaluation intended to answer are as follows:

1. Is Probation Reset being implemented as intended?

- a. To what extent do Probation Staff and stakeholders understand the Probation Reset policy?
- b. To what extent do Probation Staff feel able to implement the policy as intended?
- c. What are the wider organisational barriers and enablers to implementing the policy as intended?

2. How has Reset affected sentence management?

- a. In what ways has resource been freed up for probation practitioners?
- b. What changes, if any, have there been to risk management?
- c. To what extent has Reset influenced how supported people on probation feel?
- d. In what ways might Reset not be appropriate for all eligible cohorts of people in probation?

3. What are staff and stakeholder views on change management in probation?

- a. How do staff and stakeholders understand the motivation for change?
- b. How have staff and stakeholders been engaged with ahead of change?
- c. What would be useful for Probation Staff in future large-scale changes?

4. How has Reset affected the role of external stakeholders in sentence management?

- a. What are stakeholder views on the respective roles of HMPPS and external agencies in supporting people on probation (e.g. police, approved premises managers, mental health providers)?
- b. What changes, if any, have there been in the decision making of Parole Boards?
- c. To what extent do sentencers feel confident that probation will deliver COs/SSOs?
- d. To what extent have police involved in IOM changed their practices due to Reset?
- e. Have there been any unintended effects on prison practice due to Reset?

Appendix C

Interview Schedules

A total of 103 qualitative interviews were conducted. These were made up of the following participants:

- 40 Probation Practitioners (10 Senior Probation Officers, 19 Probation Officers, 11 Probation Service Officers), including people working in Integrated Offender Management (IOM) and Homelessness Prevention Teams (HPT)
- 13 People on Probation
- 8 police (5 IOM, 3 MAPPA [Multi-agency public protection arrangements])
- 7 Parole Board members
- 7 CRS managers/practitioners
- 6 sentencers (circuit judges)
- 5 Victim Liaison Officers
- 4 HM Inspectors of Probation
- 3 Police and Crime Commissioners and representatives
- 3 Case Administrators
- 3 Health Partners
- 2 Heads of Community Integration
- 2 HMPPS Quality/Performance/Operations staff

Interviews followed topic guides to ensure sufficient information was captured across the evaluation questions. The guides were informed by the evaluation framework and centre around the following topic areas:

- Background questions – including time in role, responsibilities and for people on probation whether they are in contact with their Probation Officer
- Guidance and communications – how changes were communicated, guidance materials and understanding
- Implementation – case management, changes to role, impact on workload

- Risk management – reactive management, impact of people on probation and how appropriate Reset is for those that fit eligibility criteria
- Organisational changes – understanding of changes, consultation and engagement, potential improvements to change management
- Concluding remarks.

It should be noted that not all topic areas listed were relevant to all types of stakeholders and therefore were included to varying degrees across topic guides.

Probation Practitioner Example

- **To start, please can you tell me a bit about your current role in probation?**
 - Prompts: How long have you been in the role? What do your responsibilities involve? What type of caseload do you manage? Do you experience working with domestic violence/sexual violence cases?
- **Thinking back to when you first heard about Probation Reset, how were the changes communicated to you?**
 - Prompts: What information did you receive about Reset? Is there any additional information you would have liked to have received?
- **Did you receive the Reset guidance materials?**
 - Prompts: How helpful did you find these? How do you feel about the amount of time you had to read the Reset guidance materials? Did you have a chance to ask questions after receiving the guidance materials? Do you feel like you had all the information you needed, when you needed it? How do you feel about the amount of time you were given to prepare for the implementation of Reset?
- **To what extent do you feel you understand the purpose of Reset?**
 - Prompts: In your view, what are the main aims of Reset? How, if at all, does Reset fit within the priorities of the Probation Service? [i.e. to protect the public through effective rehabilitation]
- **In your PDU, were Reset cases kept with the same Probation Practitioner in the final third, or were they managed in a different way (e.g. under a specialist hub for managing Reset cases)?**

- Prompts: How do you feel about this approach? What advantages, if any, are there of conducting case management in this way? What disadvantages, if any, are there of conducting case management in this way?
- **Have you had any Reset eligible cases reach the two thirds point?**
 - [If yes] Prompts: How did your approach to sentence management change at this point? How have you explained Reset to people on probation? How do you think people on probation have felt about contact coming to an end before the end of their licence or order? Is it always clear when a person on probation should have their contact suspended? How easy or difficult have you found it to update the status of cases on management information systems?
- **In what ways, if any, has Reset affected your workload?**
 - Prompts: Has it resulted in more or less work? In what ways? What about Reset-related administrative processes?
- **How easy or difficult have you found it to balance Reset processes with other aspects of your role? [e.g. personal development, providing support for PQUIP learning]**
- **To what extent has your role changed following Reset?**
 - Prompts: What have been the main changes to your role? What changes, if any, have you experienced in your caseload? Are there any parts of your role you have been unsure about following Reset? What have been the main barriers, if any, to implementing Reset? What, if anything, has helped you to implement Reset processes?
- **Now I would like to discuss your experiences of risk management under the Probation Reset guidance. What is your understanding of reactive management under Reset?**
 - Prompts: What is your approach to reactively managing Reset cases? Do you feel you have the information needed to conduct reactive risk management whilst contact has been suspended?
- **Have you had any cases where contact was suspended under Probation Reset, but was later re-instated?**

- [If yes] Prompts: Why was contact re-instated? Where did the information come from? How did you reinstate contact with the person on probation? What was their reaction?
- **How has Probation Reset affected people on probation?**
 - Prompts: To what extent do you feel there is a difference in how people of different genders are impacted by Reset? What level of support do you provide to Reset eligible cases?
- **In your view, to what extent is Reset appropriate for all people in probation who fit the eligibility criteria?**
 - Prompts: Do you think Reset is appropriate for people on probation across all eligible risk levels? [i.e. low, medium and high risk] Do you think Reset is appropriate for people on probation with different needs (e.g. those with disabilities)? Are there any other characteristics which affect how appropriate Reset is for cases? [e.g. offence type, age, gender, ethnicity]
- **To what extent are sentence requirements being completed before contact is suspended? [e.g. Unpaid Work, Accredited Programmes, Structured Interventions, RAR]**
 - Prompts: Are you able to refer people to Structured Interventions before the final third is reached? Do people on probation continue to attend requirements such as Accredited Programmes and drug testing in the final third? To what extent do people on probation honour their licence/order conditions after contact has been suspended? Do they keep you and other Probation Staff updated in the final third? Are you aware of whether they attend partnership appointments?
- **In what ways, if any, has Reset affected your relationships with external agencies? [e.g. police, approved premises managers, sentencers, parole boards, mental health providers]**
 - Prompts: Have you had to explain Reset to external stakeholders? How did you feel about this? Is there anything that could have made this easier for you? Do you think there have been any changes in the role of external agencies in supporting people on probation? To what extent are CRS services available before the final third is reached? How confident or not confident are you that CRS would share new risk

information? Are you aware of any changes to prison practice following the implementation of Probation Reset?

- **Have there been any changes in how you conduct risk assessments following Reset?**
 - Prompts: Is there anything additional that you consider compared with before Reset? How, if at all, has Reset affected your approach to higher risk cases?
- **When policy changes are made in Probation, to what extent do you understand why these changes have been made?**
- **In what ways, if any, are you and other Probation Practitioners consulted before policy changes are put in place?**
 - Prompts: Do you feel that the level of consultation is too much, not enough, or just right? Do you feel able to ask questions about policy changes? How do you feel about the level of support you receive from senior management across the implementation of new policies? Do you feel able to voice concerns to management?
- **What challenges, if any, have there been in implementing recent policy changes in probation?**
- **What, if anything, has helped recent policy changes to be implemented?**
- **In your view, what improvements, if any, do you think could be made to the change management process in probation?**
- **To finish, what changes could be made to free up capacity to help manage current demand pressures?**