



Ministry
of Justice

Integrated Offender Management

Process Evaluation Report

Dr Helen Powell, Charlotte Baker, and Kaviya Selvamanickam

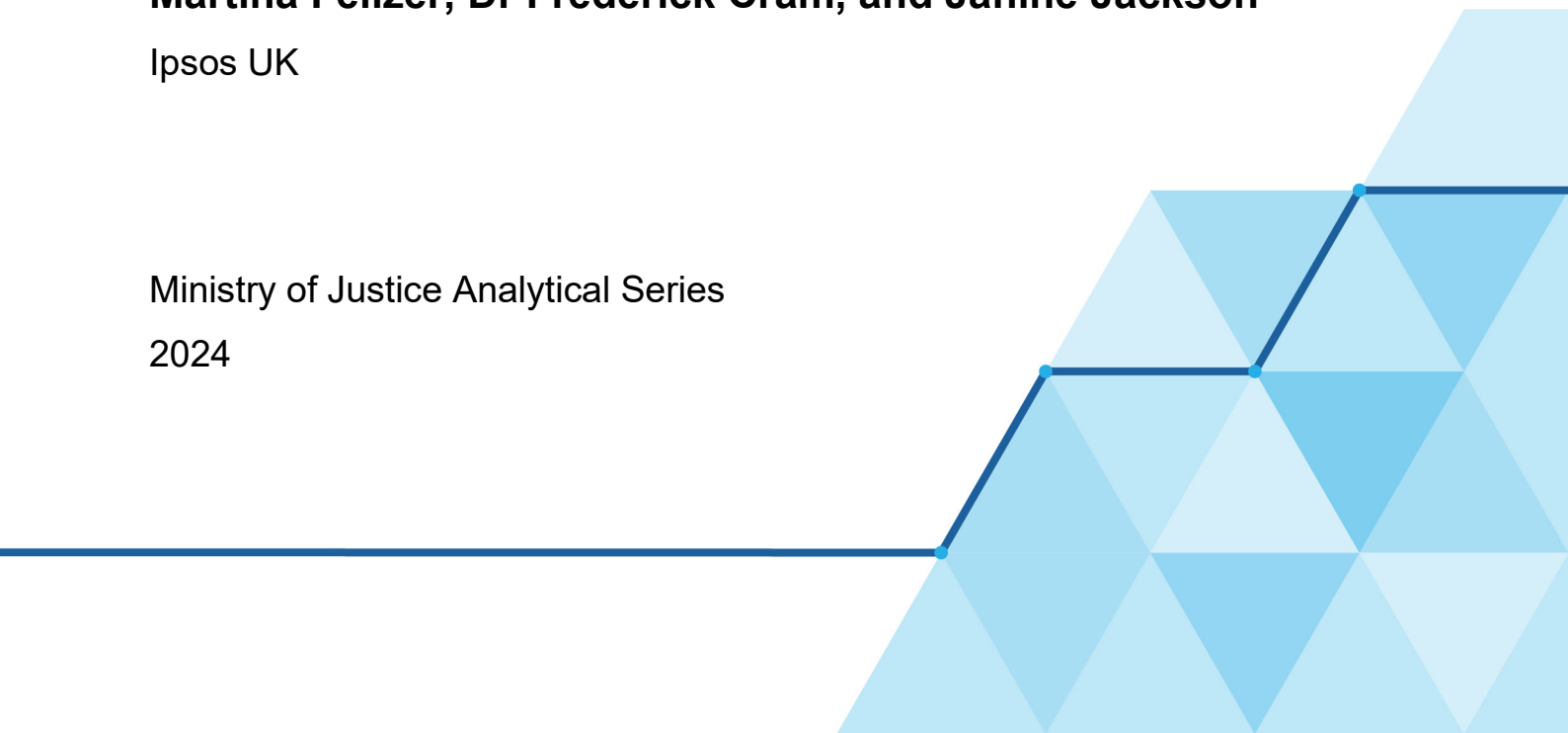
In collaboration with Professor Mike Maguire, Professor

Martina Feilzer, Dr Frederick Cram, and Janine Jackson

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Glossary

Concentrator model: A resourcing model where the case load of a select number of probation workers work is solely dedicated to IOM. These individuals would be seen as ‘concentrators’ and IOM cases would not be spread across a large number of probation practitioners.

CRS: Commissioned Rehabilitation Services

CSS: Crime Severity Score

Deselection: When an individual has been exited from IOM.

Fixed, flex and free: The model, made up of three distinct cohorts, laid out in the refreshed IOM strategy. Those on the fixed cohorts should be individuals who have committed a neighbourhood crime offence, and who meet a certain severity threshold (see section 2.3); the flex cohort is usually made up of individuals who have committed a neighbourhood crime offence who may have similar needs and risk profile to the fixed cohort but don’t meet the fixed threshold index offence criteria; the free cohort can include individuals who have committed different crime types and is at the discretion of local IOM areas (i.e. police forces/PDUs).

IOM: Integrated Offender Management

IOM frontline workers: Police officers and probation practitioners working directly with people receiving IOM.

IOM SWs: IOM Support Workers support probation practitioners to react swiftly to non-compliance / breaches by undertaking enforcement administration where required. They provide support to IOM meetings, e.g., organising agenda, taking and distributing notes and action points and undertake specific administration tasks in accordance with the procedure.

IRLIG: Integrated Offender Management Regional Leads Implementation Group

MACC: Multi-Agency Case Conferences

MAP: Multi-Agency Practitioner Meetings

National stakeholder: National strategic leads who have oversight over IOM from police and probation.

Neighbourhood crime: Crimes including domestic burglary, robbery, theft from the person, and vehicle and cycle crime.

OCG: Organised Crime Group

OGRS: Offender Group Reconviction Score

PDU: Probation Delivery Unit

Person receiving IOM: An individual on probation who has been selected onto an IOM cohort, individuals are also referred to as IOM Nominals.

Police manager: Inspector or Sergeants overseeing officers who are directly working with people on IOM.

Probation manager: Senior Probation Practitioners overseeing Probation Practitioners who manage people receiving IOM.

PWG: Police Working Group

RAG status: RED / AMBER / GREEN rating applied to IOM service users based on risks, needs and offending. Those people receiving IOM with lower risk = Green, those who have specific needs and higher risk = Amber, and at high risk of reoffending and/or with intense needs = Red.

Recall: When an individual is taken back to prison due to failing to comply with the conditions of their Licence.

Regional stakeholder: Regional IOM leads from police and probation.

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Wider stakeholders: Other agencies involved with the delivery of IOM, such as drug and alcohol services, housing services, etc.

YASW: Young Adult Support Worker supports a more rigorous approach to supervision through targeted assessments and data sharing to enhance risk management. For example, incentivising compliance by encouraging engagement with services designed to address individual needs; highlighting the consequences for non-compliance and facilitating swift deployment when required.

Executive summary

The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) commissioned Ipsos UK, to conduct a process evaluation of Integrated Offender Management (IOM). Ipsos UK were supported by four academics (Professor Mike Maguire, Professor Martina Feilzer, Dr Frederick Cram, and Janine Jackson) who have conducted a comparable evaluation of IOM in Wales (Maguire et al., 2024). The evaluation sought to identify facilitators and barriers to the implementation of the IOM refresh strategy and explore evidence of IOM's effectiveness in supporting individuals' desistance from offending.

The process evaluation consisted of in-depth interviews with: 4 national stakeholders; 7 regional stakeholders; 18 IOM police and probation managers; 26 IOM police officers and probation practitioners; 9 members from wider agencies; and 5 people receiving IOM. Findings contained in this report are based on the perceptions of those that took part in the interviews. Four case study regions were selected, and findings may not be representative of all delivery models across England and Wales. Further, the 5 people receiving IOM may not be representative of all individuals in receipt of IOM so generalisations are limited. It is possible that those who took part in the study were more engaged with IOM compared to the general IOM cohort.

The refresh

The IOM refresh strategy was published in late 2020 following findings that IOM had 'lost its way'.¹ This was seen to be influenced by there being no centralised national leadership of IOM which impacted on clear governance structures existing and the strategic delivery of IOM locally.

The need for the refresh was clear, with stakeholders and workers agreeing that IOM had lost its way, and a new strategy was timely, if not overdue. They reported that the refresh had provided clarity, as well as a renewed focus on IOM, which had led to it being better embedded at the local level.

¹ HM Inspectorate of Probation & HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services, 2020, p.4

The refresh provided new governance structures that were seen as clear, working well, and having fostered the multi-agency approach central to IOM. The strategy brought in a level of oversight and strategic leadership that was not present prior to the refresh.

A new model for IOM was also set out, containing three distinct cohorts – ‘fixed, flex and free’. Generally, the fixed cohort was designed to include individuals who committed neighbourhood crime offences who have a high risk of offending and who, under good practice, should receive three appointments a week. This cohort led the way in establishing consistency that had been lacking prior to the refresh. The flex cohort was designed to allow more space for professional judgement on thresholds for selection. The free cohort was designed to offer flexibility to focus on local priorities, such as domestic abuse or Organised Crime Group (OCG) offences.

Participants were generally confident that IOM would and should continue, but highlighted that sustainability is dependent on several factors including sufficient funding, resourcing, and buy-in from agencies and services.

Delivery of IOM

Positive engagement from people receiving IOM was cited as key to the successful delivery of IOM. Enablers included early contact with individuals in custody settings, joint visits from police and probation, and the provision of practical support. Barriers included demographics such as age, mindset, negative attitudes towards the police, homelessness, lack of access to services, and complex needs.

The support provided to individuals on IOM varied depending on their specific needs, with support often taking the form of formal face-to-face appointments, including with wider support services, such as drug and alcohol services. IOM frontline workers also noted providing informal support, such as lifts to appointments, help collecting prescriptions, providing small items such as clothing, and regular check-in phone calls. IOM frontline workers emphasised the importance of treating people receiving IOM as individuals, tailoring the intensity of support to their needs, and focusing on quality over quantity.

Co-location was viewed positively across levels, though local application varied. Where in place, co-location was seen to promote informal information sharing. Barriers to co-location included practical considerations, such as a lack of appropriate space and

incompatible IT systems, and concerns, particularly among police officers, that co-location would lead to weaker relationships with colleagues within their own agencies.

Partnerships with wider stakeholders were less well embedded than those between police and probation. Drug and alcohol services were noted to be the most engaged with IOM across areas. Stakeholders and staff highlighted the importance of strong engagement of partners and capacity within other agencies, including housing and mental health services, to effectively deliver IOM in a way that could have an impact on desistance from crime.

Deselection processes were in place across all areas and tended to be based on offending history and professional judgement. In practice, only a small number of individuals had been deselected across the locations included in the evaluation. This was often due to lack of engagement by people receiving IOM.

Key enablers and barriers

Capacity and resourcing: Resourcing was seen as a significant challenge to the effective delivery of IOM. The need for sufficient dedicated resource was universally highlighted and it was noted that resourcing issues, particularly within probation, were common. The low capacity of wider organisations to provide support, such as housing or mental health support, was also highlighted as a barrier.

Staff capability: IOM frontline workers were generally seen to have appropriate skills such as effective communication, resilience, and persistence.

Partnership working: Effective partnership working was highlighted as key to IOM. In practice, stakeholders across levels reported positive working relationships between police and probation. This was aided by regular meetings to promote formal collaboration and information sharing. Frontline probation and police workers noted that they would like to see closer working relationships with wider agencies to ensure sufficient involvement and support from these services.

Perceived impact of IOM

Overall, stakeholders across all levels felt that IOM had a clear 'value-add' to individuals and felt that IOM had the potential to positively impact individuals' lives. This sentiment was echoed by those receiving IOM, as they noted that the support provided to them could

promote desistance from crime. IOM frontline workers cited several factors that could enable or limit this impact including willingness to engage and lack of capacity within support agencies to meet the needs of people receiving IOM.

Police officers also noted that IOM could impact desistance, even when individuals did not engage with support. Due to the intense monitoring that comes with IOM, police thought that this would lead to a reduction in reoffending as individuals would feel monitored.

IOM could improve the perceptions of the police among people on probation. People receiving IOM highlighted that they often did not view the police positively but IOM had allowed for strong relationships to be built with individual officers.

Conclusions

To ensure that IOM can effectively be delivered, the following should be considered:

- Continued efforts to promote strategic buy-in, ensuring prioritisation of IOM nationally and locally, supported by dedicated staff and funding resources to support delivery, supported by national, regional, and local governance and operational structures.
- Funding arrangements should enable flexibility in how spending can be used in light of regional and local needs to aid effective delivery of IOM.
- Sufficient dedicated resource should be put in place across the probation service to ensure a concentrator model can be followed across local areas, acknowledging wider challenges in resourcing across the probation service nationally.
- Co-location should be encouraged, including via part-time models, to foster strong informal and formal collaboration between police, probation, and wider stakeholders.
- Ensuring consistent engagement from a range of agencies (housing, mental health services) who can offer support to people receiving IOM.
- IOM specific induction and training should continue to be rolled out, ensuring that all probation and police officers are clear on the purpose and aims of IOM.
- Further collaboration with prisons services should be encouraged to ensure that cohort members are identified and contacted early.

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- Quicker and easier information sharing, informally and via formal signed agreements, should be encouraged across local areas to remove barriers to providing support to cohort members.

1. Background and methodology

The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) commissioned Ipsos UK, to conduct a process evaluation of Integrated Offender Management (IOM). Ipsos UK was supported by four academics (Professor Mike Maguire, Professor Martina Feilzer, Dr Frederick Cram, and Janine Jackson)² who have conducted a comparable evaluation of IOM in Wales (Maguire et al., 2024).

1.1 Policy context

IOM was introduced in 2009 as a successor to the Prolific and other Priority Offender Scheme. It intended to bring a cross-agency response to crime and reoffending threats faced by local communities, focusing on the most persistent and problematic offenders identified and jointly managed by partner agencies³ working together. IOM focuses on both those individuals serving community orders and those leaving prison on licence (HM Government, 2020).⁴ Supervision of community sentences delivered by probation service differs from the delivery of IOM which involves joint police-probation supervision. IOM also ensures a multi-agency response to reducing reoffending through access to rehabilitative services.

An inspection of IOM in 2014 found promising results, although commitment to the approach varied among relevant agencies (HM Inspectorate of Probation & HM Inspectorate of Constabulary, 2014). However, a further inspection conducted in 2019 found that IOM had 'lost its way' (HM Inspectorate of Probation & HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services, 2020, p.4). The inspection noted the lack of national strategic leadership or oversight of IOM resulted in inconsistent delivery of IOM

² Respectively: University of South Wales, Bangor University, Cardiff University, University of South Wales.

³ The exact agencies involved in implementing IOM are likely to differ between local areas, but may include statutory and non-statutory services, such as drug and alcohol services, accommodation providers, prisons, and government departments such as Department for Work and Pensions. In practice, police and probation have led on the implementation of IOM.

⁴ There may be individuals whose statutory element of Order or Licence has completed and probation contact has ended who can either remain on IOM or be taken onto IOM. However, supervision of these cases is non-enforceable and therefore voluntary.

locally. Delivery of IOM was seen to be driven locally and shaped by localised rather than national priorities.

This inspection was soon followed by a new strategy, published in December 2020, which aimed to provide ‘a unified approach to offender supervision in the community’, whilst retaining discretion for local delivery models to also respond to local priorities (HM Government, 2020). The strategy also stressed the importance of effective governance structures, a consistent approach to supervision and support, and of evaluation to demonstrate the effectiveness of IOM. Central to this was setting clear national priorities for IOM, with a core focus on ‘neighbourhood crime’.⁵

The refresh to IOM, launched in summer 2021 following this new strategy, brought in several changes. These included strengthening national and regional oversight of IOM through new governance structures involving police and probation, both separately and jointly; introduction of the ‘fixed, flex, free’ model (see section 2.3) to guide cohort selection and management; improvement to induction and training; and, new performance indicators.

1.2 Evaluation aims

The evaluation aimed to:

- To gather evidence about how IOM refresh is developed, used and valued.
- To identify facilitators and barriers to the implementation of the IOM refresh strategy, why these happened, examples of good practice and any lessons learnt.
- To explore IOM’s effectiveness in supporting desistance.

1.3 Methodology

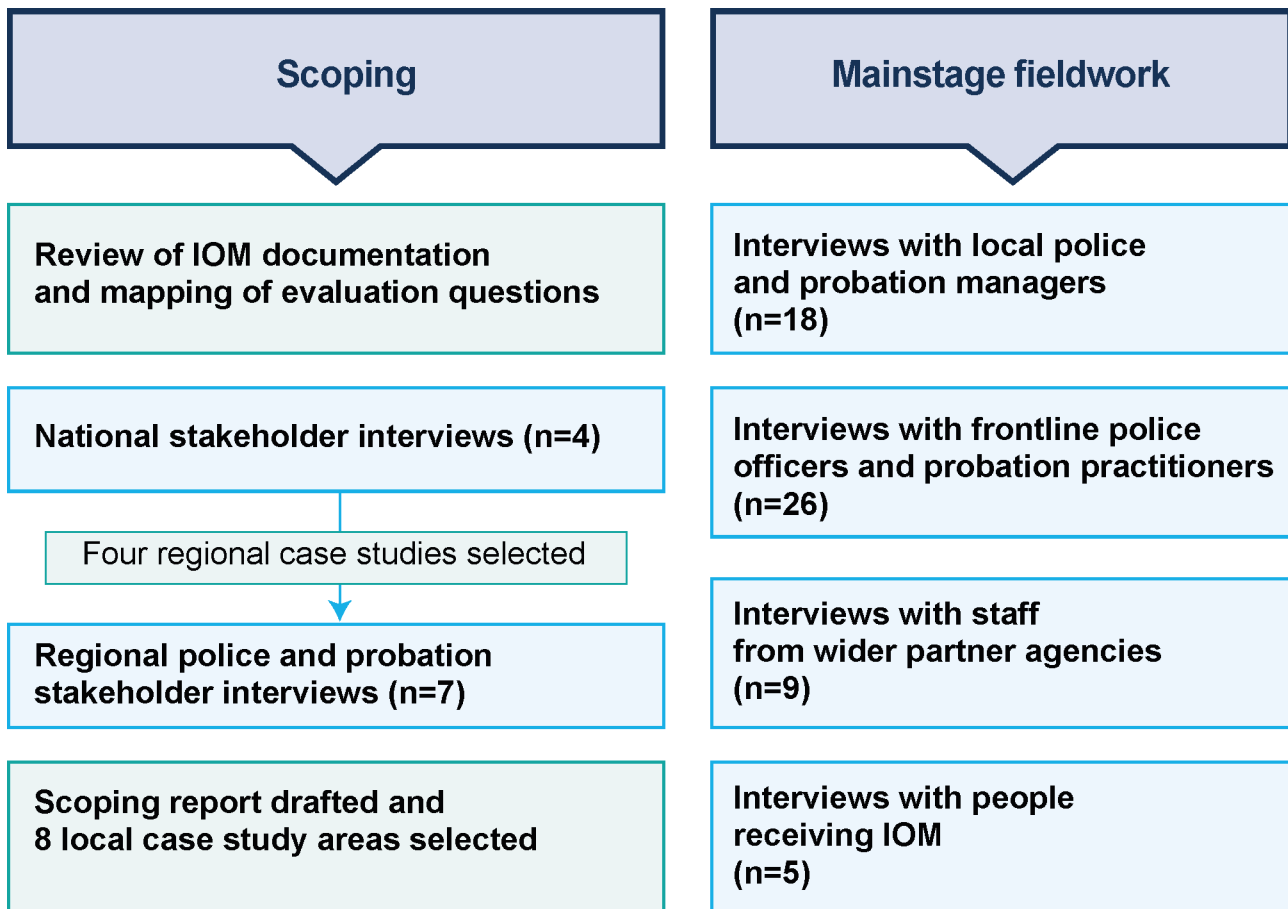
Summary of evaluation design

To meet the evaluation aims, a two phased approach was conducted. This included an initial scoping phase which was followed by a mainstage qualitative fieldwork phase.

Figure 1.1 below outlines this methodology in more detail.

⁵ Burglary, robbery, theft from the person, and vehicle theft.

Figure 1.1: Overview of the evaluation methodology



Scoping Phase

The scoping phase included a desk review of IOM documentation and mapping of evaluation questions to proposed data collection methods. Based on these activities, semi-structured interview guides were developed and agreed with MoJ.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with four national stakeholders and seven regional stakeholders from police and probation between 27 July and 1 September 2023. These interviews explored: IOM governance, implementation of the IOM model, partnership working, perceptions of the impact of IOM, and a discussion on local sampling to inform the mainstage design.

Mainstage fieldwork

Following completion of the scoping phase, mainstage fieldwork took place in eight agreed local case study areas. The mainstage took place between 20th October 2023 and 7th March 2024 and consisted of in-depth interviews with four audiences:

- 18 local managers from police and probation working on IOM (e.g. Detective Inspectors/Sergeants and Senior Probation Practitioners).
- 26 IOM frontline workers (mainly police officers and probation practitioners).
- 9 managers and members of frontline staff from wider agencies supporting IOM, such as drug and alcohol services and housing services from both local authorities and charities.
- 5 people on probation receiving IOM.

Further detail on the methodology and sampling is included in Appendix A of the report.

1.4 Sampling

To ensure the evaluation explored a range of IOM arrangements and practices, a two-tiered sampling approach was used. It is important to note that this approach allowed us to cover breadth of findings rather than painting a representative picture.

Firstly, following initial interviews with national stakeholders and discussion with MoJ, four probation regions across England were sampled.⁶ Regions were selected to try and ensure a range of characteristics, such as urbanity vs rurality, geographical spread across England, and size.

The four selected regions were:

- Yorkshire and the Humber;
- Greater Manchester;
- East of England; and,
- South Central.

Secondly, following interviews with regional stakeholders, eight local case study areas were chosen within these four regions (two Probation Delivery Units (PDUs) per region).⁷

⁶ It was decided to exclude Wales from case studies within this evaluation due to our collaborators' research on IOM concurrently taking place there – Maguire et al. (2024).

⁷ We have not named the local areas in this report to preserve anonymity.

1.5 Analysis

This report draws together findings from both the initial scoping fieldwork and the mainstage interviews. All interviews were transcribed and coded into a thematic analysis framework based on the detailed evaluation questions. As fieldwork progressed, this was refined to ensure that analysis was guided by what was coming out of the data. The in-depth exploration of this thematic framework provided the foundation of this report.

1.6 Limitations

Taking a case study approach allowed the exploration of different IOM models and their implementation. However, the areas chosen may not be representative of all delivery models across England and Wales.

Findings contained in this report are based on the perceptions of those who took part in interviews. It was not within the scope of this evaluation to triangulate findings with further monitoring information, for example to validate responses on the support provided to individuals on IOM.

Further, people receiving IOM who took part in interviews were recruited with the support of police officers and probation practitioners. It is likely that those that engaged with the evaluation were disproportionately drawn from those who engaged with IOM and had positive relationships with their IOM frontline workers. Therefore, while these interviews provided some insight on the experiences of those receiving IOM, these are unlikely to be representative of the whole population. Participants were not offered incentives to take part in the evaluation.

1.7 Ethical considerations

Ahead of fieldwork starting, the project was submitted to a full internal ethics review by Ipsos UK's internal research ethics committee (REC). Given the potentially sensitive nature of discussions around participants' experiences and views of IOM, considerations were factored into the study design.

These included, but were not limited to, providing participants with comprehensive information leaflets to establish their understanding of the project, how the information they

provided would be used and to ensure participants were providing informed consent. It was made clear to them that taking part was voluntary, and they had the right to withdraw from the research at any time. It was also explained that interviews would be treated confidentially, and findings presented anonymously in the final report.

1.8 Report structure

The main body of the report comprises the following chapters:

- Chapter 2 explores the changes brought in by the IOM Refresh.
- Chapter 3 explores the delivery of IOM, focusing on supervision, staffing, partnership working, and deselection.
- Chapter 4 explores key enablers and barriers to delivering IOM.
- Chapter 5 discusses perceptions of impact.
- Chapter 6 lays out conclusions to this process evaluation.

2. The IOM Refresh

This chapter explores the changes implemented by the IOM Refresh in 2021, including:

- A refocussing of IOM on neighbourhood crime.
- New funding for IOM at all levels, including a Regional Outcome and Innovation Fund.
- New funded roles, namely IOM Support Workers (IOM SWs) and Young Adult Support Workers (YASWs).
- New governance structures, including the appointment of national strategic leads and regional IOM leads in both police and probation, as well as IOM-related responsibilities for regional directors of the newly reunified probation service.
- The introduction of the ‘fixed, flex and free model’ and clear criteria for mandatory inclusion in the ‘fixed’ category of perpetrators of neighbourhood crime.
- New operational guidance focused on the fixed cohort.
- A new performance framework.

Stakeholders at national and regional level were clear on the need for the refresh due to the perception that IOM had ‘lost its way’. There was agreement that there was a need for more consistency across England and Wales, as well as more comprehensive oversight of the delivery of offender management.

“The refresh was to refocus and get each force and each probation region to align to common goals.” – National Stakeholder

Locally, police officers and probation practitioners also recognised the necessity of the refresh. For those working on IOM prior to the 2021 Refresh, the Refresh was timely, if not overdue. They reported that the refresh had provided clarity, as well as renewed focus on IOM at strategic levels – nationally, regionally, and locally - which had led to it being embedded more effectively at the local level.

“I think it needed some fresh eyes on it... I think it was probably long overdue.” – Police Officer

2.1 Governance structures

New governance structures put in place as part of the Refresh were seen positively, particularly among national and regional stakeholders across police and probation. Reference was made to the role of the regional strategic board and reducing reoffending board as well as local governance structures such as the MACC and MAP meetings which support the delivery of IOM. As will be discussed later in the report, the new governance structures had also helped good partnerships to develop, fostering engagement of range of agencies supporting the provision of rehabilitative services.

The pivotal inspection of IOM in 2020 recommended the establishment of clear governance structures. The new governance structures were considered to have brought in a level of oversight and strategic leadership that had not been in place previously.

“I do think the governance structure on a whole makes sense, I think it’s got that accountability, and I think it’s got the right people around the table to support that.”

- Regional Stakeholder

Despite high-level strategic leadership being in place, supported by the establishment of the Central IOM Team, national and regional stakeholders agreed that structures were not merely ‘top down’. The Integrated Offender Management Regional Leads Implementation Group (IRLIG) and Police Working Group (PWG) meetings allowed regional level stakeholders to feed back into IOM strategy and delivery. These forums were also seen as being effective avenues for sharing information, including best practice, as well as for group discussion of any challenges regions were facing.

“I think monthly is a good frequency [for IRLIG meetings], and it basically means that things are, sort of, filtered down well. And I feel that... we contribute a lot, we’re quite empowered to contribute to implementing the national strategy and having input.” – Regional Stakeholder

At an operational local level, the guidance prescribed two core meetings: the Multi-Agency Case Conference (MACC) and the Multi-agency Practitioner Meetings (MAP). MACC is a monthly meeting jointly chaired by the Police IOM Tactical Lead and Senior Probation Practitioner. This meeting should be attended by police officers and probation practitioners

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to discuss the progress of the IOM cohort, and selection and deselection of those receiving IOM. Weekly MAP meetings bring together partners to discuss real time collaboration and problem solve. The guidance states that these meetings should be attended by “key partners”, suggesting that agencies other than police and probation are expected, but the exact make-up of the group should reflect the needs of the local area.

These national, regional, and local structures were seen to foster the multi-agency approach crucial to the delivery of IOM. In particular, they were also said to have supported building effective relationships between the police and probation – nationally, regionally and at a local level. In some cases, this included broader statutory services and Commissioned Rehabilitation Services (CRS). This was deemed positive as wider partners attending MAP meetings could be involved in discussions about individual cases and provide advice.

“If you’re looking at those specific partners... you’ve got people that are the strategic leaders that can actually get that fixed rather than just working on an individual case between individual workers, you can look at their holistic plan... So I think it’s having that collaborative approach and that falling under the strategic governance that allows you to do that.” – Police Manager

However, some interviewees reported that CRS and other relevant agencies are not always in attendance, with some expressing a concern that meetings could be burdensome. The number of meetings stipulated by national guidance could prove challenging to local teams. This was acknowledged by regional stakeholders who had received feedback from local levels.

“We always seem to have lots of meetings, lots of discussions, lots of decisions about risk and where it should be managed... It’s massive, massively positive, yes. Sometimes, it can feel protracted.” – Police Officer

Police officers and probation practitioners at a local level noted the need to strike a balance between regular communication and discussion of individuals, which was vital to the effectiveness of IOM, and ensuring that meetings remained productive and efficient. Having specific timeslots within meetings to discuss specific individuals was cited as a potential mitigation, helping meetings become more structured and ensuring that officers

and wider stakeholders were able to attend when they could make a meaningful contribution. This was in place in some areas but not consistently applied. Partnership working is discussed further in Chapter 3.

“It is a real balancing act to make sure that you’re having a meeting that’s productive but at the same time it can’t be so lengthy because you might have 40 people that you’re talking about. And then you will lose partners... if they’re part of a meeting that can go on forever and a day and they’ve only got certain bits that they want to say towards certain people you can end up losing either their concentration on the day, or even their attendance in total.” – Police Manager

2.2 Commissioning

Accessing and spending funding seemed to be a particular challenge across regions according to national and regional stakeholders. Regional stakeholders noted that they had found it easy to identify initiatives which they could roll out to support the delivery of IOM locally. However, they felt there had been a lot of red tape preventing them from using this funding efficiently. Some issues that were noted included:

- Inconsistencies in decision making between regions as to what funding could be used for;
- Caps on the amount of money that could be given to one organisation (e.g. service provider, trainer, charity etc.) without having to start a public tender process; and,
- Limits on providing funding to third sector organisations.

At a regional level, forums such as IRLIG, were cited as useful for discussing these issues and in some cases overcoming them. For example, when funding was not approved for a particular initiative in one area, the regional leads were able to liaise with those in other regions where similar initiatives had been approved. This helped provide useful examples and insights that they could use to form a business case to discuss with those responsible for funding decisions in their own region.

National stakeholders also noted that it might have been better for funding to be allocated more unevenly between years. They felt this would avoid unnecessary pressure to spend

money in the early phases of the Refresh and allow more money to be available in later years. They observed that the allocation of more funding in later years, once the Refresh had become embedded and areas were more aware of their needs, would lead to more targeted spending. However, the nature of Government spending meant that budget was lost if it was not spent within certain timescales.

“It was, ‘You need to spend all this money now.’ So, some money went back, more than what we would have liked to have sent back, really.” – National Stakeholder

Despite this, both national and regional stakeholders described positive initiatives that had been implemented that were made possible by the funding. For example, one region had used funding to pay for staff’ overtime to provide the visits needed to meet the three-appointment target for those on fixed cohorts. In others, funding had been used, or was planned to be used, to provide specific support to individuals, for example on mental health needs, or to bring in new roles. In one area the hiring of intensity workers⁸ was planned by probation to provide additional support (e.g. further face-to-face interaction) to individuals to increase compliance.

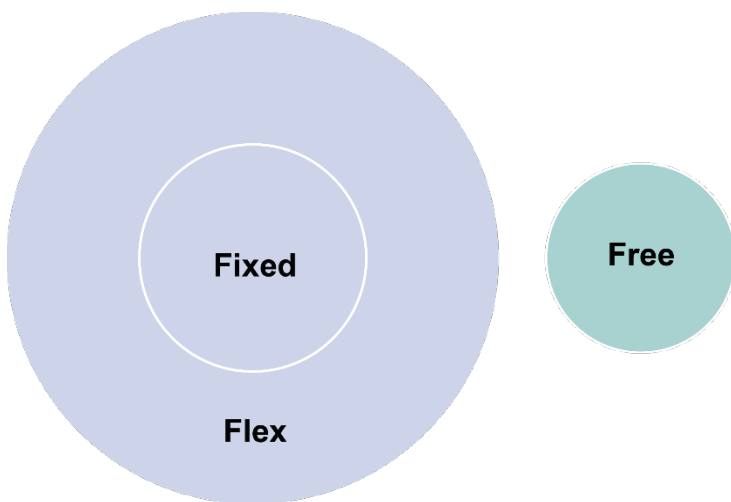
However, IOM frontline workers were generally unable to report how funding had been used. The exception was Greater Manchester, where local police officers and probation practitioners noted funding for Operation Vigilance. This allowed IOM frontline workers to provide additional appointments outside of regular hours, supporting them to deliver three appointments a week to those on the fixed cohort – a target discussed further in Chapter 3 below. Other areas did note having access to small pools of funding, but it was not clear as to the origin and availability of these funds.

2.3 The new IOM Model

The revised strategy also set out the new model for IOM, containing three distinct cohorts—‘fixed, flex and free’.

⁸ Staff members were to provide additional support to people receiving IOM, including taking them to appointments, organising diaries, and other tasks as needed until individuals are confident doing these independently.

Figure 2.3: IOM model – fixed, flex and free



Source: Neighbourhood Crime Integrated Offender Management Strategy, HM Government, 2020

Overall, the model was seen to be generally fit for purpose among police officers and probation practitioners across levels. Having a consistent model was seen as useful for structuring IOM. Alongside this, the flexibility built into the model gave areas sufficient autonomy to meet local needs – a characteristic appreciated among regional stakeholders and IOM frontline workers.

“I think the IOM model fits for who we’re working with, the tactics and everything that are in place.” – Probation Manager

The fixed cohort was generally well understood and consistently applied, with small differences cited on thresholds for selection. This is consistent with findings from the evaluation of IOM in Wales (Maguire et al., 2024). According to national guidance, those on the fixed cohort should be people who have committed a neighbourhood crime offence with a high, very high or prolific risk of reoffending.⁹ Further targeting should include those who have committed more serious neighbourhood crimes, such as robbery and burglary, even where the Offender Group Reconviction Score (OGRS) is medium, reflecting the level of harm caused by these offences. It was generally expected that the fixed cohort would be the largest cohort of the IOM scheme in each area. In some areas the refresh

⁹ As assessed using the Offender Group Reconviction Score (OGRS), a risk assessment tool used to estimate likelihood of re-offending. OGRS uses static factors such as age, gender and criminal history. It gives a score, which shows the likelihood of someone re-offending within a 12- and 24-month period.

had not resulted in a significant shift in the focus of IOM, where cohorts had already focused on neighbourhood crime. In other areas, this change was more substantial.

“It’s now far more structured about who we are going to be working with, whereas, beforehand it was a bit of a free for all who came on.” – Police Officer

With regards to selection, the criteria for admission, stated in the operational guidance, is most prescriptive for the fixed cohorts.¹⁰ While there is no specific prescribed score, local IOM areas are encouraged to set an appropriate threshold to ensure consistency locally. For example, the guidance outlines that in more rural areas, thresholds for OGRS and Crime Severity Score (CSS) may need to be reduced to achieve a larger fixed cohort, ensuring regions identify the right individuals.

All areas included in this evaluation used OGRS and CSS scores to select individuals onto the fixed cohort, in line with national guidance. Whilst the guidance allows for local thresholds, staff often referred to a national threshold for the fixed cohort: OGRS of 70% and CSS of 1500. Local areas reported lowering or raising thresholds for the fixed cohort to ensure an achievable number of people could be eligible for and accepted onto IOM. This number seemed to vary locally depending on capacity within probation and police. Whilst score thresholds were important, other information were also considered during selection. This included an individual’s offending and probation history, any further intelligence from police or probation regarding their offence and perceived likelihood to reoffend.

Fixed cohorts were consistently focused on neighbourhood crime, in line with the guidance. This focus was generally seen as the right one, by stakeholders included in this evaluation, due to the harm caused by this crime type and the needs of those people – namely, high levels of substance misuse and/or precarious housing.

“It makes sense in terms of the people that we’re targeting are the people that are the highest risk of reoffending, due to the nature of their offences... it’s neighbourhood offences, it’s acquisitive offending, it’s robbery, burglary – they are

¹⁰ The guidance outlines the following with regards to selection onto fixed cohorts: “*Index Offence + OGRS Score + Office of National Statistics (ONS) Crime Severity Score (CSS) = Target figure should be set locally and in accordance with local crime levels and IOM aligned resources.*”

the people generally with their criminogenic needs, risk factors are drug and alcohol use, no accommodation... they're the people that we do need to be targeting." – Probation Practitioner

The flex cohort was the least well understood and most inconsistently applied across IOM areas. It was generally seen as a cohort where people who have committed a neighbourhood crime could access support even if they did not meet the nomination threshold of the fixed cohort.

The free cohort, on the other hand, allowed areas to focus on areas of local need and include people from a wider range of crime types in IOM. The flexibility offered by the free cohort was appreciated by IOM frontline workers and allowed some areas to continue working with people who had committed wider crime types that were on IOM prior to the Refresh, ensuring continuity in support for those individuals. The range of offences varied across areas, but included: domestic abuse, young people with links to Organised Crime Groups or county lines, serious organised crime, serious violence, modern slavery and trafficking, and gang-related or knife crime. National and regional stakeholders also acknowledged the importance of flexibility within the IOM model, represented by the free (and to a lesser extent, the flex) cohort, in encouraging the engagement of those working in local areas.

"I think different police force areas particularly, because they have certain crime needs, like, knife crime, gang crime, domestic violence... were quite keen to keep some of those cases within the flex and free so they didn't lose that traction because they've done a lot of work and they've put resources in for that." – Regional Stakeholder

Operationally, the flex and free cohorts appeared to blur, with one area defining a cohort of female offenders as flex, which in the guidance would constitute a free cohort. This suggests that these cohorts are less well understood. However, the extent to which this was a concern at a national and regional level varied. For some, clarity between the flex and free cohorts was not an issue if individuals that would benefit from IOM were included in some way. This could be due to the lack of explicit targets on the number of

appointments a week to be provided to those on flex and free cohorts (as compared to a target of three appointments a week on fixed).¹¹

“My conclusion to all that is it doesn’t matter [if the flex and free are implemented inconsistently]. You’re working with them and they’re getting the service regardless of where you’ve labelled them... Certainly, if someone put [an offender] in fixed compared to their flex, then that does impact on the probation side of things.” – National Stakeholder

Others recognised that the concept of localism was inherently built into the model but felt the flex cohort aspect of the model represented mission drift, which could be unhelpful overall. Some at regional and local level questioned the need for a flex cohort in addition to the consistency of the fixed cohort and the freedom of the free cohort. Some national stakeholders also felt this cohort was the most likely to muddy the waters of IOM.

“I think we’ve mission drift through the flex(ed) and the free cohorts. I think the fixed cohort is good, it does what it says on the tin.” – Regional Stakeholder

Wider stakeholders included in this evaluation, outside of police and probation, were often not familiar with the different cohorts. They were unable to articulate the differences between those on the fixed, flex, or free cohorts. However, they did not seem concerned about this lack of knowledge, as the support available or provided was not likely to differ depending on cohort. Supervision and support provided is discussed further in Chapter 3 below.

“[The different cohorts are] just mentioned by the police in various meetings. It’s not something I’ve gone into in detail... it makes absolutely no difference to me as to who is on what and what level they are. If they’re cases that have been mentioned, then we’ll pick them up if they’re got an [IOM] officer.” – Wider Stakeholder

¹¹ It should be noted that following fieldwork for this evaluation National IOM Flex and Free Guiding Principles were published internally in April 2024.

2.4 New roles

The ambition of the Refresh was also to implement the new roles, such as YASW and IOM SW. A few areas highlighted the recruitment challenges they had experienced for these roles. Reasons given included a lack of people applying with relevant experience and local probation staffing pressures.

“If they advertised that post then they’ll come from other generic positions within probation where they’re already short of staff.” – National Stakeholder

Awareness of these roles varied across areas. Some IOM frontline workers were aware of them as well as the value they could bring to IOM delivery whilst others had not heard of either role. For the small number of areas included in the evaluation where these roles were in post, stakeholders highlighted their positive impact. This included improving data quality, appointment recording, embedding IOM more deeply within the police and assisting with setting up the MAP meetings.

“It would allow front-line practitioners to spend more time with the actual person on probation rather than being overwhelmed with the admin side of the job. It would be an extra resource... which would not only enhance the quality of the relationship you have... that’s the point of the job really, to try and help people that are on probation to reduce the risk of harm and reoffending.” – Probation Practitioner

Specifically for the YASW role, there was a perception the role could hopefully reduce resourcing pressures on probation practitioners and help bridge the gap between youth offending teams and probation in areas that included young offenders on IOM. The roles were also identified as being able to address gaps in support and supervision when a young person’s transitions from youth to adult services.

“I think there’s always a, sort of, gap area when somebody comes from being a child to an adult. You know, as in they tend to fall through the criminal justice cracks. So, I think part of that is to try and fill that gap.” – National Stakeholder

2.5 Sustainability

Stakeholders across levels felt that IOM should, and would, continue in the long term. The importance of the support provided through IOM was highlighted and the potential impact on desistance, discussed further in Chapter 5 below, meant that stakeholders wanted the programme to be continued. They felt that stopping, or de-prioritising IOM, would be a mistake.

“I think we should have IOM here to stay. I don’t think it should be going anywhere. There’s a lot of time, effort, and money gone into the refresh, and it would be a real shame to lose that. It’s definitely something that is needed with that cohort of people.” – Probation Manager

Stakeholders across levels reflected that neighbourhood crime was likely to remain a national political priority given the impact on communities, leading to continued central strategic buy-in for IOM.¹² This, combined with maintenance of national governance structures, was seen as being key to continued engagement from senior leadership within police and probation at a local level – a fundamental enabler for the delivery of IOM.

“Because a dwelling burglary is always going to be a high priority... it’s a life-changing experience for most people that it happens to... it will always be politically up there.” – Police Manager

“I think the government needs to have the biggest direction and try and push how important it is to the senior police officers. It does work, and we need to keep it going.” – Police Officer

However, ensuring sustainability was predicated on continued resource, funding, and strategic buy-in across all levels. There was some suggestion among national and regional stakeholders that PDUs and forces on the ground might be able to make aspects of IOM business as usual without further funding. However, if a lack of funding led to the removal

¹² It should be noted that it is likely that while this will remain a national priority, it may not be seen as a priority locally. For example, Maguire et al. (2024) found in their evaluation of IOM in Wales that some largely rural PDUs did not see neighbourhood crime as a key priority.

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of strategic oversight structures, stakeholders felt this would have a negative impact on IOM and likely increase likelihood of inconsistent delivery models and objectives.

“I think it’s sustainable if we are able to maintain the resource needed to be able to make sure it’s delivering effectively across all of the elements and the cohorts.” –
Regional Stakeholder

At a local level, police officers and probation practitioners noted that IOM was dependent on continued funding, and in some cases needed further dedicated resource to ensure effective delivery was achieved and sustained. This was important in mitigating issues caused by under resourcing, discussed further in Chapter 3 below.

“From a probation point of view, unless they focus purely on IOM or increase the staff resources, as well as housing resources, police resources, I don’t think it will be sustainable because I think staff will give up.” – Probation Practitioner

3. Delivering IOM

Since its inception, IOM has sought to ensure that Police, Probation, and other partner agencies work collectively in addressing the causes of crime and reducing reoffending among people receiving IOM. The Refresh developed governance structures at national, regional, and local level to aid the delivery of a partnership approach. This is supported by operational guidance which sets out expectations as to the supervision of those on IOM, as well as the roles and responsibilities of agencies in delivering IOM effectively.

3.1 Engagement

Initial appointments with people receiving IOM varied between being held in custody and community settings (including the individual's home). The setting of this initial appointment was seen to potentially influence successful engagement. Engaging with individuals while they were still in custody was seen to have a positive impact on engagement. Both IOM police officers and probation practitioners felt that it was easier to start building rapport and a relationship with an individual when they were still in prison (Cram, 2018, 2023). However, the importance of having these conversations sufficiently in advance of a release date from custody was highlighted to ensure positive engagement in the community.

“Whilst in prison they’ve also got the ‘I don’t want to be back here again. I hate this place. I do not want to come back. Well, to be honest, we can help you not come back.’ ...and we can start working on their pathway issues before they are released... it’s building that trust that we will do what we say we’re going to do.”
– Police Officer

Additionally, the way in which information about IOM is communicated to people on probation could also impact engagement. Some individuals receiving IOM mentioned being given leaflets and paperwork explaining the premise of IOM in addition to an initial appointment. Being clear and honest about what is expected from an individual also appears to have a positive impact on continued engagement.

“It was a bit of both I suppose, what they said and then what was in the paperwork went into a bit more detail in what they were saying. But when it’s paperwork you can’t really ask them any questions, can you, about it, so, by them telling me and the paperwork they were both as helpful as each other I suppose.”

– Person receiving IOM

Further, the format of initial engagement varied, although the presence of a probation practitioner was seen as important to build trust with the individual. For example, in some areas, probation felt it was important to take the lead on engagement, given historic mistrust of the police among those on probation. In other areas, joint initial appointments were regarded as important to highlight the joint nature of IOM, reassuring individuals that IOM is not purely a police monitoring programme, whilst being clear on the support available from both agencies.

“We work in plain clothes, we try and downplay very much that we are police... At that first appointment it is really drummed into the constables and the probation officers that you talk about IOM... not as a police initiative type thing... you talk about IOM as being a complete partnership that has two main partners and then has a lot of other agencies that all play into trying to assist somebody and rehabilitate.” – Police Manager

Demographic characteristics of people receiving IOM could have an impact on engagement. For example, the age of the person receiving IOM could impact their willingness to engage. Some officers noted that they found some older cohort members had become tired of a lifestyle taking them in and out of prison. This led to them being more willing to accept support offered through IOM. This was reiterated by an individual who was receiving IOM who noted that their age had been one reason why they had accepted support the last time they left prison.¹³

“The best results so far seem to be people who are older or more mature in life who are just sick of the kind of lifestyle. Sick of prison and want to make a change.” – Police Officer

¹³ This is consistent with the evaluation of IOM in Wales (Maguire et al., 2024).

“[Age] That’s basically changed my mind... I’ve come out this time, and it’s just been a turning point for me in my life.” – Person receiving IOM

On the other hand, IOM frontline workers noted that younger cohort members might struggle to engage due to a lack of maturity, chaotic lifestyles, peer pressure, and mistrust of the police. The latter is particularly the case if an individual has had a difficult history with the police. There was a sense that individuals often had to reach ‘rock bottom’ before engaging with IOM – and this usually happened with age.

“[Young offenders] really struggle with that intensity... and I think that’s an age thing and maturity thing.” – Probation Practitioner

The complexity of the lives and specific needs of individuals were also seen as impacting engagement. Women on IOM were seen as consistently challenging to engage due to generally having more complex needs: this was particularly the case if the women had children or experiences of domestic violence. Some officers suggested that having other responsibilities and priorities meant it could be difficult for women to engage fully with IOM. As such, police officers and probation practitioners stated that it was harder to build trust particularly with vulnerable women with complex histories.

“There’s a lot to unpick with females... I do think that females are more vulnerable than males, and I think a lot of the time they have a very complex backstory. They can be very mistrusting, which is understandable. So, gaining their trust takes a long time... if you do one thing that they don’t like, that’s it. The trust is broken.”
– Police Officer

Historic mistrust of police among offenders could also impact the extent to which they would engage with police officers as part of IOM. This was also highlighted by those receiving IOM. One individual reported being unhappy about being selected at first, even though his relationship with his IOM police and probation staff had improved over time.

“I’ve had bad experiences over the years [with the police]... so, I wasn’t happy with [being on IOM] to start.” – Person receiving IOM

“People who come out and don’t want anything to do with us, because they see us as the police, which obviously is what we are. They’ve had a chequered history with the police and can only see the police as people who enforce the law and arrest people and put them in prison.” – Police Officer

Homelessness and a lack of access to services can make engaging with IOM difficult. IOM frontline workers reported that they struggled to engage with people who are released from prison with no housing provision. Similarly, not having access to mental health services or drug and alcohol services was also seen as impacting engagement. This is discussed further in relation to the impact of IOM in Chapter 5.

“...So they’re coming out of prison, apprehensive, you’ve got everything in place, but then they’re saying, ‘Where am I going to live?’... And then you’re taking them down to housing options, they’re stood in a massive queue with everybody else, and there’s nowhere to house them... And because they’ve not got a fixed address, they can’t get everything in place properly for themselves, so then all they end up doing is thinking, ‘Well what’s the point?’ And then we end up back on the circle of them offending again, not being where they’re meant to be, sofa surfing, you can never find them, you can’t manage them properly, they don’t turn up to the appointments because you can’t give them appointments anywhere... it’s housing that’s the massive issue.” – Police Officer

3.2 Supervision

The National IOM Operational Guidance (2023) states that three appointments a week should be offered to those on fixed cohorts, unless risks and needs of the person receiving IOM in line with their RAG status indicates otherwise.¹⁴

Stakeholders and staff across all levels felt that three appointments a week was a sensible target and could be the right amount of supervision for many on a fixed cohort. They acknowledged that the value-add of IOM was the more intense supervision and access to rehabilitative services received compared to people on probation but not on IOM. This was seen as key to making a difference in the likelihood to reoffend. However, this target felt

¹⁴ National IOM Operational Guidance, 2023 (internal document; unpublished).

more realistic for areas with more probation/police capacity and strong buy-in from and capacity within wider agencies.¹⁵

No explicit guidance was given for the number of appointments to be offered to those on flex and free cohorts. For these individuals, IOM frontline workers noted that supervision would be down to professional judgement. This could mean less – and sometimes, more – intensive contact, though this varied between individuals.

Across all the cohorts, IOM frontline workers noted that the ‘right’ amount of supervision was dependent on an individual’s progress. ‘RAG’ systems were used across areas, with an individual being designated as red (having made little progress and/or needing intensive support), amber, or green (making good progress, lower likelihood of reoffending and/or less intense support needed). Frontline workers felt that supervision should take this status into account. For example, some argued that those on a red status or those with a higher risk of offending should get enhanced supervision over those who are on either a green or amber status.

“I think RAG status probably needs to come into that a little bit, so if somebody is status green for quite a while in fixed, the point of it is them becoming self-sufficient in the community. So, should we still keep doing it just because they’re in fixed, when actually professional judgement and agreement through MACC processes means that we’re going to now agree we’re going to drop it to see how they survive on their own without all that? Because it’s about that long-term desistance, isn’t it? So, I think that possibly needs reviewing a little bit.”

– Regional Stakeholder

Whilst intensive support was perceived as being helpful in preventing future offending, and regular appointments were fundamental to that support, a need to focus on the quality of appointments, not the quantity, was also highlighted. There was a concern that focusing on delivering the target of three appointments every week could detract from the quality of the support being provided. Instead, one or two appointments were seen as being as

¹⁵ Maguire et al. (2024) also found that this target was particularly challenging in rural areas of Wales due to the long distances involved and poor public transport services.

effective in meeting the needs of some individuals. Whilst for others, with more complex needs the support provided over three, or even more, appointments a week was important.

“I don’t think it’s about the number of appointments and whether people turn up, it’s about what you do in them. I think it’s a really crude measure.”

– Regional Stakeholder

IOM support offered

The ‘typical’ support offered to individuals on IOM varied depending on their needs and was determined by an agreed action plan completed at the start of the IOM engagement. This would be informed by an assessment of need, aimed at determining support required i.e. housing provision, drug and alcohol services, support with mental health, education, employment, and any safeguarding issues.

IOM engagement also typically involved appointments with wider agencies. Police officers and probation practitioners often referred to advocating for individuals on IOM to ensure they received the support required. Probation practitioners did not explicitly mention referring those on IOM to accredited programmes.¹⁶

“When we first meet the person, regardless of whether it’s in police custody, prison, in the community, at the home address, we would speak with the person and work out, what do we really need here? And at the beginning of that engagement, we would be looking at offering the person more contact with us. And that could mean a one-to-one with the case manager, and it could mean that we’re signing somebody up to attend a group work programme with us. It could be that we’re having a joint appointment with probation. It could be that we’re having a joint appointment with the treatment provider.” – Wider Stakeholder

Police and probation conducted joint appointments, at individuals’ homes, in the community, or at probation offices, as much as possible. In these visits, both police and probation would assess the progress and needs of the individual, as well as signpost the

¹⁶ Maguire et al. (2024) found that in Wales, interviewees rarely referred people on IOM to such intensive interventions and instead preferred to adapt existing interventions to create their own versions for one-to-one delivery.

individual to other services. Where weekly face-to-face appointments were not possible, probation and police noted weekly phone calls with people receiving IOM as a minimum.

“We’ll have a joint meeting then, so that the person on probation can see that we’re all singing from the same hymn sheet.” – Probation Practitioner

Reference was also made to police officers and probation practitioners providing lifts to appointments, collecting prescription medication, help sorting out income payments, help setting up a bank account. It is worth noting that this practical support was not provided by all IOM frontline workers. Although reasons for this were not always specified, capacity was cited as a general barrier to support provision (further discussed in Chapter 4). The importance of ad hoc support and other practical support outside of formal appointments was also noted as being valued by people receiving IOM. Similarly, although not available across all areas, police officers and probation practitioners that had access to small pots of funding, for example to buy clothes or other small items for people receiving IOM, felt this was an enabler to successfully building positive relationship and ensuring individuals got the support they needed.

“I’ve had support, like, financial, because I got a telly bought for me. I got a little bit of, you know, bedroom furniture bought for me as well, not a bed, a duvet set and all that. And obviously I got that because obviously he told me that obviously if you’re doing well, the help’s there.” – Person receiving IOM

“I do make my phone available, so I say, ‘Look, these are my working hours, if you do need to contact me, give me a call.’ And if there any issues or problems I can try and help and support them. I’ll have people ring me up and say, ‘I’ve got an appointment here today, do you mind giving me a lift?’ Yes, I try and support them.” – Police Officer

3.3 Roles and responsibilities of police and probation

There was consensus among the views and experiences of national, regional, and local stakeholders that police and probation teams are working collaboratively. The Refresh was seen as contributing to improved partnership working, supported by a commitment by both services to the IOM approach, underpinned by engagement at a senior level.

“I think Refresh has definitely brought us back together and brought us back [in] line with what we should be doing, and the guidance that it’s given us has made us have to sit together and talk about how we’re going to do it.” – Police Officer

Local and regional governance structures were seen as strengthening the delivery of IOM. Reference was made to the role of MAP and MACC meetings in aiding a collaborative approach. Having regular meetings to promote formal collaboration and information sharing was seen as a key factor to building rapport between the agencies.¹⁷

Whilst it was acknowledged that there is a clear buy-in among police and probation to the IOM approach, the strategic priorities of police officers, combined with the established working practices of the police, were perceived as being at odds with the rehabilitative approach of IOM.¹⁸ Yet it was argued that acknowledgment of these differing roles and agendas could help foster a positive working relationship.

“I think people see [IOM] as a real benefit... it is a mindset change, specifically for police. Because people spend a lot of time trying to arrest individuals, catch them, put them into prison, for all of these offences. I’m not saying that isn’t the case in IOM, but it takes a completely different mindset of actually going: ‘Right, what are the vulnerabilities here? What are the reasons for that offending? Why were they kept in prison? What can I put in place? How can I address their pathway needs?’”
– Regional Stakeholder

In some areas, differing strategic agendas could lead to differing opinions, particularly about deselection (when someone is taken off IOM – see section 3.6) and/or recall (when someone can be taken back to prison if they have failed to comply with their licence conditions when released on licence or parole).¹⁹ However, these disagreements were often seen as ‘healthy’ and were resolved successfully with joint decisions, due to respectful and close working relationships between individuals.

¹⁷ This is reflected in the evaluation of IOM in Wales (Maguire et al., 2024) and wider research (Cram, 2023).

¹⁸ This is in line with wider research on IOM (Cram, 2018, 2023).

¹⁹ As also found in the evaluation of IOM in Wales (Maguire et al., 2024).

“We have different agendas and sometimes they [probation] don’t necessarily want to resort to targeting people as quickly as we would like to, but I think that’s down to historic [agendas]: police are brought up to arrest people and get them sent back to prison, whereas probation are trying to avoid it. I think there’s a time and a place for both approaches and it’s trying to find that common ground.”

– Police Manager

Training

Prior to the Refresh, there was little formal induction or training for staff working on IOM. This was an issue highlighted by the 2020 inspectorate report, with sufficient training being seen as a significant gap for IOM police and probation staff.

There were mixed views locally on the training that had been received among police officers and probation practitioners. Some regional stakeholders and IOM frontline workers referenced locally designed IOM training documents or presentations. For some the training had been comprehensive, preparing them sufficiently for their role in supporting IOM cases. For others there was a sense that IOM specific training and induction had not been provided but would be useful if available. Police and Probation felt that more training on the IOM model, the support available, the needs of cohort members, and how to communicate with this specific group would be useful.

Whilst more formal training was seen as useful, a number of police officers and probation practitioners also noted that knowledge and skills needed (for example, experience communicating with and working with people who have committed a neighbourhood crime offence, or knowledge of the support available from different wider services and how to access this) could be learned ‘on the job’ and the benefit of knowledge sharing was acknowledged.

There was consistent reference to skills and experience required in managing complex caseloads, where a range of needs would be evident, impacting offending behaviour. This led to some highlighting the importance of a trauma informed approach, and the need for additional training to be incorporated into the delivery of IOM.

It should be noted that since the interviews for this evaluation were conducted, further training has been rolled out and more is planned to be released in the coming months.²⁰

3.4 Wider partnership working

As highlighted, both in the operational guidance and views of all stakeholders, partnership working is fundamental to ensuring the effective delivery of IOM. This extends beyond the working relationships between police and probation. It also relates to the role of wider agencies and the critical support they provide in addressing the range of issues evident in the lives of people receiving IOM.

Across all areas, services such as housing, drug and alcohol services, mental health services, community rehabilitation services and local authorities were also cited as being required to support IOM. There were positive examples given of how strong partnership working had been established with these services, supported by agencies regular attendance at MAP meetings. Probation and police reported some key enablers that contributed to strong partnership working, and this included having good working relationships with wider agencies and existing contacts in services. This would then lead to regular attendance at meetings and having information sharing agreements in place which would make multi-agency working more efficient.

Some strong partnerships were particularly highlighted with drug and alcohol services which tended to be the most engaged across different areas. However, variable engagement from services was also noted with reference made most often to housing and mental health services.

“There’s probably a lot of agencies that should be on it all the time, that just aren’t... I feel like that’s quite a big thing, because that’s one of the pathway indicators that we measure by, of what support people need, and it gets to that point in the conversation and we’re all scratching our heads, because there’s a huge gap that we’ve not received any information from.” – Wider Stakeholder

²⁰ The IOM Central Team conducted a skills and training audit, leading to the creation of a National IOM Training Strategy in April 2024. A new training offer has been developed, including four main training blocks: core skills, working with vulnerable adults, 7 resettlement pathways, and organisational procedures. At the time of writing these were being rolled out in a staggered manner to all IOM staff.

For some this was attributed to limited capacity of these services as well as lack of prioritisation of IOM in their work. This variable input also extended to poor engagement by some partner agencies at MAP meetings and case management reviews. There was a consistent view that housing, nationally and locally, did not see IOM as a priority but there was clear acknowledgement that housing is one of the core issues for people on IOM.

“One of the principles of IOM is heightened access to services and we don’t really see that. We’ve had situations where people risk being recalled to prison through no fault of their own, but because they’re going to lose accommodation or not get, gain accommodation. And we just can’t get housing to really help at all – we get the same responses and it’s the same response that you would get if you were just a normal person referring in.” – Police Manager

“I think they’re stretched and underfunded... what they’re able to provide is really limited, which seems crazy because every single one of my cohorts should be in therapy.” – Police Officer

Information sharing

Local IOM police officers and probation practitioners felt comfortable about sharing information about individuals on IOM with other agencies, as well as between police and probation. Regular meetings were seen as key forums for information sharing. All individuals within each cohort would be discussed with all key partners, ensuring that all those working with that individual were updated and looped into further plans for support.

Local police officers and probation practitioners also noted high levels of informal information sharing, for example through regular phone calls and emails. This was seen as important in being able to stay on top of an individual’s circumstances and more efficiently deliver support.

“[IOM police officers] ring and they tell me anything. They share information as if they were a probation colleague, really good support.” – Probation Practitioner

However, frustrations were noted around incompatible IT systems within police and probation. This was particularly noted in responding to IOM data requirements, such as recording the number of appointments an individual had received.

“[Data recording is] relying solely on people telling probation what probation need to know. And sometimes with all the MAPs and MACCs and the best will in the world, that may or may not happen to lesser and greater degrees depending on resourcing on probation and setups. So, there isn’t a generic platform as yet, that anyone can just drop everything into in one repository for that to naturally give you those figures.” – Regional Stakeholder

Information sharing, outside of meetings, with wider agencies was seen as a particular challenge. Where information sharing agreements were in place communication was enabled, but these were not universally present across all IOM partners. A lack of buy-in at all levels and higher levels of concern over information sharing, from police, meant it has been harder for some areas to put these agreements in place. Although only a few areas mentioned challenges with information sharing, the reasons stated were that police were protective over their data and often reluctant to share information.

“...But they [the police] are very protective over what they share and who they’re sharing with. So, they’ve very much, sort of, resistant to having additional agencies or representatives coming into the meetings.” – Probation Manager

3.5 Co-location

Nationally co-location is seen as critical and best practice to effectively deliver IOM. Whilst regional and local stakeholders acknowledged the significant benefits of co-location, there was a mixed picture locally as to whether these arrangements were in place. Co-location models in place varied in terms of agencies, location and intensity. Different arrangements included police co-located at probation offices, probation co-located with wider stakeholders without police, and in one area included in our sample, police co-located with wider stakeholders without probation.

The benefits of co-location were clear to stakeholders across levels. Increased informal information sharing was commonly cited as a benefit. Being able to have conversations in

person, without the need for formal meetings was seen to speed up communication and decision making among both police officers and probation practitioners.²¹

“Co-location is a must... we’re on the top floor at our office and we’re literally sat next-door to each other. So, all the police are in one room and we’re in the next room, and it’s just come in and out as you please. And that sharing of information, and... building a relationship with the police, they know how you work, you know how they work, the quick, streamlined processes of sharing information... is absolutely key from a probation and a police perspective.” – Probation Practitioner

Co-location could also help build trust in the police among people receiving IOM. Where police were based in probation, co-location could help to emphasise the joined-up IOM approach and reduce the sense among service users that IOM was merely intensive monitoring by the police.

“From the police’s point of view, makes the person who is on probation look at us and on occasion they actually forget that we’re police officers and start to tell us things that perhaps they wouldn’t say to a police officer who is sat there in uniform. They drop their guard a little bit which is always quite good for us, because obviously we (1), we get a better relationship with them, they trust us a bit more. (2), we get some information from them that may prove quite useful.”

– Police Officer

However, barriers to co-location included practical considerations, such as lack of appropriate space. There was reference made in four local areas to co-location being in place prior to COVID-19, but the pandemic had impacted agencies being in the office and the change of office locations meant that co-location no longer existed.

Co-location in police premises raised concerns that people on probation would not feel comfortable attending appointments due to concerns they would be arrested or were being called in due to suspected wrongdoing. Further, police stations were seen as inherently

²¹ This was also found in the evaluation of IOM in Wales (Maguire et al., 2024).

not trauma-informed spaces.²² This could then impact engagement with IOM and impact trust in both police and probation among cohorts.

In some areas, co-location was planned but had not yet been implemented due to delays in ensuring compatible IT systems could be put into place. This included computer stations within probation premises that could link into police databases for co-located offices.

Resourcing could also have an impact on co-location. In probation, where a concentrator model has not been implemented, IOM cases are too disparately spread between probation practitioners to warrant formal co-location arrangements with police, a challenge further discussed in Chapter 4. This was a particular barrier in areas where the only space available for co-location was a police station. In these cases, probation practitioners' IOM caseloads did not warrant them moving to the police station to work due to their other cases.

“The barrier has been trying to employ the concentrator model and just with staff turnover, leaving, sickness, it's meant that cases have been allocated [randomly]... people haven't had the time, or the case load to co-locate with.”
– Regional Stakeholder

Further, some felt that full-time co-location was not desirable due to concerns about losing links to home agencies. IOM frontline workers, particularly within the police, highlighted the importance of not losing ties with their own forces. In these cases, full time co-location could lead to a sense of distance between IOM police and probation staff and other investigative officers. While information sharing with probation might improve, they were concerned that this would dilute intelligence sharing within police.

“I personally don't think [co-location is] a good idea. I think it's a good idea for my officers to spend a lot of time within probation, going in. But to be actually based within probation, we feel we would then lose the contact with the departments within the police that we're supporting, because our role is also to support our policing colleagues when they are investigating people that we manage. So, it's striking that balance between making sure we're visible with partners, but also

²² It should also be noted that probation offices may also not be trauma-informed spaces.

making sure we're visible within our own organisation as well. And I think we'd be siloed if we worked out of probation." – Police Manager

Furthermore, some police officers based in probation premises noted a danger of 'role creep'. While they were happy to support probation practitioners outside of IOM, constant queries about non-IOM cases could impact their capacity to deliver IOM and/or concentrate on people receiving IOM. For these officers, part-time co-location and/or ensuring regular communication was seen as more beneficial than full co-location.

3.6 Deselection

Deselection processes were in place across areas. Deselection was discussed at monthly MACC meetings with all partners. IOM frontline workers noted that whilst deselection had not fundamentally changed since the Refresh, the process had become more streamlined and formal.

"That de-registration, it's a conversation with everybody, it's not just police make that decision, it's not just probation make that decision, it's a decision that's made by everybody that attends our meetings." – Police Officer

Most regions and areas followed a 'RAG' rating system to step down an individual. Generally, deselection is discussed when an individual is 'green' on this scale and has not offended in the last 12 months. Individuals were usually put on a three-month deselection plan, where appointments and contact from their IOM frontline workers would be gradually reduced. This included an assessment of no known reoffending, good engagement on IOM, and if long-term plans to ensure desistance are being met. This period provided time to ensure that an individual was ready for deselection and an opportunity to onboard them back on the cohort if needed.

Less commonly, individuals would be deselected in some areas if they had been 'red' for a long period of time – cited as multiple months – and they had not engaged with the support offered. There were differing opinions on the value of keeping these individuals on IOM. Some, including police and wider stakeholders across two areas, felt that it would be more beneficial to deselect these individuals to provide space for others that may be more willing to engage.

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“They do give it a good old try though, it’s not just like ‘We’ve not heard from them for 2 weeks, remove them.’ ...[they] are discussed at several meetings I would say before it’s finally like ‘Right, we’ve really given this a go, there’s no engagement, let’s remove them.’ It’s not just decided overnight.” – Wider Stakeholder

Overall, IOM frontline workers reported only a small number of individuals being deselected so far since the start of the Refresh. They highlighted that individuals would need to be in a stable place for them to successfully come off IOM, noting the importance of stable accommodation, freedom from existing substance misuse issues, and employment, all of which were seen to be a challenge.

“We’re not just pulling the parachute away and letting them fall. We would make sure there’s other agencies in place.” – Police Officer

Reaction from people receiving IOM on deselection was reported as mixed by IOM frontline workers. Some felt ready to be under less stringent monitoring whilst others were concerned that they would lose support that was being provided. This was echoed by those receiving IOM who were generally uncertain about how they would feel coming off IOM as they reported relying on the support provided.

“I haven’t thought about [being deselected]. I don’t know if I’d be happy. I think I’d be happier to keep seeing them to be honest, because I know if there’s a problem they’re only a phone call away.” – Person receiving IOM

4. Key enablers and barriers to implementing IOM

The principles of IOM are predicated on the provision of intensive support to people on probation across IOM cohorts, with particular emphasis on those on the fixed cohort. This chapter explores the enabler and barriers of delivering the IOM model.

To promote engagement with IOM, it was deemed crucial for people receiving IOM not to see it as just increased police supervision but instead as enhanced support. However, positive engagement from cohort members and the successful delivery of IOM was dependent on a number of factors, notably a willingness to engage by the individual. This could be impacted by their age, trust in agencies involved in delivering IOM, and a belief that IOM could provide the support they needed to address issues influencing offending behaviour and help them on their desistance journey (further discussed in Chapter 5). For example, individuals were more likely to engage and turn up to appointments if they knew they would also benefit from IOM in other ways. This could include lifts to and from appointments, help accessing food banks, getting a gym membership, or an IOM phone.

“...You try and sell it by saying things like, ‘You do know that that means I could ask them if they can give you a lift back?’ from wherever they might be.”

– Probation Practitioner

Resourcing was a key challenge to successfully delivering IOM, with high staff turnover and recruitment issues cited by stakeholders across levels in relation to probation, and police recruitment issues also noted though less frequently. The lack of resource within probation was not seen as unique to IOM, and instead was linked to wider resourcing issues within the probation service.²³

²³ The 2022/23 annual report by HM Inspectorate of Probation highlighted the staffing crisis within probation nationally. This inspection report found an overall national shortfall of 1,771 probation practitioners against the required staffing level, a vacancy rate of 29 per cent. Staffing levels were found to vary substantially between regions. Whilst a substantial increase in trainee probation practitioners was shown, this was reported to have had a limited impact on overall staffing levels, in part due to the number of staff leaving the service to have also increased considerably (HM Inspectorate of Probation, 2023).

“From a probation point of view, it’s a mess. It’s an absolute mess. There’s staff leaving all the time. It’s a constant turnover... they are dealing with the most complicated cases when it comes to IOM... it just seems to me, that they bring people onto IOM, they’re sort of broken in, and within a year and off they go.”
– Police Manager

Limited resource influenced the extent that probation practitioners could dedicate their time to IOM, with most often having both IOM and non-IOM caseloads.²⁴ Probation practitioners noted that ideally, they would follow a concentrator model whereby a small number of individuals work solely on IOM cases. However, this had not been possible in most areas included in this evaluation. Instead, many probation practitioners stated they had high non-IOM caseloads that could take up a significant proportion of their time. High non-IOM workload within probation were seen as problematic because they restricted the time and attention that probation practitioners could give to IOM cases.

“We have IOM cases, but we also have non-IOM cases so we’re not able to fully dedicate all of our time and resources to just the IOM. I think we’re probably spread a bit too thin.” – Probation Practitioner

“People who hold IOM cases will also hold a large chunk of regular probation cases as well. So, they’re sort of overworked. They can’t give IOM the priority and the focus as much because they may have 100 other cases they’ve got to manage at the same time, and that can’t be helped. That’s just the cases they’ve been allocated. So, their backs are up against the wall before they’ve even started.”
– Probation Manager

Consequently, these resourcing challenges were also cited as a barrier when it came to partnership working between police and probation. In the areas selected for the evaluation it was common for dedicated police officers to be working solely on IOM cases. Both police officers and probation practitioners saw this as fundamental to enabling them to provide effective support to people on IOM. However, lack of probation capacity often put a strain

²⁴ It should be noted that Maguire et al. (2024) found that across most areas within Wales probation staff had dedicated IOM workloads and did not hold non-IOM cases.

on the police, including reducing joint visits. This led to police officers feeling that the partnership approach within IOM was not always being delivered.

IOM staff from some areas stated that improved engagement at a senior level had helped address resourcing issues. Similarly, regional stakeholders spoke of the role regional meetings can have in highlighting and responding to resourcing concerns.

“There was always buy-in at a low level for IOM, but never higher up the chain from detective inspector level, which was a real shame. But [they]’ve got that now, and they’re throwing resource at [IOM].” – Probation Manager

Information sharing practices and regular communication on caseloads is essential to the effective delivery of IOM. It was viewed that having IOM administrative support allowed time to be given to ensuring these processes were in place, not only between police and probation but also with partner agencies.²⁵ However, the presence of IOM administrator roles varied across areas included in this evaluation, with this lack of dedicated administrative support being highlighted as a barrier to supporting partnership working and the delivery of IOM.

It was recognised throughout the interviews that there is a lack of resource and capacity within wider agencies due to external pressures, such as national and local housing supply shortages, as well as insufficient funding for mental health services across the country. Participants also highlighted that housing and mental health are key factors that can influence an individual’s desistance from crime. This strongly suggests that additional resourcing in those areas could be critical to the success of IOM.

“We’ve definitely got people in our cohort who we can show from every time they’re in the community, when they’re housing goes wrong, everything else falls to pieces for them and then they reoffend. So, we try and flag that to Housing in loads of advanced notice to say, ‘This person, can we have a plan for them because this is the harm they’ll cause to the rest of the community if you don’t.’

²⁵ Maguire et al. (2024) found that funding in Wales was used to employ ‘senior administrators’ involvement in all aspects of running IOM. These roles were said to have a beneficial impact on the efficiency of local teams.

They don't have the capacity to set aside housing for them or to prioritise those people." – Police Manager

Overall, participants emphasised that a key aspect of the offer is for people receiving IOM to have quicker access to services. However, the consensus was that for many services this was not the case and both police and probation have questioned why they are encouraging certain people to be on IOM if the IOM status itself doesn't attract priority from wider agencies.²⁶ Some police officers and probation practitioners suggested that wider agencies should have resource dedicated to IOM, or at minimum specific IOM leads within agencies, so that individuals would be prioritised rather than being put on waiting lists.

Linking in with prisons could lead to earlier engagement with individuals who may be eligible for IOM prior to their release, allowing additional time to line up support. In one area, IOM frontline workers noted that they linked in with prisons to identify individuals who had committed a neighbourhood crime and being released – this allowed staff to begin work to secure support, such as housing, in advance of release which was seen as enabling more effective delivery of IOM. However, other areas noted a desire to work more closely with prison offender management units and offender managers, stating that their attendance at regular IOM meetings would be beneficial to engaging people eligible for IOM earlier, which could have an impact on engagement (discussed further in Chapter 5).

"We'd love the prison offender managers to be there [at MACC meeting] so that we can start that pre-release work a lot earlier. And have that continuity when the offenders go into custody as well." – Police Manager

In addition to there being sufficient resource, the capabilities of police officers and probation practitioners to deliver IOM effectively were also highlighted. A range of skills were highlighted as important, including excellent communication skills, resilience, and persistence in the face of individuals that were challenging to engage. Overall, staff felt that these skills existed among those delivering IOM. They also noted a sense of enjoyment and purpose working on IOM, many having explicitly applied for the role, particularly in cases where they felt sufficient capacity for their IOM workload.

²⁶ This was echoed in the evaluation of IOM in Wales (Maguire et al., 2024).

However, it was acknowledged that working within IOM was not seen as a ‘beginner’ role, instead requiring experience dealing with non-IOM offenders, both from a police and probation perspective. For example, probation practitioners noted that newly trained practitioners might struggle with the complexity and additional needs of those on the IOM cohorts. Similarly, within the police, IOM was seen as distinct from the work of wider teams.²⁷

“I do feel like it’s maybe not the best route for somebody so newly qualified to go into it. Just because, I think you need to find your feet a little bit and when you’ve just learnt one side of the job, to then learn another one in such a short space of time is quite full on.” – Probation Practitioner

“I think we’ve definitely got the people on the floor with the right skill base... You’ve got police officers from different walks of life, and they’ll bring their own skill to the table, their own expertise.” – Police Officer

Where newly recruited police officers and probation practitioners were assigned IOM cases, reference was made to the importance of strong supervision structures being in place to support staff in working with IOM cases. This was specifically referenced in relation to probation with positive examples given of the support and insights provided by more experienced probation to new staff. It was acknowledged that in addition to receiving specific IOM training, learning on the job was also key. Nonetheless, the role of training and a general need for clarity on the overarching aims of IOM were seen as fundamental to delivering IOM.

“I think the best way to learn how to deliver IOM is to actually do it. And have cases yourself, get support from more experienced colleagues and over a period of time you pick it up fairly quickly really.” – Probation Practitioner

Partnership working, particularly between police and probation, was cited as a key advantage of the IOM approach. For example, joint visits with police and probation helps the individual understand that IOM is a partnership approach and not purely a police monitoring scheme. It also enables both police and probation to have a good knowledge of

²⁷ Findings reflected in the broader IOM research (Cram, 2018, 2023).

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the case and support sharing information. This helps keep both agencies informed and it also reiterates to the person receiving IOM that IOM is a partnership approach.

5. Perceived impact of IOM

The key aim of IOM is to reduce reoffending among cohort members. While this evaluation was not focused on impact, stakeholders and staff were asked about their perceptions of impact on individuals. This section explores these perceptions, alongside those of the small number of people on probation interviewed.

5.1 Impact on desistance from crime

All stakeholders felt that IOM had the potential to positively impact individuals' lives. The additional structure and support that IOM could provide to individuals, through regular appointments and oversight from multiple workers – i.e. designated workers from both police and probation – was felt to have provided an environment conducive to desistance. However, stakeholders also noted the challenges in measuring impact with regards to desistance, noting instead that the value of IOM was to help individuals make smaller changes that could lead to a reduced likelihood of reoffending over time. They also noted that this process was likely to be gradual, and as discussed above, progress was not always linear, with those considered for deselection occasionally being unable to desist once support had been removed.

“When we help support them with their pathway issues we are taking away that need for them to commit criminality... This has helped them stabilise their life. We're also filling their time with those appointments by helping them to seek employment... I think IOM plays a huge benefit in them moving forward with the aim of desistance from criminality.” – Police Officer

People receiving IOM also stated that the support provided could help prevent future offending. Individuals reported receiving support accessing stable accommodation, support with drug and alcohol issues, as well as more ad hoc practical and emotional support. As such, there is potential for desistance through improved stability and security enabled by IOM.

“Everything I’ve needed help with they’ve helped me. They always offer it, asking me if I need things, and I don’t need anything to be honest because all the stuff I’ve needed they’ve helped me with.” – Person receiving IOM

“They’ve helped me with housing... If I haven’t got somewhere to live, I’m committing crime to find somewhere to live, and that’s a fact. That’s my biggest one thing.” – Person receiving IOM

Desistance from crime was also seen to be generally dependent on the positive attitude of people receiving IOM and their willingness to accept the support provided. This was promoted where IOM frontline workers were able to show people receiving IOM that they could offer practical support that would benefit them. However, workers noted frustration in cases where individuals were not provided with the support they need, for example housing, due to capacity constraints within services, or a lack of priority provided to people receiving IOM (as discussed in Chapter 4).

“The people that are on the pathway are generally people of no fixed abode and are taking drugs and are acquisitive offenders. That’s really, really hard to stop, especially with the fact that there’s no housing. It’s a vicious cycle.”

– Probation Practitioner

“If they want to make IOM work properly, they need a specific offer for IOM cases. So, they need to invest in it, they need to have a drugs worker for IOM. I think they should have some priority housing. I think they should have quicker and better access to accredited programmes.” – Probation Manager

This was also highlighted by people on probation stating that not having access to housing could impact long-term desistance. Given engagement was seen as dependent on the provision of needed support to individuals, this would likely impact on relationships between people receiving IOM and their police and probation managers.

“You know, there weren’t people coming round on a regular basis seeing how you are, you know what I mean?... I didn’t have any support around me, and nobody I could actually phone up and say, ‘Listen, I’m struggling today. I’ve had a thought of using, but I’ve not.’ You know what I mean? And that’s the kind of support that’s

available, you know, from the IOM. Because it doesn't matter what time of day it is, you can phone them up.” – Person receiving IOM

However, police officers considered that IOM could impact desistance, even when people on IOM did not engage with support. It was considered that IOM could have an impact on desistance through increased monitoring, even where individuals did not engage with support. Local police officers noted that without IOM these individuals would not be under as much scrutiny. They felt that this would be likely to lead to a reduction in reoffending as cohort members would feel monitored. Further, police officers particularly noted how familiarity with these cohort members among officers could lead to easier identification if an individual was to reoffend.²⁸ In two areas covered by this evaluation electronic tagging was used as part of an EMAC pilot (Electronic Monitoring of Acquisitive Crime). Police in these areas also noted that this tool, alongside IOM supervision, could reduce the likelihood of reoffending because of increased monitoring.

“It definitely makes a difference, because it either makes them desist because they're taking the most out of it, and trying to better themselves, or it gives them a sense that they're going to get checked all the time and going to be watched all the time, so they give it a rest for a bit.” – Police Officer

5.2 Wider impacts

People receiving IOM highlighted that they had not previously, and in some cases still, did not view the police favourably. However, through getting over this initial mistrust and engaging with the support offered as part of IOM they had built strong relationships with individual officers. This in turn had influenced how they felt about the police more broadly. This change took time to embed, and was built when, over time, officers continued to be there for individuals. For example, one individual noted how much they had appreciated their IOM police officer connecting with them over the Christmas period. Officers following through on promises to meet individual's needs, for example sourcing them a microwave, was key to building this rapport.

²⁸ Maguire et al. (2024) also found that some people on probation found the demands of IOM supervision challenging to meet, placing them at risk of licence breaches even if they were not offending.

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“[IOM has] been an eye opener for me, and it’s taught me a lot about authority, and about police... I came from a background where we separated ourselves from authority and police... I didn’t trust police... at first, yes, I didn’t even want them in my life, to be honest... for me now, personally, the trust that I’ve built up with [IOM police officer], and the understanding of police now has changed totally. It’s built my trust in police.” – Person receiving IOM

6. Conclusions

Overall, there was consensus that IOM represented an important programme in offender management. Stakeholders across levels felt that IOM can and does provide necessary support to cohort members and can have a positive impact on desistance. The small number of people receiving IOM who engaged with this evaluation noted the positive impact IOM had had on their lives, including their ability to access services and their likelihood to reoffend.

The Refresh was seen to have brought missing clarity to the operationalisation of IOM and had led to clearer governance structures. It had also fostered stronger relationships between police and probation, as well as, in some cases, with wider agencies.

There was agreement across all stakeholders that IOM can have a positive impact on desistance. The role of IOM in being able to address issues associated with offending was seen to be strongly underpinned by the combined work of police and probation, supported by wider support services. The role of specific services, such as housing and drug and alcohol services, were seen as key to the effective delivery of IOM. It was evident the engagement of wider services varied across the areas taking part in the evaluation.

To ensure that IOM can be effectively delivered, the following should be considered:

- **Resource and efforts to maintain strategic buy-in should be continued for national, regional and local governance and operational structures.** By continuing to note IOM as a priority at a national level, local engagement of agencies is likely to continue, ensuring the model is embedded and sufficient resource is dedicated by both police and probation. Initiatives, such as IOM training being rolled out, is likely to be more efficiently trickled down through consistent structures, improving the operationalisation of IOM.
- **Funding should be streamlined to remove any unnecessary bureaucracy and ensure funding can be spent more easily on regional priorities.** This includes reviewing restrictions on spending on services provided by third sector organisations.

- **Further communication activities should ensure that frontline workers are aware of local funding pots available for ad hoc needs of people receiving IOM.** This includes smaller pots of funding, that were seen as a real benefit where available, for example to make small purchases, such as clothes, to support those on probation.
- **Sufficient dedicated resource should be put in place across the probation service to ensure a concentrator model can be followed across local areas, acknowledging wider challenges in resourcing across the probation service nationally.** Where possible, a small number of probation practitioners should manage IOM cases. Not only would this likely have a positive impact on support provided, but also could further strengthen working relationships between probation and police, and wider agencies.
- **Co-location should be encouraged, including via part-time models, to foster strong informal and formal collaboration between police, probation and wider stakeholders.** However, settings for co-location should be considered from the perspective of those receiving IOM. For example, ensuring co-location does not lead to appointments with people receiving IOM solely taking place within police stations where possible, acknowledging that availability of spaces in which to conduct appointments might be more limited in certain areas, such as rural settings due to availability of appropriate transport options.
- **Efforts to gain the involvement of wider agencies should be made, taking into account wider capacity constraints on housing and mental health services.** Sufficient resources such as staffing, funding and service provision and commitment to deliver IOM nationally, as well as locally, is likely to be key to the effective delivery of IOM, ensuring support is available to meet the needs of people receiving IOM. Conversations at a strategic level may encourage attendance at regular meetings from wider agencies and ensure sufficient support is in place to promote desistance among cohort members.
- **IOM specific induction and training should continue to be rolled out, ensuring that all probation and police staff are clear on the purpose, aims and operational practices of IOM.**

- **Further collaboration with prisons services should be encouraged to ensure that cohort members are identified early.** This will allow for the opportunity to engage people receiving IOM when they are in custody settings. Further it would allow additional time for police officers and probation practitioners to begin to work on providing support to individuals, for example, ensuring housing is available on the day of release where possible.
- **Information sharing, informally and via formal signed agreements, should be encouraged across local areas to remove barriers to providing support to cohort members.**

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Appendix A

Methodological note

Process evaluation methodology

In order to meet the evaluation aims, a qualitative methodology was developed. We conducted a total of 69 interviews across a range of stakeholders and IOM staff. On average, the interviews with stakeholders lasted an hour and interviews with people on IOM lasted 45 minutes. This includes national strategic stakeholders to those working on the frontline and people receiving IOM. The multi-tiered approach meant that stakeholders from all levels were included in data collection. This ensured that we captured a breadth of experiences and perspectives.

To date we have conducted the following evaluation activities, findings from which are reflected in this report:

- Desk based review of IOM refresh documentation.
- Mapping of the process evaluation questions.
- Interviews with four national stakeholders.
- Sampled four regional case study areas.
- Interviews with seven regional leads.
- Interviews with 18 managers from police and probation.
- Interviews with 26 frontline probation practitioners and police officers.
- Interviews with nine members of staff from wider agencies.
- Interviews with five people receiving IOM.

Table A1: Detailed breakdown of interviews by region

		National/ Regional	East of England	Greater Manchester	South Central	Yorkshire & the Humber	Total
National		4	-	-	-	-	4
Regional		7	-	-	-	-	7
Police	Manager	-	3	2	2	2	9
	Frontline	-	3	3	5	4	15
Probation	Manager	-	2	2	2	3	9
	Frontline	-	3	2	2	4	11
Wider agencies		-	5	-	2	2	9
People receiving IOM		-	1	1	2	1	5
Total		11	17	10	15	16	69

Qualitative interviews

Recruitment

National and regional stakeholders were recruited to this research in collaboration with MoJ. These interviews provided us with strategic perspectives from both police and probation. Bespoke information sheets and privacy notices created for this research were sent to potential participants by MoJ. Individuals were then asked to contact Ipsos researchers directly if they were willing to take part in interviews, ensuring that Ipsos only received personal information of those who had consented to take part in the evaluation.

We worked closely with regional leads to recruit managers within sampled areas to take part in interviews. Similarly, we liaised with managers to recruit frontline workers, members from wider agencies and people receiving IOM. No incentives were offered to people participating in the evaluation.

It should be noted that the facilitation of recruitment by MoJ and gatekeepers (such as managers and frontline workers for future interviews) allowed for some self-selection bias. While the evaluation sought to capture a wide range of views, and ensured participants felt confident sharing open and honest feedback, findings in this report should be read with this in mind.

Content

Interviews were designed to be semi-structured, with discussion guides available to guide interviewers and ensure sufficient information was captured across the evaluation questions. The guides were informed by the evaluation framework and centre around the following topic areas:²⁹

- Introduction and information on the role of participants
- IOM governance
- Implementation of the IOM model, including:
 - The IOM ‘offer’
 - Supervision
 - Selection and deselection
 - Staffing and resources
 - Contextual factors
 - Implementation of new roles (or barriers to this)
- Partnership working
- Impact of IOM on desistance

²⁹ 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 discussion guides.