

**USER VOICE**

ONLY OFFENDERS CAN STOP RE-OFFENDING



HM Inspectorate  
of Probation

# **CAPTURING THE VOICE OF PEOPLE ON PROBATION FOR THE KIRKLEES INSPECTION**

**PUBLISHED MARCH 2023**

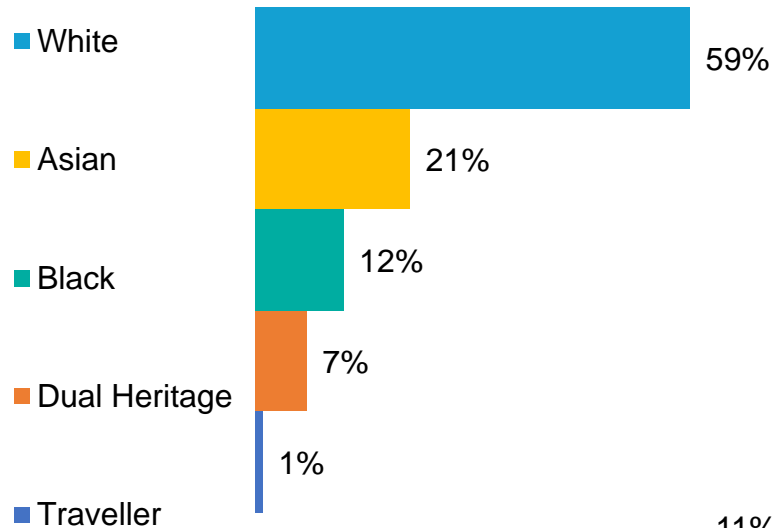
# 82 PEOPLE HAD THEIR SAY:

4 ONLINE SURVEYS

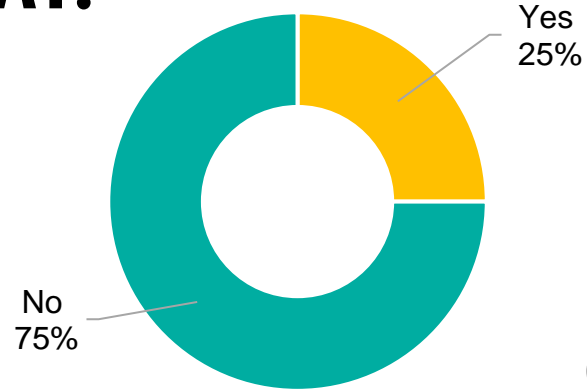
72 FACE TO FACE SURVEYS

6 IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

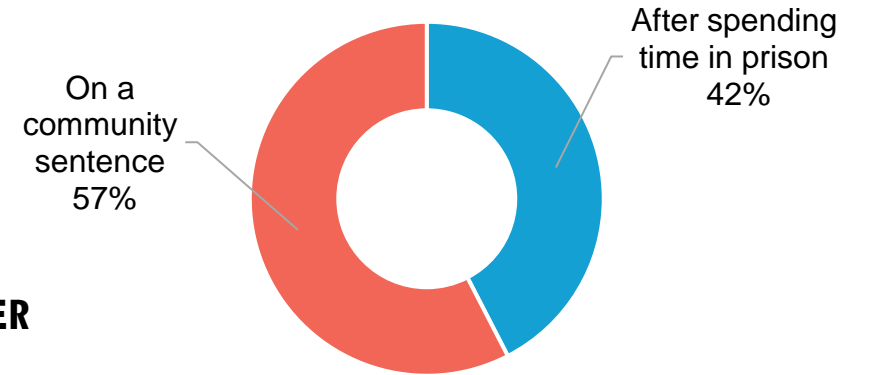
## ETHNICITY



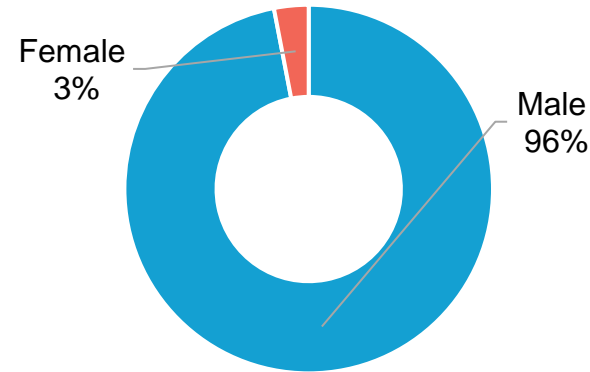
## DISABILITY



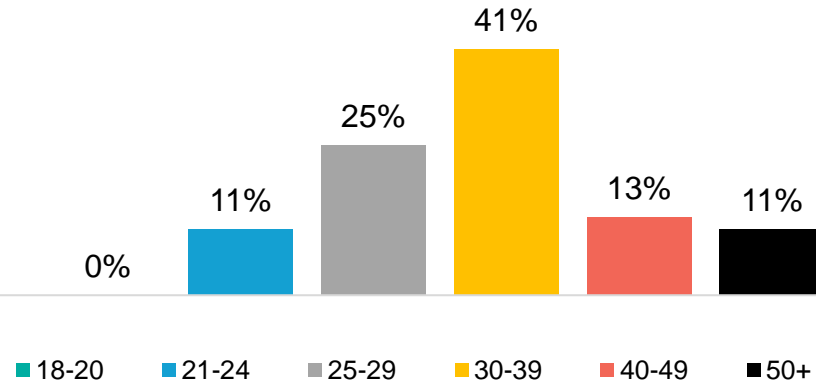
## SENTENCE



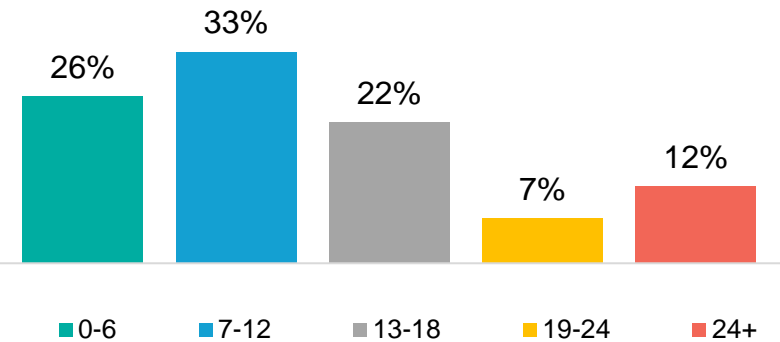
## GENDER



## AGE



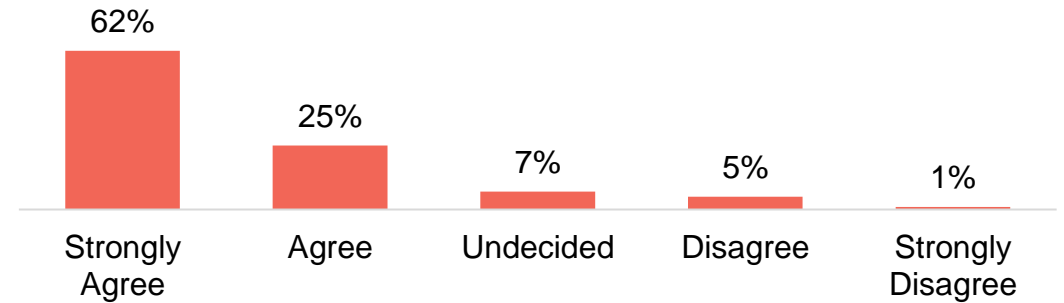
## TIME ON PROBATION (MONTHS)



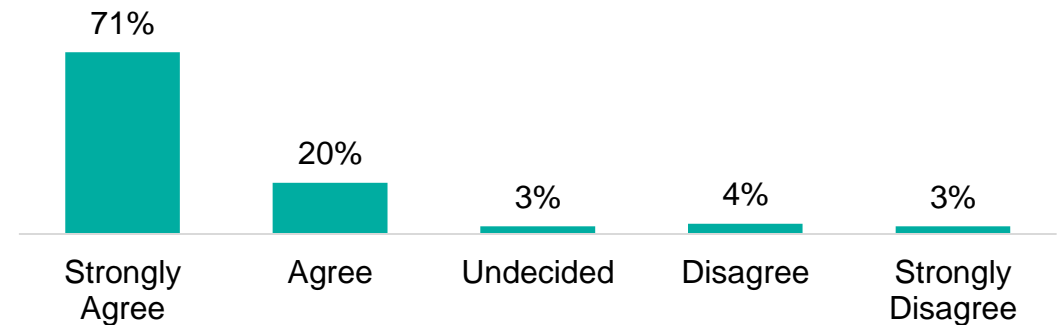
# APPOINTMENT EXPERIENCES VARY AMONG SERVICE USERS

- **9%** (7/75) reported '**Appointments**' as the biggest challenge whilst on probation, whereas **9%** (7/75) also reported it as what has been good regarding their probation experience. This was the second most popular response across both questions.
- The common issue of long waiting times for people on probation that has been seen in many probation regions, was not noted in the voice of People on Probation in Kirklees. Rather appointment punctuality and flexibility are noted and well appreciated.
- '**Reception**' was also among the most frequent positive responses. People mentioned the members of staff being helpful and kind.
- Those that had an issue with appointments, did so for the following reasons:
  - Failures in communication or difficulties contacting the probation office that result in frustration, distress and worsened Person on Probation – Probation Officer relations.
  - Few experience lack of flexibility and consideration to their needs and commitments.

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



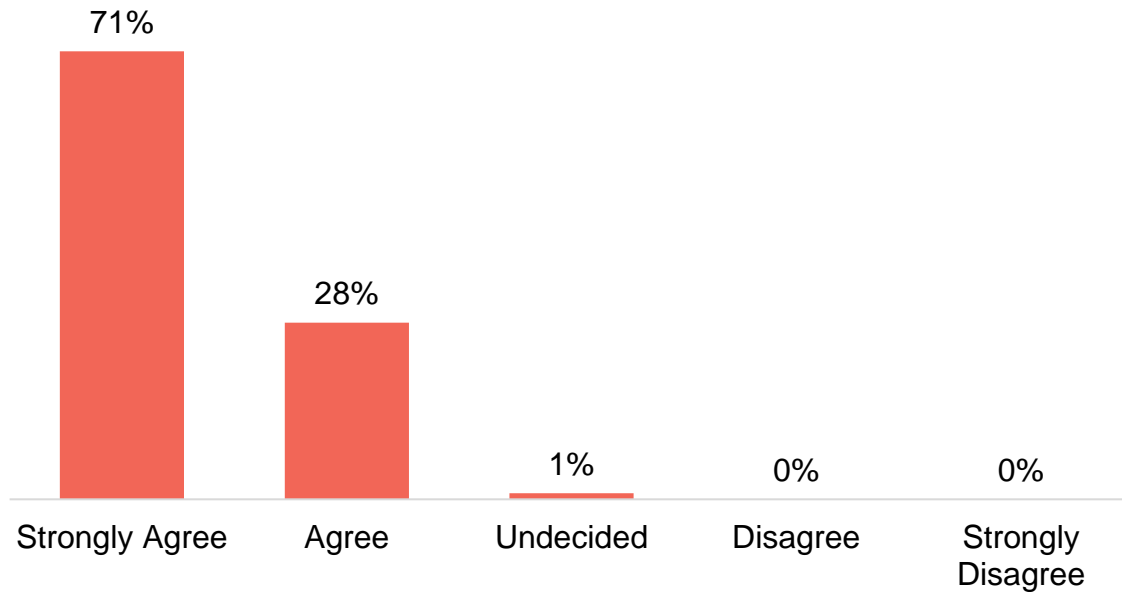
Q: I have been able to have appointments with my Probation Officer at a time that suits me



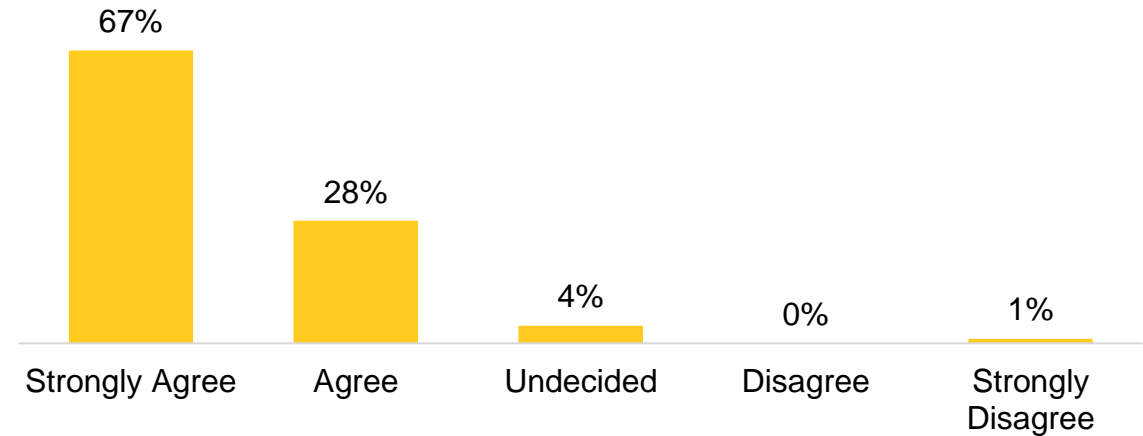
*"Yes, they (appointments) feel like a safe space for me so anytime I am there I can just talk about how my week has gone"*

# NEARLY EVERYONE FEEL SAFE ACCESSING THE OFFICE AND TRUST THEIR PROBATION OFFICER TO HAVE PRIVATE CONVERATIONS

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



Q: I feel safe accessing the probation office



# 1 IN 2 THINK THE RELATIONSHIP WITH THEIR PO IS THE BEST PART OF THEIR PROBATION EXPERIENCE

- In general, people in Kirklees have a positive experience with their Probation Officers.
- **51%** (39/76) of responses cited the 'relationship with their Probation Officer' when asked 'What has been good about your probation experience'. This was the most common positive aspect of probation experience in Kirklees.
- **8%** (6/75) see their relationship with their Probation Officer as their biggest challenge whilst on probation.
- Those who see it as a problem often do so because of frequently changing Probation Officers which they believe hinders their advancement.

*"My Probation Officer listens to me and we can talk about anything. I find it very therapeutic and even though I don't need any support I know it's available."*

*"Good Probation Officer, just keep me really well informed on things. She offered me to get onto a course but haven't started it yet."*

*"Just get on really well with my Probation Officer he's always listening to me always supportive and if I need anything he's always there."*

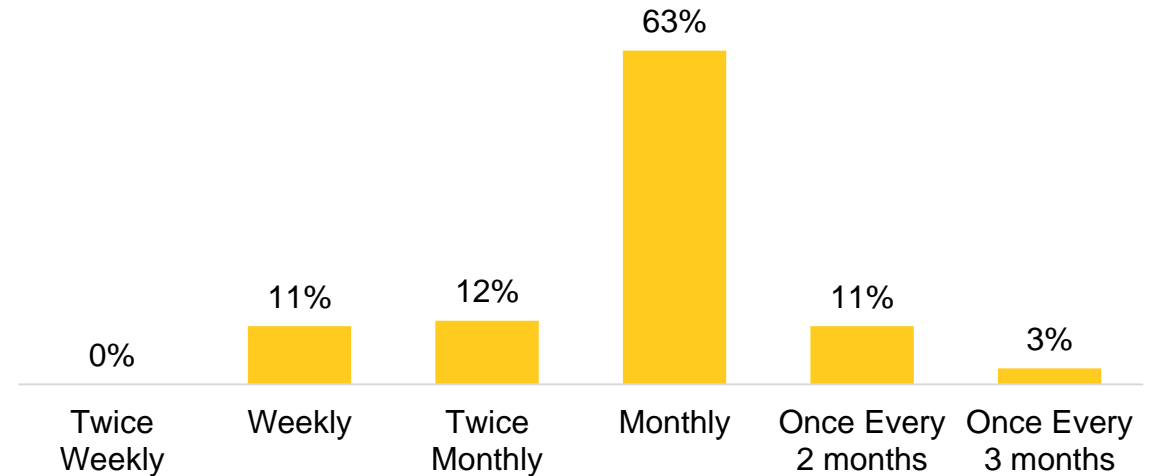
*"This time around I managed to keep the same Probation Officer. She listens and engages well with me, and she's offered and got me some support for my mental health."*

*"My Probation Officer has changed 4 times in the space of 2 months. It's really hard to build a rapport with them, they should at least do a handover. I also wanted to do some courses to make me a better person. My partner got onto some, but they haven't offered me any."*

# PEOPLE ON PROBATION WANT MONTHLY APPOINTMENTS

- The type of contact People On Probation want varies, with the slight majority preferring telephone contact over face-to-face contact.
- A tailored approach based on what works for both the Person On Probation and Probation Officer is recommended.
- **63%** (48/76) stated that they should see their Probation Officer monthly; by far the most popular answer to the question 'How often do you think you should see your Probation Officer?'

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



*“Monthly on the phone would be better, I don’t drive so sometimes coming to the office is an issue or difficult.”*

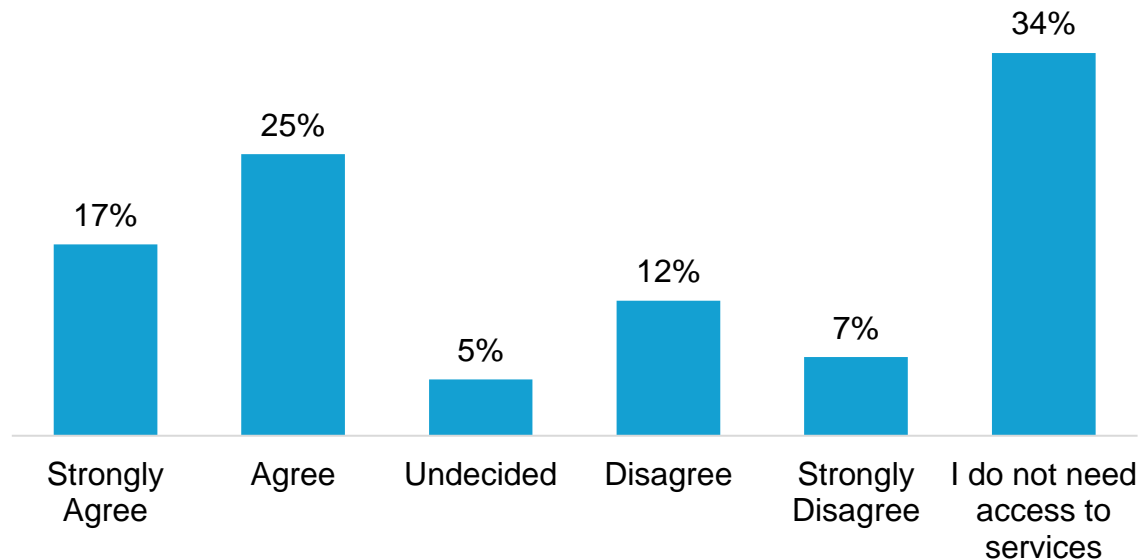
*“Alternate between phone and in person.”*

*“I am low risk and only need help with finances. A phone will suffice as visits are not necessarily needed. But I will comply with anything required of me.”*

# ACCESS TO THE SERVICES

- **3 in 5** (32/50) of those that need help accessing services felt like they received the support they needed.
- Experiences with housing and ETE vary among People On Probation. While many are happy with the support they have received, other feel like they have been left waiting for long periods of time.

Q: Probation have helped me access the services I need



*“Although probation got me a flat, it's not compatible with my health issues.”*


*“Probation Officers have been really accommodating and arranged unpaid work indoors for me. Probation Officers really kind to me and just wants to do anything that she can to help me. It's really good that they got alison.com which counts towards our hours.”*

*“I was waiting to get onto a work placement but it's taking ages to get onto one.”*

*I need more support for me drink and anxiety; I have had to get all the help myself.”*

*“Only things I've needed help with is housing which still hasn't been sorted 3 months post release. Any other issues are mistakes made by probation in my Oasys which are still waiting to be corrected.”*

# **3 IN 5 FELT SUPPORTED IN REGARD TO ACCESSING SERVICES RELEVANT TO THEIR PERSONAL NEEDS**



**58% HAVE  
BEEN ABLE TO  
ACCESS  
SERVICES  
RELEVANT TO  
THEIR  
PERSONAL  
NEEDS**



**60% HAVE BEEN  
ABLE TO  
ACCESS  
SERVICES IN A  
REASONABLE  
TIME**



**60% HAVE BEEN  
ABLE TO  
ACCESS  
SERVICES IN  
THEIR LOCAL  
AREA**

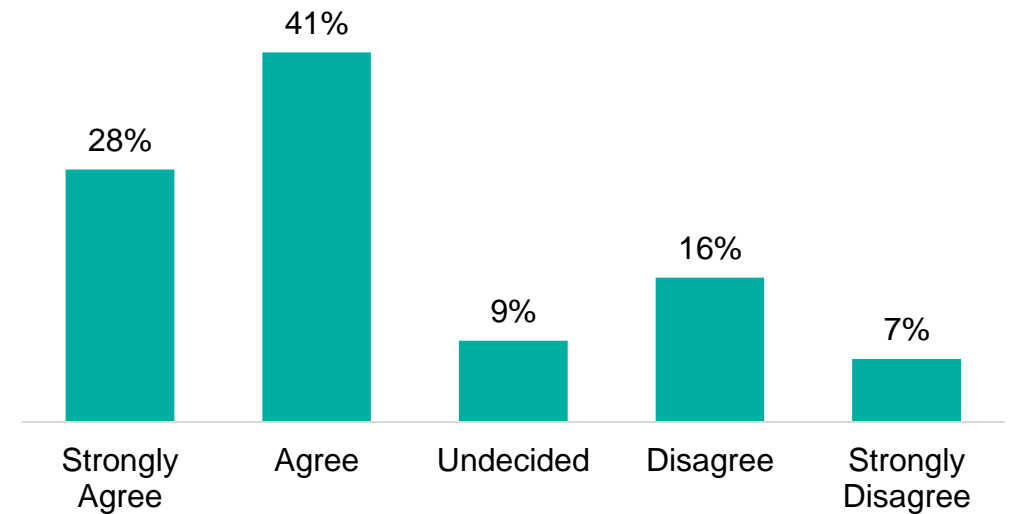


# TRAVEL WAS THE NUMBER ONE RESPONSE TO ‘WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED?’

- Travel was the biggest issue for **13%** (10/75) of those surveyed and stood out in the thematic analysis of the interview data.
- 1 in 5** feel the distance travelled to get to their supervision appointments is unreasonable.
- This is especially affecting people that:
  - Are redirected from the Dewsbury PDU hub.
  - Have mobility requirements
  - Suffer from financial problems.
- However, **2 in 3** are able to access services that are relevant to their personal needs in their local area.

*“The Dewsbury office is closed as well so at the minute I'm travelling 10 miles, it's just too much for me.”*

**Q:** The location of my supervision appointments, courses or support have been within reasonable travelling distance



# INDUCTION EXPERIENCES CAN BE DAUNTING FOR PEOPLE ON PROBATION

- Some People On Probation received an insightful induction where they were informed of probation processes and available help. Whereas others found the experience daunting or lacked purpose.
- The induction is often an overwhelming experience for People On Probation, especially when they have just been released after a long prison sentences.

*"It was really confusing, no one really knew what was going on and I ended up being left waiting for ages. I was told what I had to do each week etc. but felt a bit daunting."*

*"My induction was okay but the person I met on that day wasn't even my Probation Worker so I felt my next appointment was like starting over."*

*"I found it really intimidating and I didn't like it one bit, if it wasn't for my social worker coming with me I wouldn't have coped during that part of it."*

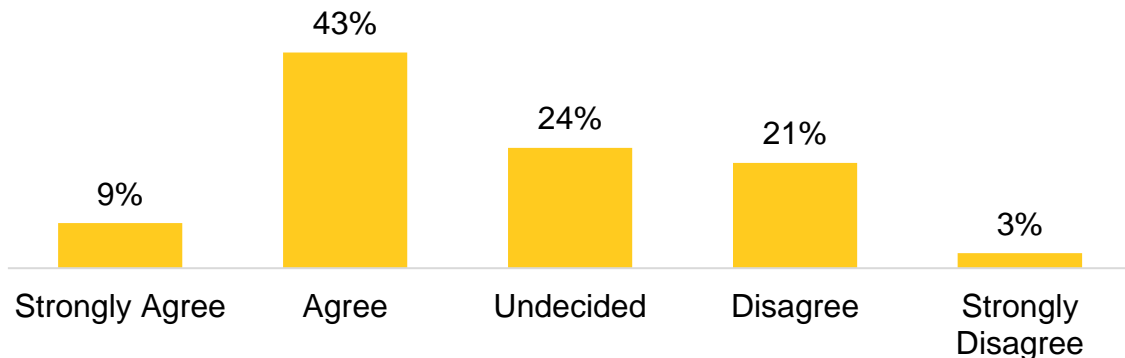
*"Pretty good, we sat down had a chat about the past, things that I want to get help with and how we are going to work on things. It was really good to be honest."*

*"It was a waste of time, I came out of prison and had nowhere to stay. They didn't organise anything for me. The prison just fobbed me off to probation and probation haven't been great either."*

# HALF OF PEOPLE ON PROBATION FEEL HEARD REGARDING THEIR SUPERVISION

- **52%** (40/76) 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.
- However, only one person interviewed felt they had a say how the Kirklees service is run.
- **2 out of 6** people interviewed felt like they could raise complaints. Those that felt they could not, responded that they either didn't know how to or fearing to be treated differently afterwards.

Q: Probation services have asked for my views about being on supervision



*"I haven't had to, so I am not sure."*

*"Yeah, I think everything is tailored around me."*

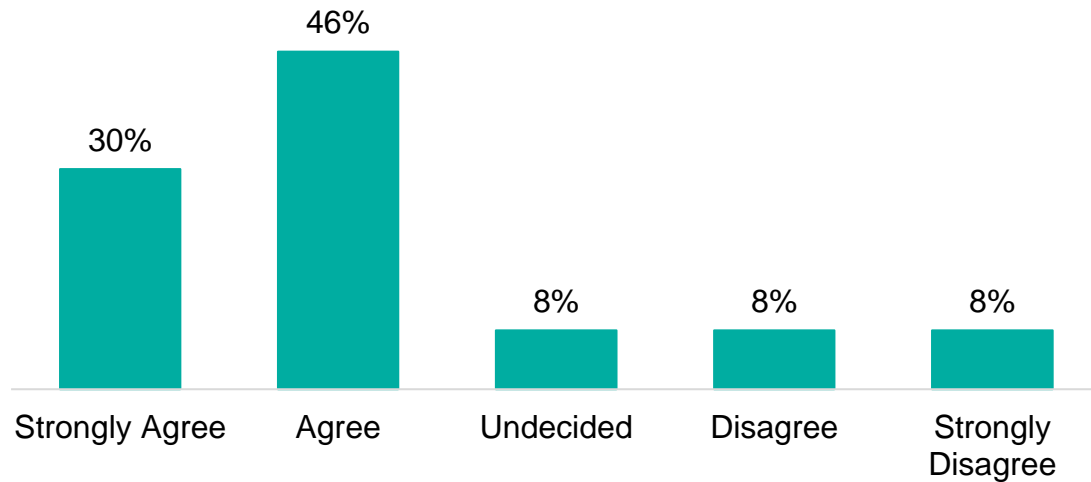
*"No and I wouldn't want to as I know if I do, I will get treated differently. I wanted to get my Probation Officer changed but I am scared to try and do that."*

*"No, I wouldn't know how to do so."*

*"Yes, I know that I can ask reception if I need to and they would help."*

# 3/4 OF PEOPLE ON PROBATION IN KIRKLEES ARE HAPPY WITH THE SUPPORT THEY RECEIVE – MAINLY DUE TO HAVING AN EFFECTIVE PROBATION OFFICER

Q: Overall, I am happy with the support I have received from probation



*"My probation officer has been great, without her I wouldn't have coped so well."*

*"My Probation Officer manage to help me get some counselling which has really helped me."*

*"I own my home to these people without them I'd be on the streets. My Probation Officer is really nice as well and we can talk about anything."*

*"Probation officers really accommodating and arranged unpaid work indoors for me. Probation officers really kind to me and just wants to do anything that she can to help me. It's really good that they got alison.com which counts towards our hours."*

*"Reception are very friendly and helpful, I also don't have to wait long to get seen."*

# PEOPLE ON PROBATION'S SOLUTIONS TO THE ISSUES THEY FACED

- People on Probation need support with travel between the Dewsbury and Huddersfield offices due to the temporary closure. Some of them are suffering from financial difficulties and having to spend the extra time and money traveling can be a source of distress.
- A bigger focus on timely access to services such as housing and ETE.
- Consistency with inductions. People On Probation need an induction that is digestible, an opportunity to understand their order and tailor the order to their needs.
- Continuity with their Probation Officers is imperative. Those experiencing revolving doors of Probation Officers struggle to get the help they need.
- People On Probation should have clarity regarding the complaints process.

*"If they could do more to help with our travel would really help it's a fair walk for me."*

*"Yeah, it's a bit far to get down here, why don't they do some appointments where they come to us. I have a lot of issues so coming here can be hard for me."*

*"If I ever need to change my appointment it's a bit of a problem. Will be helpful if I had a direct number."*

*"The only thing is it's a bit far to travel to this office, I think they should find some alternatives."*

*"I want to see prisons and probation work better together so that when people like me come out we are not left on the streets."*

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