

ELECTRONIC MONITORING IN ENGLAND — THE VOICE OF PEOPLE ON PROBATION

OCTOBER 2026

WHO WE ARE

This is a research project commissioned by **HM Inspectorate of Probation** and conducted by **User Voice**.



HM Inspectorate
of Probation

User Voice brings together decision makers, service providers and people with convictions to build a better, more effective justice system, one shaped by the people who know first-hand what needs to change and how to change it.

OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of the consultation was to better understand the experience of those people on probation who are or have recently been electronically monitored. Furthermore, our objectives were:

- To understand how well probation prepares them for the tag conditions.
- To better understand their experience of the electronic monitoring service and the technical aspects of different tags.
- To better understand what impact having a tag has on rehabilitation and re-offending (family, work, health etc.)
- To understand any specific positive or challenging aspects of having a tag.

KEY FINDINGS

- **49%** of people felt probation prepared them well for their tag, but **37%** disagreed and **31%** said they had not spoken to a probation practitioner before the tag was fitted.
- **56%** agreed their probation practitioner explained the purpose of their tag throughout their sentence, while **32%** disagreed, suggesting significant communication gaps.
- **51%** said probation considered their personal circumstances when setting tag conditions, but **37%** felt their circumstances were not properly considered.
- **78%** said their tag conditions had never been reviewed or changed, even where they had complied with requirements and demonstrated progress.
- **71%** found the installation of their tag easy and described installation staff positively, although **22%** reported negative experiences such as delays or rushed appointments.
- Only **33%** had never experienced technical problems with their tag, while **13%** reported issues more than ten times and many described false alerts, battery problems and connectivity failures.
- **48%** found the tagging company easy to contact when support was needed, while **30%** disagreed.
- **46%** agreed their tag was helping them stop offending, but a similar amount of people (**44%**) disagreed, showing mixed views on effectiveness.



KEY FINDINGS

- While **47%** said their tag made it easier to comply with sentence or licence conditions, **48%** disagreed that tagging was improving their life overall.
- Tagging created major employment challenges: **65%** said it negatively affected their ability to work through restrictions on shifts, overtime, travel and job opportunities.
- **27%** reported health conditions that either affected the tag or were worsened by it, with participants describing pain, skin irritation, reduced mobility, poorer mental health, increased anxiety, disrupted sleep, and a reduced ability to exercise.
- More than half (**56%**) disagreed that their tag was helping them rebuild family relationships, with curfews and exclusion zones often limiting family contact and caring responsibilities.
- **53%** said they avoid going out because they are ashamed of their tag, highlighting the significant stigma attached to electronic monitoring.
- Alcohol monitoring tags showed particularly positive outcomes: **39%** of respondents had an alcohol tag, and many reported sustained sobriety, improved wellbeing and reduced alcohol-related offending.
- While **74%** of respondents had never breached their tag conditions, those who did were often affected by technical problems, unclear information, health issues, or difficulties balancing tag requirements with work.



APPROACH

PRE-FIELDWORK

- Research materials were co-produced with UV staff and volunteers with experience of tags and the HMIP academic specialist.
- Participant recruitment had two facets:
 - 1) Two text messages (May & June 2026) were sent out to all individuals in England under electronic monitoring (EM) since September 2025. The text message included a link to our survey.
 - 2) Each six probation areas provided us a list of 50 individuals under EM from their caseload to be contacted for an interview.

FIELDWORK

- 30 people on probation under EM were interviewed for the consultation.
- 420 people on probation under EM filled out our survey, of them 210 were from the six regions under this inspection.
- One lived experienced peer researcher conducted all the 30 interviews via telephone.

DATA ANALYSIS

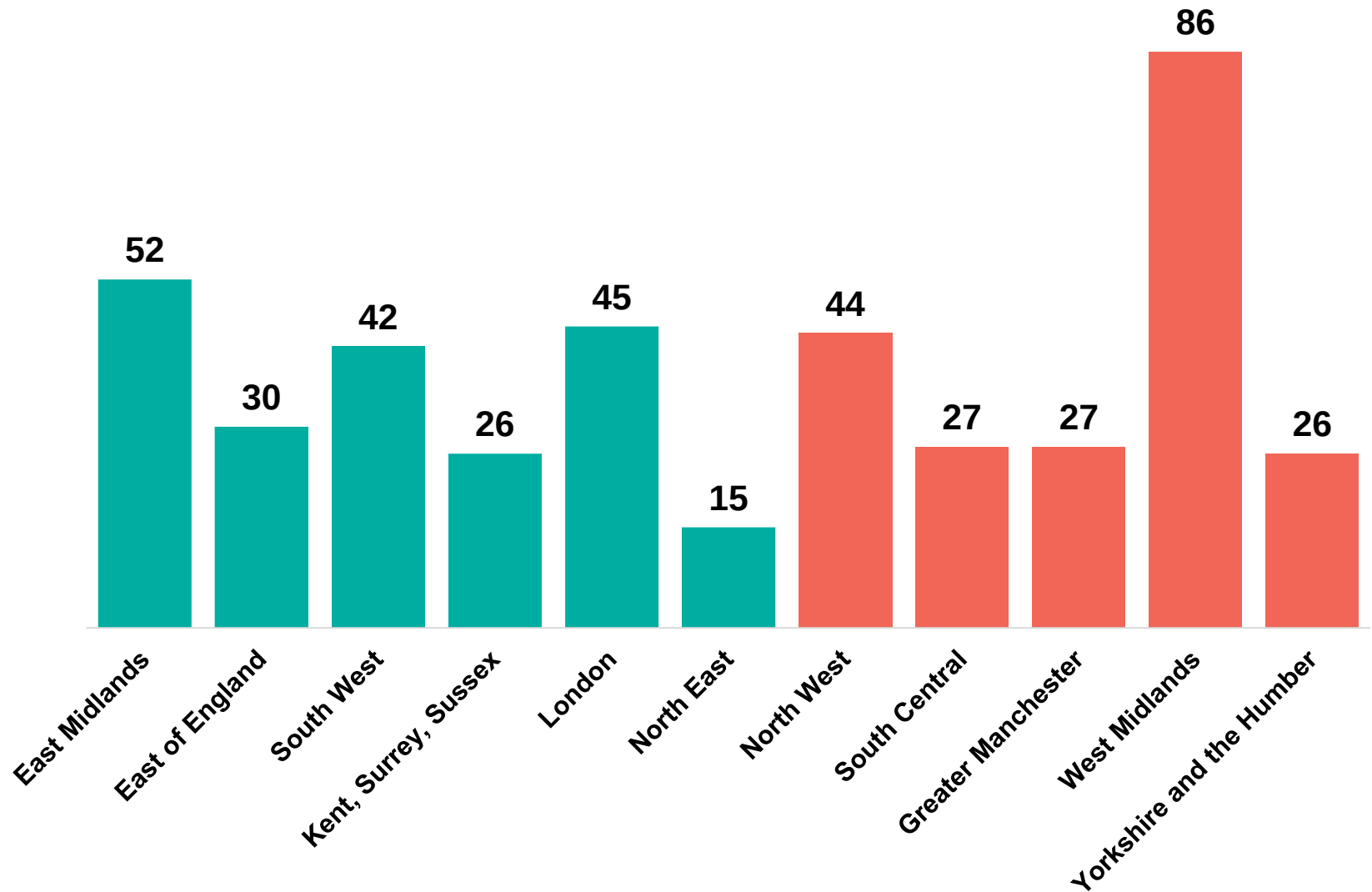
- Thematic data analysis was completed on all qualitative data.
- Statistical analysis was completed on all Likert-scale survey responses.



RESEARCH SAMPLE*

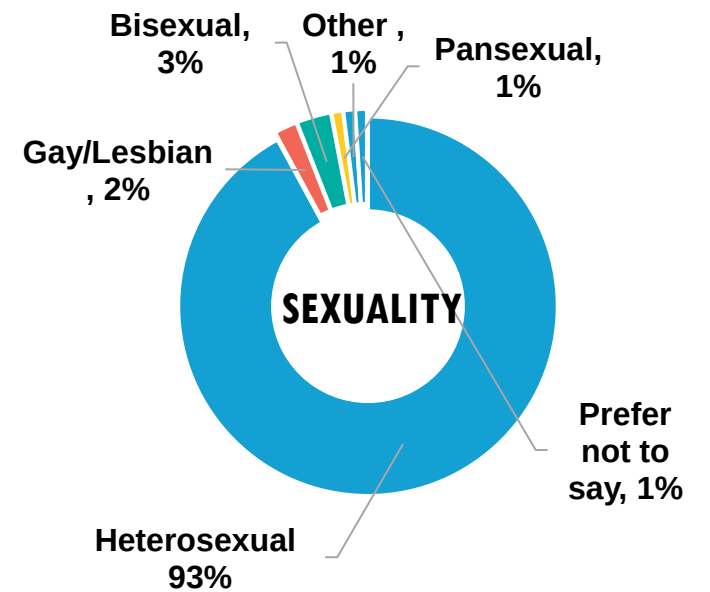
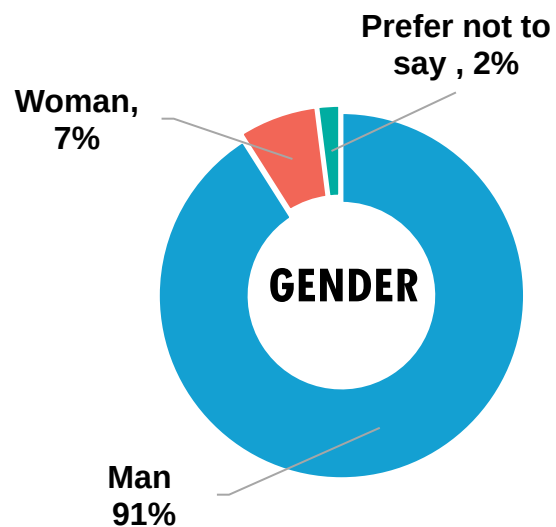
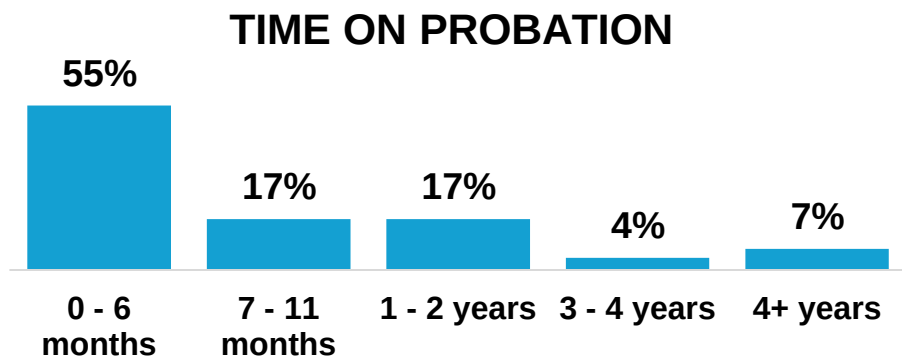
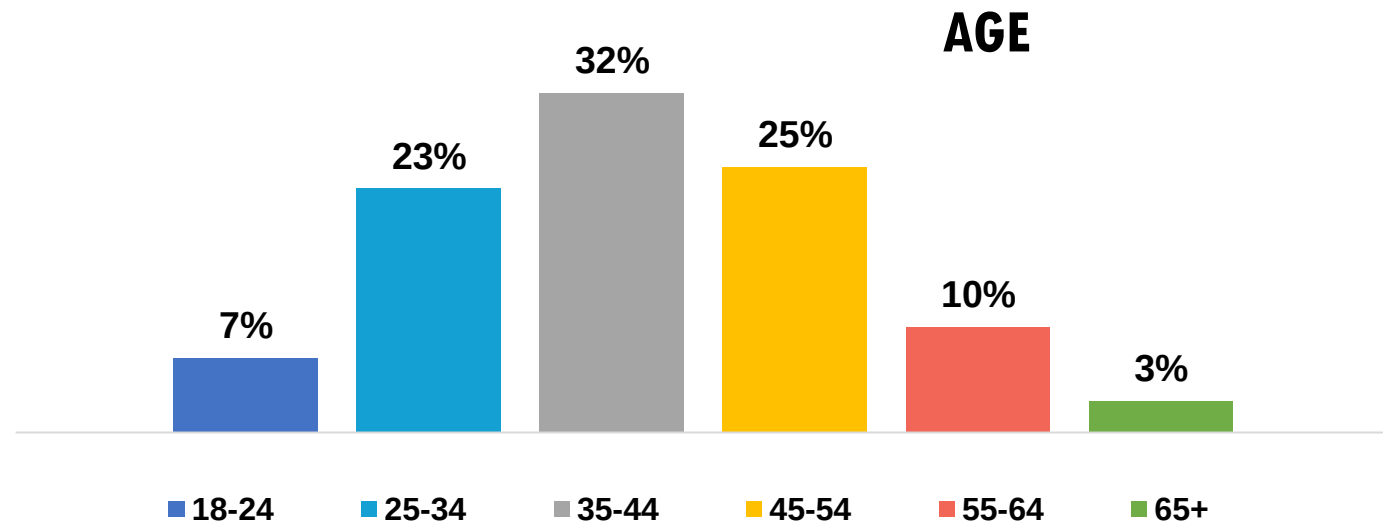
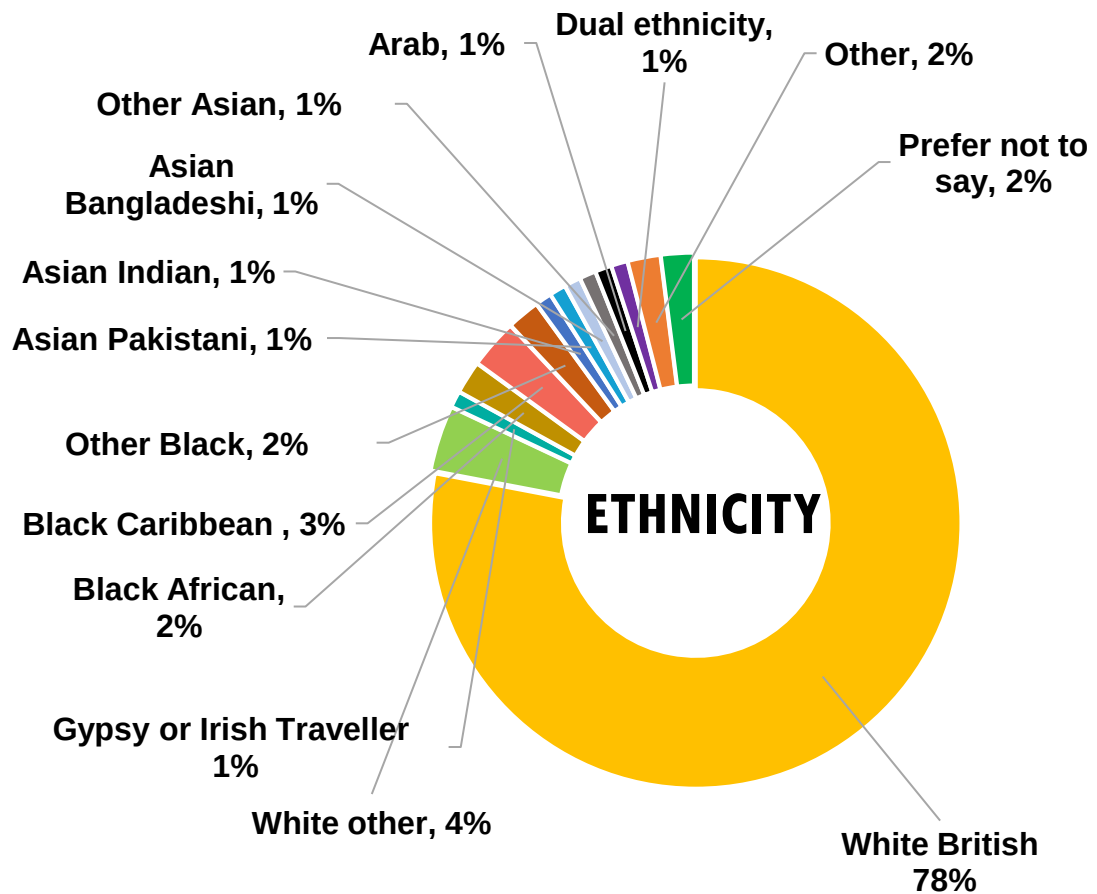
*Some charts may total to over 100% due to rounding.

SURVEY RESPONSES BY REGION



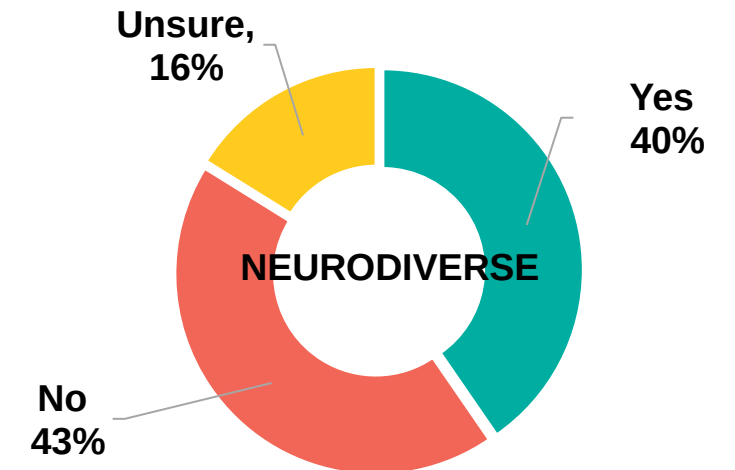
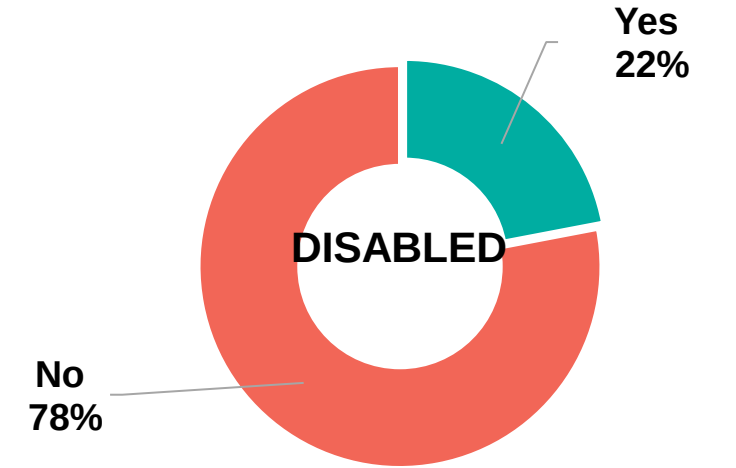
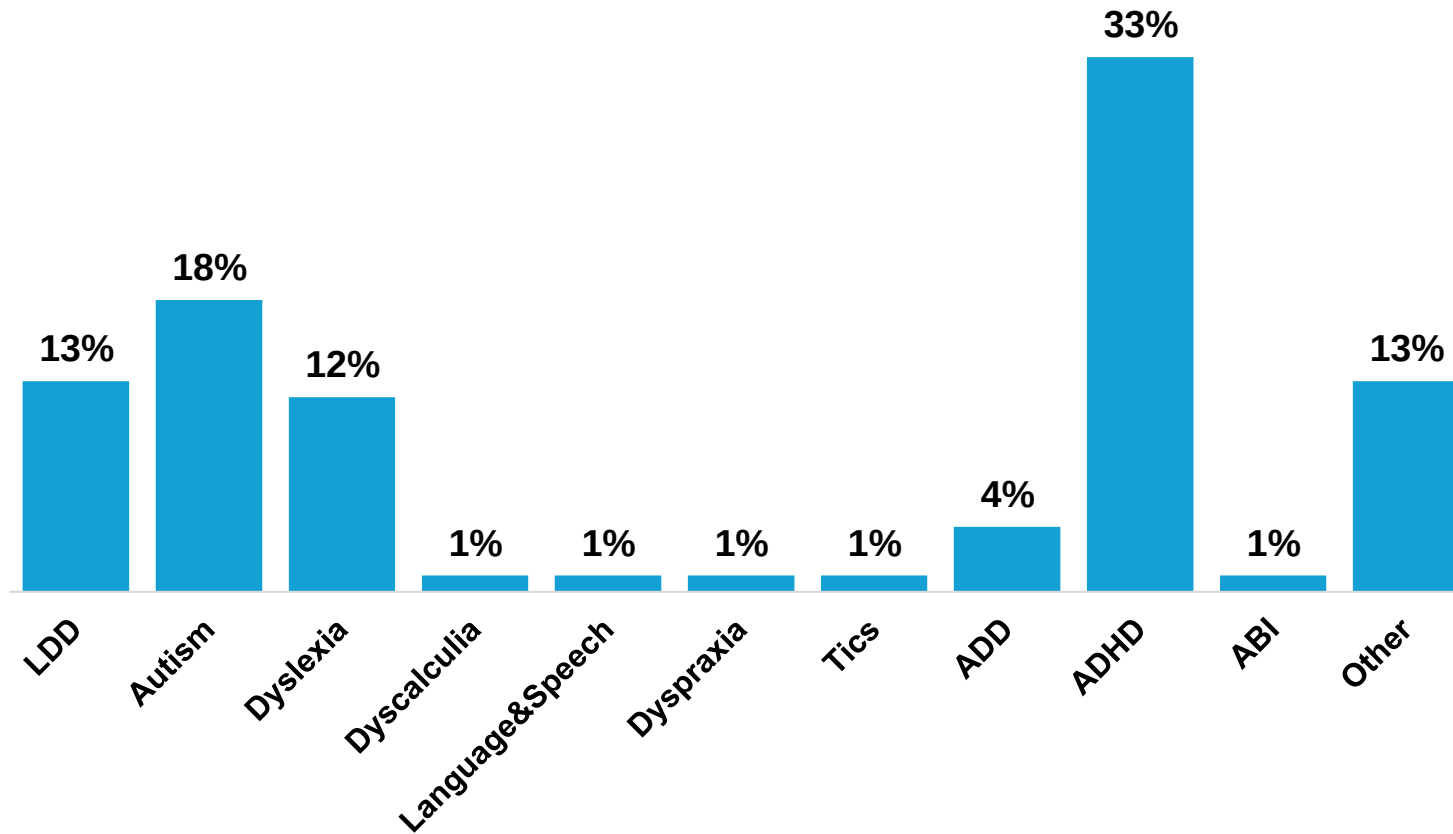
- 11 Probation regions
- 450 People had their say
- 420 Survey responses
- 30 Interviews

Green: regions under inspection / **Red:** regions only part of the survey



2 IN 5 WERE NEURODIVERGENT AND 1 IN 5 IDENTIFIED AS DISABLED

NEURODIVERSE CONDITIONS

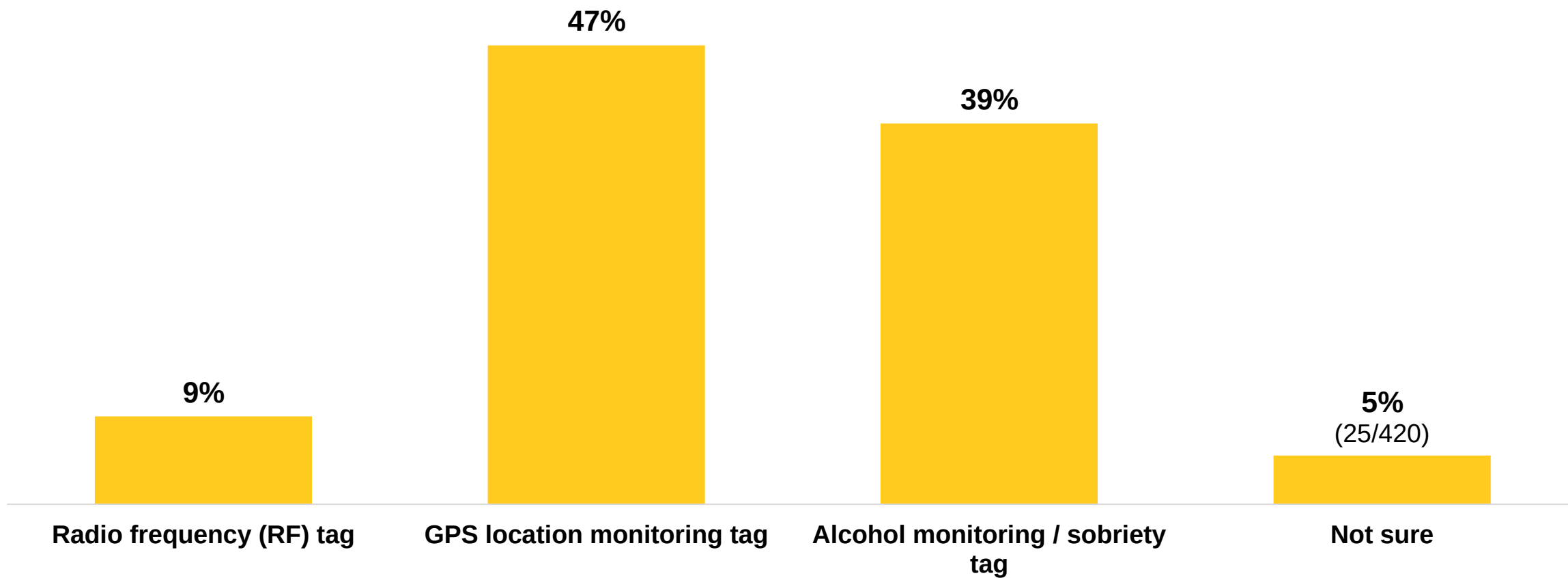




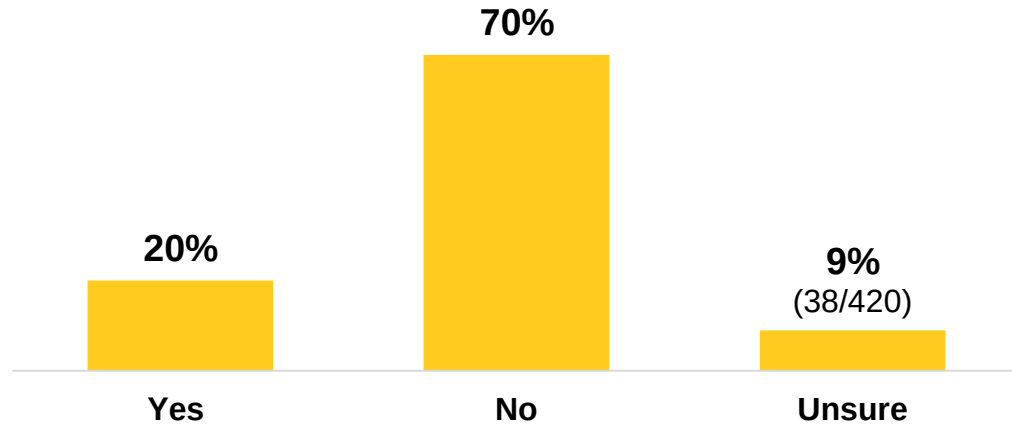
TAG STATISTICS*

*Some charts may total to under or over 100% due to rounding.

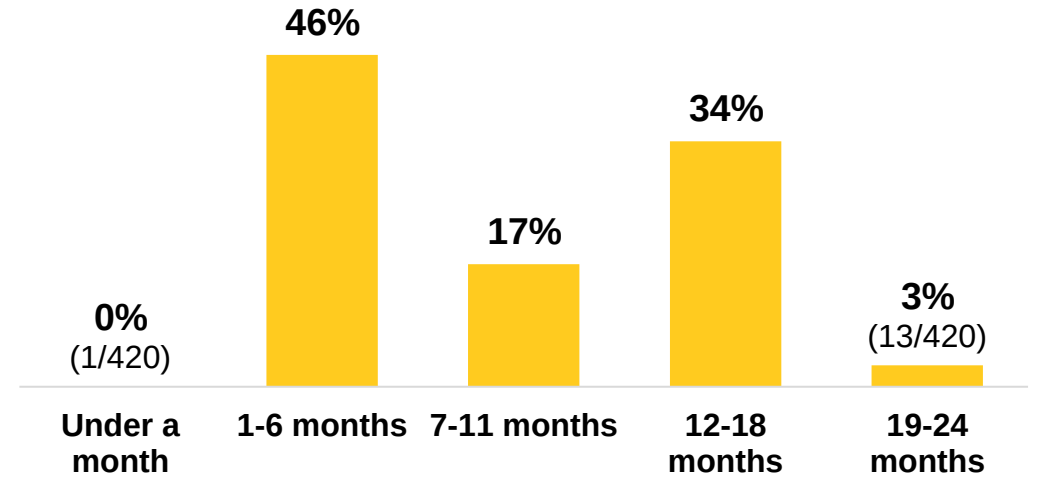
Q: Which tag you have / had? (choose all that apply)



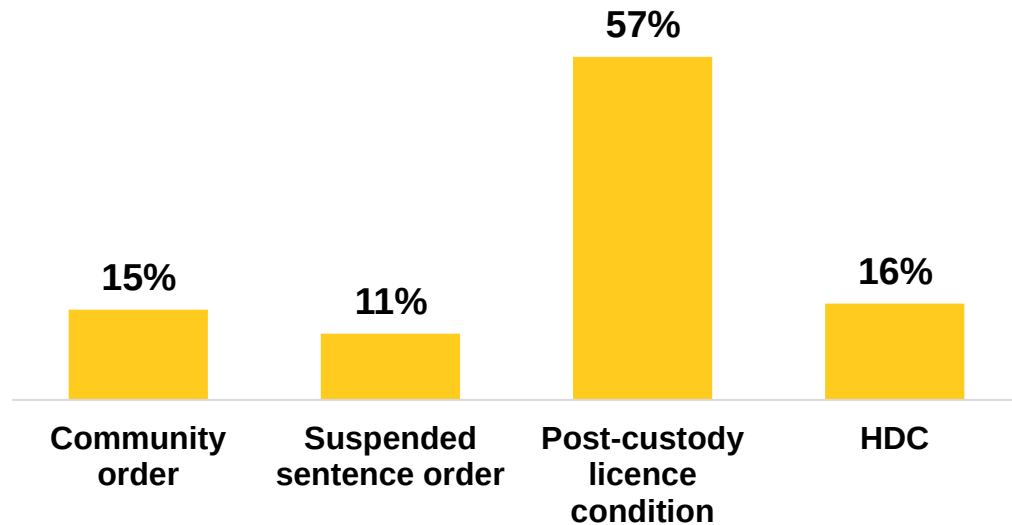
Q: Was your tag an alternative of you going to prison?



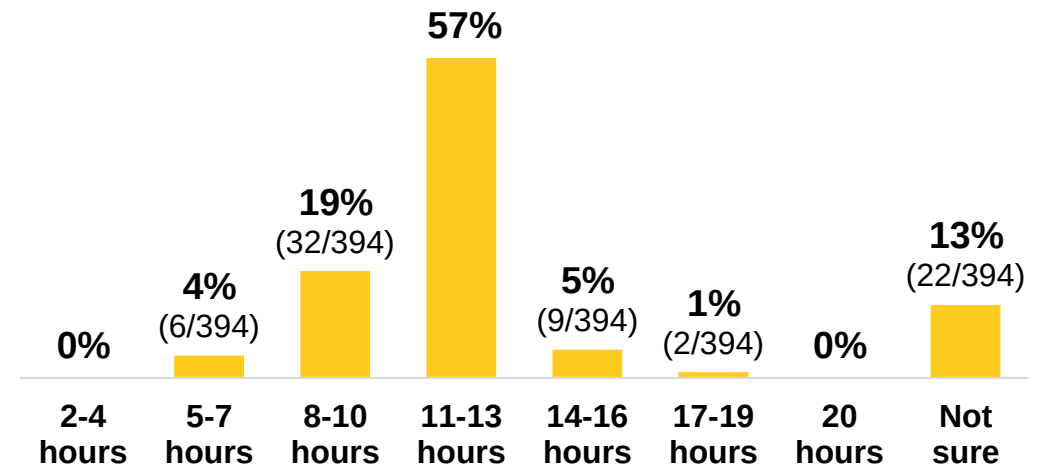
Q: How long do / did you have to wear a tag?



Q: Are you subject to?



Q: If you are on a curfew, how long is your daily curfew?



PILOT TAGGING SCHEMES

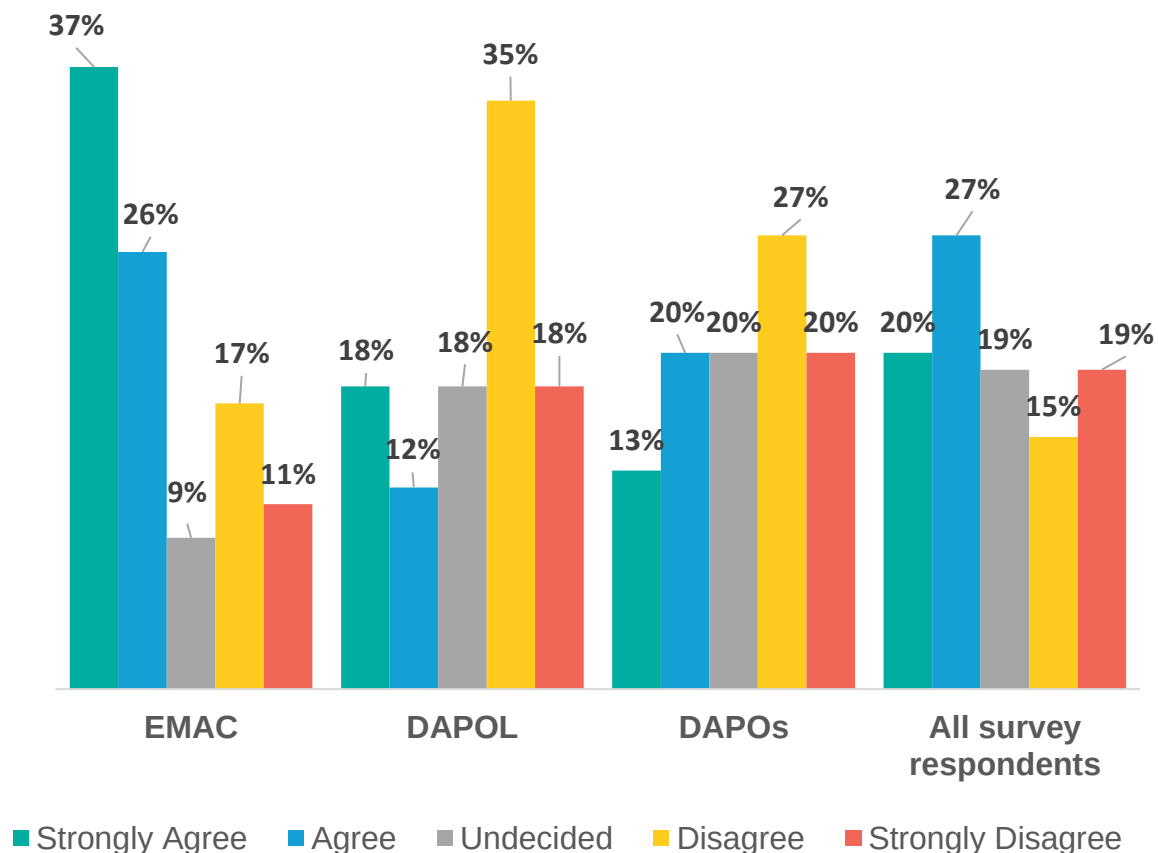
- **11%** (35) of survey respondents were part of the Acquisitive Crime Electronic monitoring Project (EMAC), **5%** part of the Domestic Abuse Perpetrators Licence (DAPOL) scheme (17), and **5%** part of the Domestic Abuse Protection Orders (DAPOs) (15).
- **63%** of people part of EMAC agreed that their tag is making it easier to stick to the conditions of their sentence, this is considerably higher than those on DAPOL (30%), DAPOs (33%), or on average with all survey respondents (47%).

"In short, it is a tool used to monitor my whereabouts. I now see it as something that is able to protect me." (EMAC)

"Better than being in prison grateful to be able to serve remaining licence in community." (EMAC)

"I've learned that being on tag can help depending whether you want to change your life around. Getting into applying for jobs doing volunteer jobs helping the community, moving forward with my life staying crime free and learn more about life." (EMAC)

Q: 'My tag is making it easier to stick to the conditions of my sentence / licence.'
- responses by pilot tagging schemes



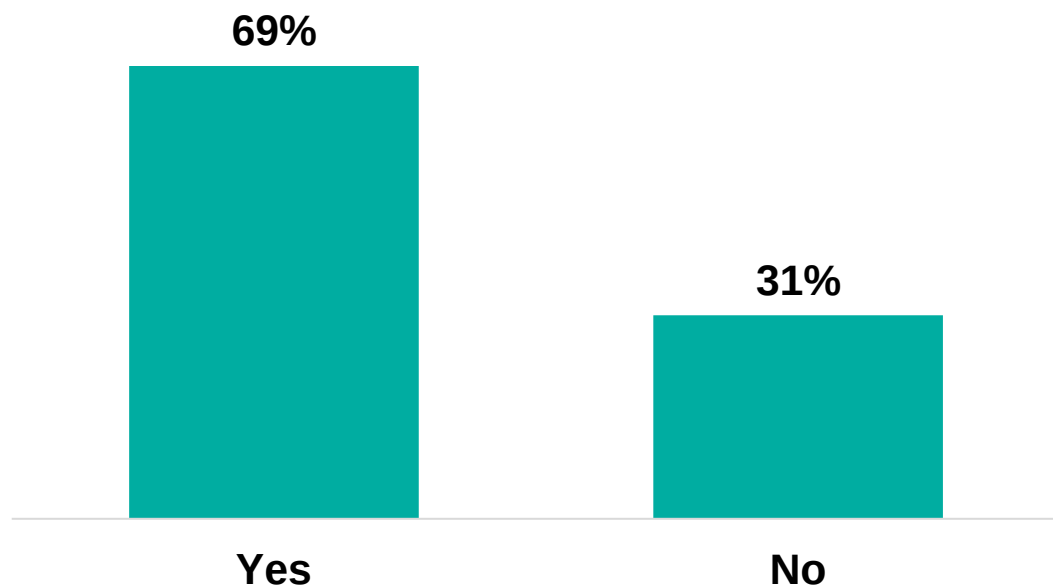


PREPARING FOR TAG*

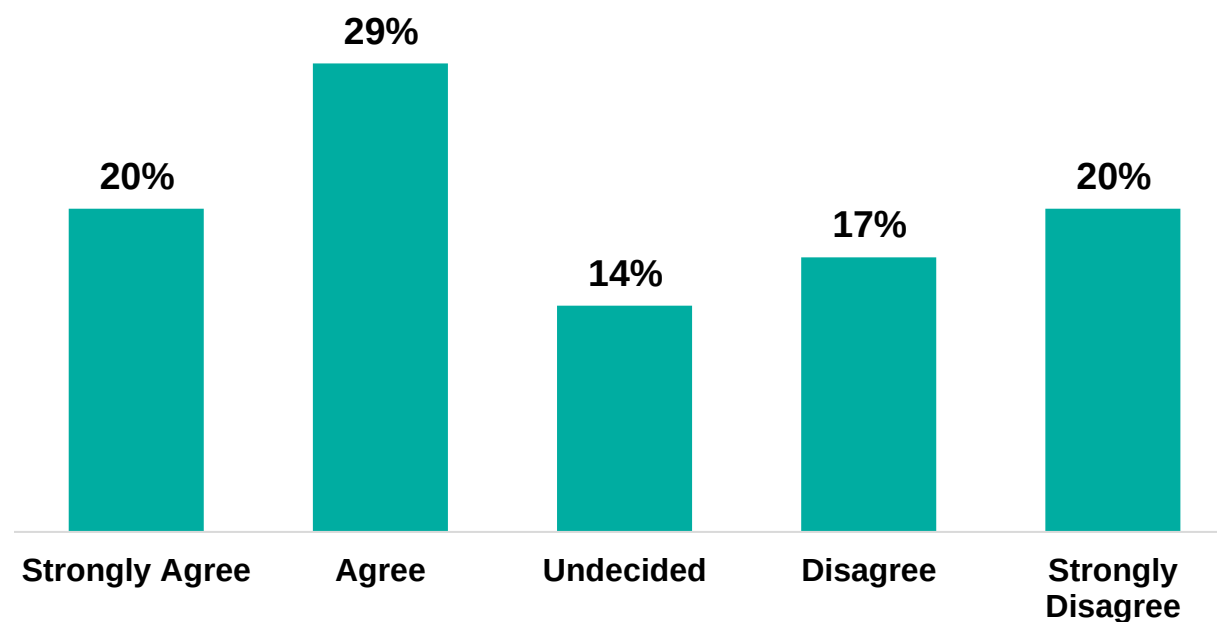
*Some charts may total to under or over 100% due to rounding.

ALMOST A THIRD SAID THEY HAD NOT SPOKEN TO THEIR PRACTITIONER BEFORE THEIR TAG WAS FITTED, AND ALMOST 2 IN 5 WERE NOT PREPARED WELL FOR THEIR TAG

Q: Did you speak to your probation officer before your tag was fitted?



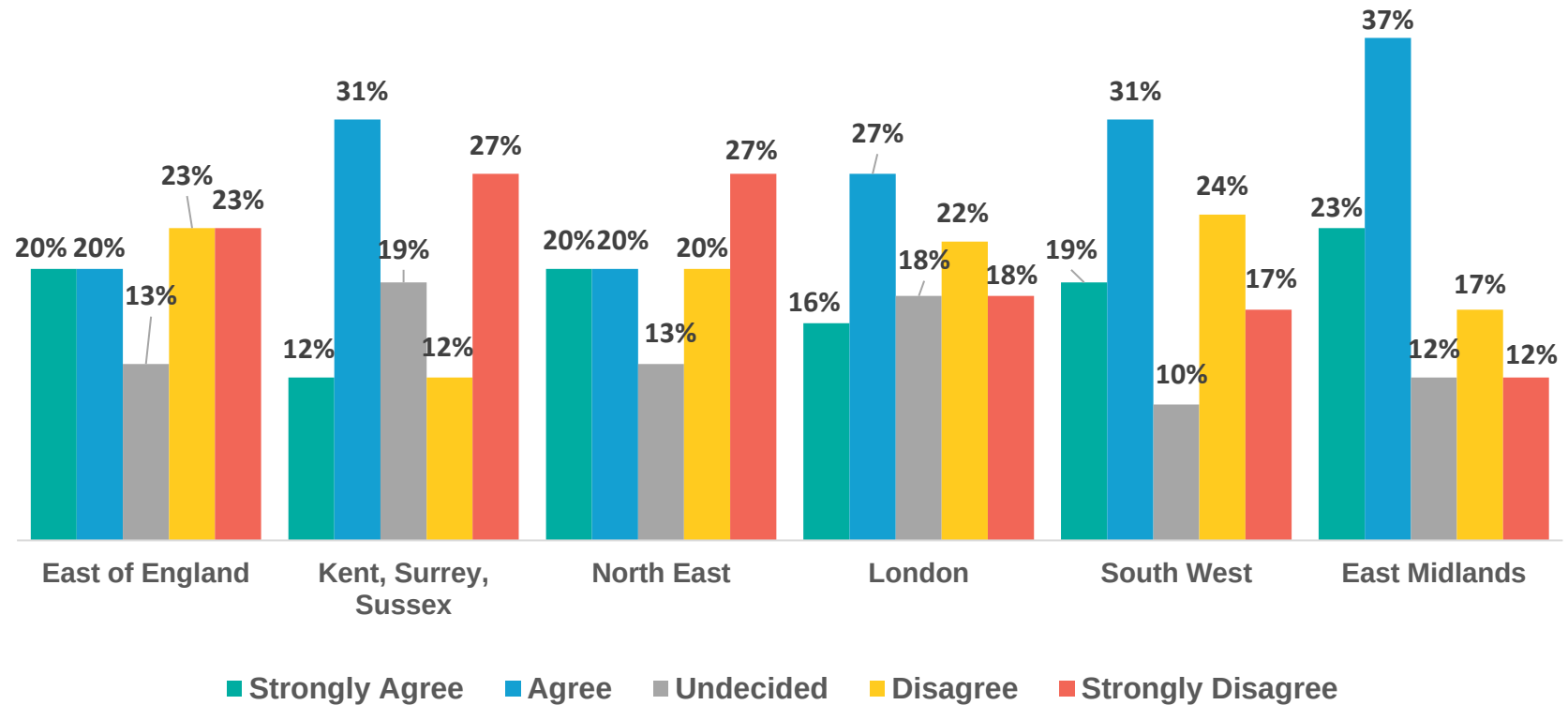
Q: 'Probation prepared me well for the tag and what wearing it means.'



Q: 'Probation prepared me well for the tag and what wearing it means.'
- responses by the six probation regions under this inspection

**60% OF PEOPLE IN EAST
MIDLANDS AGREED
PROBATION PREPARED THEM
WELL FOR THE TAG, MUCH
HIGHER THAN THE AVERAGE
OF 49%**

**47% OF PEOPLE IN NORTH
EAST AND 46% IN EAST OF
ENGLAND DISAGREED
PROBATION PREPARED THEM
WELL FOR THE TAG, MUCH
HIGHER THAN THE AVERAGE
OF 37%**



HALF SAID PROBATION PREPARED THEM WELL FOR THEIR TAG

- Mostly, those people who were told in prison that they would be tagged felt better prepared.
- They described receiving information before release about the tagging process, curfews, GPS monitoring, and start dates, often through prison and/or community offender managers or probation officers in person or via a video link.

"I was on recall in prison and it was done while I was in prison. Yes, I think I did [see probation before being tagged]. I got paperwork off them."

"I got told in jail that I'm on tag when I get released."

"I mean, yeah, they told me about my curfew, GPS and stuff. And I was informed about what's going on. I was just informed that the tag will be on past my actual release date, because that's what they're doing now when people are released. Because of the new 33%, 40% stuff."

"It's mainly done with a probation officer from inside custody, rather than the one I'm working with now in the community. You have to see probation before you leave [prison]."

"All I know is when I was in custody, I was given a tag date and then my probation officer was obviously on the ball and had it all ready for me to come home on time. So, it was quite good."

"Yeah, it was straightforward. I knew what was going to happen before I was released."

"Uh it was just via video link in prison, being handed over from the prison offender manager to the community offender manager. ... they said, 'Right, well, we're going to put you on an alcohol tag for 6 months.' Which um just baffled me, quite frankly."

LIMITED PREPARATION AND INFORMATION BEFORE TAGGING

- The **37%** who disagreed they were prepared well for their tag reported little or no preparation before monitoring began, with many only finding out about the tag shortly before release, on the day of release, at their first probation appointment, or while it was being fitted.
- Many said they received only basic instructions about installation and licence conditions, with limited information about how monitoring would work. Some felt courts and prison staff did not adequately explain the tag or what would be expected of them.
- First-time tag users often found the experience daunting and unfamiliar and felt they would have benefited from more guidance, even though the tag itself was generally manageable once in place.

"I wasn't told I was having a tag until I was released from prison. I didn't have a risk assessment in prison."

"I was not informed about the tag in court and had no idea I was to receive a tag am now in breach because it has not yet been fitted."

"Fitting was OK etc., but I was contacted by Probation after it was fitted, I had only a 5min conversation in Court with Probation as she was busy."

"They didn't [prepare me for my tag]. I was literally in the probation as soon as I got out of prison, and they just sort of walked in and started putting it on me."

"I didn't know I had to wear one after release from custody it was sprung upon me minutes before release from HMP."

"I don't think they actually did prepare me for it. I never knew what I was getting ... They just said that I was getting tagged and it was part of license and the times, and that was it. But yeah, they didn't really do much to prepare me."

"They didn't really. I was told by the prison that the tag would be fitted that evening. So the evening of the release, the tag would be fitted and I needed to be home at the address on the license by 5:30. So I didn't have any contact with probation about the tag. ... you know, we're supposed to have a prison offender manager who helps us with, you know, rehabilitation and release, doesn't happen. Zero, no contact with prison offender manager."

COMMUNICATION GAPS AND PRACTICAL CONSEQUENCES

- People commonly described poor communication between prisons, probation, courts and tagging services, which led to confusion about the tagging process and what would happen after release.
- Some people said they learned more about their tagging requirements from judges, courts or tagging staff than from probation.
- Poor communication and lack of information sometimes led to practical difficulties, including misunderstandings about tagging requirements, confusion about exclusion zones and, in some cases, breaches.

"Honestly, they didn't really. They just sort of told me, you're going to be on tag, and then I had to sit and wait for the people to turn up and put me on tag. It was basic. It was the court that told me what the tag was for and all of that stuff. So, I understood that before I actually interacted with my probation officer. I understood, but it was through the court, not my probation officer."

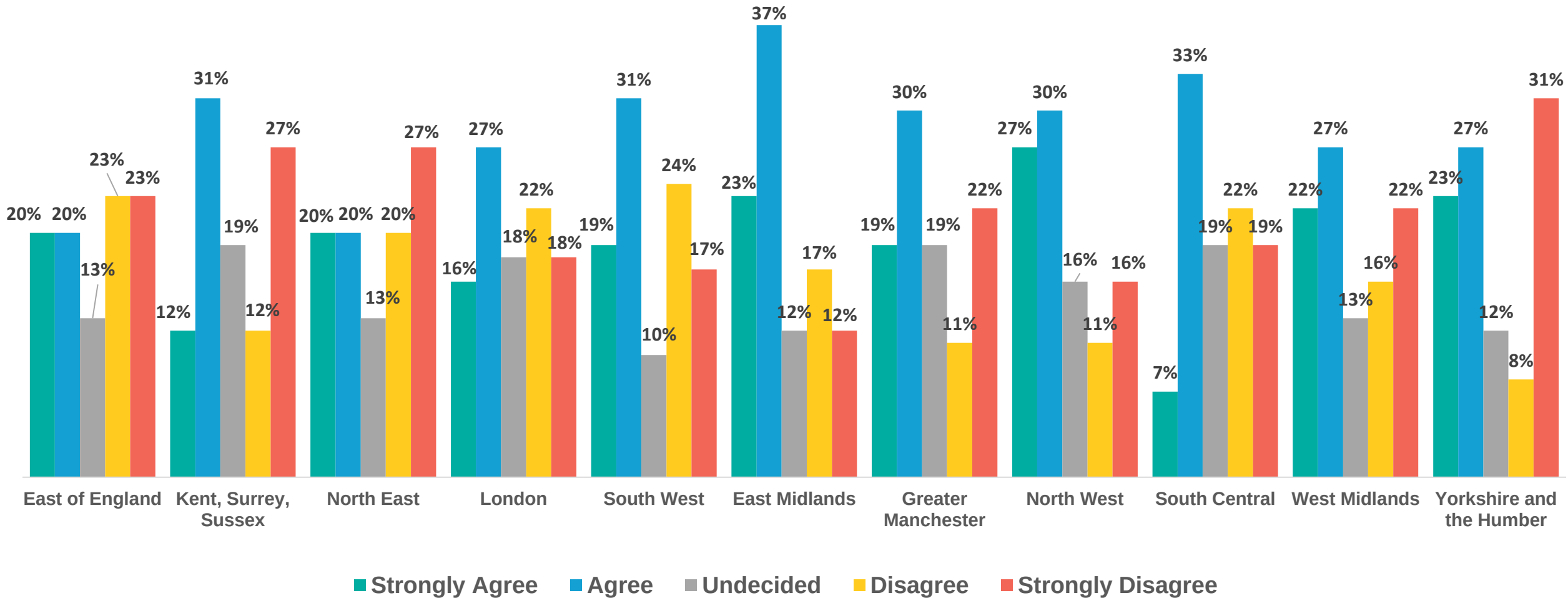
"Well, when I was in prison, I was told all the way along, you won't be having tag. I got released on license. Nothing said in there about HDC or any form of tagging. And then ... I took a long car journey down to probation and that's where they informed me that you're going on a GPS tag for three months."

"They just said to be home, they're arriving, there wasn't really much preparation to be honest. I had to ask all the questions, I would say, to be to be honest ... But for someone that this is my first experience and it's all very daunting and alien, I'd like to know the ins and outs of everything."

"I also had an exclusion zone when I came out of prison, but the map I was given was on a blurred A4 piece of paper and was very hard to read. Because of that, I accidentally went into the exclusion zone, which triggered a breach."

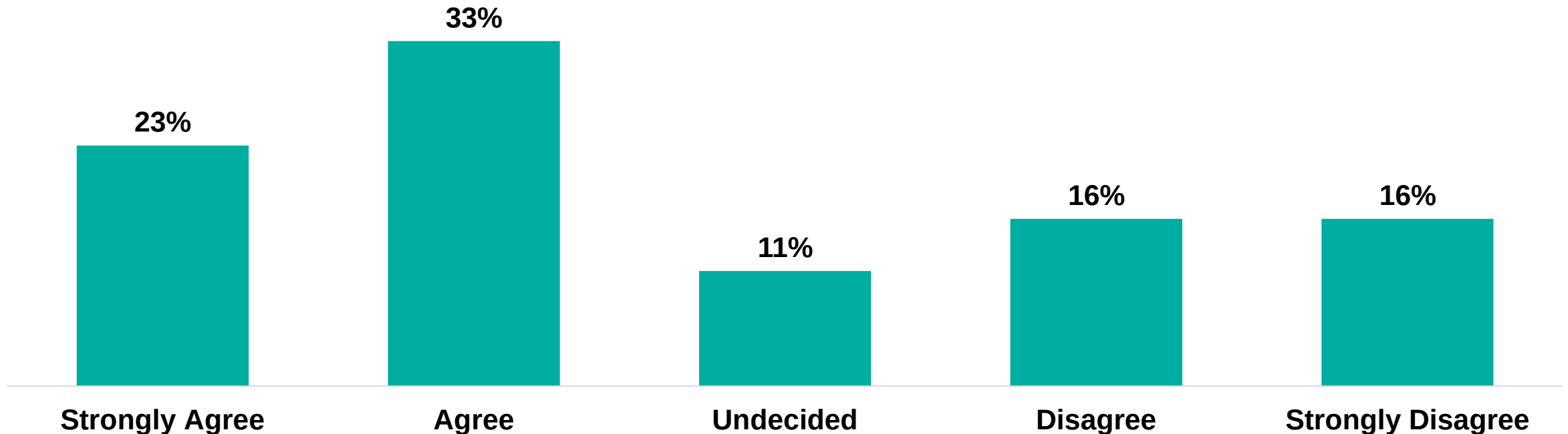
"I got to uh probation office, walked in the door, they give me a breathalyser, and he stuck the tags on straight away. I don't think there was any preparation whatsoever."

Q: 'Probation prepared me well for the tag and what wearing it means.'
- responses by all probation regions in England



ONE THIRD HAD NOT HAD THE PURPOSE OF THEIR TAG EXPLAINED TO THEM THROUGHOUT THEIR SENTENCE

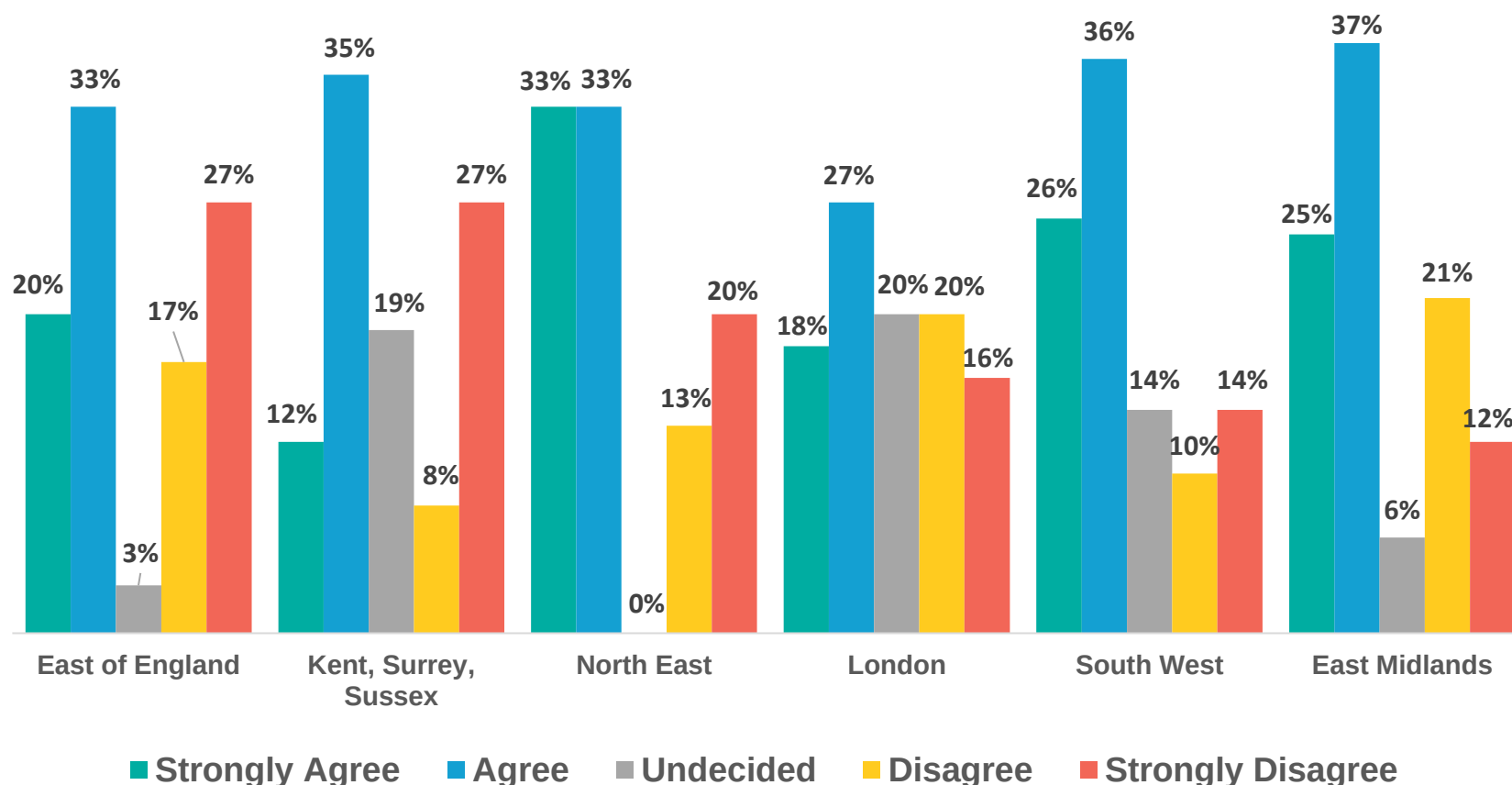
Q: 'My probation officer clearly explained the purpose and benefits of my tag throughout my sentence/licence.'



66% OF PEOPLE IN NORTH EAST AND 62% IN SOUTH WEST AND EAST MIDLANDS AGREED THEIR PRACTITIONER CLEARLY EXPLAINED THE PURPOSE OF THEIR TAG THROUGHOUT THEIR SENTENCE, MUCH HIGHER THAN THE AVERAGE OF 56%

44% OF PEOPLE IN EAST OF ENGLAND DISAGREED THEIR PRACTITIONER CLEARLY EXPLAINED THE PURPOSE OF THEIR TAG THROUGHOUT THEIR SENTENCE, MUCH HIGHER THAN THE AVERAGE OF 32%

Q: 'My probation officer clearly explained the purpose and benefits of my tag throughout my sentence/licence.' - responses by the six probation regions under this inspection



OVER HALF SAID THE PURPOSE OF THEIR TAG WAS EXPLAINED TO THEM

- **55%** of people said the purpose of their tag had been explained to them and could clearly describe why they were being monitored, such as for an alcohol-related offence or to monitor their alcohol use and/or location.
- Those who felt informed generally understood the link between their offence, risk factors, or licence requirements and the decision to impose tagging.
- However, most people did not elaborate on how the purpose of their tag had been explained to them, instead focusing on practical aspects of tagging such as installation, licence conditions, curfew requirements, and how monitoring operated.

"And yeah, it was all right. It was to do with I got done drink driving, so that's why the alcohol tag went on."

"They explained everything, it was for alcohol, to monitor me alcohol and monitor me location."

"It was mainly to keep me in the house and stop me from going out driving and doing stuff that I'm not supposed to be doing."

"One of the conditions was I wasn't allowed near a college at all because my ex-partner's daughter went there..."

"They told me it was a time tag, curfew tag... just stay in the curfew, that's it."

"I mean, yeah, they told me about my curfew, GPS and stuff. And I was informed about what's going on."

A THIRD OF PEOPLE SAID THE PURPOSE OF THEIR TAG WAS NOT EXPLAINED TO THEM

- **32%** of people felt the purpose of their tag had not been clearly explained by probation, with many saying that they were simply told they would be tagged or monitored as part of their licence conditions, without a clear explanation of the reasons behind the decision.
- Some said the decision to impose a tag was unexpected and remained unclear and described communication about the purpose of tagging as limited and one-way, with few opportunities to discuss the reasoning, ask questions, or seek clarification from probation.
- For some, the purpose and requirements of the tag only became clear after installation or through information provided by courts, tagging staff, or other agencies rather than probation.

"No [it was not explained], I was just told I'm going on tag. That was the parole board that said that."

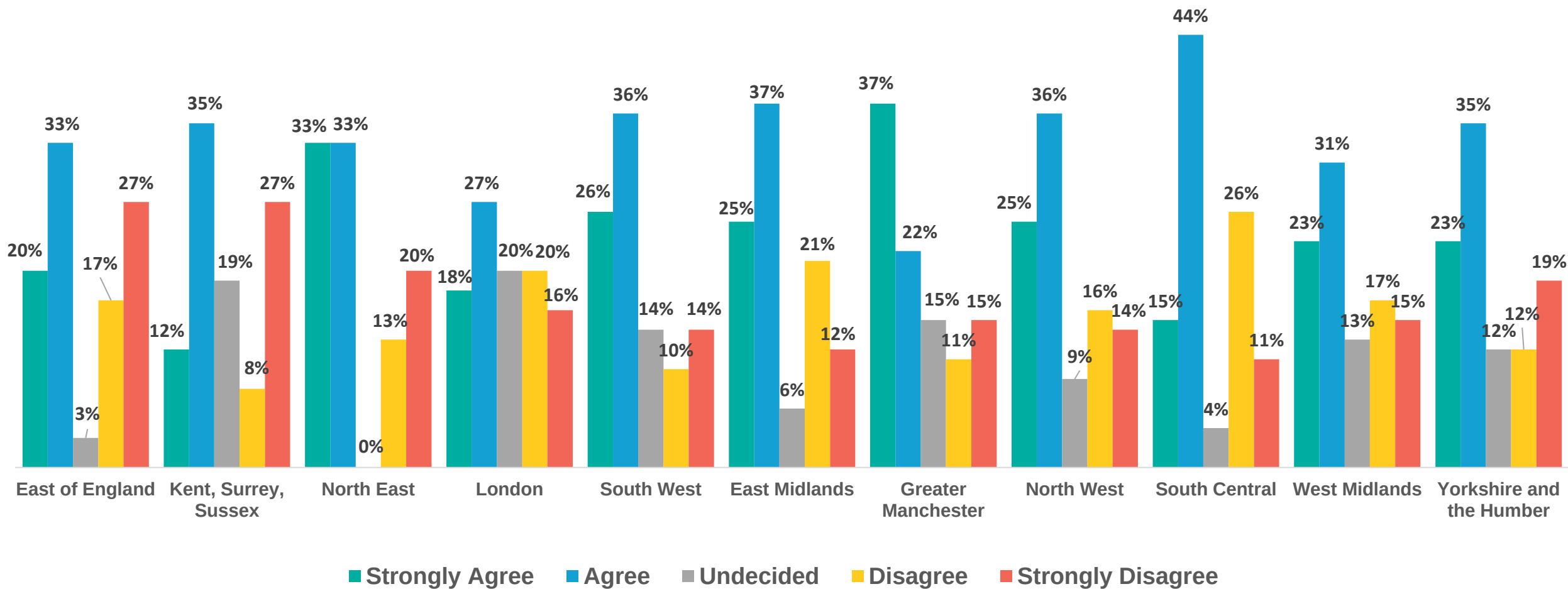
"No, they didn't give me anything about it. They just said you'd get an alcohol tag on you."

"I'm totally undecided, and originally I was not classed as not qualifying for tag, yet three months after my release I was put on tag for reasons that I have still not been fully explained."

"They told me I was going on the tag on my license paper. They didn't learn nothing about it until license was given to me. No, [they didn't tell me the purpose of the tag before] not until they put it on."

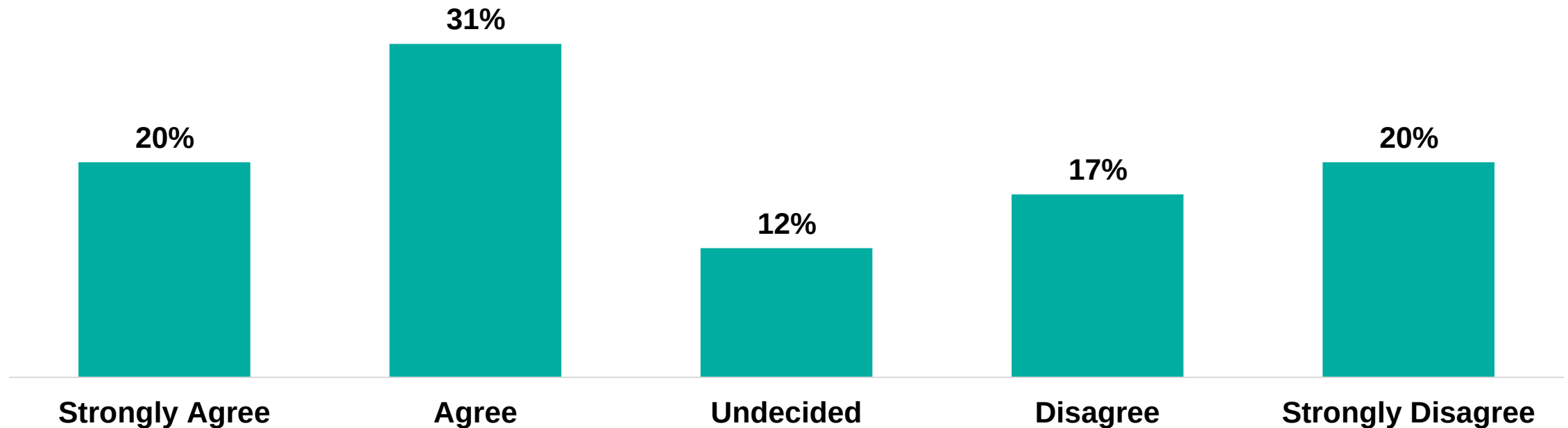
"They didn't really discuss it, mate. They just said, 'You're going to take an alcohol tag. Make sure you stick to it. Don't drink.' Uh, you know, uh, 'Expect to do community service.' Right. Uh, and what blah blah blah. And yeah, that was it. But no, you don't really get much information, mate. They just turn up from with the geezers."

Q: : 'My probation officer clearly explained the purpose and benefits of my tag throughout my sentence/licence.' – responses by all probation regions in England



HALF SAID PROBATION ASKED THEM ABOUT THEIR PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES WHEN CONSIDERING TAG CONDITIONS

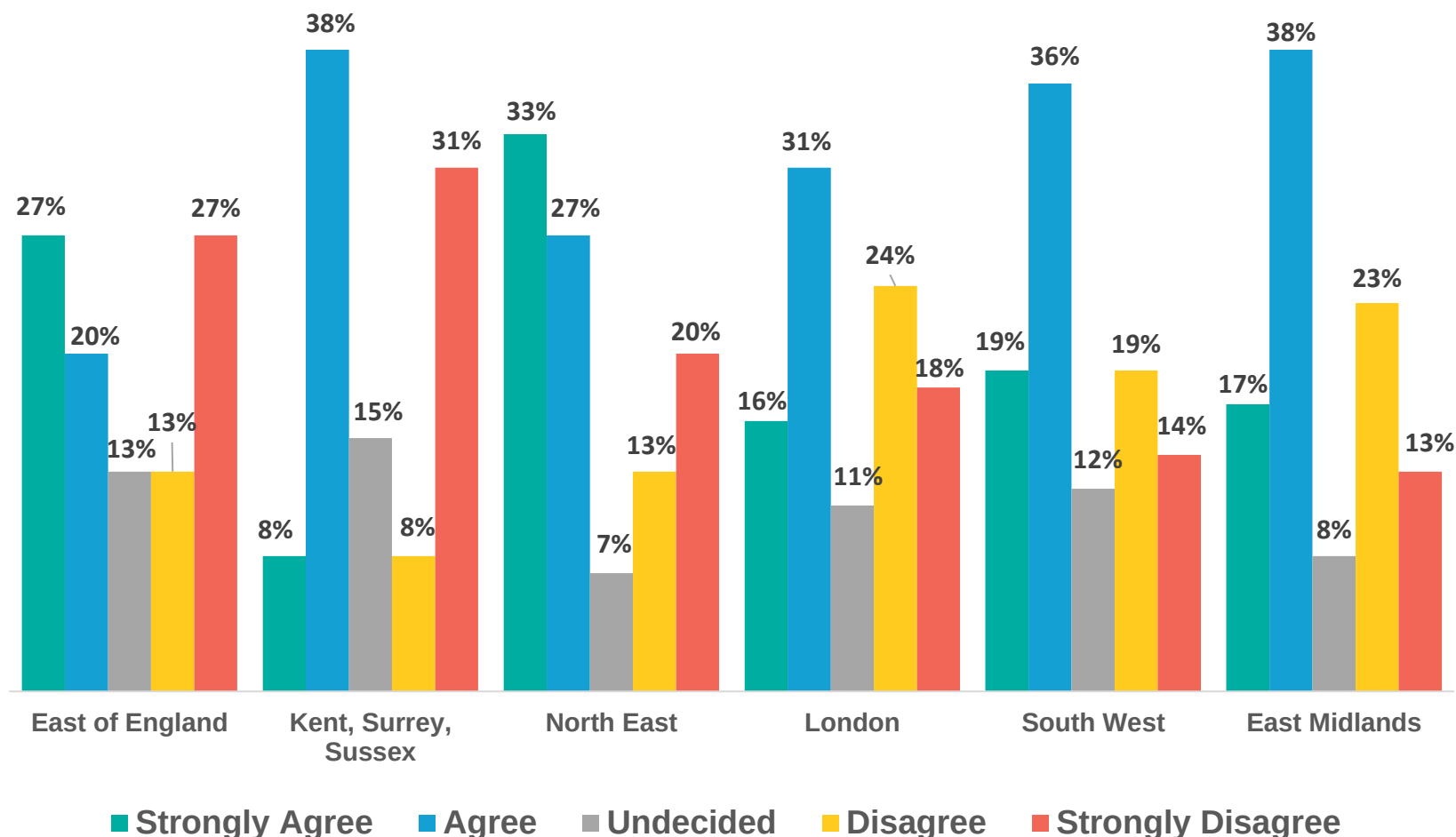
Q: 'Probation asked about my personal circumstances when considering my tag conditions.'



**60% OF PEOPLE IN NORTH EAST
AGREED PROBATION ASKED
ABOUT THEIR PERSONAL
CIRCUMSTANCES WHEN
CONSIDERING THEIR TAG
CONDITIONS, MUCH HIGHER
THAN THE AVERAGE OF 51%**

**42% OF PEOPLE IN LONDON
DISAGREED PROBATION ASKED
ABOUT THEIR PERSONAL
CIRCUMSTANCES WHEN
CONSIDERING THEIR TAG
CONDITIONS, HIGHER THAN THE
AVERAGE OF 37%**

Q: 'Probation asked about my personal circumstances when considering my tag conditions.'— responses by all probation regions in England



ALMOST 2 IN 5 SAID THEIR PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES WERE NOT CONSIDERED FOR THEIR TAG CONDITIONS

- Family responsibilities and arrangements were not always reflected in tag conditions, making it harder for some people to see their children, attend family events, or maintain family relationships.
- Health and wellbeing needs were sometimes overlooked, for example for some people with diabetes, eczema, or mental health difficulties who felt tagging created additional challenges.
- Employment circumstances were not always accommodated, with some participants reporting difficulties maintaining work, working certain shifts, or continuing jobs involving travel.
- Housing and accommodation needs were not always considered, particularly for people experiencing homelessness, moving between addresses, or relying on family support.

"The tag just restricts you from doing stuff with your family such as family/birthday meals and can't take son to football training and he is missing out on being part of a football team."

"... the exclusion zone ... means when I'm trying to see my kids, I have to go like double the miles just to see them ... these are not helping me, just setting me up to fail."

"I got put on for you to come out of prison. Well, I told them I had diabetes and they still put it on."

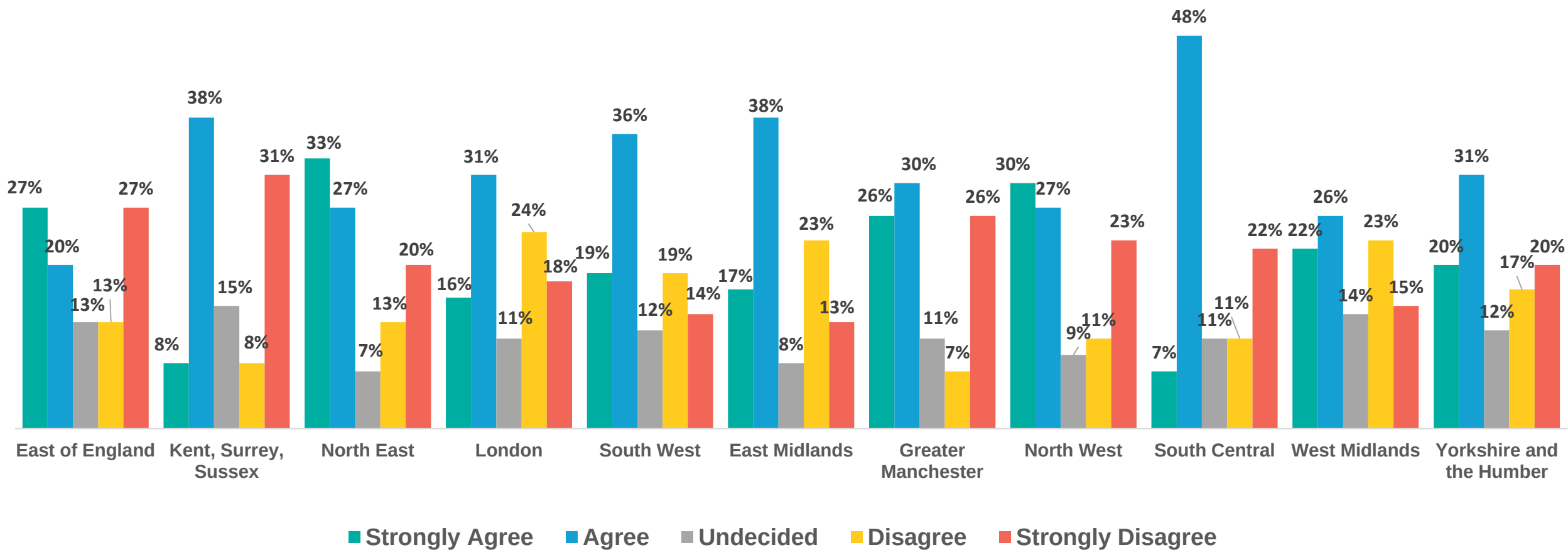
"Despite always complying with my tag conditions... I suffer with cluster migraines, PTSD, anxiety, depression and often need medical attention. What always ends up in being a breach even though I've provided hospital letter evidence."

"The tag prevents me doing overtime, shifts, training away from home etc. Despite my offence, the tag is serving no purpose other than preventing me seeing family and getting work."

"... my work was within the exclusion zone and this was not considered."

"Before I got released from jail, I was trying to move where I am now, but my probation officer was sort of dragging his heels ... They still put me in an AP up by [airport], even though I wanted to be in [city]. My mum lives in [same city]"

Q: 'Probation asked about my personal circumstances when considering my tag conditions.'
– responses by all probation regions in England



CASE STUDY 1: 25–34-YEAR-OLD BLACK MAN

- **Marlon** (pseudonym) got a tag that monitors a curfew as part of his community order.
- He said he was given very little information about the tag before it was fitted. Most of what he knew came from the court rather than probation staff, and he understood that the tag was there to make sure he followed his curfew and stayed away from certain activities.
- Marlon had a positive relationship with his current probation officer, contrasting this with previous experiences. Regular contact helped ensure he understood the tag requirements and the consequences of non-compliance.
- He felt communication from the monitoring service could have been better. He waited about a week for the tag to be fitted and spent several days at home waiting for staff to arrive. Despite this, he described the staff who fitted the tag as friendly, helpful and clear in explaining how it worked and what the conditions were.
- Marlon said the tag had little impact on his ability to work, he felt the curfew hours did not cause problems because they were set around his expected working hours.
- While the curfew occasionally prevented him from attending social activities, such as evenings out with family, he did not feel that the restrictions had seriously affected his relationships or social life.
- Marlon viewed electronic monitoring as a way to demonstrate compliance and reassure probation services and the courts that he could be trusted to follow his conditions and was not a flight risk.

“I understood that [the purpose] before I actually interacted with my probation officer. ... but it was through the court, not my probation officer. It was mainly to keep me in the house and stop me from going out driving and doing stuff that I'm not supposed to be doing.

... my PO this time, he's absolutely amazing. Every month [I see him], but I see him like in between sometimes if I need to. We have [discussed tag conditions] in the past, yeah. Um basically, he just wanted to make sure that I was getting on okay with it and that I understood that if I breach it, then what the repercussions would be, etc.

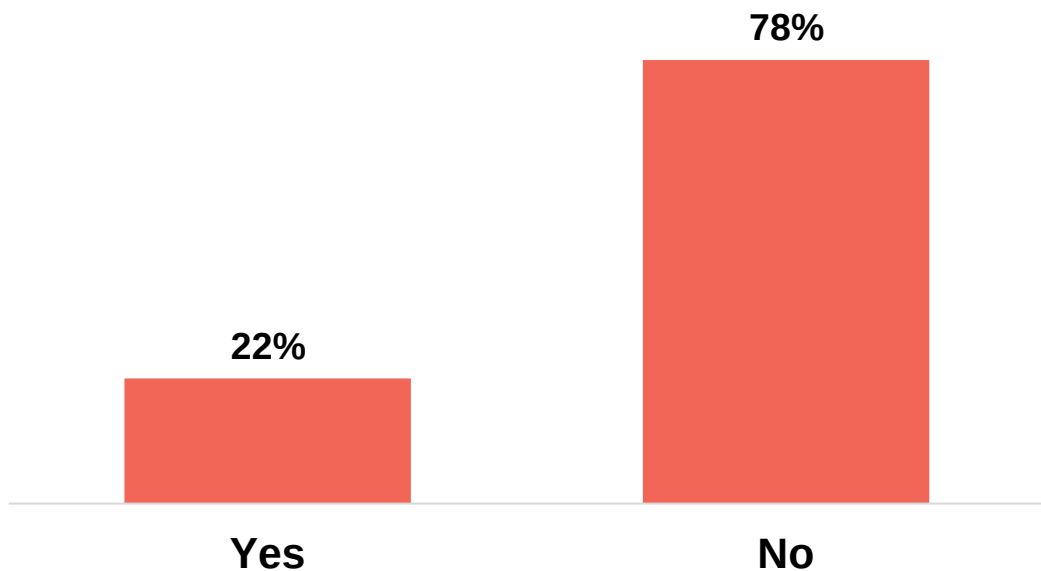
There's the like social judgment side of things. Um, like, you go to the doctors, sit down, your trousers ride up, and everyone can see it sort of thing. Um, but ... judge was extremely lenient with me with my timings. Um, so obviously if my timings were different, then I can imagine it would have been an issue.

Um, on a positive note, the people that came round were really friendly, and any questions I had, they answered them. So yeah, just a positive note about the people that came round, really.”

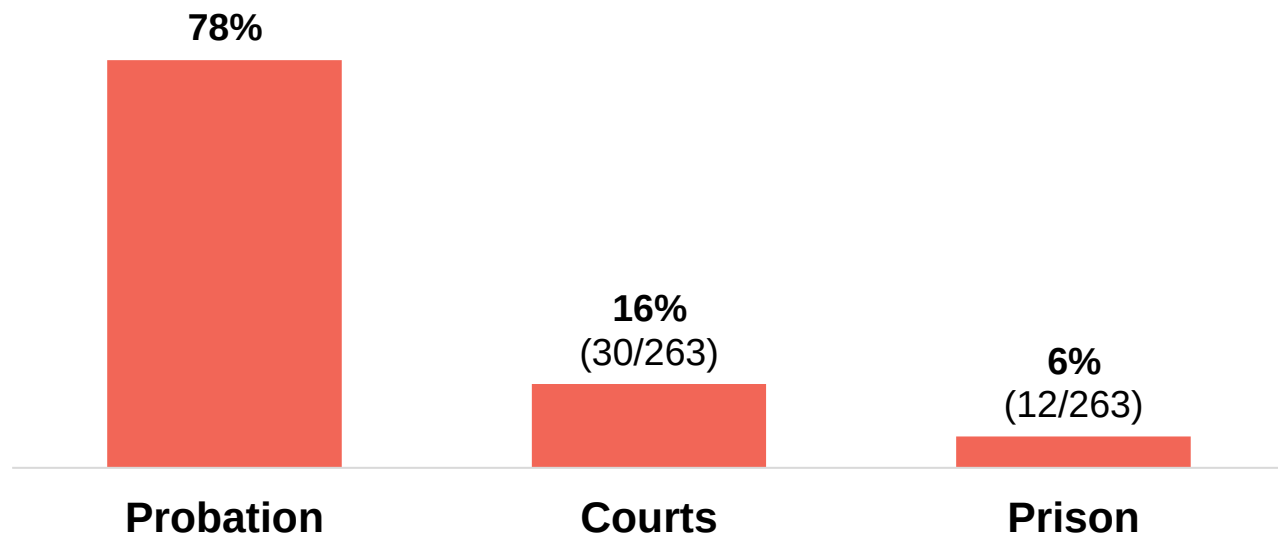
THE ASSESSESSMENT OF TAG CONDITIONS*

ALMOST 4 IN 5 HAVE NEVER HAD THEIR TAG CONDITIONS CHANGED

Q: Have the conditions of your tag ever been changed?
(e.g., shorter curfew, less exclusion zones)



Q: If the conditions of your tag has been changed, by who?



Q: Have the conditions of your tag ever been changed? (e.g., shorter curfew, less exclusion zones) – responses by the six probation regions under inspection

33% OF PEOPLE IN EAST MIDLANDS SAID THE CONDITIONS OF THEIR TAG HAVE BEEN CHANGED, MUCH HIGHER THAN THE AVERAGE OF 22%

87% OF PEOPLE IN NORTH EAST AND 85% IN KSS SAID THE CONDITIONS OF THEIR TAG HAVE NEVER BEEN CHANGED, MUCH HIGHER THAN THE AVERAGE OF 78%



ALMOST 4 IN 5 HAD NOT HAD THEIR TAG CONDITIONS CHANGED

Some people talked about how they had asked for their tag conditions to be changed but had been denied. This is what they said:

- Many people said their tag conditions were not reviewed or changed as promised, despite being originally told reviews would take place regularly.
- Several felt frustrated that good behaviour, full compliance, and evidence of progress did not lead to restrictions being reduced, removed, or adjusted.
- Some reported that requests to change conditions to support employment or personal circumstances were not approved, making work and daily life more difficult.
- A few respondents felt decisions about tag conditions lacked transparency, with little explanation for why restrictions remained in place or why additional monitoring requirements were added.
- Concerns about poor management and monitoring of tagging led some to question whether conditions were being meaningfully reviewed at all.

"Part of the licence conditions it states they will be assessed. They haven't been and I've been on it 6 months now."

"Very negative, probation were unwilling to make changes to curfew to accommodate work."

"I was then put on a curfew from 6pm to 6am. I was told this curfew would be reviewed monthly, but it wasn't. Even though I attended every probation meeting, every phone appointment, and did not miss a single appointment in 10 months, I stayed on that curfew for nearly 7 months. What I found frustrating is that there seems to be very little recognition of progress or good behaviour. If somebody is fully complying, attending every appointment, reducing their risk, and doing everything asked of them, I think there should be some reward or incentive, such as the possibility of having restrictions reviewed properly and maybe removed early. Instead, it felt like no matter how well I did, I was still treated the same."

"It was absolutely pointless just a ticking box exercise. It was not once monitored. I work on the railway and was on a shipping docks at 3am and no one even knew. Which as my offence is drugs this should have been a major red flag. But like I said no one monitors so who would know."

"Anything I asked for it to be extended to eight o'clock so I can go to the gym, just for my own mental health and that, but they denied it and said no, so."

CHILDREN AND EMPLOYMENT WERE MOST COMMON REASONS FOR CONDITION CHANGE

The **22%** of people who said the conditions of their tag have been changed talked about the following:

- Some people said that probation changed curfew hours to accommodate employment, childcare, or family responsibilities. For example, one participant's hours were adjusted to support work and collecting their child, while another had their curfew extended to 8pm to enable attendance at children's activities and family events.
- Some participants described probation as willing to consider changes where circumstances changed, such as moving address, starting work, or taking up education or training.
- A small number reported adjustments being made for health reasons, including changes to the fit of the tag and, in one case, removal of the tag due to complications related to diabetes.

"I asked her about changing it if I had, say, a job or I was going to do a course, and she said to let her know and she would speak to her manager. I haven't had to do it, but she was quite accommodating about it."

"I liked to have it changed times for leaving to go to work. And then obviously pick up my child on a Friday, so yeah, they did [change] my times to help me in that respect."

"I did request times to be changed to later on, I've got two small children um with after school clubs and birthday parties and all sorts, so um that allowed me to do those things with those, I guess. Um so it did change to 8:00 PM."

"They come round and adjusted it, I think they adjusted it about twice. Then they then they decided to take it off because of diabetes."

"I did [request changes], that was to move premises."

"I've asked my probation officer to try and get me put back on the alcohol tag because alcohol is my main problem. And that's why, like, I've got my license back now but I don't drive. That's why I was asking for probation because every time I drink, it makes my mental health worse. ... Well, I've asked them and they said to me I'd have to go back to court. To have the tag put back on."

**Q: Have the conditions of your tag ever been changed? (e.g., shorter curfew, less exclusion zones)
– responses by all probation regions in England**



CASE STUDY 2: 35-44 YEAR OLD WHITE BRITISH WOMAN

- **Nicola** (pseudonym) was released on HDC and required to wear a tag to monitor compliance with her curfew hours.
- She said she was given basic information before the tag was fitted, but she would have preferred more detailed explanations because the experience was new and unfamiliar to her.
- Nicola had monthly contact with her probation officer, sometimes by phone. Her tag conditions were discussed at the start, and she successfully requested a later curfew to help with childcare and her children's activities.
- She felt communication with EMS could have been more personal. While she was positive about the staff member who fitted the tag, she found the removal process unusual and felt staff could have been more approachable.
- At the time of the interview, Nicola was studying. She did not report any impact of the tag on employment or education.
- She described feeling anxious, self-conscious and embarrassed while wearing the tag. Keeping it hidden from her children and other people was a major concern, and the stigma associated with the tag added stress and had an ongoing impact on her wellbeing.
- Nicola struggled to identify many benefits of electronic monitoring beyond being able to remain at home with her children rather than being separated from them.

“ ... for someone that this is my first experience and it's all very daunting and alien, I'd like to know the ins and outs of everything. So, I would say the standard information was there, but I then asked more.

I did request times to be changed to later on, I've got two small children um with after school clubs and birthday parties and all sorts, so um that allowed me to do those things with those. Um so it did change to 8:00 PM.

I would say I do feel very lucky that I had more over winter, as I hid it completely. Um and obviously, I didn't want my children to see it, so I managed to hide it from them as well somehow. It took a lot. There was a lot of locked doors in the shower and stuff, which doesn't usually happen.

I, honestly, apart from the fact that I was home with my children instead of the opposite, that's obviously a massive benefit, but to be honest, there aren't any others, are there? Like you feel like a caged animal, really.”

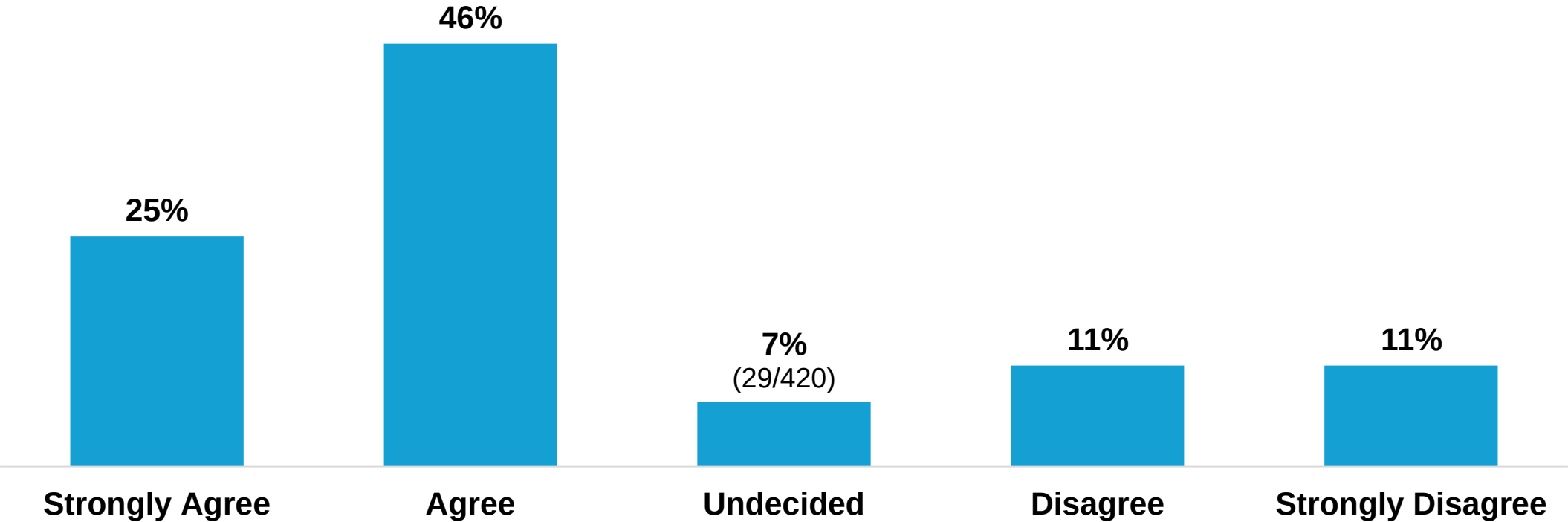


**ELECTRIC MONITORING
SERVICE (EMS)***

*Some charts may total to under or over 100% due to rounding.

7 IN 10 SAID THE INSTALLATION OF THEIR TAG WAS AN EASY PROCESS

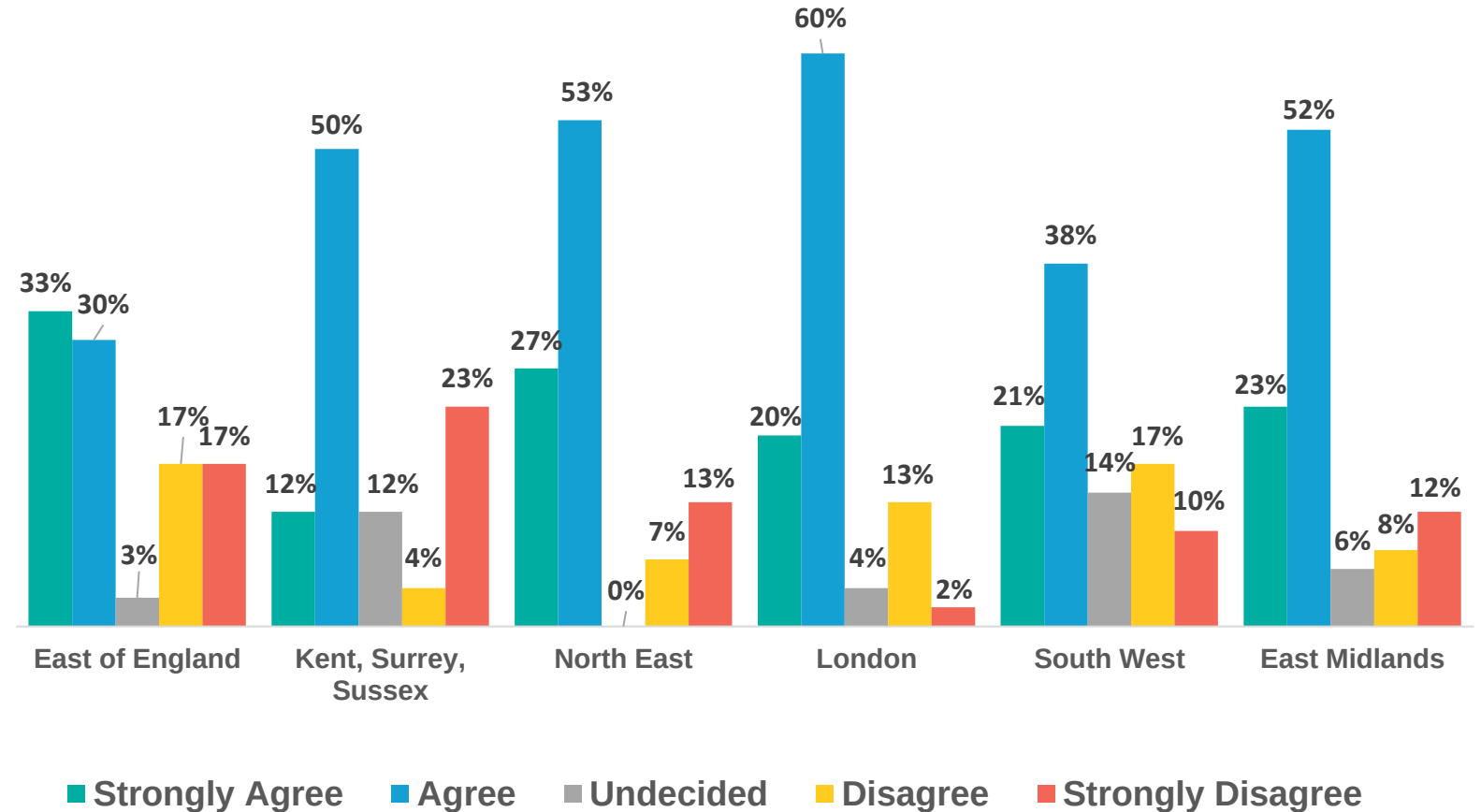
Q: 'The installation of my tag was an easy process.'



81% OF PEOPLE IN NORT EAST AND 80% IN LONDON AGREED THE INSTALLATION OF THEIR TAG WAS AN EASY PROCESS, MUCH HIGHER THAN THE AVERAGE OF 71%

34% OF PEOPLE IN EAST OF ENGLAND DISAGREED THE INSTALLATION OF THEIR TAG WAS AN EASY PROCESS, MUCH HIGHER THAN THE AVERAGE OF 22%

Q: 'The installation of my tag was an easy process.'
– responses by the six probation regions under this inspection)



7 IN 10 SAID TAG INSTALLATION WAS AN EASY PROCESS

- Most people were positive about the electronic monitoring staff who installed their tag, describing them as friendly, respectful, and helpful.
- Many said installers took time to explain how the tag worked, how to charge and use it, and what was expected of them, while also answering questions and helping them feel reassured.
- Several people valued the practical information provided during installation, including leaflets, contact details, and explanations about requirements and restrictions.
- A few praised installers for being considerate of their comfort, including adjusting the fit of the tag and checking that it was not causing discomfort.
- Some appreciated that installers explained the reasons behind certain requirements and restrictions, rather than simply applying the equipment and leaving.
- **22%** of people had a more negative experience, describing installation visits as rushed, taking place late at night, or feeling that equipment was not properly set up when first installed.

"He didn't want to make it feel uncomfortable. So he's asking me, does it feel okay? If you move it back, does it feel loose? He really made sure that my, what do you call it? My comfort was taken, so I really appreciated that as well. Like, he cared."

"They told me obviously where I had to go round, stick my leg in the corner of the room, etc. Um, and they told me like explained to me why I wasn't allowed ... So, they were quite thorough in their explanation. Yeah, they gave me a leaflet with contact information and a few like frequently asked questions."

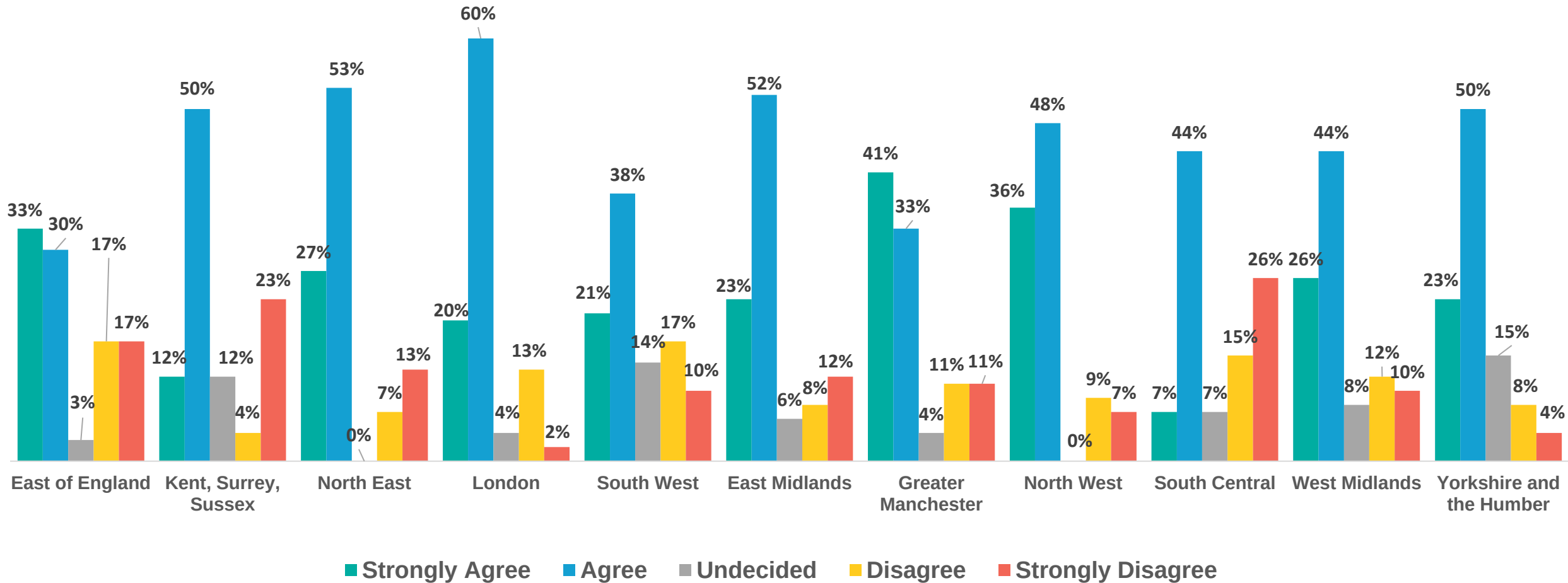
"They were fine. I just thought everything was good with it, to be honest."

"The person who'd done it, he explained to me what it is, what not to do, what not to do with it, what to do with it, charge it, you know, keep it within the boundaries at certain times. It was precise and clear instructions. And when he came to take it off as well, there was nothing but respect and I appreciated that."

"I mean, when the lady came to put- the actual lady from EMS came to fit the tag, she gave me a booklet. She sat there with me for like an hour just going through different things about the tag, signals and stuff. So, I would say, yeah, it was pretty well explained to me."

"They was okay. Just seemed very rushed. And the equipment not working and stuff like that. They literally left the tag box at my house, and then I don't even think it was set up right."

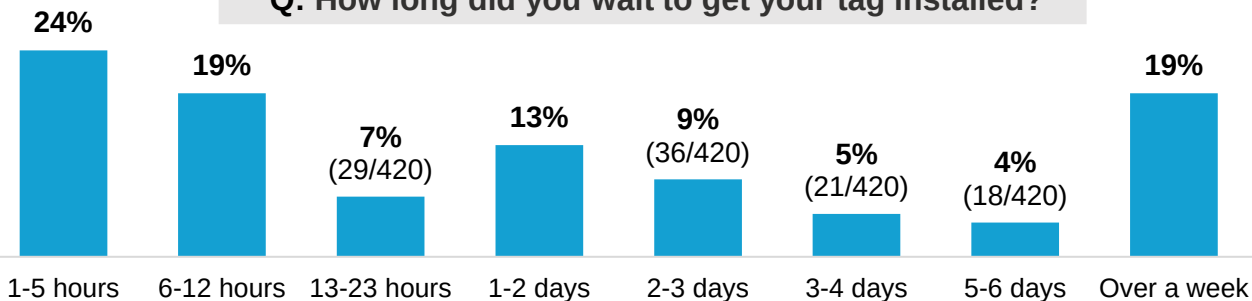
Q: 'The installation of my tag was an easy process.'
– responses by all probation regions in England



1 IN 4 HAD THEIR TAG INSTALLED IN 1-5 HOURS

- Experiences varied considerably, with some people waiting around a week for installation while others reporting delays of more than a week.
- Several people found the wait stressful, having been told to stay at home and comply with their curfew while not knowing when their tag would be installed. Some worried they could get into trouble despite following instructions.
- A small number of people reported long delays, including waiting several weeks for installation or being repeatedly told to remain available for visits that did not take place.
- Installation appointments often took place in the evening, with some people having their tag fitted close to or after midnight.

Q: How long did you wait to get your tag installed?



"They didn't turn up till, I got released on the Tuesday, they turned up on the Saturday night. So, I was waiting quite a few nights for them to fit it. Four, five nights, something like that."

"Waited over 2 weeks to be fitted meaning I couldn't leave the house after 5pm although I didn't have a curfew restriction on my license."

"They was very really late. No one expected it. That was almost after midnight, but okay. That was not really good because it's also, I'm not live alone."

"It took maybe a week, 10 days at first. And then the alcohol tag didn't work, so they had to take that one off and they came back about two weeks later to re-fit it."

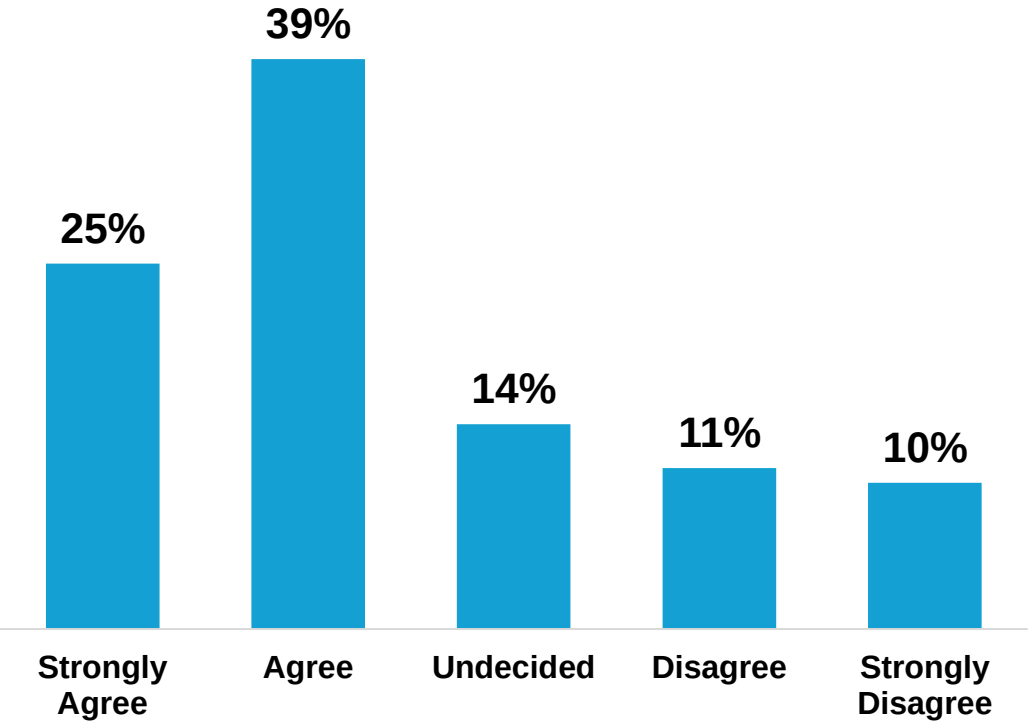
"I can't exactly remember now ... It was definitely within 48 hours of being out of prison, like, yeah they were as gold."

"No, absolutely ridiculous. Well, they knew I'd come out of custody and to my mother's house. And I was there for probably about eight weeks and no one came out to fit the tag at all. My mum's just lost her husband after 55 years and we were told to wait up until midnight every night."

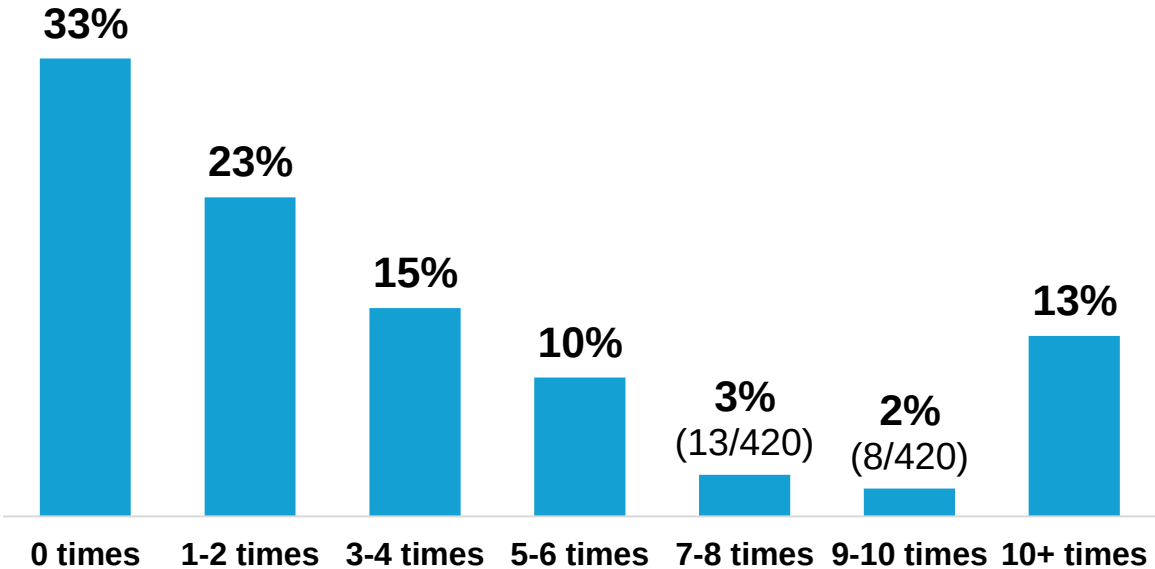
"Well, the tag, since I come out of prison, I come right to my house in [city], with my sister, cause she got me out on bail. And they come around at 8:00 at night, slap the tag on me, and I've had it since."

1 IN 5 FOUND THE TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF THEIR TAG DIFFICULT

Q: 'I find all the technical aspects of my tag easy.'



Q: How many times you have had issues with your tag or Base?



ONLY A THIRD HAD NEVER HAD ANY TECHNICAL ISSUES WITH THEIR TAG

- Battery management was a common challenge, with people frustrated that the tag did not show how much battery was left, making it difficult to know when it needed charging and remember to keep it charged.
- Unexpected calls from the monitoring company, often late at night, caused stress and anxiety.
- Faulty or unreliable monitoring equipment led to repeated beeping, ringing, and alerts, even after problems had been reported.
- False tamper alerts were sometimes triggered by signal or connectivity issues and wrongly recorded as tampering or a breach.
- Some people reported false alcohol alerts, saying their tag recorded alcohol use even when they had not been drinking.
- Signal and connectivity problems were reported, particularly in rural areas or places with poor coverage.
- Delays in fixing technical issues meant some problems continued for weeks or months.

"I've been having problems with my tag for over 3 months and my probation have reported it on number of occasions and still nobody has been out to fix it."

"Been recalled to prison before due to tagging company not taking my hearing into consideration when attending property and my box keeps ringing once every 15 mins and no one has come out to fix problem."

"As far as I am aware, there was no functionality on the tag to make me aware that it was about to run out of battery."

"I keep getting false tamper alerts."

"The tag is better than being in prison however the monitoring machine has never worked properly (has been reported)."

"It helps just the charging side is difficult to keep remembering when my mind's messed up as it is with all other thoughts other than to remember to charge my tag."

"We had a few issues because I live in the middle of nowhere. I live on the edge of a farm, so the signal's a bit of a problem. And my alcohol tag kept saying it was losing signal with my alcohol box. So she kept saying that there was a report of me tampering and that, but it wasn't, it was just my box losing signal a lot."

ALMOST A THIRD FIND THE TAGGING COMPANY HARD TO CONTACT WHEN NEEDED

48% of surveyed people agreed the tagging company is easy to contact whereas 30% disagreed (21% 'undecided').

- When people needed urgent help, they often found it difficult to contact the tagging company, leaving them unable to fix problems quickly.
- Unclear contact details and limited support outside normal hours made it harder for people to get help when equipment problems occurred.
- Long waits, unanswered calls, and dropped calls left some people with a poor impression of the service.
- Some people felt the level of support and communication did not match the level of monitoring.

"They don't leave you any contact numbers whatsoever. I got locked out of my room once. I tried to phone them and say, look, what am I supposed to do? And there was no way I could track them down. I even ended up trying to phone probation ... But because it was a Friday night, there was nothing nobody could do. I just had to wait until Monday. So I was out then, I was in breach until Monday because I couldn't get back into my flat."

"... although the installers were great the same can't be said about the monitoring staff there is a serious problem with communication between them as I was rang every 30 mins for the same thing even though the first 3 times I told them there was an issue with the equipment and they noted it that there was I still received the calls every 30 mins."

"They left me a number to ring ... it comes with the box. So it just says press the box button and then it'll come through to a call to them or something if you need any help with anything or right like that."

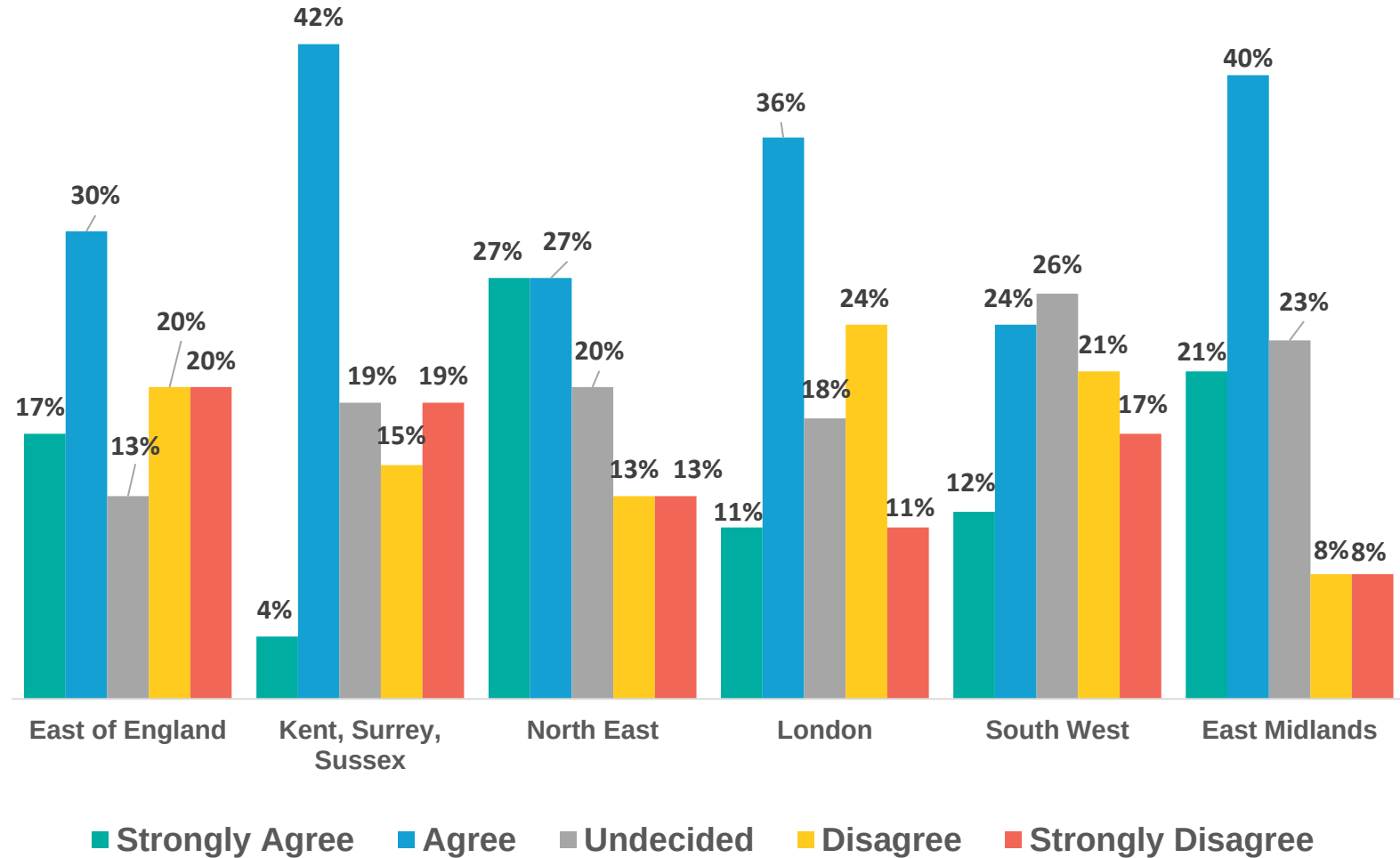
"I agree in principle to a tag however its not easy to contact the tagging company and the equipment doesn't work as it should all the time which is a continuous worry and the probation service CERTAINLY DO NOT HELP."

"As for the tag company, pointless. I've rung 3 times and each time I'm on hold for 10mins then it cuts off. A company that monitors US, but not the phones? Totally disgraceful."

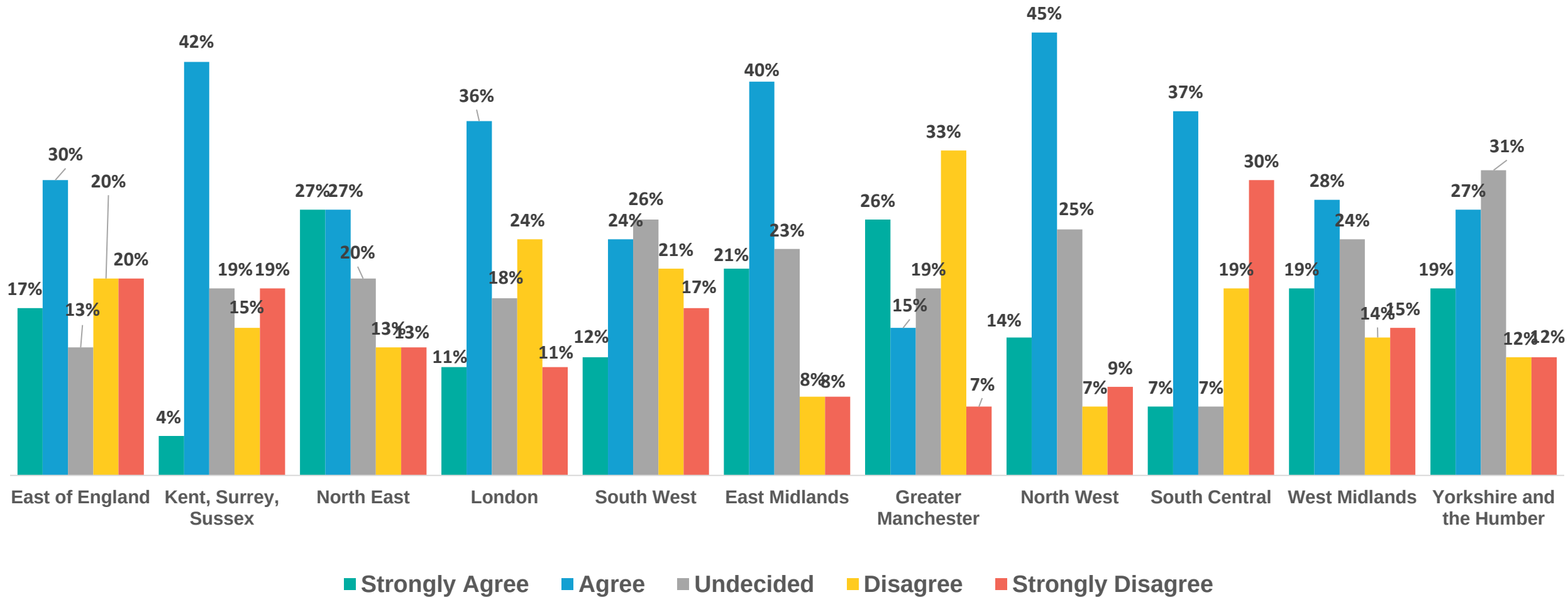
61% OF PEOPLE IN EAST MIDLANDS AGREED THE TAGGING COMPANY IS EASY TO CONTACT IF THEY NEED TO, MUCH HIGHER THAN THE AVERAGE OF 48%

40% OF PEOPLE IN EAST OF ENGLAND AND 38% IN SOUTH WEST DISAGREED THE TAGGING COMPANY IS EASY TO CONTACT IF THEY NEED TO, HIGHER THAN THE AVERAGE OF 30%

Q: 'The tagging company are easy to contact if I have issues with my tag.'
– responses by the six regions under inspection



Q: : 'The tagging company are easy to contact if I have issues with my tag.'
– responses by all probation regions in England



CASE STUDY 3: 45-64-YEAR-OLD WHITE BRITISH MAN

- Patrick (pseudonym) was released on HDC in 2025. He had no contact with probation about his tag before release. Information about the fitting was provided through his licence paperwork issued by the prison.
- He felt comfortable discussing any issues with his probation practitioner and believed she would help if he needed changes to his curfew hours for work.
- Patrick saw HDC as a positive experience overall. He was pleased that the tag allowed him to leave prison earlier and felt that a 7am to 7pm curfew was manageable.
- Soon after release, Patrick experienced technical problems with his tag. He received several overnight calls from EMS saying the system showed he was not at home, even though he was. These issues caused stress and anxiety, especially when EMS reported a breach after claiming nobody answered the door during a visit. Patrick said his probation officer was supportive and helped resolve the issue.
- Because of concerns about inaccurate reports, Patrick bought a Ring doorbell so he could keep a record of visits and protect himself if similar issues happened again.
- Patrick felt that EMS staff often assumed people had done something wrong and could be rude or difficult to deal with.
- Despite the technical problems, Patrick said wearing the tag did not affect his voluntary work, health, family relationships or daily life. He described the tag as comfortable and easy to live with.
- Patrick raised concerns about the HDC application process, noting that people with low literacy levels may struggle to complete the paperwork without support.

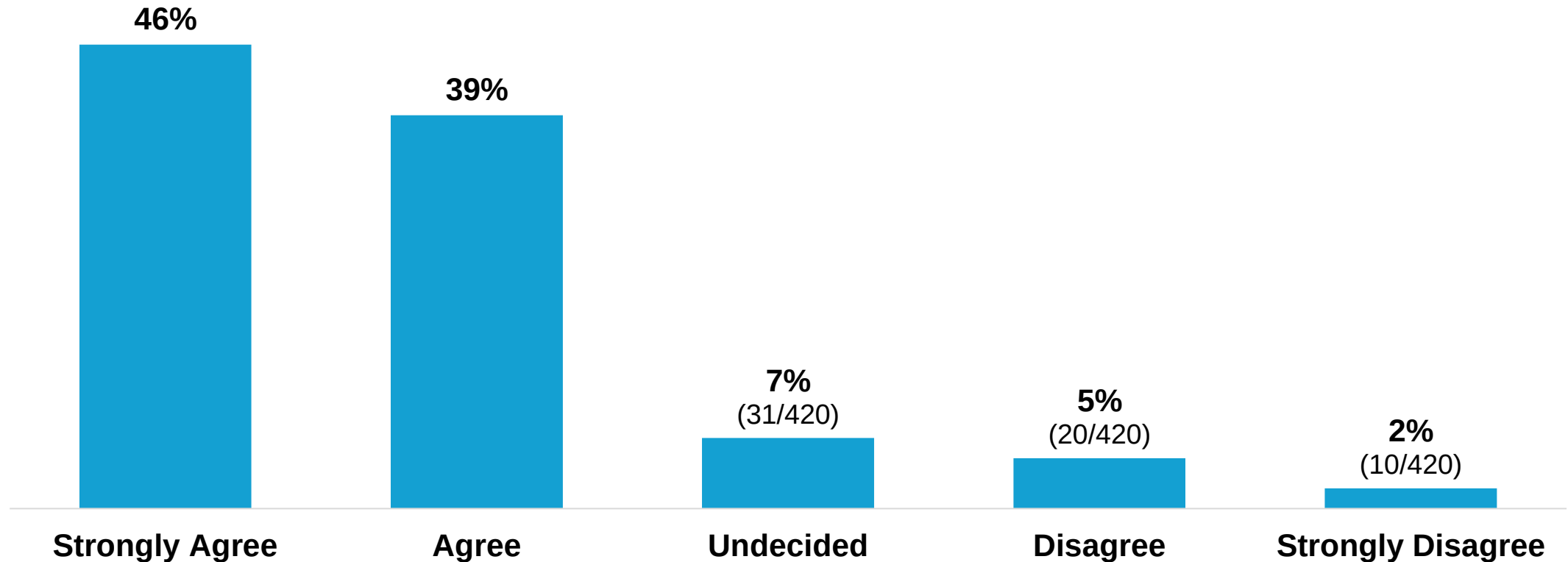
"We're supposed to have a prison offender manager who helps us with, you know, rehabilitation and release, doesn't happen. Zero, no contact with prison offender manager but probation officer on the outside was good, the one I had."

"I'm waiting for this [EMS] guy to come. Nobody comes and obviously I'm thinking it's going to be another sleepless night cause it's going to be faulty. Lo and behold, he reports a breach because he says he came and there was no reply. I was in, you know, I wasn't out. So, reports a breach to the probation officer. So, obviously, you can imagine now, I'm pretty angry, and she was very supportive and said, "Don't worry too much about it, I'll get it removed."

"... the negatives are EMS, they need to change their attitude in the call center because they just talk to us like we're shit. Um, they're not friendly, they're quite rude, you're automatically guilty when you're not guilty."

OVER 4 IN 5 SAID THEY HAVE BEEN TREATED WITH RESPECT BY THE TAGGING COMPANY

Q: 'I am / was treated with respect by the tagging company who installed and maintain my tag.'



THE INSTALLATION STAFF WERE LIKED BY MAJORITY OF PEOPLE

- People often described staff as friendly, approachable and non-judgemental, and said they explained the process and requirements clearly.
- Positive experiences were most often linked to tag installation and removal visits, which were seen as well organised and respectful.
- Some people appreciated staff being understanding and recognising the inconvenience of wearing a tag.
- **7%** of people felt they were not treated with enough respect or consideration, especially when equipment issues arose.
- Some felt that procedures did not always take account of people's living situations, causing disruption and inconvenience.
- Negative feedback was more often directed at the company and call centre support than at the staff who installed or removed tags.

"When you move address in my case shared housing they don't care that you share a house with others and will come out most of the time midnight and be loud while others are asleep putting you in a very uncomfortable position you explain your in shared house and if they can come early and they just fob you off."

"The company is horrendous. The staff have no respect for anyone on tag and talk to you with absolute disrespect, almost as if they don't care you could be put in prison for their technology failing. Too many issues with the equipment and not enough consideration from the staff/call centre."

"They, to be fair, they're actually all right. They're very chatty and explain everything and what not, so, they're not too bad. They don't judge, the ones I've come across, they're just doing their job and they've been very friendly."

"Good as gold. I thought, the two women that came out they was lovely. You know, they was nice and polite. There wasn't no problem with them."

"But as I say, doing the fitting procedure of the tag and the removal procedure was brilliant. It was just the bit in between where I had the issue with the tag."

"They were really nice. They're like, "Oh, so happy that like you're" I was like number four on their list, and they're like, "We really like to take the tags off, we don't like putting the tags on."

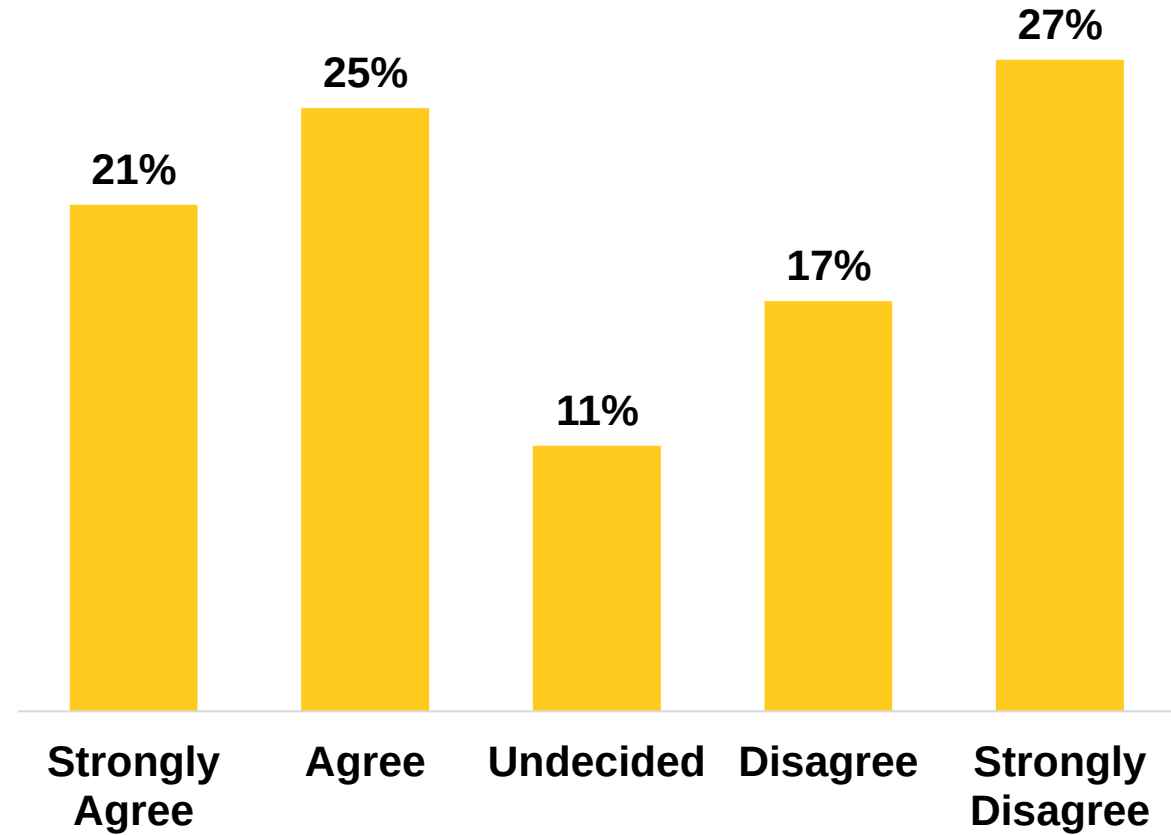


REHABILITATION*

*Some charts may total to under or over 100% due to rounding.

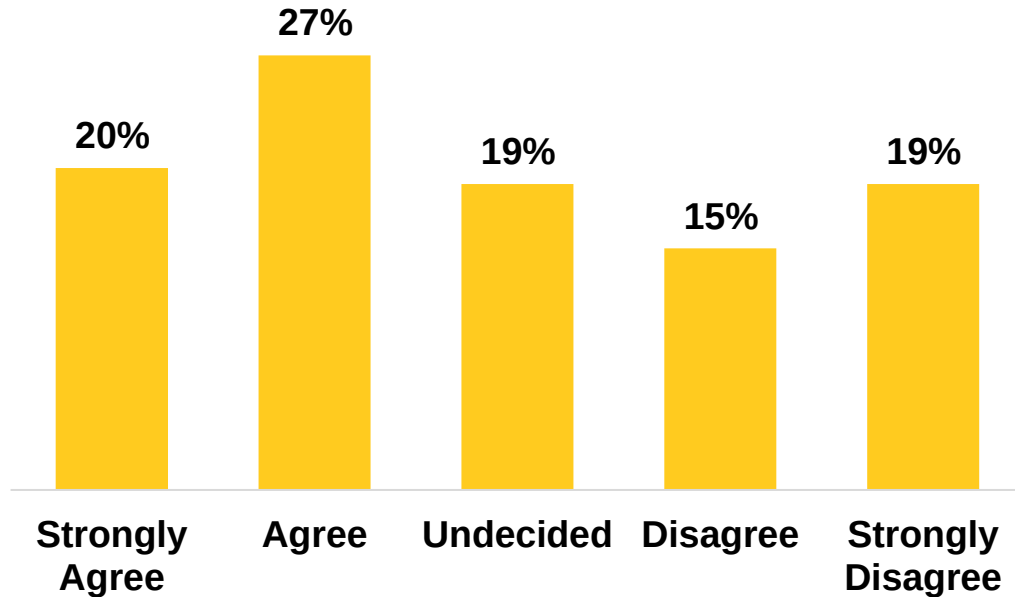
Q: 'My tag is helping me to stop offending.'

**46% AGREE THEIR
TAG IS HELPING
THEM TO STOP
OFFENDING WHEREAS
44% DISAGREE**

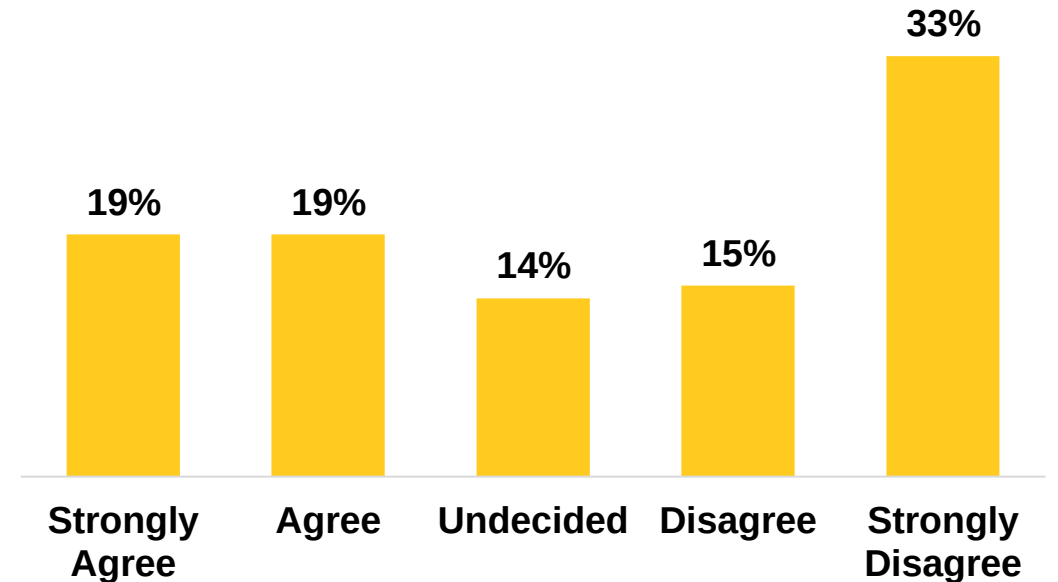


ALMOST HALF AGREE THEIR TAG MAKES IT EASIER TO STICK TO THEIR CONDITIONS, HOWEVER ALMOST HALF DISAGREE IT IS IMPROVING THEIR LIFE

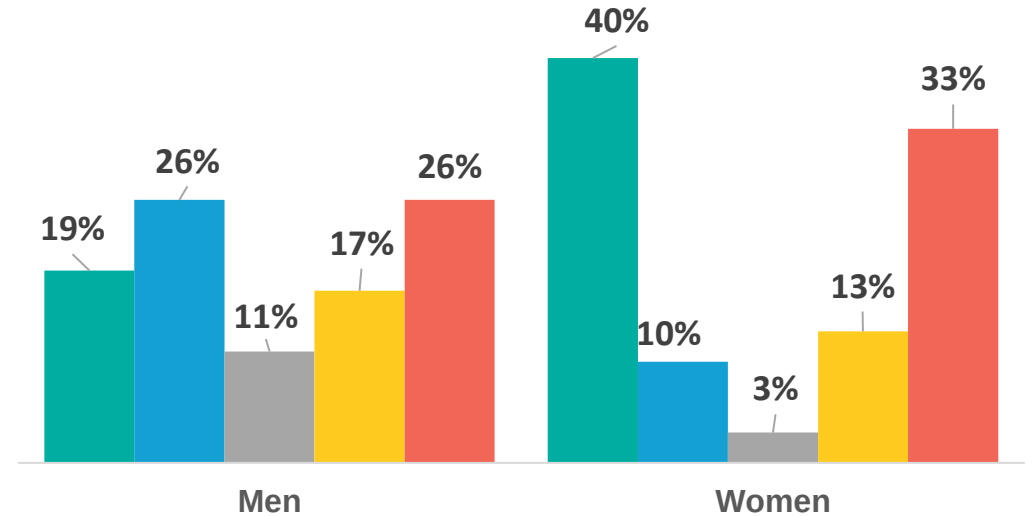
Q: 'My tag is making it easier to stick to the conditions of my sentence / licence.'



Q: 'My tag is helping me to improve my life.'

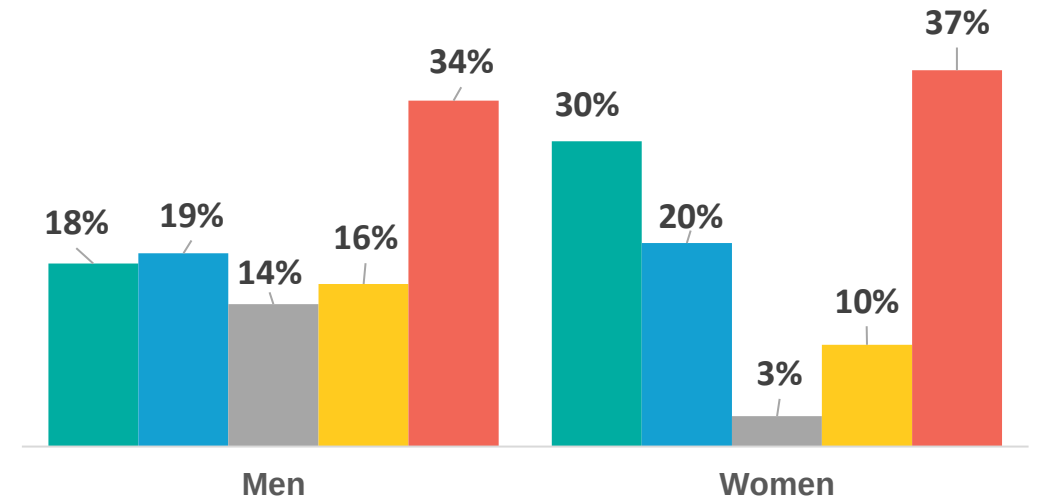


Q: 'My tag is helping me to stop offending.' - responses by gender



■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Undecided ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

Q: 'My tag is helping me to improve my life.' - responses by gender



■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Undecided ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

45% OF MEN AND 50% OF WOMEN AGREE THEIR TAG IS HELPING THEM TO STOP OFFENDING WHEREAS 43% AND 46% RESPECTIVELY DISAGREE

37% OF MEN AND 50% OF WOMEN AGREE THEIR TAG IS IMPROVING THEIR LIFE WHEREAS 50% AND 47% RESPECTIVELY DISAGREE

CASE STUDY 4: 45-54 YEAR OLD ASIAN WOMAN

- **Simran** (pseudonym) was released from prison with a post-custody licence condition with a tag that monitors 7am to 7pm curfew.
- She said that information about her release arrangements was mostly provided through standard paperwork and guidance from prison probation staff.
- Simran thinks the tag worked well after her release, although she received repeated calls from monitoring staff while on bail because of possible system errors and concerns that the tag was not recording properly.
- However, she found wearing the tag embarrassing and uncomfortable at times, especially during family gatherings and social events, although she tried to hide it to avoid drawing attention to it.
- She said that the experience made her feel more anxious and made it harder for her to sleep. It also made her more aware of her own mental health and more understanding of the difficulties other people face.
- Simran felt the criminal justice process had negatively affected her confidence in the justice system and believed that some decisions and restrictions lacked clear explanations.
- Despite these challenges, she identified some benefits of electronic monitoring, including providing daily structure and routine during the transition back into the community.

“... it was a bit like, obviously, you know, embarrassing and stuff give but then what can you do? It's just a part of life. There's so many people that have tags nowadays. You didn't used to notice it until, you know ... when you don't have it, you don't notice it, Yeah. when you have it, you notice it on everybody.

... But in the winter, you just put long trousers on and you're fine. I went to a family function, and I had to wear Indian suits. I just had to make sure that it stayed covered the whole time that I was there. And that was it, really. Not unsafe, just uncomfortable, embarrassed more than anything else.

I think the positives is basically, it gives you a routine. That you need to be at home 7:00 to 7:00.

Your life is controlled, so you just basically can't leave the house at that time, and even if something has happened, ... So, that's actually the only thing that's a negative, your life is controlled by that, little box that's on your leg.”



EMPLOYMENT*

*Some charts may total to under or over 100% due to rounding.

ALMOST 1 IN 5 SAID THEIR TAG DOES NOT IMPACT THEIR ABILITY TO WORK

- **16%** of people said tagging had little or no impact on their ability to work, particularly where employers or courts were willing to accommodate conditions.
- Some said they were able to continue in employment because curfew hours were aligned to working hours or employers accepted restrictions on working patterns.
- Several people described practical inconveniences, such as discomfort with work boots or explaining the tag to colleagues or customers, but did not feel these prevented them from working.
- Some felt GPS monitoring was less disruptive than expected because it allowed flexibility to move around for work while still meeting monitoring requirements.
- Openness with employers or customers sometimes helped minimise the impact of tagging in the workplace.

"Funny enough, I've just started a new job. I'm working for Butlins. It was just bloody annoying where it was attached [the tag]."

"So, sometimes it was hard. Like, my boss had to make sure I was like near. I think once I've had to reschedule my appointment because I broke down like quite far up north of [city] and we couldn't get back. So, it was a bit of a pain in the bum. But my probation officer was really nice about it, plus she could see on my GPS tag where I was anyway. So, she knew I wasn't lying and that."

"A bit. Just with work boots. It was hard to get it with the work boots on, 'cause my work boots are quite high. I had to explain to another customer, 'cause obviously they saw the tag when I had to take my shoes off to go into their house, so I was just open and honest with them."

"No, it's fairly well hidden, you know, just wear, wear sort of baggy trousers and it's not very noticeable. There's no curfews on this, it's just supposed to monitor if I go over the drunk-drive limit and that's it."

"Not at all. I had a job lined up on a farm. Um, and the judge put my hours of the curfew around the hours which I'd be working."

TAGS LIMIT THE WORK PEOPLE CAN GET AND DO

- **65%** of people said tagging impacted on their ability to work.
- Many people said tagging restricted the type of work they could do, with curfews and monitoring conditions limiting shift work, overtime, travel and flexibility, particularly in occupations with irregular hours such as delivery, security and driving roles.
- Several people said they had lost jobs, been refused employment, or changed career paths because tagging requirements could not be accommodated.
- Some felt employers viewed the tag negatively, while others experienced anxiety, embarrassment or self-consciousness when attending interviews or interacting with customers.
- Some felt tagging arrangements did not adequately account for employment needs, contributing to financial strain, reduced career opportunities and poorer wellbeing.

"Indirectly, maybe. I just felt self-conscious about walking around and, you know, going to interviews and things with a tag on my leg."

"Main issue is curfew times versus shift finishing as a home delivery driver."

"Been refused 6 jobs due to the tag."

"Pretty straightforward, just annoying as it has limited my ability to work overtime at work."

"Since being placed on the tag, I have lost the ability to work in the security industry and can no longer carry out close protection or security work. This has affected me financially and professionally."

"Prison found me a job as a delivery driver - the tag doesn't really consider shift over runs."

"Very negative, probation were unwilling to make changes to curfew to accommodate work."

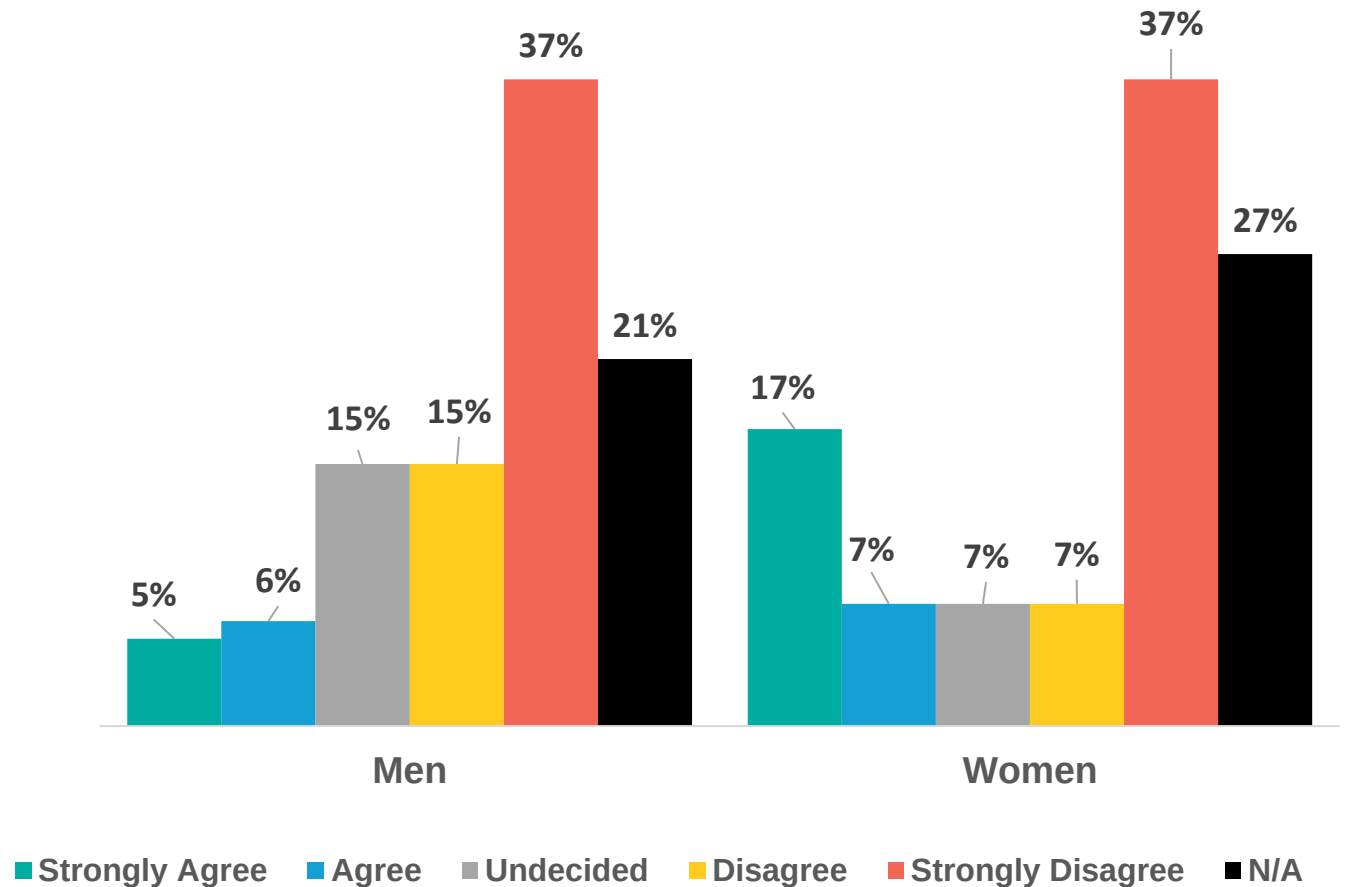
"The tag itself is a good idea, but it is so big, I had 2 give up my job because uniform didn't cover it."

"Absolutely crazy all its done was lost me a job. Real amazing for trying to stop someone committing crime. Take their job away and don't monitor."

MEN ARE FINDING IT HARDER TO WORK WITH A TAG IN COMPARISON TO WOMEN

11% OF MEN AND 34% OF WOMEN AGREE THEIR TAG IS MAKING EASIER FOR THEM TO WORK DURING THEIR SENTENCE WHEREAS 52% AND 44% RESPECTIVELY DISAGREE

Q: 'My tag is making it easier for me to work during my sentence.'
- responses by gender





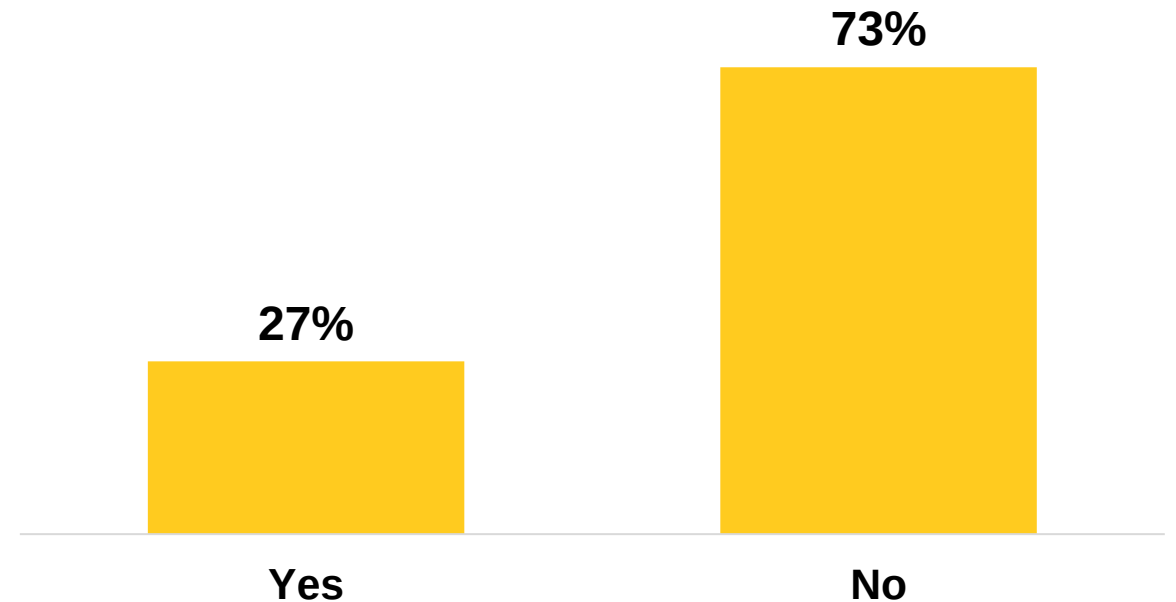
HEALTH*

*Some charts may total to under or over 100% due to rounding.

OVER 1 IN 4 HAD A HEALTH CONDITION THAT CAUSED ISSUES WITH THEIR TAG

Q: Do you have any health problems that affect the tag, or that the tag affects?

- When we asked how their tag is impacting their health, most people mentioned how their tags are causing issues with their legs, whereas many talked about their mental health, negative impact on their sleep, and inability to exercise.
- Some also talked about how their tag is stopping them from washing properly.



TAGS ARE CAUSING AND WORSENING LEG HEALTH ISSUES

- Many people reported skin damage and irritation caused by the tag, including rashes, eczema flare-ups, dry skin, sores, blisters, cuts, bleeding, scarring, and in some cases loss of tissue. Some people had required medical treatment like antibiotics.
- Pain, discomfort, and reduced mobility were frequently talked about, with people describing the tag as too tight, too heavy, and rubbing against the ankle or bone. Many said this made everyday activities like walking more difficult.
- Some people felt the tag had a greater impact because of existing health conditions, including diabetes, cancer, heart conditions, gout, eczema, osteoarthritis, nerve damage, circulatory problems, and previous injuries. Respondents described swelling, increased discomfort, and worsening symptoms associated with these conditions while wearing the tag.
- A number of people raised concerns about circulation and nerve-related symptoms, including numbness, loss of feeling in the foot, and worries that the tag was restricting blood flow.

"The tag was digging into my leg and it marked me. I started getting sores and what looked like blisters."

"I havnt had eczema for years and its flared up again where my tag is due to dry skin."

"I was diagnosed with cancer on release from prison and have been getting swelled ankles."

"The alcohol tag put me in serious pain had a serious infection 3 times."

"Have had a knee reconstruction that didn't go as planned then was jailed received no further treatment then they put a tag on my leg that breaks the skin, restricts blood flow stopping me walking."

"I have diabetes and my leg and foot swells can't get proper shoes on."

"The tag has rubbed the skin off my lower leg, constantly bleeding, shooting pains in my ankle, movements are hard and cannot walk more than a few hundred metres before constant pain ... I suffer constant loss of feelings in my right foot."

"I have gout, some days my feet get really painful when I wear my work boots as it has to move up my leg to get my safety footwear on."

TAGS' IMPACT ON MENTAL HEALTH

- Many people said the tag was worsening their mental health, leading to increased anxiety, depression, low mood and, in some cases, suicidal thoughts.
- Concerns about technical faults resulting in breaches were a major source of anxiety for many people, leaving them feeling unable to switch off and contributing to ongoing stress and emotional exhaustion.
- Unexpected buzzing, flashing lights and alerts were reported to heighten anxiety, particularly when they occurred without warning or made people question whether something is wrong.
- For some, the tag makes it more difficult to manage existing mental health conditions, disrupting routines and reducing their ability to maintain stability and cope effectively.
- The physical presence of the tag caused psychological distress to some with its size, fit and sensory impact causing frustration, anger and emotional discomfort.
- Some people felt the tag acts as a continual reminder of past trauma or difficult life experiences, contributing to ongoing negative thoughts and emotional distress.

"I get anxiety whenever it flashes red, I suffer from extreme anxiety depression ADHD PTSD."

"Mentally causes increased anxiety and low mood because unable to live a normal healthy lifestyle with it on."

"Constantly reminds you of a tragic event in your life keeping you in a loop of depression."

"Anxiety and depression - its not allowing me to have a set routine as that is the most important thing to keep on track and keep busy."

"It's the worse thing I have ever had to endure, the constant worry of breeches due to misinformation from probation has destroyed my mental health."

"It makes me feel like a target and suicidal."

"It's mentally draining worrying if ya gonna get arrested for being dopie and forgetting to charge it."

"The feel of it set my sensory issues off making me become extremely angry and upset. I had managed to give up cannabis after five years of smoking it to help keep me calm in situations, along with giving up nicotine for two weeks after smoking for 20years. I was so angry, upset, frustrated, every horrible feeling I've been trying to get away from feeling, so within hours, I was back smoking again."

TAG RELATED LACK OF SLEEP IS IMPACTING MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

- Many people said the tag affects their sleep, making it difficult to get a comfortable and uninterrupted night's rest, with the resulting lack of sleep contributing to increased stress, frustration and reduced overall wellbeing.
- Night-time buzzing was a common cause of sleep disruption, with some respondents reporting that alerts regularly wake them up or keep them awake.
- The size and weight of the tag were frequently linked to difficulties sleeping comfortably, with many people describing it as bulky, heavy, or getting in the way when they are in bed.
- For some, discomfort caused by the tag makes it harder to find a suitable sleeping position, particularly for those who already have health conditions or mobility issues that affect their sleep.

"The constant loud buzzing has caused issues with my mental health and I have mentioned this also to my probation officer as well as the GP. I am unable to get a proper nights sleep due to it regularly going off as well as being uncomfortable whilst in bed."

"I suffer from mental health problems and it's constantly buzzing I can't sleep as it is."

"It's shit, it's keeping me awake and making me stressed due to not a lot of sleep because of discomfort."

"It is uncomfortable to have the tag, I don't sleep well, it is heavy. I would appreciate a smaller and lighter device."

"The tag is fine until I go to bed then it's in the way."

"How huge it is I haven't been able to sleep comfortably because of the size of the tag ..."

"I have global osteoarthritis need a left hip and rt knee replacement. This means that I can only sleep on one side. Using pillows and getting used to it."

"I find it hard to sleep anyway and now this buzzes every half hour and its keeping me awake and waking me up."

INABILITY TO EXERCISE IS WORSENING MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH FOR MANY

- Many people felt that being unable to exercise as they normally would was negatively affecting both their physical and mental wellbeing, with respondents linking the restrictions to weight gain, reduced fitness, increased anxiety, distress and lower mood.
- Many said the tag prevents them from taking part in their usual forms of exercise, including gym workouts, running, walking and swimming, leaving them less active than they would normally be.
- A substantial number of respondents highlighted the impact of the tag not being waterproof, explaining that being unable to swim or take part in water-based activities has reduced their opportunities to stay active and manage existing health conditions.
- A smaller group focused on the physical discomfort of the tag itself, saying its size, bulk and pressure on the ankle can cause soreness and make walking more difficult.

"[Tag impacting my] ADHD as I am unable to release if I have too much adrenaline or energy."

"Due to not being able to do the sports I normally do with the tag, it is affecting all aspects of my mental and physical health."

"[The tag is impacting my] mental health, I need to go for walks or alone time but I'm confined to a house at night, my crimes are not night related, night stroll could lower anxiety."

"I have put on weight and have medical problems due to having no exercise."

"I am asthmatic and having the tag restricts me from doing any exercise and is sore on my ankle even when I am walking."

"Horrible because off the weight I have gained from my alcohol tag not being water proof and not being able to exercise."

"It has caused me to feel distressed and prevented me from doing the things I enjoyed before like going to the gym, walking and swimming which now has made my mental health worse feeling depressed most days."

"Can't go swimming, aqua park or anything water related. Can't run in the gym on running machines either."

CASE STUDY 5: 45–64-YEAR-OLD WHITE BRITISH MAN

- **Liam** (pseudonym) has an alcohol tag and a GPS tag (exclusion zone) which were both installed after he was released from prison.
- He was not prepared for the tags. While he knew tagging was a possibility, he was not told he would be fitted with tags until they were installed.
- Liam said that the purpose of the tags were explained after they were fitted, but expressed concerns about the reliability of the monitoring system after discovering that one of his tags had reportedly not been recording correctly for several months.
- He felt that communication and monitoring processes could be improved. He suggested that regular updates or feedback on compliance would help people understand whether the equipment was working correctly and whether they were meeting their conditions.
- Liam said the tags caused pain, swelling and circulation problems, which affected his mobility and daily life. As someone with diabetes, he felt his health concerns were not taken seriously enough and that there should be more medical input for people with existing health conditions.
- Overall, Liam viewed electronic monitoring negatively. He felt it had contributed to physical health problems, reduced his mobility and fitness (e.g., swimming), and added stress to an already challenging period following release.

“... I was driven all the way down from [prison] to [city]. It took four and a half hours to get here. I got to uh probation office, walked in the door, they give me a breathalyser, and he stuck the tags on straight away. I don't think there was any preparation whatsoever.

He [PO] said, "Well, you know, you could end up going back to prison." I said, But what for what? I've got diabetes. You knew I had diabetes before you put the tag on. You've stopped the circulation down my left leg and down my right leg ... if I'm standing on my feet too long or walking around too long, that's it. It swells.

... alcohol tag is very very tight. ... And they put it on your foot, it either depends how thick your feet are or your ankle, but mine was on the last notch. Um So, you're going to get excruciating pain whether you like it or not. And a lot of people have ended up getting um uh viruses and sores, and I was lucky I didn't.

... you can't put your feet in the water. You can stand in the shower. Yeah. If you submerge that tag, that's a breach. So, um you can't go to saunas, you can't, all these things you cannot do. So you can't swim, your tag will become uh how would you say that, it'll switch itself off. You know?”



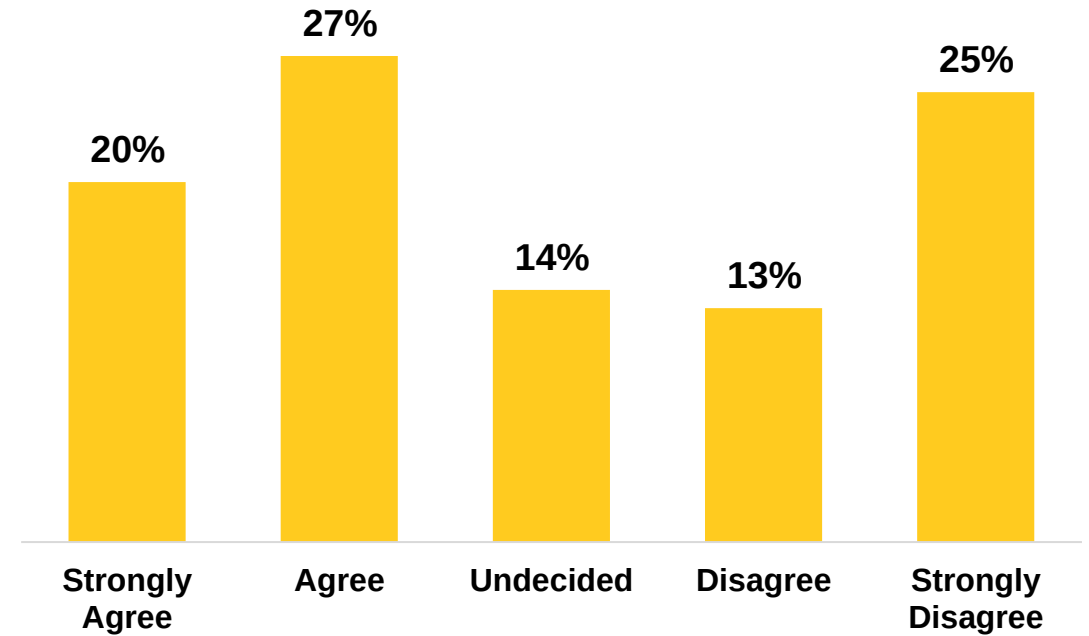
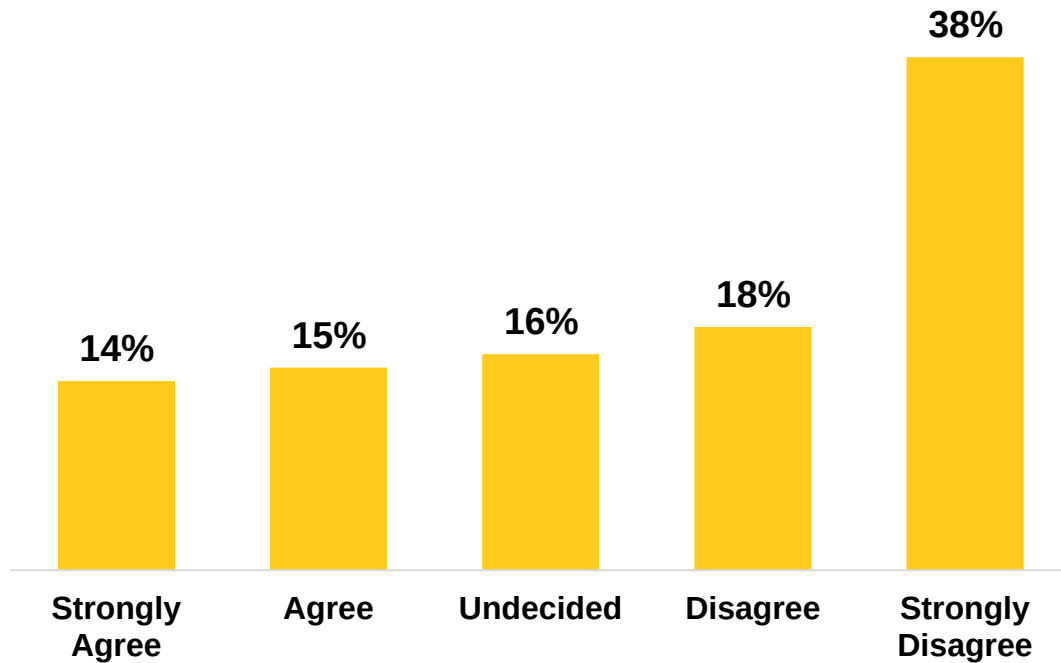
FAMILY*

*Some charts may total to under or over 100% due to rounding.

MORE THAN HALF DISAGREE THEIR TAG IS HELPING THEM TO REBUILT FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

Q: 'My tag is helping me to rebuild relationships with my family.'

Q: 'My tag does not interfere with my caring responsibilities.'



TAGS MAKE FAMILY LIFE HARDER FOR MANY PEOPLE

- Many people felt that tagging conditions, particularly curfews and exclusion zones, reduced the time they could spend with family, making it harder to attend family events, visit relatives, take part in celebrations, and maintain everyday family relationships.
- A large number of people said the tag affected their ability to parent or spend time with their children, including taking part in activities, sports and childcare, while some felt restricted in where they could go with their children.
- Several people described feeling embarrassed or uncomfortable about family members, friends or children seeing the tag, leading some to hide it, avoid certain situations or have difficult conversations about what it was.
- For some, tagging placed strain on family life and wellbeing by increasing stress, anxiety and practical difficulties. However, others said their families were understanding and supportive, and some felt alcohol monitoring had improved family relationships by helping them stop drinking.

"I can't see family, limited to where I can go."

"I feel like this tag has done nothing but hold me back from progressing at the speed that I was naturally progressing at, it's held me back from playing with my daughter in ways I would normally on soft plays/parks etc. ..."

"I asked my probation officer to change my tag time as I am currently on a 7am-7pm curfew and she has said to me that she can't do that. This is also having a massive impact on my mental health. I have a child that I have to attend to that lives in [city] and these timings make it impossible for me to be able to do this"

"As for the exclusion zone, the whole of borough, is an absolute joke, it means also when I'm trying to see my kids I have to go like double the miles just to see them, these are not helping me, just setting me up to fail, its wearing me out, constantly worrying about this when I should be concentrating on getting my life bk on track."

"The tag just restricts you from doing stuff with your family such as family/birthday meals and can't take son to football training and he is missing out on being part of a football team."

"I wasn't allowed tag at my home address and being a main carer to my kids I'm having to travel constantly with my children in taxis to go to my address."

"Also meant I could not pick my children up or go to doctors."

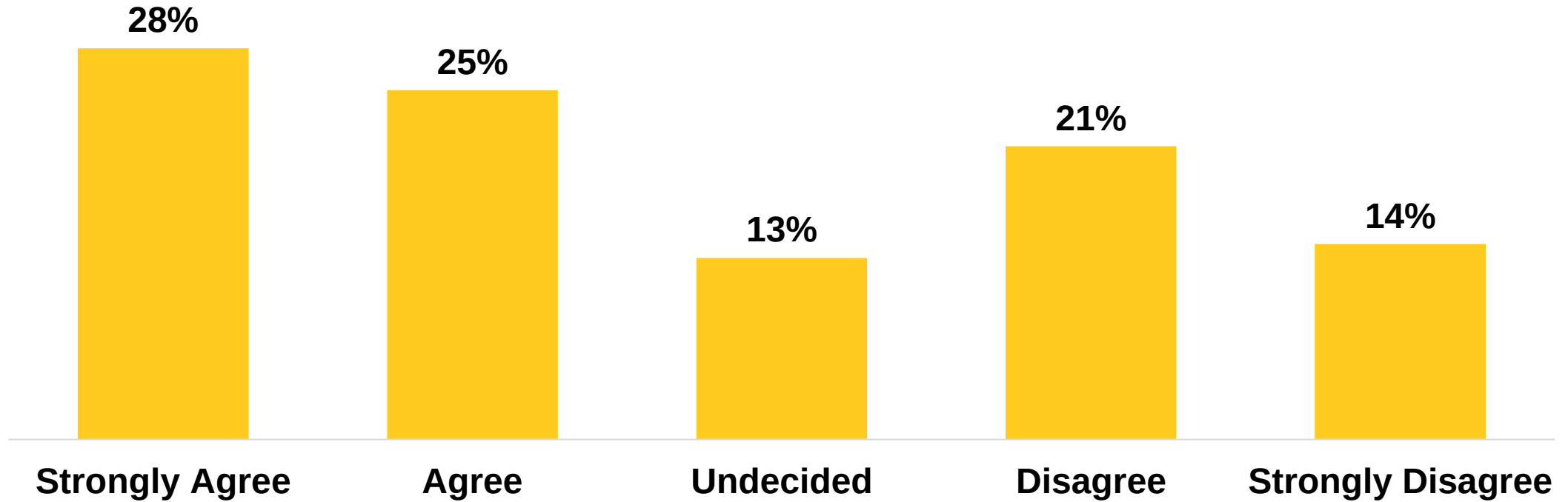


STIGMA*

*Some charts may total to under or over 100% due to rounding.

OVER HALF AVOID GOING OUT BECAUSE THEY ARE ASHAMED OF THEIR TAG

Q: 'I avoid going out because I'm ashamed of my tag.'



MANY WORRY ABOUT BEING JUDGED BY PEOPLE

- Many people described feeling embarrassed, self-conscious or uncomfortable about wearing a tag in public because they feared being judged by others.
- A common concern was that people would make assumptions about them based on the tag, regardless of their offence, circumstances or progress since conviction.
- Several people said that having a tag made them feel less safe in public and increased feelings of anxiety.
- Some people said these concerns led them to avoid certain social situations, reduce contact with friends or be more cautious in public settings.
- However, others said wearing a tag had little or no impact on their social lives or confidence.

"I would avoid seeing some friends because of the tag, yes."

"People hide, you know what I mean. And someone who's got a tag is a dangerous, is a criminal, and blah blah. Doesn't matter what he's done and doesn't matter how changed his life. That's why I try hiding. And that's why sometimes I'm feeling not comfortable and even unsafe."

"No, apart, like I said, apart from I'm self-conscious that I'm, I've got tags on and I'm doing everything I can to make sure they're not visible, you know?"

"It just felt a fear of judgment from other people that I shouldn't be fearing from. I don't know why. It's like it's like a whole weird anxiety thing."

"No, you can hide it, but obviously it's not easy. Yeah, I did feel unsafe."

"Being in tag has severely affected my social abilities, and my mental health. ... The tag has set me back significantly. I feel that I have been branded with a physical mark of shame ..."

"Really terrifying, people in my building asked me a lot of times and giving bad look and criminalising me! I stopped going gym swim sauna and scared to walk into office spaces. As security is checking sometime."

MANY CHANGE THEIR CLOTHING AND BEHAVIOUR TO HIDE THEIR TAG

- Many people said they regularly adjusted their clothing to conceal the tag and avoid unwanted attention.
- Avoiding shorts was particularly common, with many choosing to wear jeans, tracksuit bottoms or longer clothing even in hot weather.
- Several people described taking extra care at family events, religious settings, schools and other community spaces to ensure the tag remained hidden.
- Concerns about the size and visibility of the tag meant some felt they constantly had to think about how they looked in public.
- For some, being able to conceal the tag reduced its day-to-day impact and allowed them to continue social activities without drawing attention.

"I went to a family function, and I had to wear Indian suits. I just had to make sure that it stayed covered the whole time that I was there. And that was it, really. Not unsafe, just uncomfortable, embarrassed more than anything else."

"I've got um a family member's birthday coming up, and yeah I'm pretty sure it's going to be hot on that day, and obviously, I'm going to wear I'm definitely going to wear a pair of jeans, even though it's going to be hot."

"It's embarrassing going where I live, it's look, a small village. It's embarrassing. You you have to wear baggy jeans because people are, 'Oh, he's got a tag on.' Yeah. You know, the size of it."

"No, I'm not avoiding anything. I've not changed what I wear. It's just I'm not wearing shorts a lot of people in the mosque that knows me, I have to be very careful. There were certain days that I wouldn't go, because my anxiety would come a little bit, from nowhere. So I don't want them to know, because it's none of their business ..."

"So I would say, yeah, of course, anxiety levels, like going to my children's school and things like that. Like I'm very I was very conscious of it being there and the fact that it needed to be hidden the whole time."

"No, it's fine. Absolutely fine. Just put a sock over it, and then it's a bit bulky, but yeah."



ALCOHOL TAGS

HAVING TO WEAR AN ALCOHOL TAG WAS A TURNING POINT FOR MANY

- **39%** of survey respondents had an alcohol tag. Of these, **71%** had a sobriety tag and **29%** had an alcohol monitoring tag.
- Alcohol tags helped many people achieve and maintain sobriety, often for the longest period of their lives, reducing cravings and acting as a turning point in helping them reflect on their drinking and build healthier lifestyles.
- People said they experienced improvements in wellbeing, including better mental and physical health, greater confidence, and a more positive outlook.
- The tag helped some people get their lives back on track by supporting positive routines, strengthening focus on work and family, and reducing alcohol-related offending.
- Some people said they had fewer arguments at home, positive feedback from loved ones, and savings from not buying alcohol.
- In fact, some valued the support and accountability provided by the tag that they had requested an extension.

"To be honest with you the tag has been amazing. I used to binge drink at weekends which used to get me into a lot of trouble which led me to have in the tag. I've been five months sober been difficult but it's been the best thing that's ever happened to me to have that gap with drink."

"It's helping me to stop thinking about alcohol and help build my life again."

"I actually asked for it to be extended it was due to come off 8 days ago but this is the only time I've ever not drunk alcohol, for months and I'm 52 years of age, if it wasn't for the tag I would be drinking daily and committing offenses to obtain alcohol."

"It has stopped me drinking for 10/11 weeks, which I have never done since the age of 13, I've been an alcoholic, besides prison this is the only thing that has helped me to abstain from alcohol, I have asked for it to be extended, for a while till I feel confident."

"In my wife's words. It's the best thing to happen. I've stopped drinking. Haven't had a drink for almost three months. Got 4 weeks left. I'm just starting to feel the benefits of no alcohol. I agree with my wife."

"It has completely stopped me from craving alcohol and I feel once off I will stay sober as can't stand the smell of beer or spirits now and saves me loads of money which I will use for holidays."

HOWEVER, ALCOHOL TAGS ARE TOO BIG AND UNCOMFORTABLE TO WEAR

- Many people found the tag uncomfortable, describing it as bulky, causing irritation or pain, and getting in the way of daily activities and work.
- Many recovering alcoholics said the tag acted as a constant reminder of alcohol, which some felt made it harder to manage cravings or protect their mental wellbeing.
- Several people raised concerns about the reliability of the tag, reporting false positive readings, allegations of tampering despite complying with conditions, and questioning whether the technology worked as intended.
- Some people felt the tag was embarrassing or stigmatising, particularly when they did not see themselves as having an alcohol problem.
- A number of people said the practicalities of wearing the tag were restrictive, making activities such as showering or certain types of work more difficult.

"The alcohol one is big and bulky often tripping me up at work going up and down the stairs and its uncomfortable with my work boots."

"It would of been easier having a diabetic patch which takes reading from blood than one on ankle as it limited a lot of things especially showering."

"It's also a regular reminder of alcohol, I notice it going off every half hour, and as a recovering alcoholic, this is not helpful."

"Having autism and it can affect my mh as well and being an alcoholic but sober so many years having the alcohol tag in a way makes u want to have a drink."

"My offence was 4 years ago, and I do not have a problem with alcohol. To me the only punishment is the embarrassment and the pain of the cheap plastic."

"I don't drink and they have said a few times I'm tampering with it and its just nonsense as I have no need to and wouldn't know how to, it's a bit demoralising when u know u haven't done anything wrong and its giving off false alert."

"I asked for it as I believed it would help me keep on track and prove to my loved ones who have stuck by me that I have abandoned drinking. However I've had false positives 5+ and I haven't drank any alcohol."

CASE STUDY 6: 45–54-YEAR-OLD WHITE BRITISH MAN

- **Andrew** (pseudonym) had an alcohol tag as a post custody licence condition, he was told before release that he would be fitted with it.
- He felt the alcohol tag was imposed because of perceived risk rather than his individual circumstances. He said the progress he had made in prison was not recognised.
- Andrew said the installation process as straightforward and said the tag was fitted shortly after arriving at approved premises.
- He found the tag physically uncomfortable and said it affected his sleep. He also reported developing a slight limp while wearing it.
- Andrew said the tag had a negative impact on his mental wellbeing. Living with PTSD, he said wearing a visible tag increased feeling of hypervigilance and made him feel less safe because he believed it marked him a criminal.
- Wearing the tag affected some everyday activities. He was particularly frustrated that he could not swim while wearing it, as he felt this was important for his wellbeing.
- While Andrew could see the value of alcohol monitoring for some people, he felt it offered few benefits for him. He said the tag acted as a constant reminder of past difficulties rather than supporting rehabilitation.
- He was happy that, as probation got to know him better and gained a better understanding of his situation, his alcohol tag was removed about a month earlier than planned.

"... despite being sober for the 3 years, uh and having quite a quite a journey with alcohol, uh and coming to terms with how I used to use it, there was just no interest to recognise what I'd been doing. So, it just felt like a very sort of risk-averse um approach that they took: "Right, well, we're going to put you on an alcohol tag for 6 months." Which um just baffled me, quite frankly.

I discussed with my probation officer, you're basically forcing me to walk around with this constant reminder that I used to use alcohol um to cope with life. I'm not doing that now, but the message that this thing that buzzes on my leg every 30 minutes is telling me is, "You have a problem with alcohol."

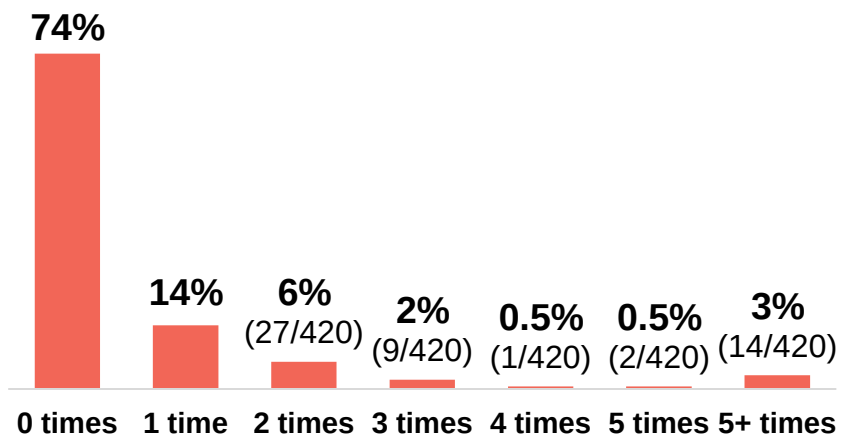
So, uh yeah, I mean, it it's definitely had impacts. I mean, I'm a pretty resilient person, but it did have impact on me. So, that was the most liberating thing of taking it off. It's not the fact that I could go and get drunk, it was a fact it was a case that, "Well, I don't look like somebody who's a threat to society."



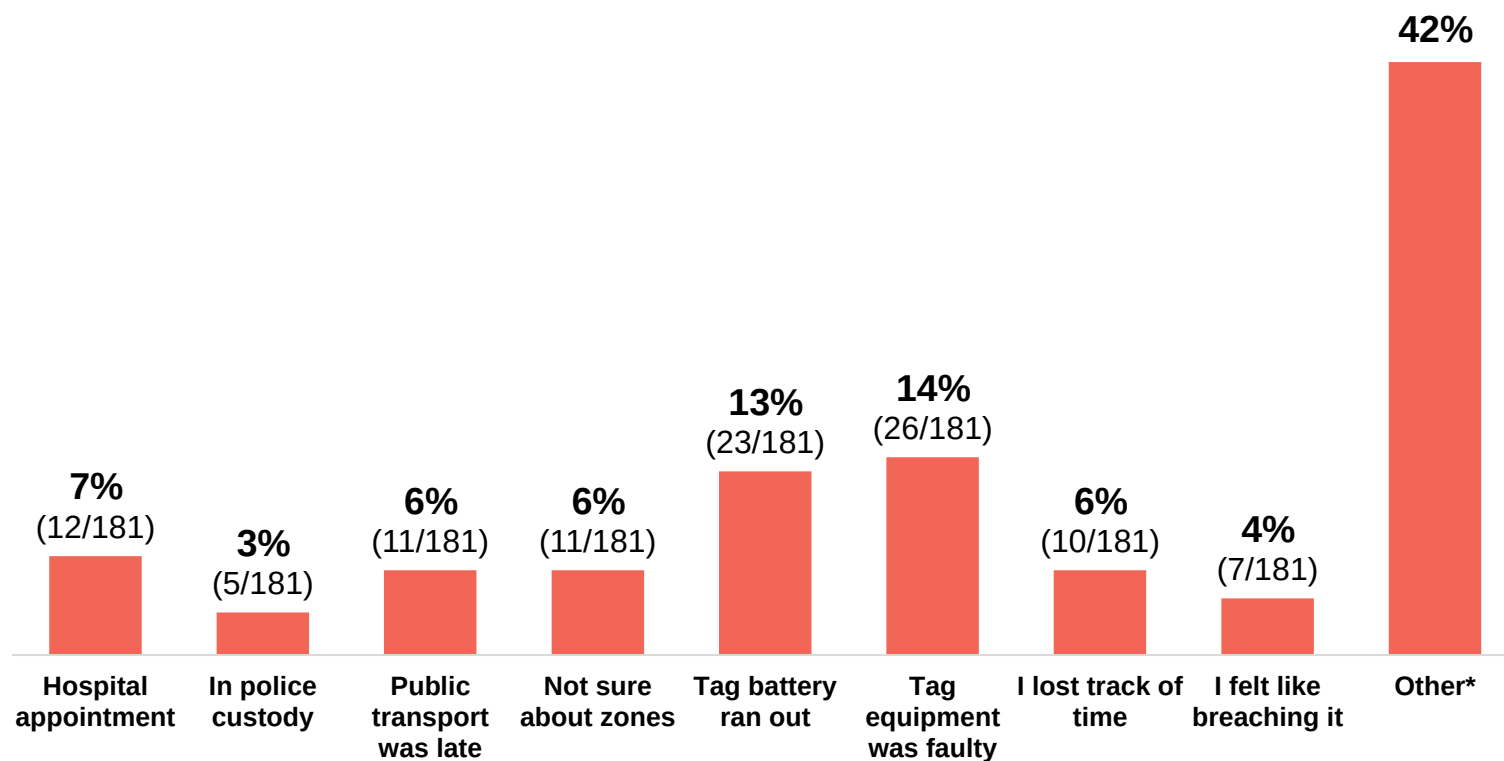
BREACH*

*Some charts may total to under or over 100% due to rounding.

Q: How many times have you breached your tag conditions?

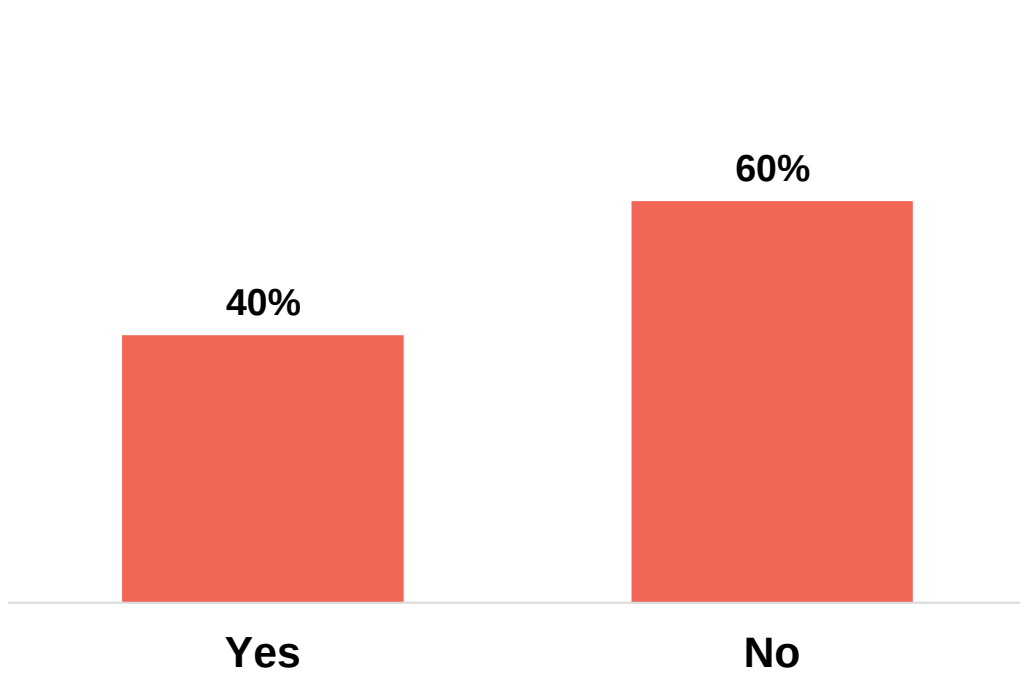


Q: What were the circumstances that made you breach your conditions?

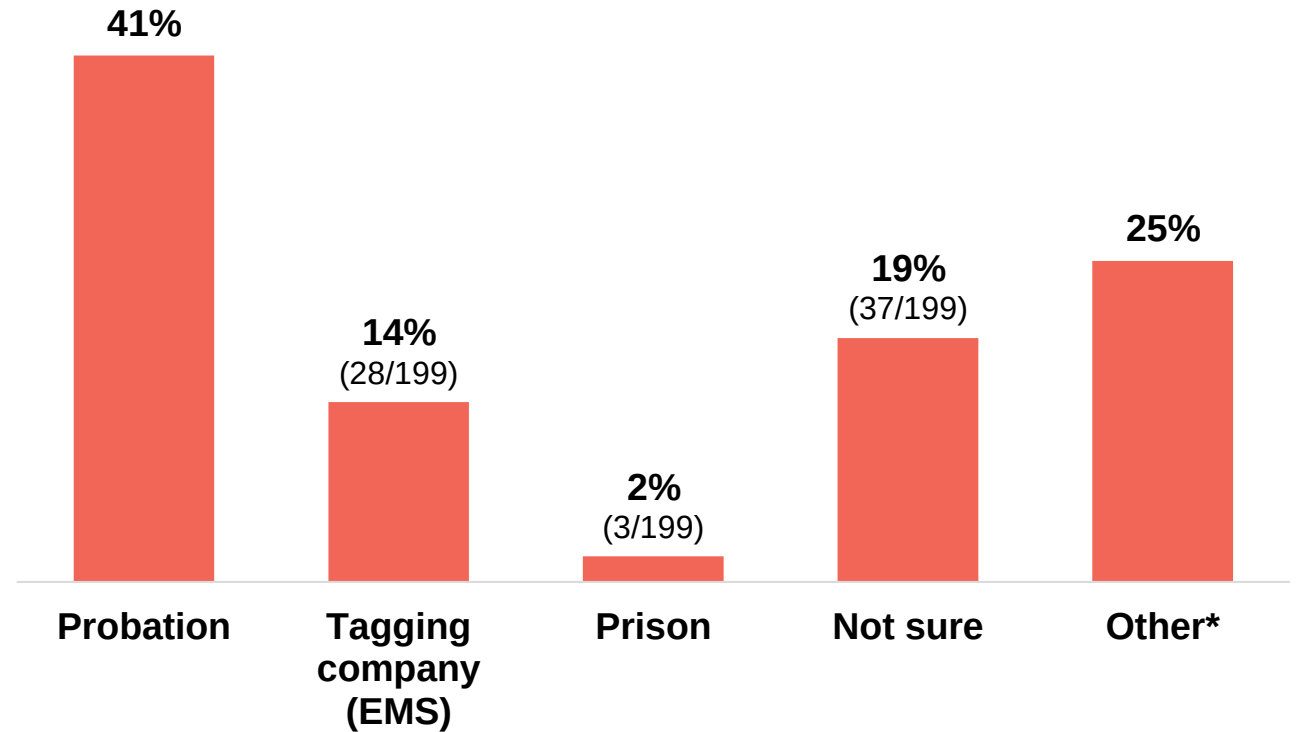


*Most respondents who selected 'Other' said they had not breached their conditions. The second most mentioned reason was alcohol consumption. Less frequently cited reasons included drinking alcohol-free beer, tag showing false positive reading on alcohol, changing address without the information being passed to the Electronic Monitoring Service (EMS), lack of communication between EMS and probation regarding changes to conditions, and work-related curfew breaches.

Q: Did anyone contact you about the breach?



Q: If yes, who contacted you about your breach?



*Other responses were either 'N/A' or 'I didn't breach'.

BREACHING TAG CONDITIONS DUE TO HEALTH, SUBSTANCE MISUSE OR WORK

- Health and wellbeing challenges were a common reason for breaches, with people mentioning physical and mental health difficulties, bereavement, and substance misuse issues. Some felt breaches could have been avoided if their personal circumstances had been better considered in the first place.
- Several people were breached following what they believed were false alcohol alerts, reporting that tags recorded alcohol consumption when they had not been drinking. A small number linked breaches to products they believed should not have triggered the tag, including alcohol-free beer and apple cider vinegar.
- Some respondents said they breached their conditions because of work commitments or other practical issues, including having to work later than expected and delivery driver-related issues.

"I suffer with cluster migraines, PTSD, anxiety, depression and often need medical attention What always ends up in being a breach even though I've provided hospital letter evidence. I've been on tag for 3 years."

"Had too much to drink."

"Drinking and entered an exclusion zone by mistake."

"False positives the tag has said I'm drinking when I have not drank any alcohol since I've had this tag on."

"Work as a delivery driver and somethings delivery circumstances cause timing issues."

"So I asked for tag myself it wasn't part my original license conditions I wanted it at time to improve my life but then after 6 month clean I was recalled for staying out nothing to do with alcohol and it was extended for six month so the tool I asked and used to better my life is now it's used against me."

"Tagging company or probation didn't take hearing problems into consideration when attending property to reset equipment resulting me getting recalled to prison due to my disability and lost everything all over again."

"Work shift overran."

BREACHING TAG CONDITIONS DUE TO TECHNICAL ISSUES OR MISCOMMUNICATION

- Communication issues were a common factor in breaches, with people mentioning unclear, inaccurate, or poorly communicated information about curfew times, licence conditions, and exclusion zones. Some said they had accidentally entered exclusion zones due to unclear guidance, poor-quality maps, or incorrect boundary information.
- Technical and operational problems played a role in many breaches, with people reporting faulty equipment, repeated alerts, unresolved maintenance issues, and difficulty reaching the tagging provider for support.
- Several people described being recalled following what they believed were administrative mistakes, such as inaccurate records or incorrect information provided by probation or monitoring staff.

"I also had an exclusion zone when I came out of prison, but the map I was given was on a blurred A4 piece of paper and was very hard to read. Because of that, I accidentally went into the exclusion zone, which triggered a breach."

"I had multiple breeches due to incorrect information provided by probation. One breech I was outside the exclusion zone."

"It's impossible to call the tagging company altogether... the tag box rings every half hour which is annoying ... I was one minute late and still got classed as a breach."

"Tag unaware of change to curfew for 2 weeks."

"Probation gave me incorrect information and exclusion zone is incorrect."

"Curfew times was not communicated with me properly."

"It was demeaning, I kept getting recalled by "mistake" then having my tag either extended or a curfew put in place."

"The people said that they came to my property to put my tag on but they didn't turn up & also apparently my tag died & don't know how."

EXPERIENCES OF BREACH

"What happened to me was that my tag became faulty and what it had done, when your tag gets to 20% and it's near dying, it vibrates and it also sends an automated message to the phone in your room, and then it's like because the phone it calls the phone, you answer and it's an automated message and it says, "This is EMS. Your battery is low, please charge it," right? Well, and this is what happened to me now. They put a tag on me, and when I was released from prison, I was really overweight. So, first thing I done was to get my diet right and that, start exercising. So, I lost, between when the tag was put on and the time when I got recalled, I've lost 50 lb. So keep that in mind, right? So, it's not as fitted as it used to be. But, it still vibrates. I still feel it if it vibrates, you know? It's on my ankle, for crying out loud. I can feel it, but when it got to 20%, the automated message stopped coming through. It stopped calling the phone. So, this is what's happened to me, this is how I got recalled, right?"

"... my probation saying that me to walk around with the box. Now, the EMS people say not to move the box. Now, what do I do, move the box, don't move the box? Like, are you is this absurd or what? Like, like this is what it's been the whole time. Yeah. A clash of two communication and breakdowns, like, where I have self-harmed because of these situations."

"I was told that I had a drink when I hadn't. And I know I hadn't, I was here, you know? I got a warning for that one. The tag people have said that I've threatened them when I haven't. ... My probation officer looked into it, realised that I haven't said a single word, that nobody was ever threatened, you know? But as a lifer, I could have gone back to jail for that. ... if my probation officer didn't believe me, I would have been recalled."

"Oh yeah, we can see that there's a bit of a fault with the wire.", they just replace the wire, but in the course of that, obviously, two breaches. It was explainable breaches, but you know, I was still put down two breaches."

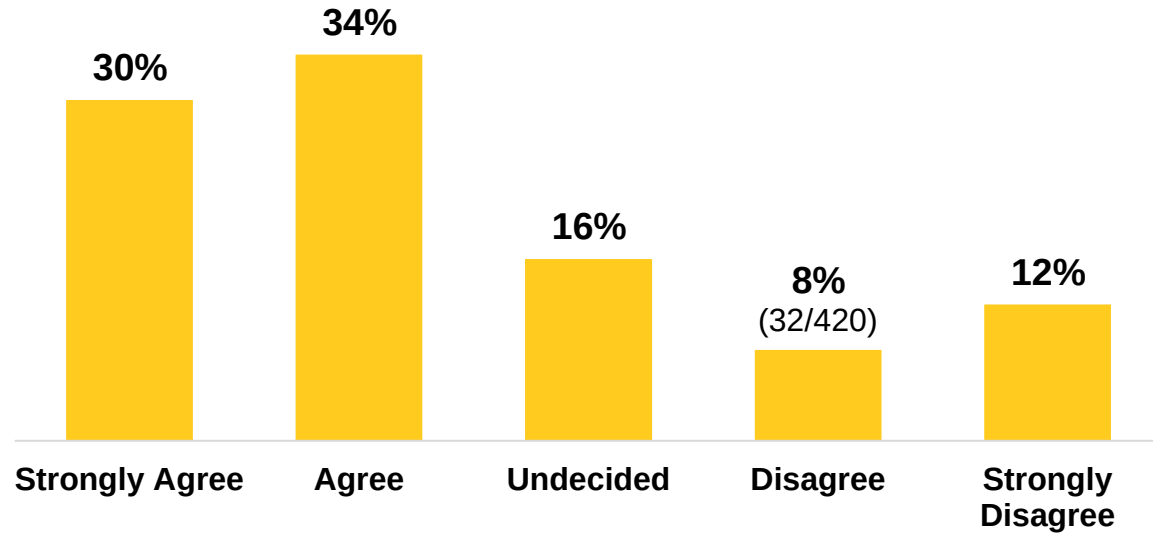
"... my probation's scrambling around trying to put a tag on my foot to my cousin's address where he lives with his missus and his kid, and it's down as his missus' address. But I'm a threat to a woman, apparently, and you want to tag me there? Like, just think of it logically, are you trying to set me up to fail, are you trying to help me, or are you just trying to cover your back?"



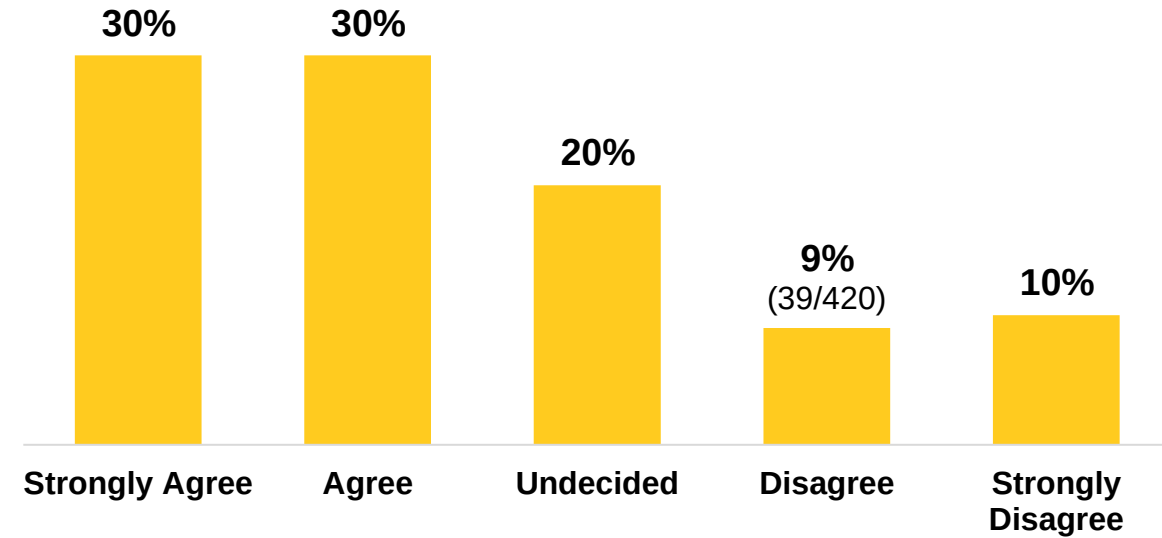
OVERALL PROBATION EXPERIENCE*

*Some charts may total to under or over 100% due to rounding.

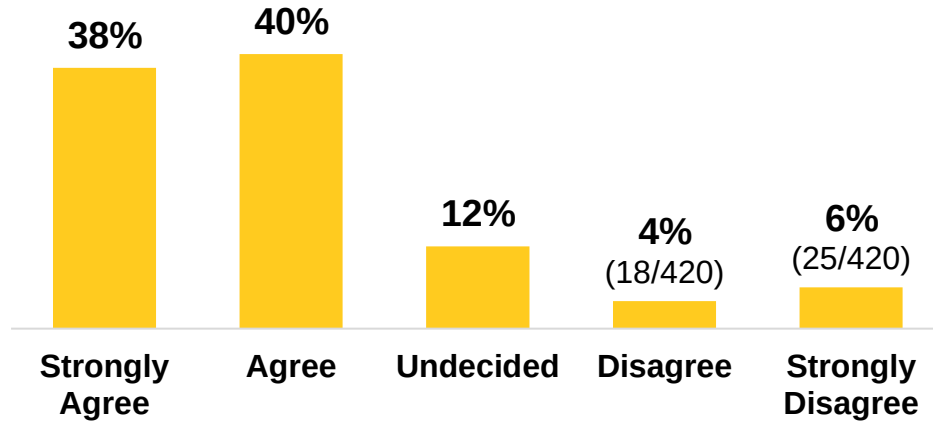
Q: 'Overall, I am happy with the support I receive from probation.'



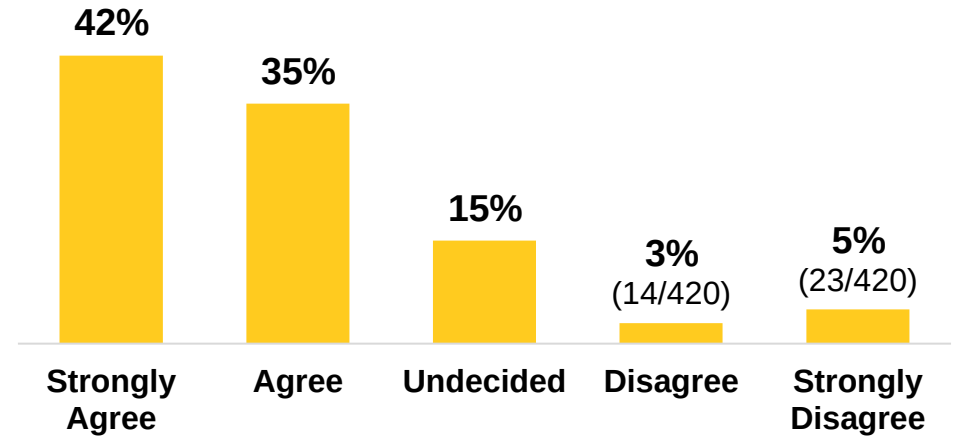
Q: 'Probation has helped me to access the services I need.'



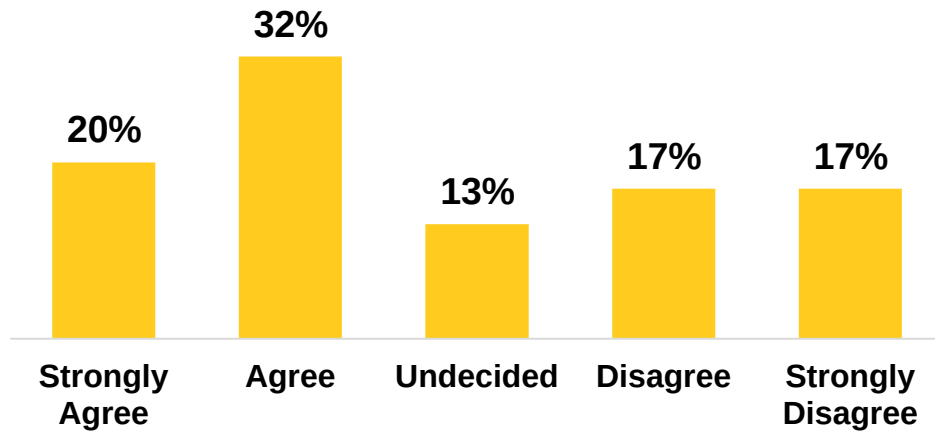
Q: 'I receive enough face-to-face support from my probation officer.'



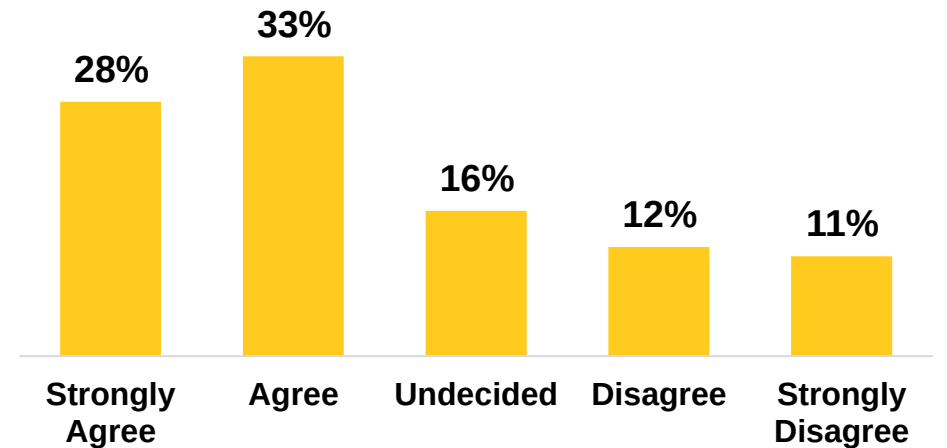
Q: 'I have a good relationship with my probation officer'.



Q: 'Probation has asked me about my experience of wearing a tag.'



Q: 'My probation appointments are useful.'





THE POSITIVES OF HAVING A TAG

TAGGING CAN SUPPORT POSITIVE CHANGE AND HELP PEOPLE STAY OUT OF TROUBLE

- Tags are viewed as a preferable alternative to custody, enabling people to remain in the community, maintain family relationships, and access support while serving their sentence.
- Tags can create a structure and routine through curfews and monitoring requirements, helping some individuals establish more stable daily habits.
- Tags can encourage behaviour change by helping people avoid trouble, think twice before making poor decisions, and stay on a "straight and narrow" path.
- Tags can support reductions in alcohol and drug use by limiting exposure to situations associated with substance use.
- Tags help people demonstrate that they are complying with their conditions and staying out of trouble.
- Tags offer reassurance through monitoring and communication processes, including notifications and checks that support compliance.
- For some, tags prompt reflection on past behaviour and motivates longer-term lifestyle changes and future goals.
- Tags support reintegration by helping people maintain employment, family responsibilities, and community ties while avoiding further custodial sentences.

"And it's made me think about my life. I need to change it so I'm a better man, and instead of being what I was doing, you know? And you know what, since I've been off tag, I've been the most happiest person. I can do what I want, go where I want, and not get in trouble."

"Stopped me drinking. Stopped me drinking. Tell a lie, I've had two pints at my mate's wedding. That was 6 months ago."

"... if anything happens in the town, like crime-wise, like my probation officer called me the other day and he said that there was an incident somewhere, and they looked at my tag and they could see that I was in the street, but I was nowhere near the crime that got committed. So in that in that way, yeah, it's like a good thing, do you know what I mean? Because it proves that I'm keeping myself out of trouble away from any criminal activity."

"Yeah, there's a benefit. I just stop drinking. Heavy drinking, stop heavy drinking."

"Yeah, as I said, like cos I used to be on the cocaine a lot, so I don't go out now, so it doesn't ... I've got no like—if I go out, and everyone's offering you this and that, wherever you go. I don't go to them places anymore. I've rescheduled my life around it, do you know what I mean? So, it's good, it suits me now."

"I think the positives is basically, it gives you a routine. That you need to be at home 7:00 to 7:00."

"I have learned more on the tag than I did in prison. It is showing me a better way and easier way of dealing with things and how to juggle my life around things."

"Makes me feel safe so when I go out won't get attacked or verbal abuse."

"It's a pain in the ass but it does help me not to re-offend."

"In short, it is a tool used to monitor my whereabouts. I now see it as something that is able to protect me."

"Great (moral and legal) proof of change. Happy to have it to prove I won't do anything so stupid and wrong ever again. Would honestly extend if I could because it is great for proving I am to change and am changing for the better!!!"

"I guess it's the ability to prove to probation and the court that I'm not a flight risk and that I will stick to my curfew and basically, it's a way that I can prove to the system that I'm trustworthy."

"The gps I don't mind as I had an incident and the tag showing my location would have helped to show where I was at the time."

"Wearing the tags have helped me to reconnect with my friends and family and my health condition have improve."



PEER-LED SOLUTIONS



THE ISSUE:

Many people felt anxious and stressed because they were uncertain about how long the tag battery would last and when it needed charging.

SUGGESTED PEER-LED SOLUTION:

Participants recommended adding a battery indicator or display so they can easily check how much battery they have left.

"What could help is an app to see how much power the battery has left so could check via phone."

"I just think, how shit is this tag on my ankle then, because they can't even afford to put a little screen on there that just tells you the little battery percentage?"



THE ISSUE:

Many people described tags as large, heavy, uncomfortable, and easy for others to notice. Some reported that wearing a tag caused significant health problems, particularly pain, swelling, and irritation in their legs, while others said it limited their ability to sleep, exercise, or even walk

SUGGESTED PEER-LED SOLUTION:

People suggested developing smaller, lighter, and more discreet devices that are less intrusive while still supporting effective monitoring.

"The tag is too big it constantly hurts my ankle. The tag itself and the clip on the other side are too big for long term use."

Can you make them smaller? Because I know people have watches that they pay for, you know, pay for things on their watches and they're tiny. So, I don't see why it needs to be so big. I still I think it can be completely out of sight, hidden, and a lot smaller, and I still think it would act as a deterrent.



THE ISSUE:

Many people experienced frustration and anxiety because of false alerts, technical problems, and concerns that the system could wrongly record a breach. These issues reduced confidence and trust in electronic monitoring.

SUGGESTED PEER-LED SOLUTION:

People recommended improving the reliability of monitoring equipment, providing better customer support, and ensuring that alerts are investigated fairly and thoroughly.

"I have had many difficulties with the tagging company not letting me know several times when they was coming to my property I'm currently at risk of breaching my license conditions due to the tagging battery been faulty."

"Someone I knew had to pay for private alcohol testing to prove that the tag is faulty something needs to change clearly not good enough."



THE ISSUE:

Many people said that poor communication and a lack of information about electronic monitoring caused uncertainty and stress. Some received very little information before being fitted with a tag, leaving them unsure about what to expect, how monitoring worked, and what rules they would need to follow.

SUGGESTED PEER-LED SOLUTION:

People felt that information about electronic monitoring should be provided earlier, before release and tag installation, to help them understand what to expect, how the tag works, and what rules and requirements they need to follow.

"They didn't [prepare me well for the tag]. It was ad hoc. Very random. Lack of communication. They just said we would be on tag, and everything that would take place in terms of the process of how it would be applied, it didn't happen in that way."



THE ISSUE:

Many people felt that curfews and monitoring conditions were too restrictive or difficult to fit around everyday life, especially when balancing work, family responsibilities, education, rehabilitation activities, or living at more than one address. Existing arrangements could make it harder to maintain important commitments and did not always reflect the realities of people's circumstances.

SUGGESTED PEER-LED SOLUTION:

People recommended introducing more flexible curfew arrangements and making it easier to adjust monitoring conditions when people's circumstances change. They also suggested alternative methods of monitoring compliance, such as address checks, police sign-ins, and arrangements that better reflect complex living situations.

"The negatives, obviously like a couple social things, if you did have a job and you finished late and there was a delay getting back, then there's obviously you'll be in breach for not being back on time."

"The restriction of the time for the family stuff. ... they didn't want to extend my hours or anything, so I wasn't going to keep arguing or try to get into a debate with them about it, and put my point across."

"These tags really need to be used in accordance to personal individual circumstances as they can do more harm than good which will cause people to breach conditions when the breach could Of been avoided by the individual actually being heard rather than just listened to."



THE ISSUE:

Many people felt that their tag conditions were rarely reviewed, even when they had followed all the rules and made positive progress.

SUGGESTED PEER-LED SOLUTION:

People suggested regular reviews of monitoring conditions, with progress, compliance, and reduced risk taken into account when deciding whether restrictions could be reduced or adjusted.

"What I found frustrating is that there seems to be very little recognition of progress or good behaviour. If somebody is fully complying, attending every appointment, reducing their risk, and doing everything asked of them, I think there should be some reward or incentive, such as the possibility of having restrictions reviewed properly and maybe removed early."



THE ISSUE:

Some people felt that monitoring ended before positive changes had become part of their normal routine.

SUGGESTED PEER-LED SOLUTION:

They suggested that longer periods of monitoring could help support lasting changes, particularly in relation to alcohol use and healthier lifestyles.

"... my life got a lot better when I went on the tag, and then I've come off and it's just gone back downhill again. I reckon if they would have gave me the maximum time you can have on that tag, that might have brought me away from drink completely."



THE ISSUE:

Some people felt that current monitoring technology focuses on alcohol use but does not monitor other substances.

SUGGESTED PEER-LED SOLUTION:

They suggested offering monitoring options that can detect drug use when this is appropriate for a person's circumstances.

"Uh well, I think they should make one for drugs. If they can if they can make one for alcohol, then they should be able to make one for drugs. And that should definitely be done."

ELECTRONIC MONITORING IN ENGLAND — SERVICE USER VOICE

AUGUST 2026