

USER VOICE

ONLY OFFENDERS CAN STOP RE-OFFENDING



HM Inspectorate
of Probation

CAPTURING THE VOICE OF PEOPLE ON PROBATION FOR THE HULL & EAST RIDING INSPECTION

PUBLISHED MARCH 2023

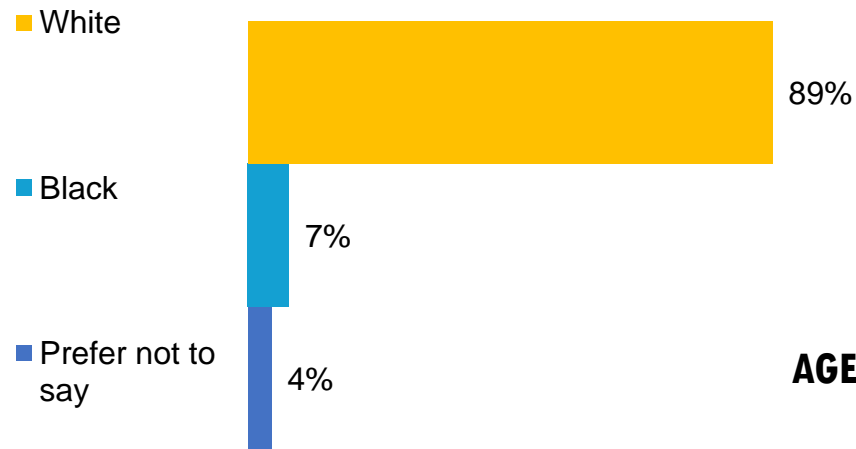
80 PEOPLE HAD THEIR SAY:

14 ONLINE SURVEYS

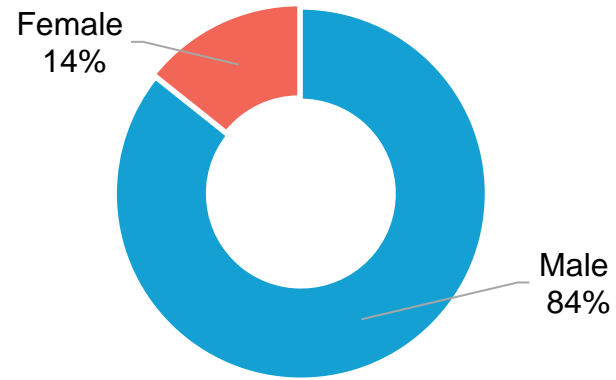
62 FACE TO FACE SURVEYS

4 IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

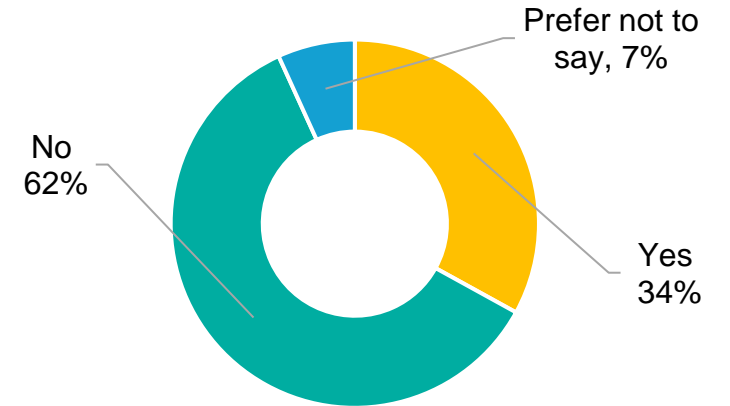
ETHNICITY



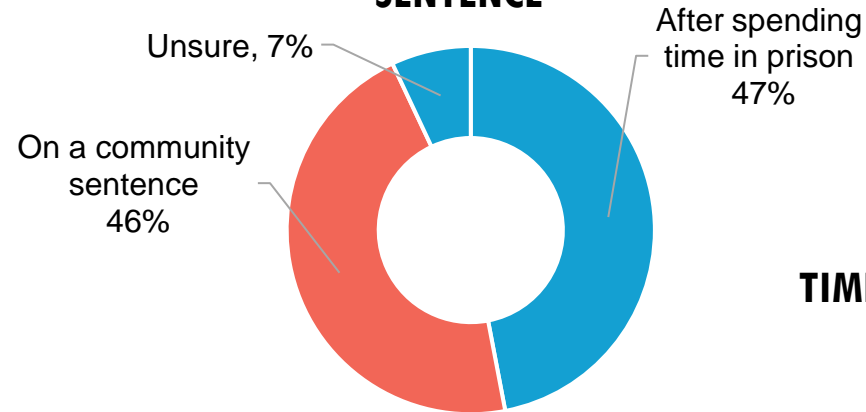
GENDER



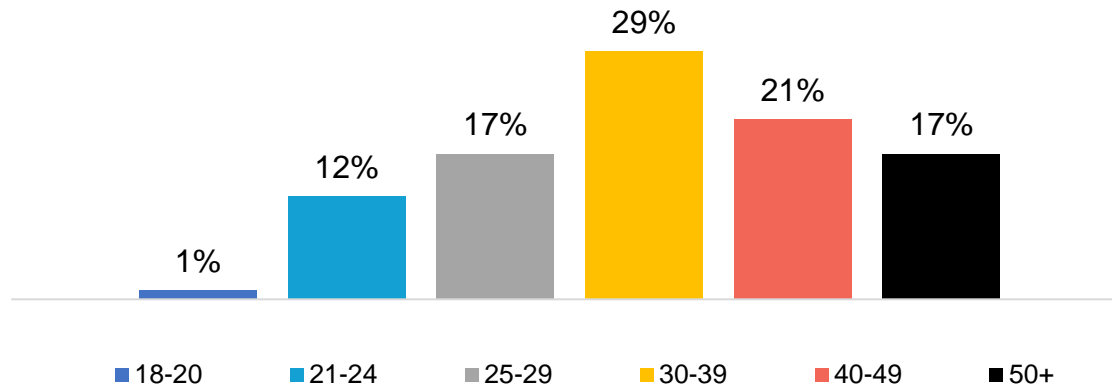
DISABILITY



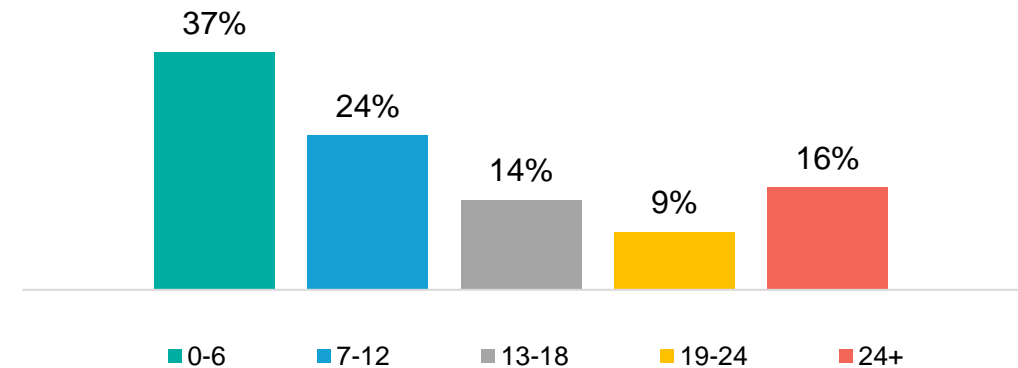
SENTENCE



AGE



TIME ON PROBATION (MONTHS)

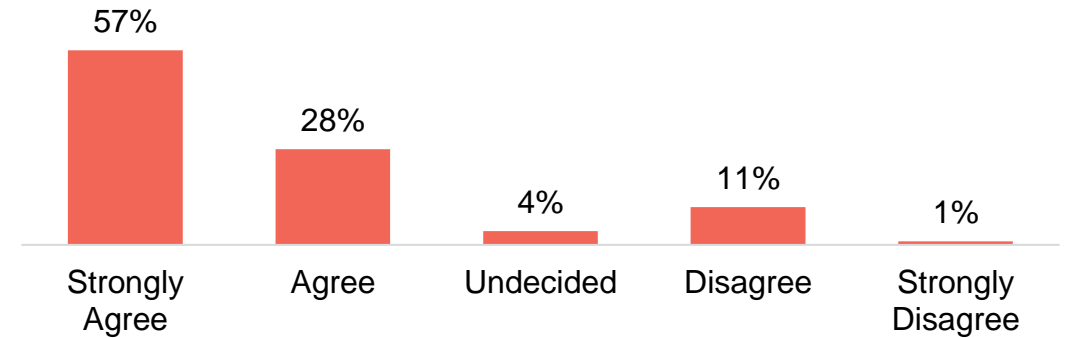


APPOINTMENTS WERE PEOPLE ON PROBATION'S BIGGEST ISSUE IN HULL & EAST RIDING

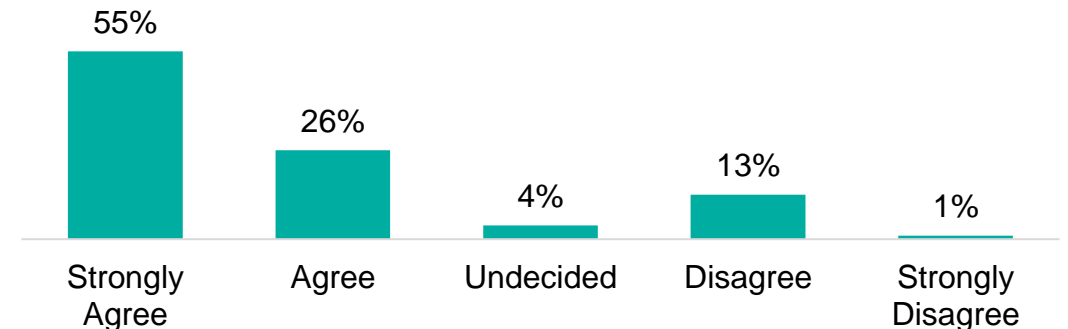
- **23%** (17/75) said that **'appointments'** are their biggest challenge during their probation experience – the most popular response for those with issues other than 'Nothing can be improved.' The most common causes of dissatisfaction were:
 - PO lateness to appointments.
 - A lack of support accessing services.
 - A lack of consideration for personal needs and circumstances.
 - Financial difficulties and having to pay for travel to get to appointments.
- **1 in 10** (8/76) stated that **'appointments'** are what has been good about their probation experience. This was for the following reasons:
 - Approachability.
 - Flexibility and willingness to adjust to one's needs and commitments.

"The time I have with my Probation Officer is very rushed, they seem to want me out of the door before I have got in."

Q: I have been able to contact my Probation Officer when needed



Q: I have been able to have appointments with my Probation Officer at a time that suits me



PEOPLE ON PROBATION'S VOICE REGARDING WHETHER OR NOT THEY GET WHAT THEY NEED FROM APPOINTMENTS

"I was homeless and in supported housing. During my probation period I got a flat which I am happily still in. I worked on my mental health & am currently having counseling as unfortunately it's an ongoing situation. I got clean from drink & substances also through being court ordered to attend services. With help from Renew (Hull) probation, Together Women & a big push from me, I remain clean today. Finally, just having the routine of appointments with probation and the other services I mentioned, helped me start to get my life on track."

"Getting the support was an issue but once I got it, no problems. Renew really helped."

"Would be good if they helped with this but I don't understand why we are expected to do unpaid work when we need to eat too, why not help get people paid work? That would really help change people, right? I don't believe they are there to help, this should be the focus of appointments. They are there to get paid and get paid off people like me. Middle class living off the lower comes to mind, so when can we have a paid job?"

"My Probation Officer is as good as gold. I am six and a half months sober now and my life is good. Probation helped me get the support in the first place so I can't fault them. If I need anything they will help me."

"It seems like my four officers over the two years just wanted me to fail as they made me come into the office every week for two years. They did me no good whatsoever even though they talked a good game about back to work courses they only started putting me in touch with people in the last six weeks and absolutely nothing happened, just cancellation after cancellation!!!"

Every appointment was a waste of my time and their time, asking pathetic questions unrelated to my offence and also if they cancelled or rescheduled, it wasn't a problem, but if I was late or rescheduled it, I get a warning. Plus, it costs me money and time every week as I'm a banned driver and in full-time work. Also, my personal officer rang, text, emailed my boss more than 3 times asking if I was OK. It's a good job my boss is a family friend or else I'd of been sacked."

PEOPLE IN HULL & EAST RIDING GENERALLY HAVE POSITIVE OPINIONS OF THEIR PROBATION OFFICER

- **39%** (30/76), cited the ‘**relationship with their Probation Officer**’ when asked ‘What has been good about your probation experience?’
- **All** of those interviewed discussed a positive experience with their Probation Officer.
- People often reflected on feeling well supported, being heard out, and being able to trust their Probation Officers.
- The **8%** (6/76) who had any issues with Probation Officers did so mostly due to the frequent changing of POs and instances of miscommunication on their order/license.

“My Probation Officer is a good chap. I feel like I can trust him. This is my first time on probation, he has explained my order to me properly.”

“My Probation Officer has been really supportive to me. I feel like he cares about me and I don't feel judged at all. I think it's important that I trust him as it means I can open up a bit more.”

“Changing my officer and having to explain things again doesn't help at all. They don't bother reading the notes.”

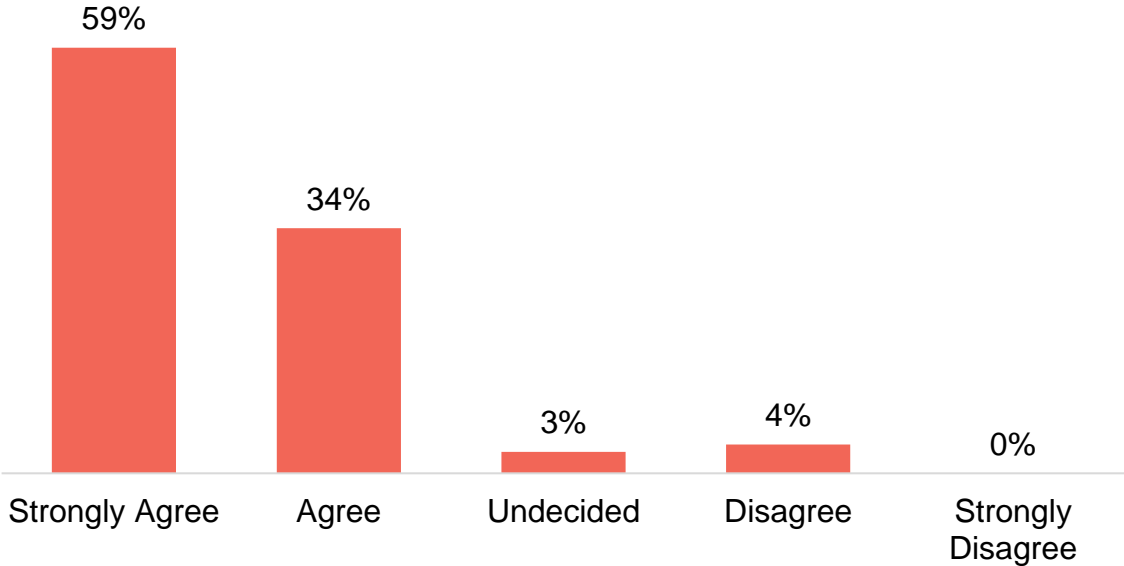
“The staff are very caring and supportive, and they listen to you. They are always willing to help and to sort out support to help.”

“The probation office keeps making me attend things that breach my restraining order and gets me recalled.”

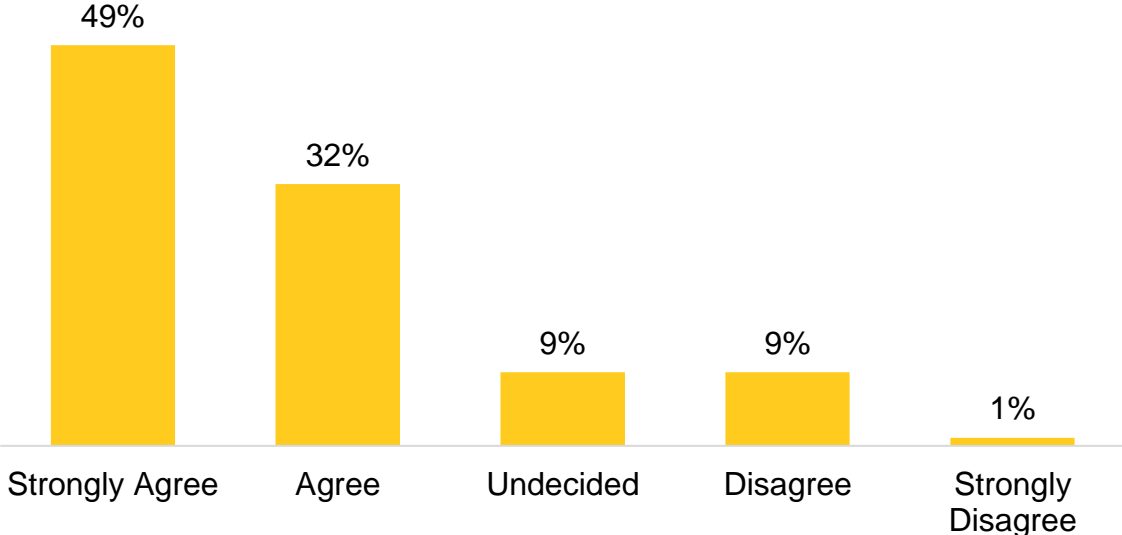
“My officer tried to breach me after sending appointments to a 10-year-old phone number from last time I was on probation over sending a letter to my address. Quite a bad experience, just glad I didn't end up in jail as I have been waiting for an operation for ages.”

THE VAST MAJORITY OF PEOPLE IN & EAST RIDING FEEL SAFE WHEN ACCESSING THEIR LOCAL PROBATION OFFICE

Q: When needed, I have been able to have conversations in private with my Probation Officer



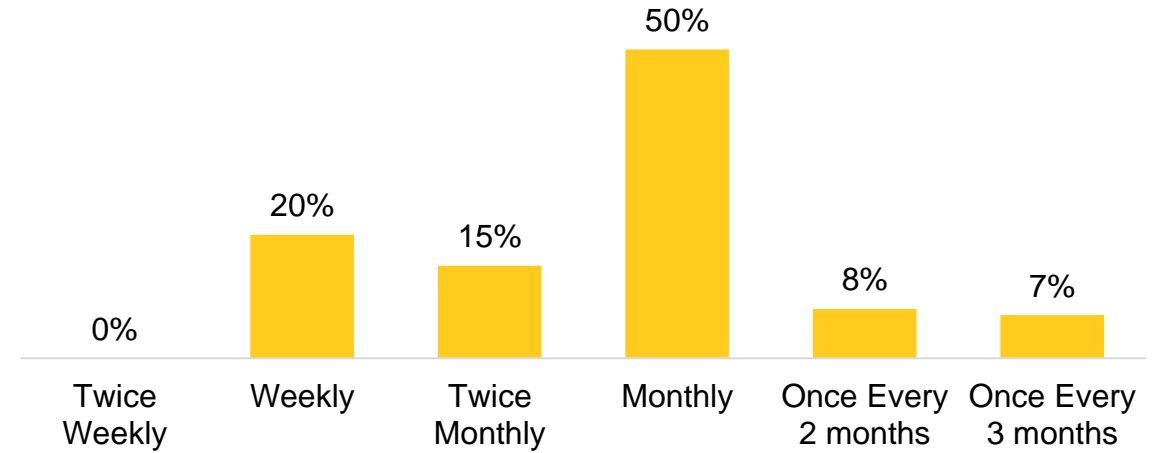
Q: I feel safe accessing the probation office



PEOPLE WANT AN APPROACH TAILORED TO THEIR INDIVIDUAL NEEDS

- **54%** of People on Probation mentioned that they want telephone contact and **53%** mentioned that they want to have appointments face-to-face. Many of which wanted a blend of both forms of contact.
- The frequency of contact wanted depends on the individual and their need for support. However, **half** (37/75) prefer monthly appointments.
- **9 of 10** People on Probation agreed that appointments, courses and/or support have been within a reasonable travelling distance.

Q: How often do you think you should see your Probation Officer?

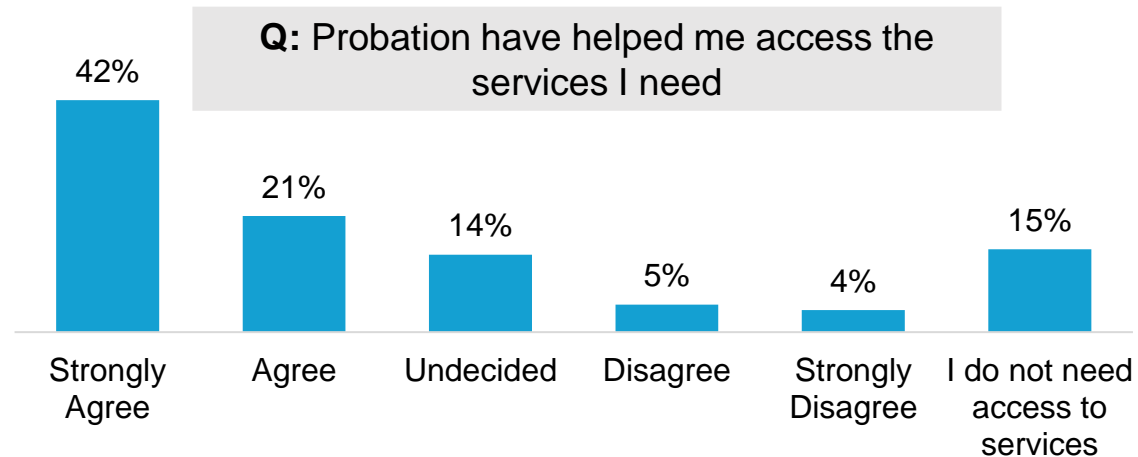


"I think a mixture of phone and face to face every couple of weeks or even monthly."

"Depends on circumstances but they should be more accommodating with each person needs as we're all different. One might be happy to do face to face but one might be too sick for example. I feel phone appointments are enough, then face to face if needing help with housing etc."

GOOD ACCESS TO VITAL SERVICES IN HULL & EAST RIDING

- Nearly **3/4** (48/66) of those that need support accessing services in Hull & East Riding feel that probation have helped them access it.
- Signposting for **substance misuse** and **mental health** support is effective and well appreciated in the area, however, a few wish they could have gained access to it sooner.
- **Housing** is high in demand and some people seem to be waiting long periods of time for accommodation.



"It has been good so far. I came out of prison 2 months ago, they have helped me find a place to live and helped me get my CSCS card, can't fault them."

"New skills and an employment programme was sorted out by my PO that's why I'm here today."


"I'm homeless and hopefully they're going to help me with that."

"Trying to get help with housing they are trying to help me but it's not good enough at the same time I am in a hostel and need help. They have been good to me in so many respects, but I need to get out of this hostel."

"Since being on probation they have helped me so much. Referred me to Ingeus who have been helping with my mental health for 12 months and it has gone so well they have put me forward for a peer mentor scheme so excited."

"They gave me a food parcel when I had nothing."

3 IN 4 FEEL SUPPORTED IN REGARD TO ACCESSING SERVICES RELEVANT TO THEIR PERSONAL NEEDS



**74% HAVE
BEEN ABLE TO
ACCESS
SERVICES
RELEVANT TO
THEIR
PERSONAL
NEEDS**



**75% HAVE BEEN
ABLE TO
ACCESS
SERVICES IN A
REASONABLE
TIME**



**75% HAVE BEEN
ABLE TO
ACCESS
SERVICES IN
THEIR LOCAL
AREA**

PEOPLE ON PROBATION STRUGGLE WITH TRAVEL COSTS IN HULL & EAST RIDING

- Travel was the biggest issue for **13%** (10/75) of those surveyed which is high compared to other regions.
- While only one person had an issue with travel because of distance, the rest found it financially burdensome.

"Travel is an issue, they don't reimburse my bus fares."

"Bus fares aren't reimbursed; I am on Universal Credit and it costs quite a bit to get here so I have to walk miles often as I can't afford the travel."

"Bus fares, I really struggle getting money to go to an appointment."

"Bus fares are an issue as with the living crisis, I just don't have the £4 fare to spare."

"Not having spare money to get to the women's centre. Tregund bus fares times are really hard."

INDUCTION EXPERIENCES MOSTLY POSITIVE IN HULL & EAST RIDING

- **3 in 4** interviewed People on Probation received an insightful induction where they were informed of probation processes and available help.
- **9%** (7/76) considered communication on order and license to be a part of their positive experience whilst on probation. However, **11%** (8/75) of experiences involved some issues with the clarity of their order.

"It was well presented, and I fully understood what was expected of me. I felt able to ask questions if not sure. The session wasn't rushed and full of jargon."

"It was OK, very informative. We went through my risk factors and my sentence plan and through available courses."

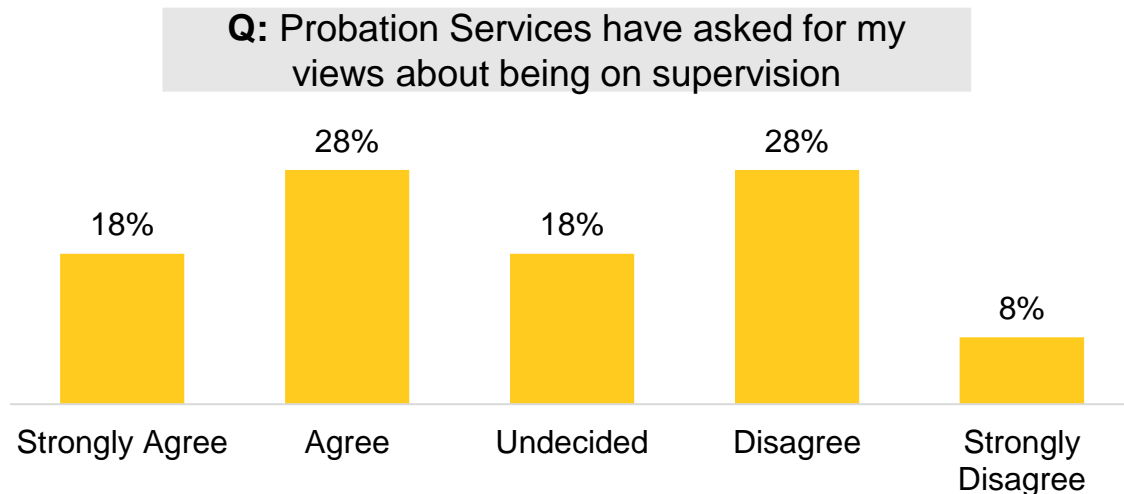
"It went very well, everything was explained fully, maybe a little too much information all at once though."

"My Probation Officer on release was full of false promises which was very stressful and if the SPO hadn't intervened, I don't know what would have happened."

"I'm on an alcohol order and I feel I am on the wrong order, but they won't change it."

JUST UNDER **HALF** PEOPLE ON PROBATION FEEL HEARD REGARDING THEIR SUPERVISION

- **46%** (35/76) of those surveyed felt like Probation Services had asked for their views about being on supervision. This is a relatively high percentage compared to recent inspections.
- All people interviewed were aware of EPOP program and felt able getting involved and discussing any challenges they have whilst on probation.
- **Half** of the people interviewed knew a pathway to making complaints.



“I am not aware of the complaints procedure but now you have mentioned it I will ask.”

“There is a complaints procedure which was explained but I have never had to use it.”

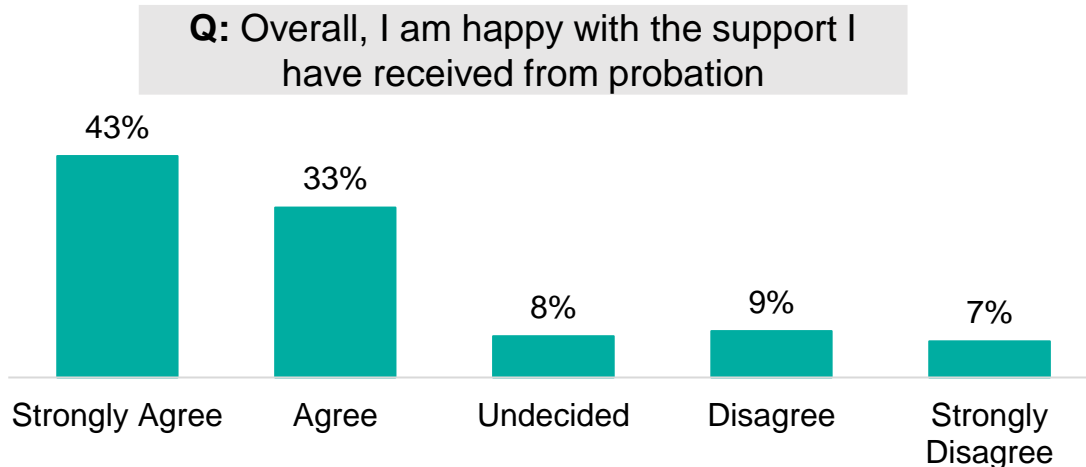
“I am currently involved in EPOP, I have been going since November and have had 2 meetings. Have been able to discuss things we would like to see changed and this has been received very well.”

“We do now since EPOP started around November 2022. We discuss issues and are able to raise them high up the ladder and they seem to listen which is very encouraging.”

“We have EPOP and its just started here. We are able to discuss in a group what the issues are from our own experiences of being and work on solutions. This is then fed back to management.”

76% ARE HAPPY WITH THE OVERALL SUPPORT THEY RECEIVE FROM PROBATION

- **45%** (34/75) answered ‘**nothing can be improved**’ when asked about the issues they had and what improvements they would like to see in probation.
- Whereas **26%** (20/76) stated that there were ‘**no positives**’ regarding their probation experience.
- Amongst other things, People on Probation appreciated effective signposting to Women’s Centre and Domestic Violence interventions.



“Going to the Women’s Centre which has helped me to develop my skills and confidence.”

“Being able to get the help I need for my drug addiction which has helped me, and they have supported me.”

“I had a domestic violence offence and probation helped me to understand my behaviour.”

“They have, I was signposted to mental health services fairly quickly and I am really thankful for that.”

“I have been supported in finding a new job and signposted to OFFPLOY by my Probation Officer. They revamped my CV and I obtained employment.”

PEOPLE ON PROBATION'S SOLUTIONS TO THE ISSUES THEY FACED

- People on Probation would like to receive travel reimbursements, especially those going through financial hardship.
- People on Probation want to reduce the waiting time for appointments and for their time in appointments to be used more efficiently.
- Continuity with their Probation Officers is imperative. Those experiencing revolving doors of Probation Officers struggle to get the help they need.
- Poorly understood and explained order/license can be a source of misunderstandings and frustration.
- People on Probation should have clarity regarding the complaint process.

"They should reimburse the full bus fare, especially during this cost-of-living crisis."

"Probation should refund all bus fares, so people do not get into trouble for not attending."

"More rooms or better appointment slots as I have to wait often to get a room. They seem to book everyone at the same time."

"Before you come out of prison maybe your PO could come and see you and explain your order to you a bit better, like how often do you have to come etc. as I didn't have a clue."

"Not to have all probation offices look like the inside of a police station. Interview rooms should be renamed Room 1, Room 2 etc. User led inductions."

"Keeping the same Probation Officer if possible throughout so you can build a relationship."

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