

**USER VOICE**

ONLY OFFENDERS CAN STOP RE-OFFENDING



HM Inspectorate  
of Probation

# **CAPTURING THE VOICE OF PEOPLE ON PROBATION FOR THE NORTH & NORTH-EAST LINCOLNSHIRE INSPECTION**

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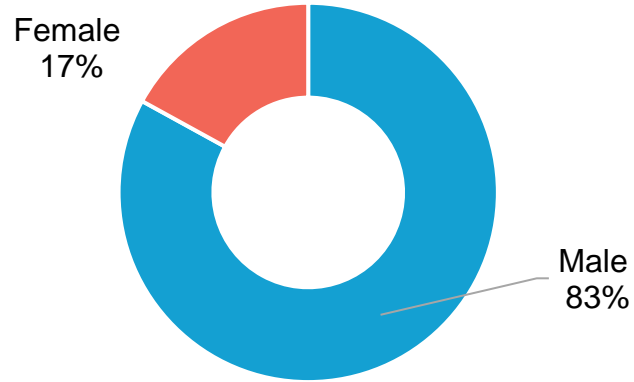
# 50 PEOPLE HAD THEIR SAY:

5 ONLINE SURVEYS

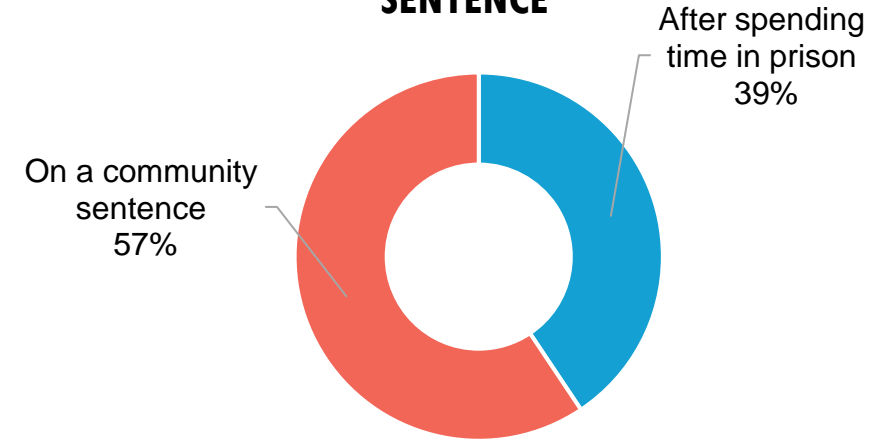
41 FACE TO FACE SURVEYS

4 IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

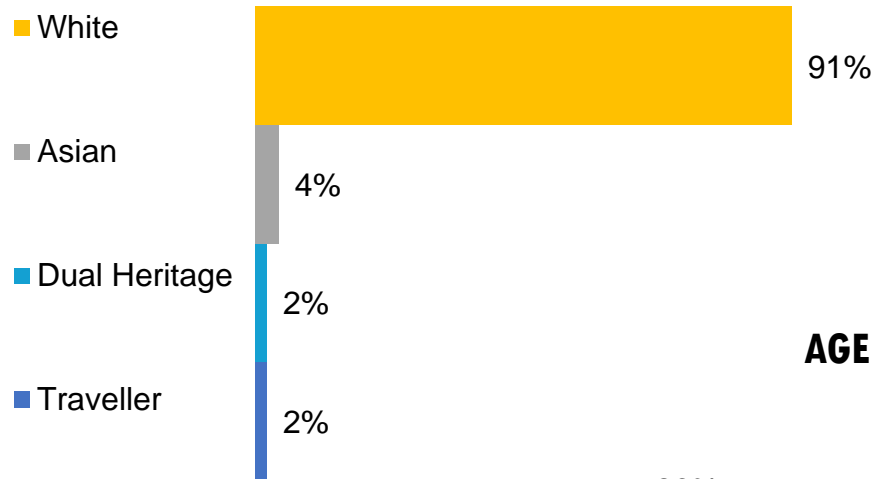
### GENDER



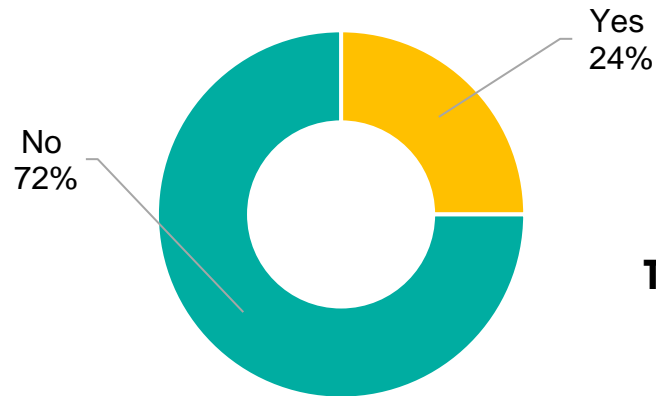
### SENTENCE



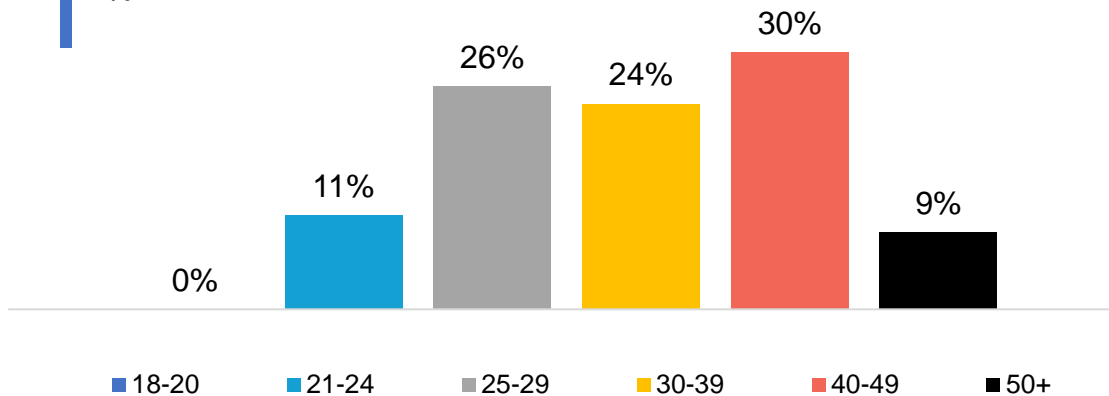
### ETHNICITY



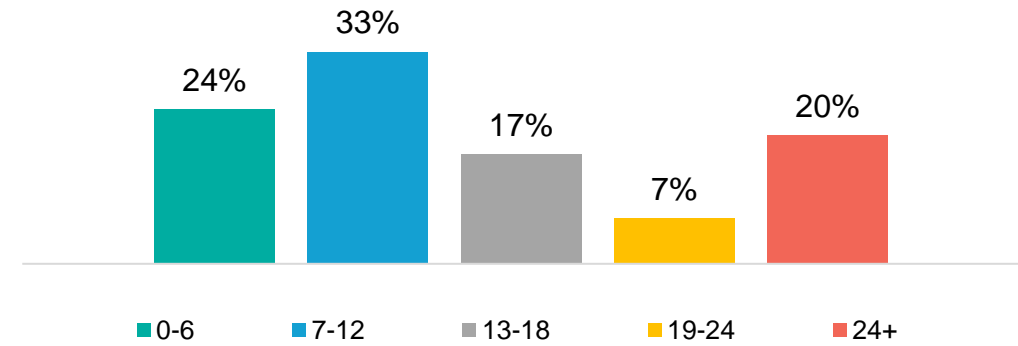
### DISABILITY



### AGE



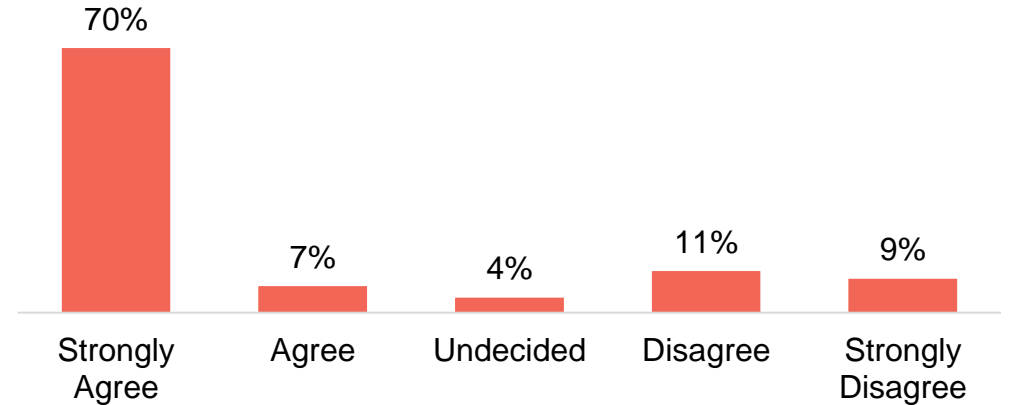
### TIME ON PROBATION (MONTHS)



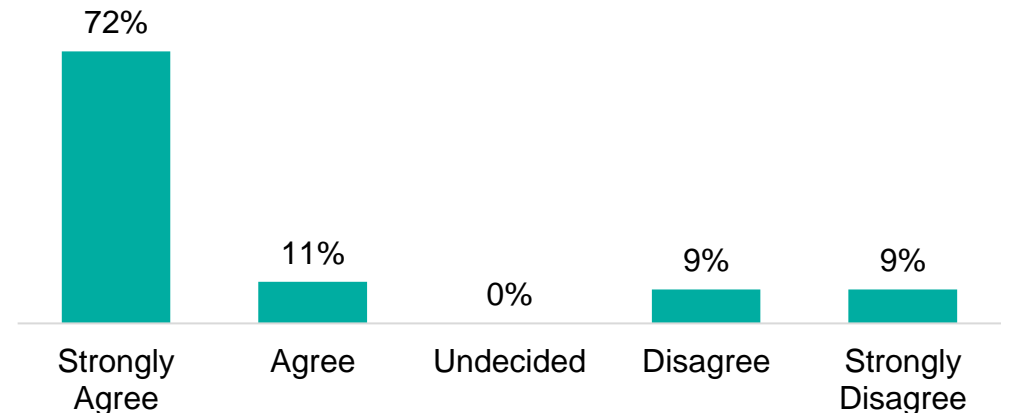
# HALF RESPONDENTS THINK APPOINTMENTS TO BE A POSITIVE ELEMENT OF THEIR PROBATION EXPERIENCE

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

- **51%** (23/45) determined that ‘**Appointments**’ as the positive element of their probation experience.
- People on Probation think that appointments are often worked around their schedule. Flexibility and consideration of personal needs and circumstances are often reflected in the data and are well appreciated.
- **11%** (5/46) that noted appointments as an issue did so because they feel:
  - unsupported with services.
  - that appointments were getting in the way of their personal life.



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



*“They are really easy to contact and always manage to fit appointments around my time schedule, especially if I am late for reasons beyond my control.”*

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

*"I have been on probation for 6 months now and am very happy with the service that I have received. I struggle with my mental health and have done for years so was very anxious about coming to probation. I feel like my PO understands me which helps, and she helped me get an appointment to do some counselling which I wasn't able to do on my own, because of my mental health.*

*We have appointments on the phone as well as in the office which helps as I don't always like going out of my house, if I can't make an appointment, she is fine and we will rearrange or do it over the phone."*

*"They always give me appointments to cater for me and they write it down so that I can put it on my calendar, they have told me that if I need any help with anything that they are able to help and point me in the right direction, I can trust my Probation Officer I have been on it for 10 years and had to transfer from Boston to Grimsby and it has been very good."*

*"Its just a complete waste of time here, I am on the streets and need housing and they won't or can't do anything to help me at all so what is the point in coming here, I will get arrested at some point and go back to court and go to prison and start the whole process again, until they can help me with my housing I have no hope at all."*

*"I am a drinker and need help getting off it but they don't do anything to help me and they speak to me like crap, I really don't see the point of this."*

*"I miss a lot of appointments because of drug use and they are generally quite supportive with my circumstances, when I talk to them they are supportive, there is a woman that comes in and helps me with housing and drugs I have had help from them to stay off drugs."*

*"At no point was I offered help in fact my life was made more difficult by probation making me leave work to attend appointments risking my livelihood."*

# 7 IN 10 THINK THEIR PROBATION OFFICER IS THE BEST PART OF THEIR PROBATION EXPERIENCE

- **69%** (31/45) of responses cited the 'relationship with their PO' when asked 'what has been good about your probation experience?' This was the most prominent response to the question.
- Trust, a personal approach, support finding services, flexibility and accommodation of personal needs are what people in North and North-East Lincolnshire appreciate the most.
- However, **28%** (13/46) see their relationship with their PO as their biggest challenge whilst on probation. This was the second most cited response to the question 'If anything, what has been your biggest issue whilst being on probation?'
- Those that have an issue with their Probation Officers mostly do so due because of:
  - The lack of support accessing the services they need,
  - Frequently changing Probation Officers;
  - Feeling judged and threatened by breach.

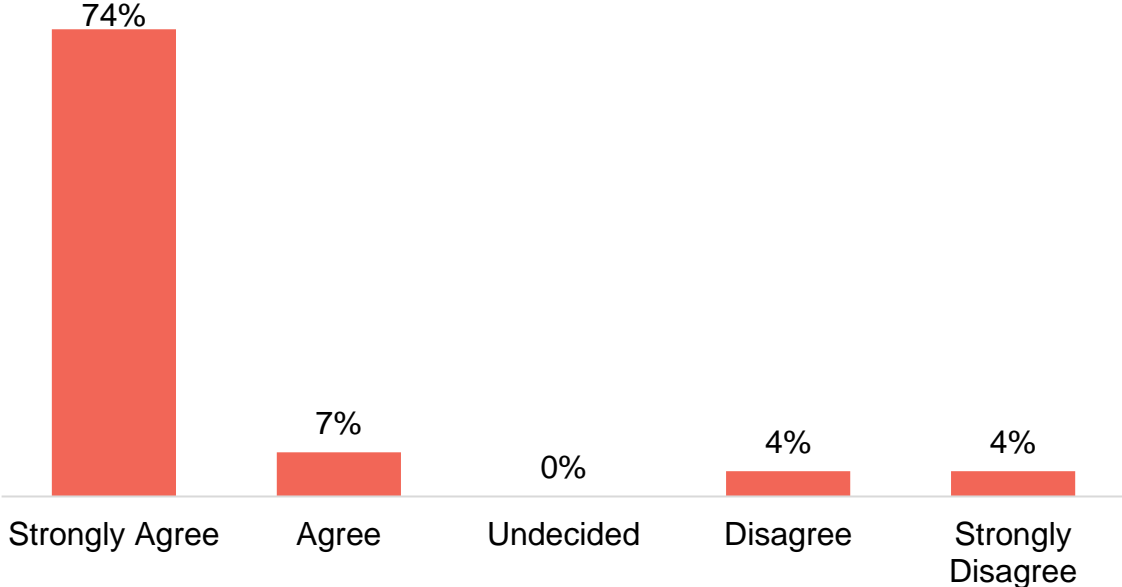
*"My PO was really helpful, she just wanted it to work for me from the start, when you come to probation there is a feeling that they have your life in their hands and it is scary, she made me feel a lot easier about it. I am a farmer and am very busy at last minute I may have to do something on the farm and she would let me change my appointment, no problem at all. In fact with 7 months left to go on my order she took me to court and had my order revoked because I didn't need anything at all, she was very nice."*

*"Have changed Probation Officers 4 times in the last 18. Treatment was more relaxed and understanding with the first group but now after 2 years of probation, I feel I am less understood and going through the initial conviction process all over again every time they change officers. Also, my first Probation Officer made promises that haven't been kept."*

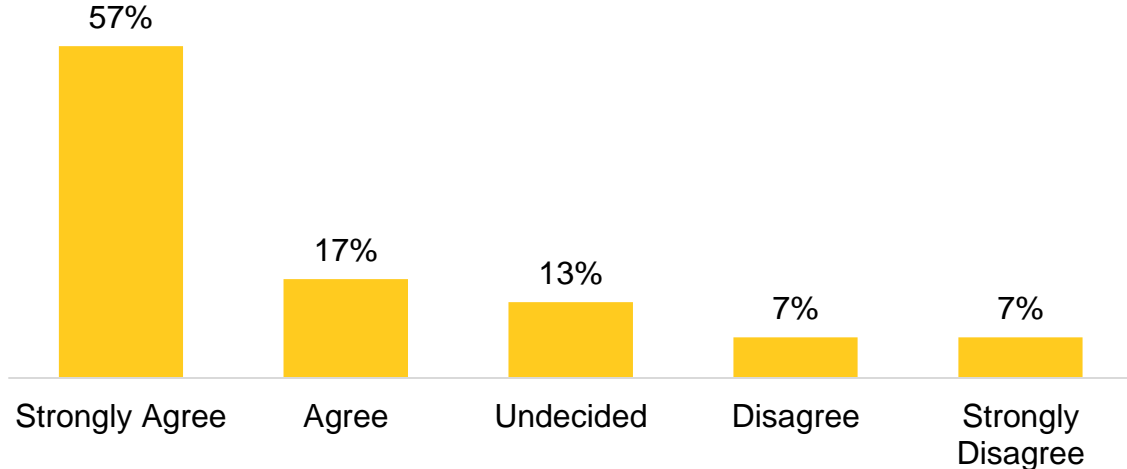
*"When I came out of prison I was terrified of what probation would be like because I knew I could go back to prison. I have ADHD and struggle around change and new people etc., but my PO was really supportive and would either just call me and even come to my house a couple of times. She would always ask me when I would like to come into the office if it was necessary at all, she talks with my GP as well so she understands me."*

# THE VAST MAJORITY OF PEOPLE IN NORTH AND NORTH-EAST LINCOLNSHIRE FEEL SAFE WHEN ACCESSING THEIR LOCAL PROBATION OFFICE

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



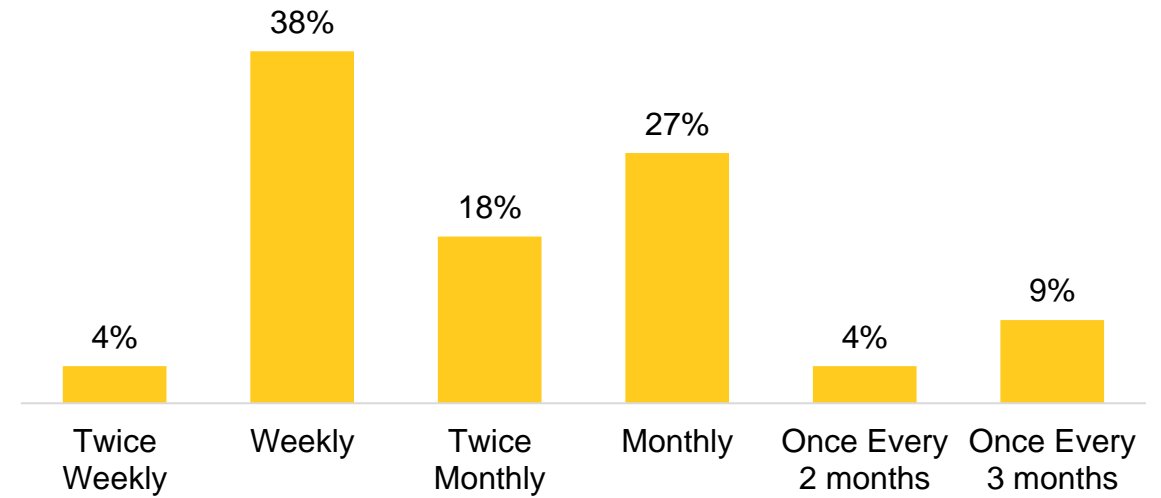
Q: I feel safe accessing the probation office



# 2 IN 3 PEOPLE WANT FACE-TO-FACE APPOINTMENTS IN NORTH AND NORTH-EAST LINCOLNSHIRE

- **64%** of People on Probation want face-to-face contact. However, personal preference should be taken into consideration as some also prefer remote contact.
- The frequency of contact wanted depends on the individual and their need for support.
- **70%** (32/46) of People on Probation agreed that appointments, courses and support are within a reasonable travelling distance.

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



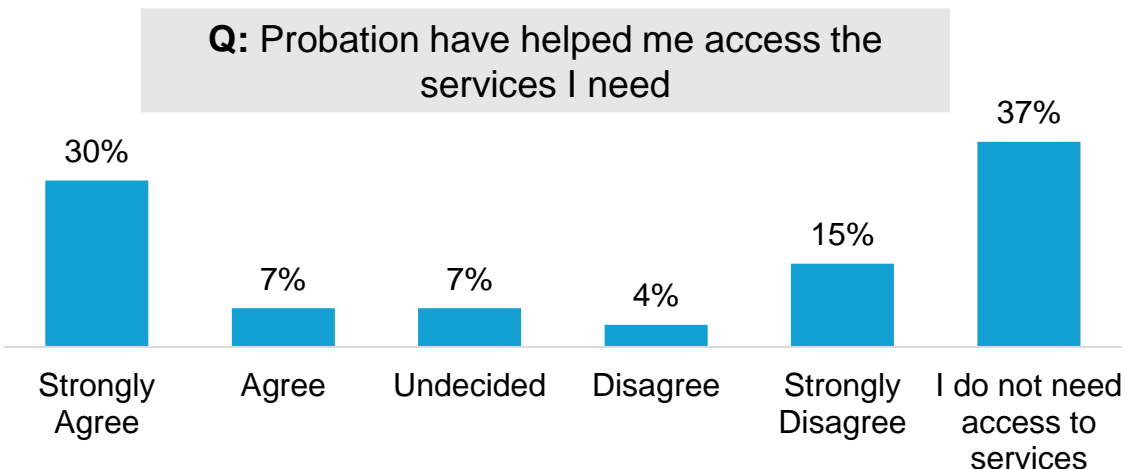
*“Face to face is much better if you need the support, which I do”*

*“Weekly, as to whether it is face to face or not should depend on if I am busy or not.”*

*“Face to face but they should be helping me. I don’t mind coming here but just they won’t help me.”*

# ACCESS TO VITAL SERVICES IS DEPENDANT ON A COMPETENT PROBATION OFFICER

- Almost **2 in 5** (17/46) do not need access to services in N and NE Lincolnshire.
- **59%** (17/39) of those that need support feel that they have had the necessary help to access the services they need.
- Some people are in great need for services that probation aren't signposting them for in areas such as: **mental health support, substance misuse** and **ETE** amongst others.



*"I have had lots of support from my Probation Officer. For my mental health they have referred me to Ingius for help. They also helped me back into work, I think it helps that they care and they are kind. Plus, they got me into temporary housing accommodation."*

*"They haven't referred me for help with my alcohol even though it is on my license, it doesn't make sense. I have a mental health diagnosis and yet have to do it all myself in terms of getting proper support and meds off my GP. She just wants me to get breached all of the time for nothing."*

*"Probation have struggled to support me with issues surrounding finances. I have had issues with Universal Credit as I am student with the OU. I needed proof that I was not eligible for finance of which Novus had the details (inside prison), yet I had no way of contacting them and probation failed to help with the matter. I have asked for support with regards to housing upon release from the bail hostel, yet I haven't heard anything. I am also expected to travel every week from Hull to Grimsby which is not ideal."*

*"This is not my first time on probation so I know what it is like. This time it has been really good, they help me solve problems that I can't solve myself, so at the moment they are helping me get housing, to get a flat."*



# **OVER HALF FEEL SUPPORTED IN REGARD TO ACCESSING SERVICES RELEVANT TO THEIR PERSONAL NEEDS**

**62% HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ACCESS SERVICES RELEVANT TO THEIR PERSONAL NEEDS**

**59% HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ACCESS SERVICES IN A REASONABLE TIME**

**59% HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ACCESS SERVICES IN THEIR LOCAL AREA**

# PROVISION OF MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT VARIES DEPENDING ON THE INDIVIDUAL

- Support with mental health was the biggest issue for **17%** (8/46) of people in N and NE Lincolnshire. However, it was cited as a positive aspect of probation experience for **20%** (9/45).
- Similarly, **9%** (4/46) of all People on Probation struggle receiving adequate support for overcoming addiction, whereas **9%** (4/45) also state that help with substance misuse was what has been good about their probation experience.
- A lot of the disparity in experience can be pinned to the effectiveness of the PO's ability to signpost the individual.

*"I have mental health issues I am getting grief off my neighbors in the approved premises, my PO has contacted them and is working with them to get me out of there. 95% of the time I have an appointment and I leave with a smile it picks me up."*

*"I don't actually need any help from them anymore but at the start I needed support with my mental health and they got me help, they linked me in with a specialist GP in mental health, it helped a lot."*

*"I was in a wheelchair at first and had no help for mental health."*

*"I have split personality disorder and suffer terribly with anxiety so the idea that I have to sit in probation waiting areas scares me and makes me feel very anxious. My PO is never on time and I am made to wait in the probation office waiting area with other people it makes me feel very uncomfortable. I am a drinker and need help getting off it but they don't do anything to help me and they speak to me like crap, I really don't see the point of this."*

*"I find it hard to communicate in society because I don't want to hurt no one but I also have a good personality and no one has help socially rehabilitating me from a prison in my head."*

# INDUCTION EXPERIENCE AND COMMUNICATION ON ORDER/LICENSE VARIES FROM PERSON TO PERSON

- **Half** of those interviewed felt their order was explained clearly during the induction process.
- **22%** (10/45) of survey respondents shared having received good communication on their order/license. Whereas, **1 in 5** (9/46) surveyed reflected on the communication of their order/license negatively.

*“It was not explained to me at all, It was not good I was coming out of prison. They had given me a new address but didn’t tell me where I was living until I was released.”*

*“They didn’t really talk to me in prison about what my order was going to look like when I come out of prison, I lived in Hull but have to travel all the way to Grimsby to probation which is ridiculous. In the end my conditions were explained to me.”*

*“They explained everything to me. I am currently on extended supervision after getting a new charge.”*

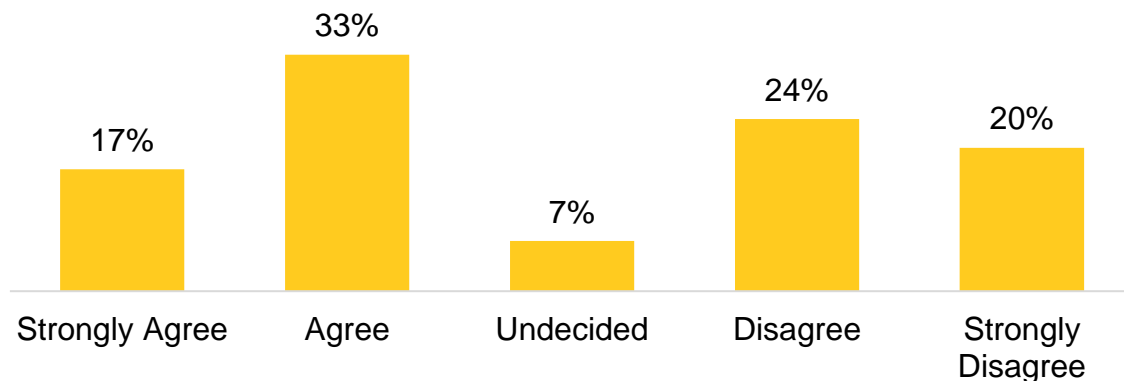
*“They have actually made it clear what I am expected to do and also what they are expected to do. They have been very approachable.”*

*“My oasis report was really incorrect which does not help because they have an opinion or judgment on you before you have even started based on incorrect information. They don’t want to listen to you, they just want to tick their boxes.”*

# HALF OF PEOPLE ON PROBATION IN NORTH AND NORTH-EAST LINCOLNSHIRE FEEL THAT THEIR VOICE IS HEARD

- **50%** (23/46) of those surveyed felt like Probation Services had asked for their views about being on supervision.
- **Half** of those interviewed felt like they could raise complaints if they needed to.

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



*“When I rang to make a complaint, the manager hung up on me and blocked me, not very professional. I am dyslexic and can’t read and write so it was impossible for me the way I tried it, they just hung up.”*

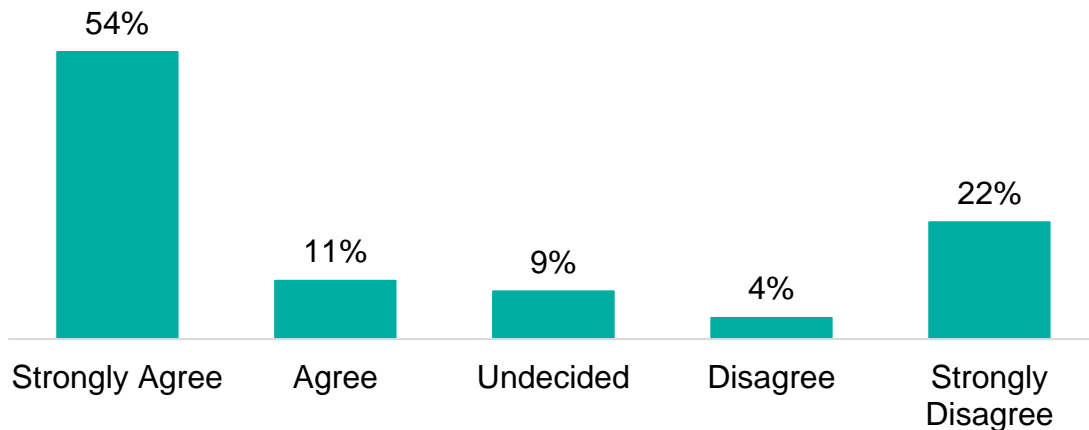
*“We are all different therefore there cannot be a one service fits all, so they need to hear what we have to say and tailor the order to the individual.”*

*“Never had to make any complaints but if needed to I feel that I know how to do it.”*

# 65% ARE HAPPY WITH THE SUPPORT THEY RECEIVE FROM PROBATION WITH NEARLY HALF FEELING THAT NOTHING CAN BE IMPROVED

- **48%** (22/46) answered ‘**nothing can be improved**’ when asked about the issues they have experienced whilst on probation.
- Whereas **16%** (7/45) stated that there were ‘**no positives**’ in regard to their probation experience.

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



*“They have helped me become a better person and helped me not want to go back to prison, I have ADHD and the women’s group helps me with that. It helps going to the women’s group.”*

*“Probation has really helped me to build my confidence after my offence and with my drug addiction.”*

*“It’s much better up here than down south, where I used to be. You would get breached for anything. Here they are a bit easier on you. I have had lots of support, they sat down and cared about what would be good for me. The BBR course was really beneficial to me in terms of how to better manage relationships, also unpaid work has been really good, the person in charge is kind and caring. They always let me make the appointments for when is best for me which makes life easier for me. She just listens, which sounds silly, but it’s really important. They referred me to a person to help with my emotional wellbeing also.”*

*“Probation don’t understand me as a person, they are not a very good service at all. I have needed help filling in application forms and have asked for this help but haven’t got any, so what is the point in coming.”*

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

- There is a high demand for mental health and addiction recovery support in North and North-East Lincolnshire. The help People on Probation receive is inconsistent. Some feel fully supported, while others feel the Probation Officer is failing to meet their needs.
- Continuity with Probation Officers is imperative. Those experiencing revolving doors of Probation Officers struggle to get the help they need.
- Good understanding and communication with the Person on Probation regarding their license is important for rehabilitation. People need to be explained clearly what is expected of them and what they can and cannot do. Personal barriers to meeting license demands need to be identified and appropriate support should be offered.
- People On Probation want clarity regarding the complaints process.

*"It's not really probation that can do anything but there needs to be a lot more help for people with mental health issues."*

*"I have a fantastic opportunity to go and work on a crabbing boat in Newlyn and am supposed to be going tomorrow. However, I have just been told that my PO is not in, therefore they can't make a decision, and that it will most likely be no because it is short notice, what is that about!? I have found a job but can't take it, it's bullshit... how am I supposed to rehabilitate."*

*"I don't feel that I can trust them at all. When you say something to them, they contact social services and then bang your in trouble. For the first time ever I don't use drugs but it's not enough, so I can't trust them."*

*"They just treat me like dirt, I have mental health issues, I suffer with anxiety and depression but they don't seem to care even though I ask them for help, I feel like they just talk down to me and threaten to send me to jail... The other thing is that they change officers all of the time so that is why they don't help. I just get passed around."*

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