



## HMI Prisons Stakeholder Survey 2021: Summary of findings

---

### INTRODUCTION

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMI Prisons) conducts an annual survey of its stakeholders, and the findings are used to inform the corporate planning process. Provided below is a summary of the main findings from the 2021 survey. This year we gained feedback from stakeholders on the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on our work, and on some of HMI Prisons' activities since returning to full inspections in May 2021. To capture this context, the section introduced in 2020 on stakeholder perceptions of HMI Prisons' response to COVID-19 was retained, and the original section on the overall perceptions of stakeholders was reintroduced. New questions pertaining to equality and diversity, newly revised full inspection reports, and HMI Prisons' *Expectations* were also added.

As in previous years, the 2021 survey was conducted online. A link to the survey was emailed directly to stakeholders within the Ministry of Justice, Home Office and Ministry of Defence, to police forces and police and crime commissioners, to members of both houses of parliament, to other National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) members, to academics with an interest in criminal justice, to non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and third sector organisations, to private sector providers of custodial services and to home affairs journalists.

The survey link was also distributed to individual prisons by HM Prison and Probation Service's communications team, to individual Independent Monitoring Boards by the IMB Secretariat and to individual immigration facilities by the Home Office's Immigration Secretariat.

The 2021 online stakeholder survey was 'live' from 8 to 29 November 2021. We received 127 complete responses in total.

We would like to thank everybody who took the time to complete the survey.

### Note on interpretation of findings

Due to the sampling strategy, we cannot provide a response rate for this survey or make any assumptions about the representativeness of respondents. Nor is it possible to determine whether apparent differences between sub-groups of respondents are statistically significant.

Throughout this report, percentages may not always total 100 due to rounding.

Table I shows the roles of those who responded to the 2021 survey.

<b>Table I Stakeholders categorised (n=127)</b>	
<b>Practitioners</b> I work directly with offenders, prisoners or detainees	35 (28%)
<b>Management</b> I am involved in the management of prisons or other places of detention I am involved in the management of other services for offenders or detainees (e.g. escort, health, education)	61 (48%)
<b>Independent scrutineers</b> I work for another inspectorate, ombudsman or regulator I work or volunteer for an independent monitoring body (e.g. IMB, ICV)	13 (10%)
<b>Other stakeholders</b> I work on criminal justice or immigration policy I work in parliament I am a politician I am a journalist I am an academic, researcher or student I am, or have been, a prisoner or detainee I am a family member or friend of a prisoner or detainee I am an interested member of the public Other	18 (14%)

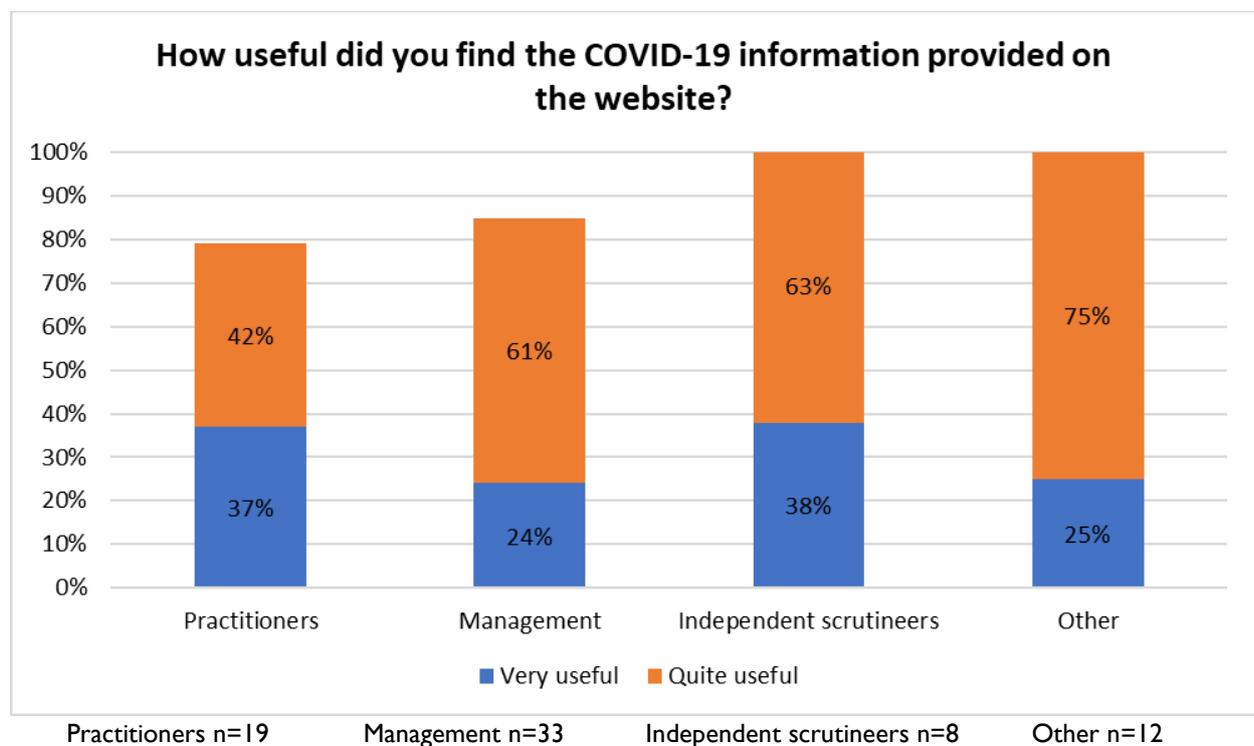
## FINDINGS

### HMI Prisons' response to the COVID-19 pandemic

Over half of respondents (57%) said they had visited the COVID-19 section of the HMI Prisons website.

Respondents who had visited the COVID-19 section of the website were asked how useful they found the information provided. The majority (87%) found the information to be very useful or quite useful. The breakdown by stakeholder is shown in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Percentage of stakeholders who found information on the COVID-19 section of the website very useful/quite useful**

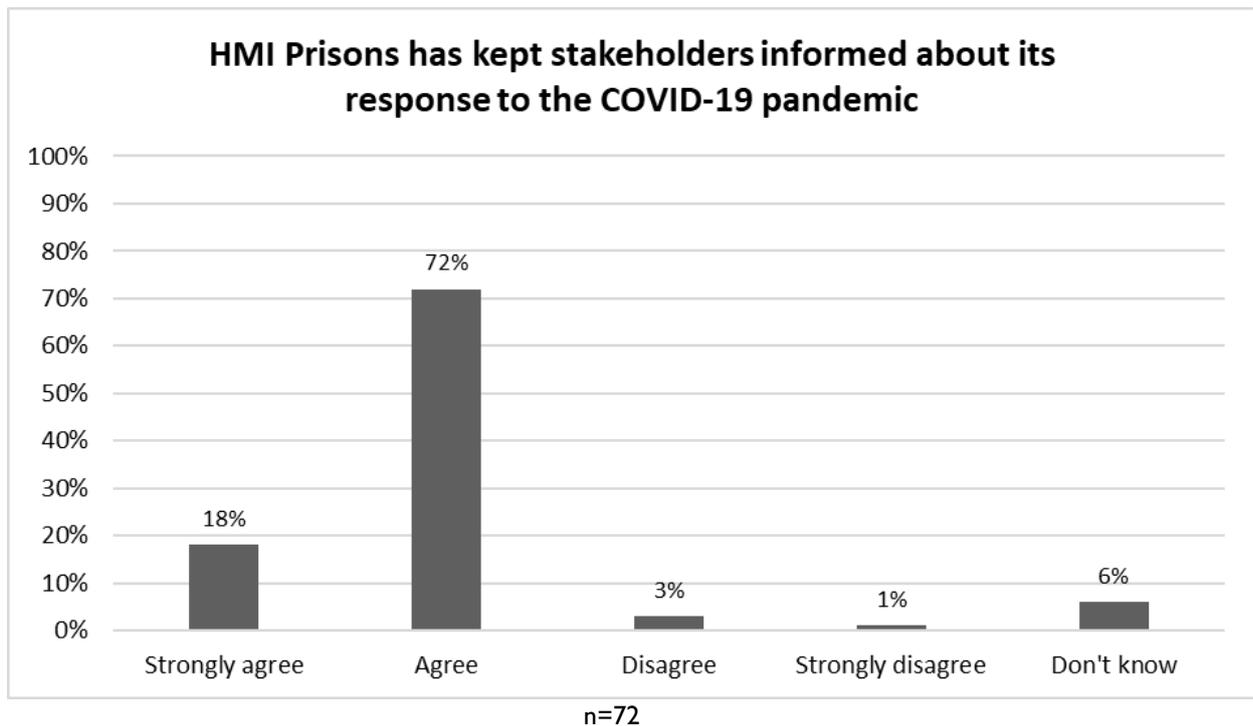


Just 13% of visitors said that the information provided was not very useful, and no visitors reported that it was not at all useful.

All stakeholders were also asked to indicate their agreement with two statements about HMI Prisons' response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Responses to these questions are displayed in figures 2 and 3. Not all stakeholders answered every question, and percentages displayed are based on the number of people (n) who answered each question.

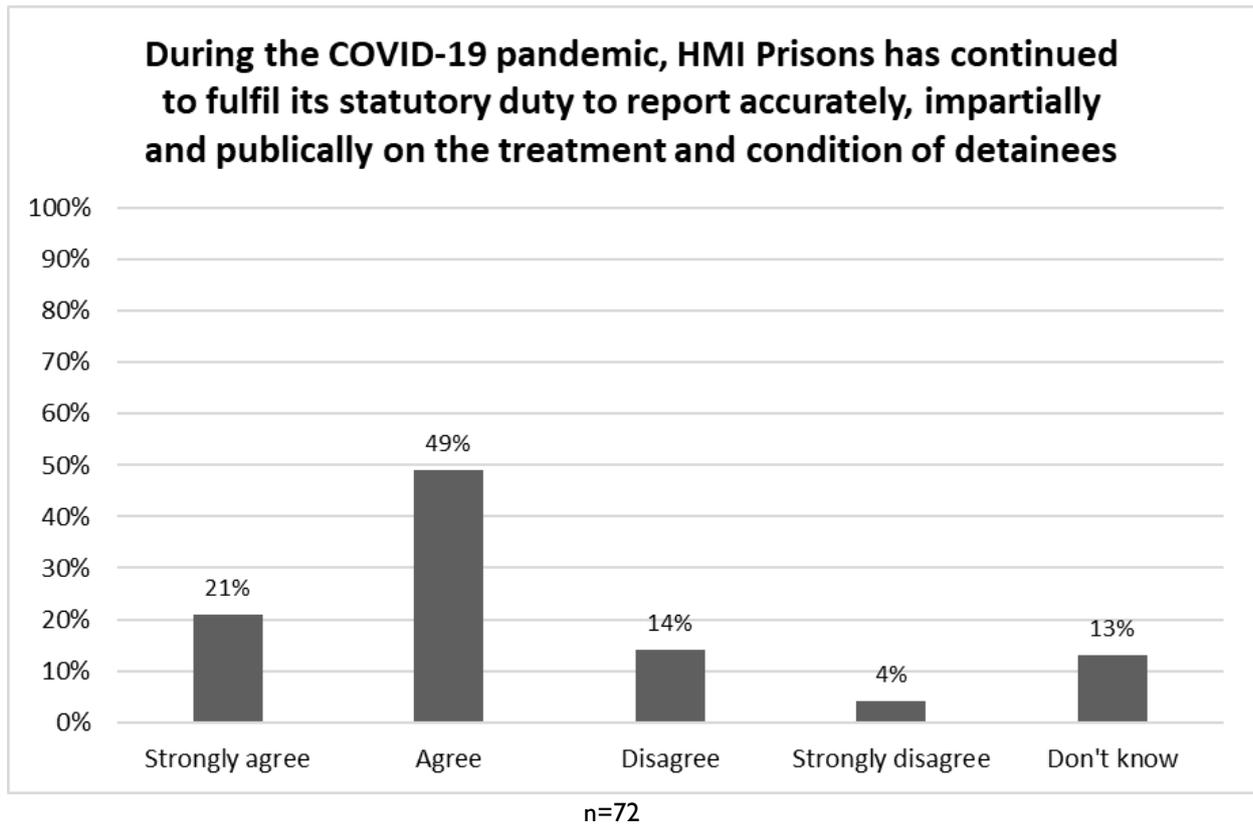
In relation to the statement about whether HMI Prisons has kept stakeholders informed about its response to the COVID-19 pandemic, perceptions were generally positive, with 90% agreeing or strongly agreeing, and only 10% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing overall.

**Figure 2: HMI Prisons has kept stakeholders informed about its response to the COVID-19 pandemic**



In relation to the statement about reporting throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, perceptions of HMI Prisons were slightly less positive, with just over two-thirds (69%) of respondents overall agreeing or strongly agreeing that HMI Prisons has continued to fulfil its statutory duty to report accurately, impartially and publicly on the treatment and condition of detainees. Eighteen per cent disagreed or strongly disagreed.

**Figure 3: During the COVID-19 pandemic, HMI Prisons has continued to fulfil its statutory duty to report accurately, impartially and publicly on the treatment and condition of detainees**

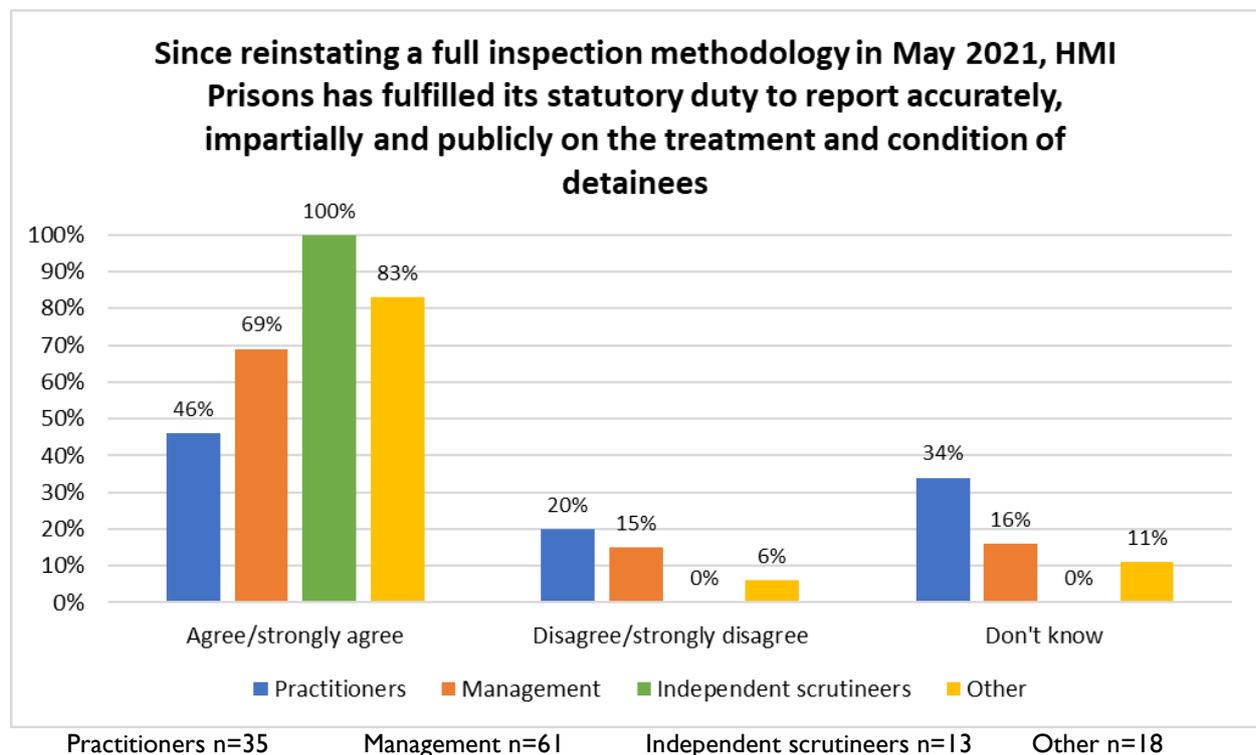


## Overall perceptions of HMI Prisons

As in previous years, respondents were also asked to consider their general perceptions of HMI Prisons over the previous 12 months, by responding to a series of statements. For these questions, responses have been broken down by stakeholder type, and response options combine agree/strongly agree and disagree/strongly disagree. The number of stakeholders who answered each question (n) is stated, and the percentages displayed are based on the number of respondents who answered each question, not the total number of survey respondents overall.

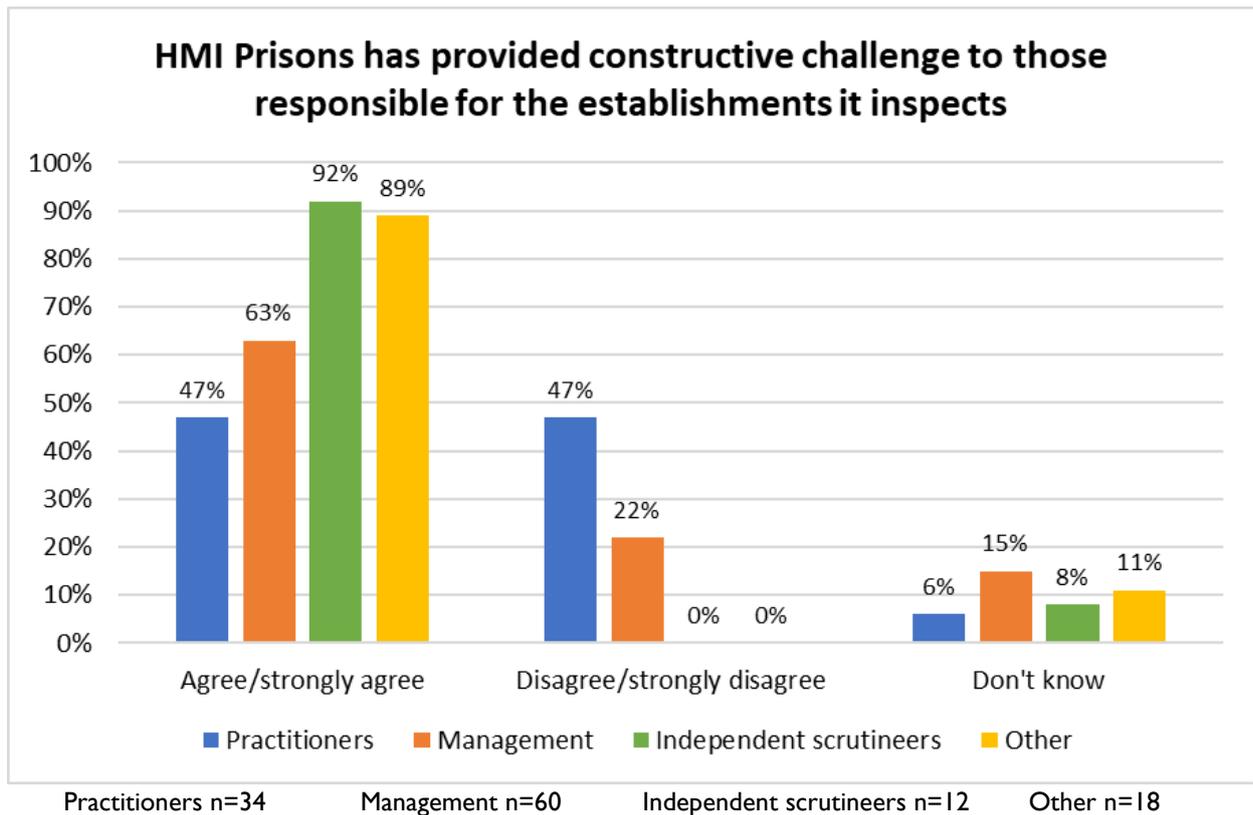
Just over two-thirds (68%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed overall that, since reinstating a full inspection methodology in May 2021, HMI Prisons has fulfilled its statutory duty to report accurately, impartially and publicly on the treatment and condition of detainees. Agreement was highest among independent scrutineers, 100% of whom agreed with the statement, and lowest among practitioners, of whom less than half (46%) agreed with the statement. Notably, almost one-fifth (19%) of stakeholders overall responded 'Don't know' to this statement.

**Figure 4: Since reinstating a full inspection methodology in May 2021, HMI Prisons has fulfilled its statutory duty to report accurately, impartially and publicly on the treatment and condition of detainees**



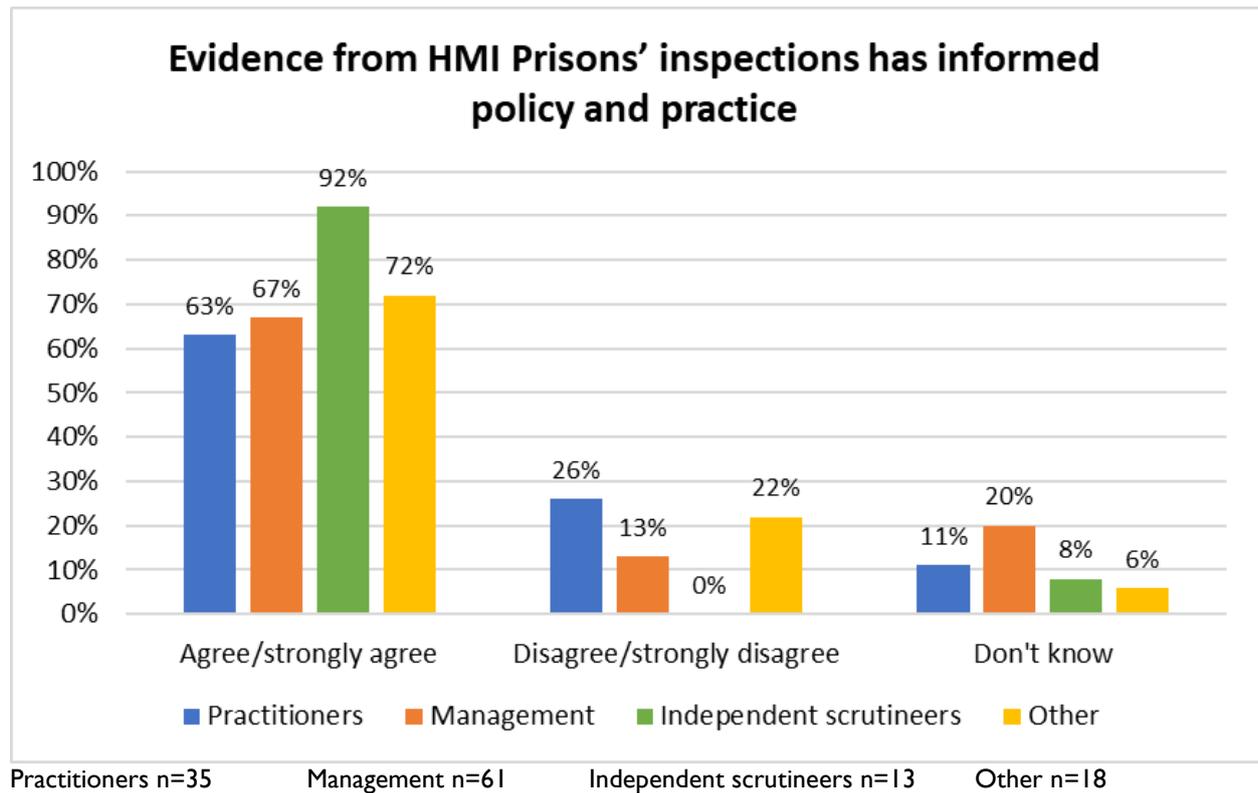
Agreement with the statement about HMI Prisons having provided constructive challenge was similar to the statement about reporting, with just under two-thirds (65%) of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing overall. Again, agreement was highest among independent scrutineers (92%) and lowest among practitioners, an equal number of whom agreed/strongly agreed (47%) or disagreed/strongly disagreed (47%).

**Figure 5: HMI Prisons has provided constructive challenge to those responsible for the establishments it inspects**



Sixty-nine per cent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement about HMI Prisons' evidence having informed policy and practice. Independent scrutineers were most likely to agree (92%) and practitioners least likely to agree (63%). Interestingly, one-fifth (20%) of managers indicated that they didn't know if they agreed or disagreed with this statement, which was a higher percentage than any other stakeholder group.

**Figure 6: Evidence from HMI Prisons' inspections has informed policy and practice**



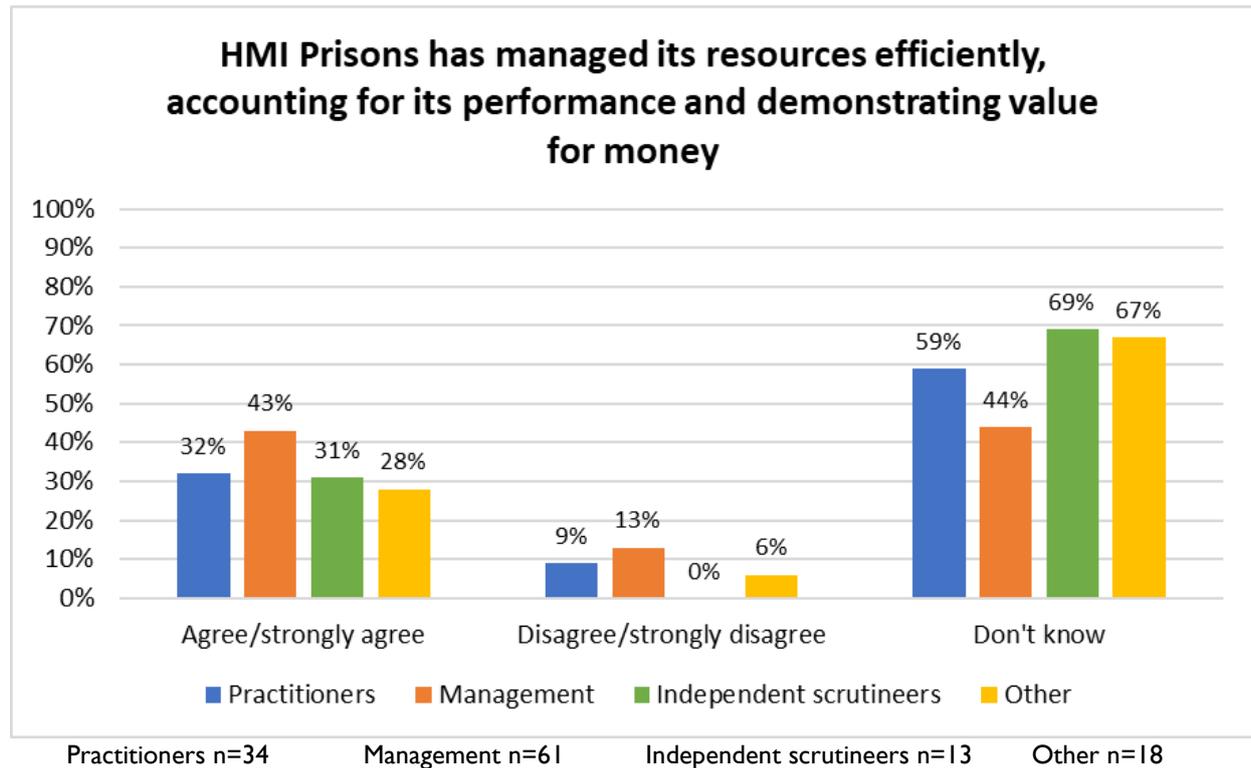
For the statement about HMI Prisons' staff skills and expertise, it is notable that just over one-fifth (21%) of respondents answered 'don't know'. Under two-thirds (60%) agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, and almost one-fifth (18%) disagreed or strongly disagreed. Independent scrutineers and 'other' stakeholders were more likely to agree (69% and 67%, respectively) than practitioners or managers (57% and 58%, respectively).

**Figure 7: HMI Prisons' staff have the necessary skills and expertise to deliver quality inspections**



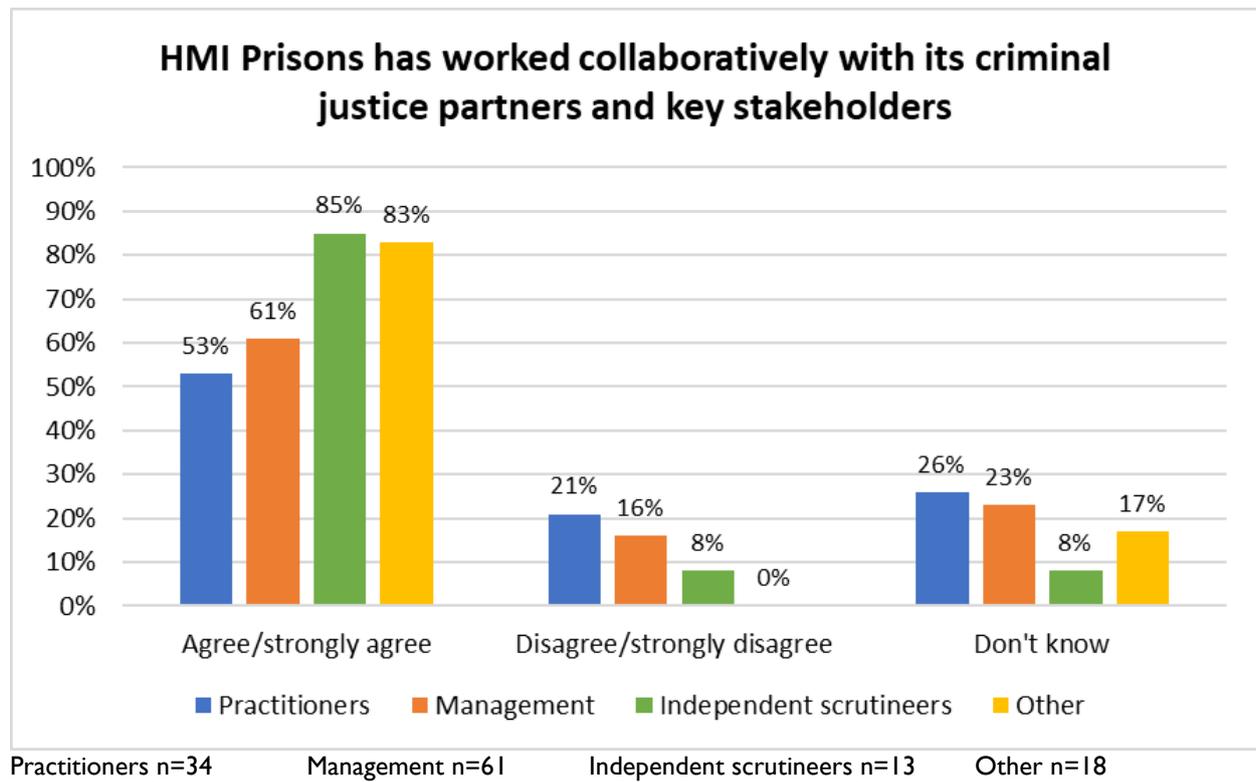
The lack of strong opinion was even more evident for the statement about HMI prisons managing its resources efficiently, with over half of respondents (54%) answering 'don't know'. Overall, just over one-third (37%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that HMI Prisons has managed its resources, accounted for its performance and demonstrated value for money. Managers were most likely to agree (43%) and 'other' stakeholders least likely to agree (28%).

**Figure 8: HMI Prisons has managed its resources efficiently, accounting for its performance and demonstrating value for money**



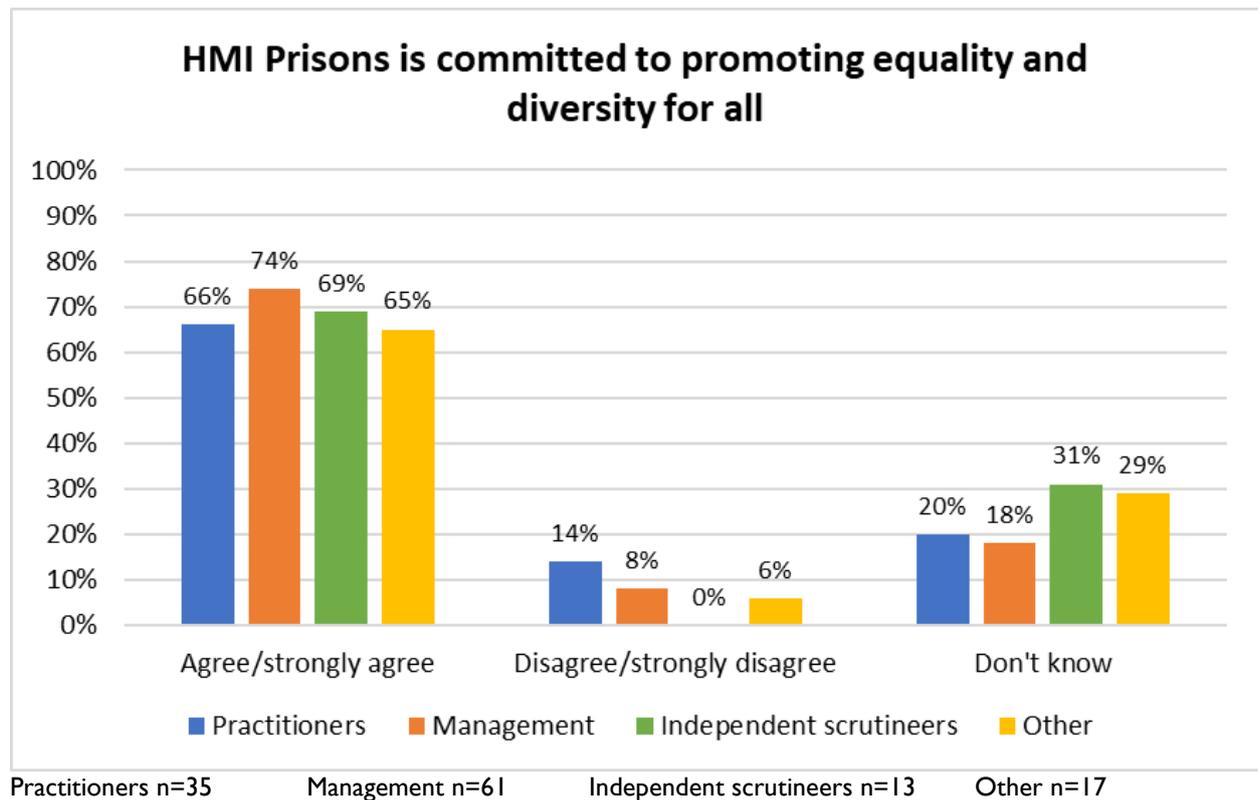
Overall, 64% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that HMI Prisons has worked collaboratively with partners and stakeholders, and only 14% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Independent scrutineers and 'other' stakeholders were most likely to agree with this statement (85% and 83%, respectively), and practitioners least likely to agree (53%).

**Figure 9: HMI Prisons has worked collaboratively with its criminal justice partners and key stakeholders**



With regards to the new statement about HMI Prisons' commitment to equality and diversity, just under three-quarters (70%) overall agreed or strongly agreed that HMI Prisons is committed to promoting equality and diversity for all. Just 9% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Managers were most likely to agree (74%) and practitioners were most likely to disagree (14%).

**Figure 10: HMI Prisons is committed to promoting equality and diversity for all**



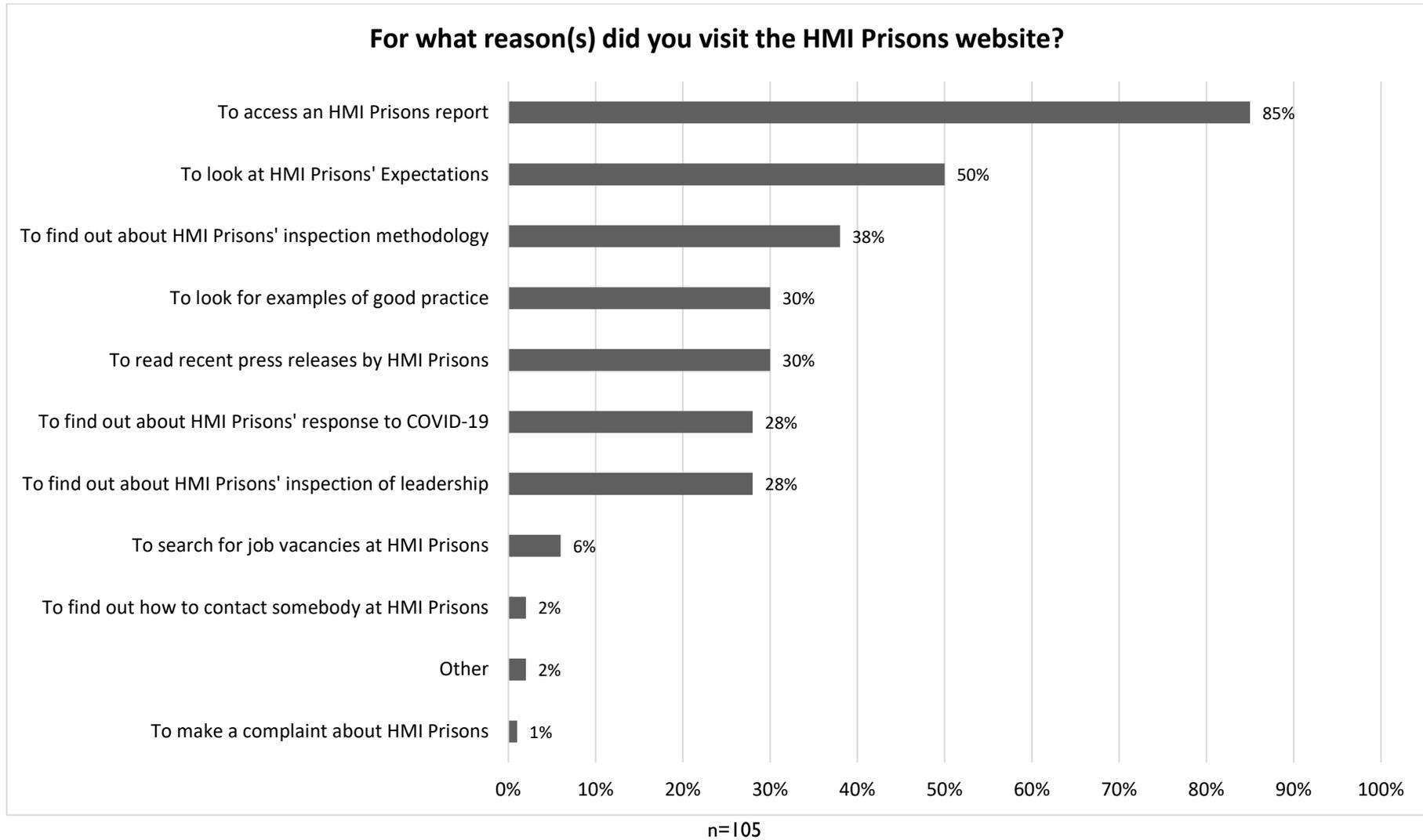
## **HMI Prisons' website**

Overall, a high proportion of respondents (86%) said they had visited HMI Prisons' website in the last 12 months. Most of these respondents (87%) had visited the website about once a month or less, 8% about once a week, and 5% more than once a week.

We also asked stakeholders their reasons for visiting the website. Of the 127 respondents who completed the survey, 105 stakeholders answered this question. The most common reasons were to access an HMI Prisons report (85%), to look at HMI Prisons' *Expectations* (50%) and to find out about HMI Prisons' inspection methodology (38%). Just under one-third of respondents (28%) said that they had visited the website to find out about HMI Prisons' inspection of leadership.

Most website visitors found it either very easy (36%) or quite easy (58%) to find what they were looking for, with just 5% reporting that it was not very easy and 1% that it was not at all easy.

**Figure 11: Reasons for visiting HMI Prisons' website**



## HMI Prisons' inspection reports

This year's survey sought stakeholder's views on the two types of reports published over the past 12 months: scrutiny visit reports and newly revised full inspection reports. For brevity, only overall perceptions of full inspection reports are presented below.

A high proportion of respondents (83%) said that they had looked at one or more scrutiny visit and/or inspection reports. Those who had looked at one or more reports in the last 12 months were then asked to indicate their agreement with a series of statements about newly revised full inspection reports. Overall, perceptions of inspection reports were very positive. The results are shown in figure 12.

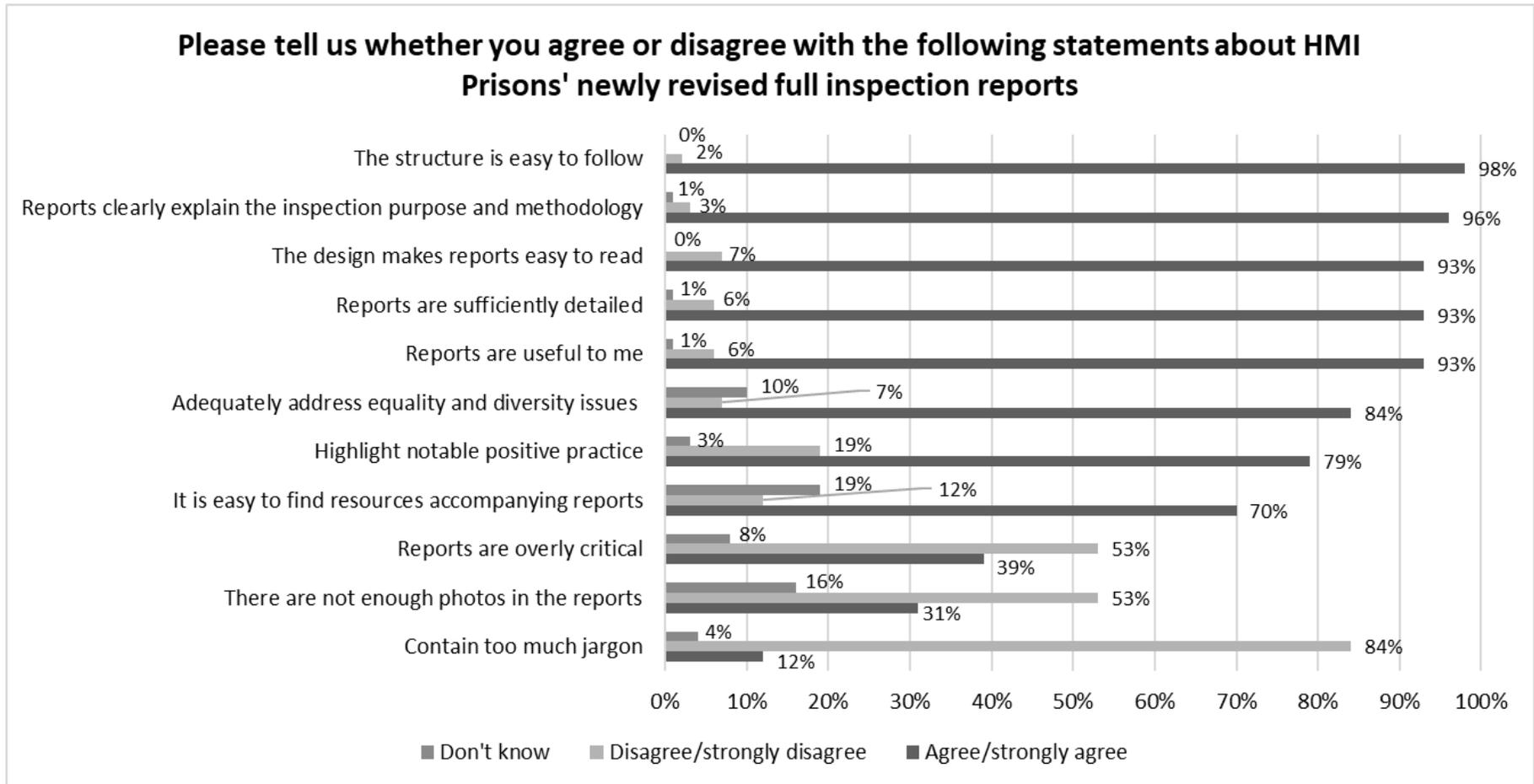
There was high agreement across the 102 stakeholders who answered this question that the structure of reports is easy to follow, reports clearly explain the inspection purpose, the design makes the reports easy to read, reports are sufficiently detailed, reports are useful and reports adequately address equality and diversity issues for detainees (ranging from 84% to 98%).

Attitudes towards reports highlighting notable positive practice and it being easy to find the further resources accompanying the reports on the website were slightly less positive, with 79% and 70% agreeing or strongly agreeing overall, respectively.

In terms of reports being overly critical, over one-third (39%) agreed that reports are overly critical, and just over half (53%) disagreed. Almost one-third (31%) agreed that there are not enough photos in the reports, and just over half (53%) disagreed. Just 12% agreed that the reports contain too much jargon, while 84% disagreed.

There were a few notable differences in agreement with certain statements between stakeholder groups. Generally, practitioners and managers tended to be slightly less positive in their responses to the statements than independent scrutineers and the 'other' group. In terms of the statement about the reports containing too much jargon, 100% of both independent scrutineers and 'other' stakeholders disagreed with this statement, while just over one-quarter (26%) of practitioners and 12% of managers agreed that the reports contain too much jargon. Similarly, for the statement that the reports highlight notable positive practice, independent scrutineers and 'other' stakeholders were more likely to agree with this statement (92% and 94%, respectively) than practitioners and managers (78% and 71%, respectively). Over half of managers (55%) agreed that reports are overly critical, compared with 0% of independent scrutineers. However, independent scrutineers were least likely (83%) to agree that the design makes the report easy to read, with agreement ranging from 92% to 100% in the other groups. Finally, in terms of the number of photos in reports, almost half (45%) of independent scrutineers agreed that there are not enough photos, compared with only 27% of managers, 35% of practitioners and 29% of 'other' stakeholders.

**Figure 12: Overall stakeholder agreement with statements about newly revised full inspection reports**

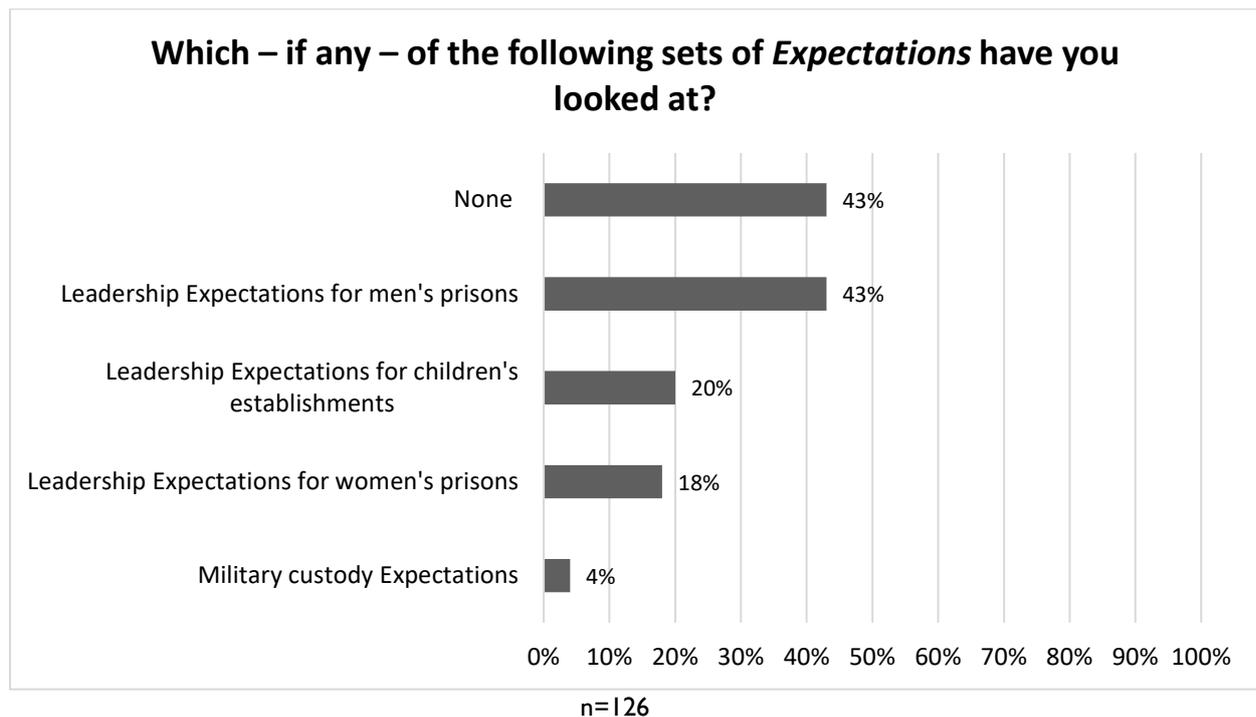


n=102

## HMI Prisons' Expectations

This year's survey contained a new section to gather stakeholder's perceptions of our *Expectations*. Over half of respondents (57%) had looked at one or more of the new *Expectations* during the previous 12 months. Of these, the men's leadership expectations were the most likely to have been accessed.

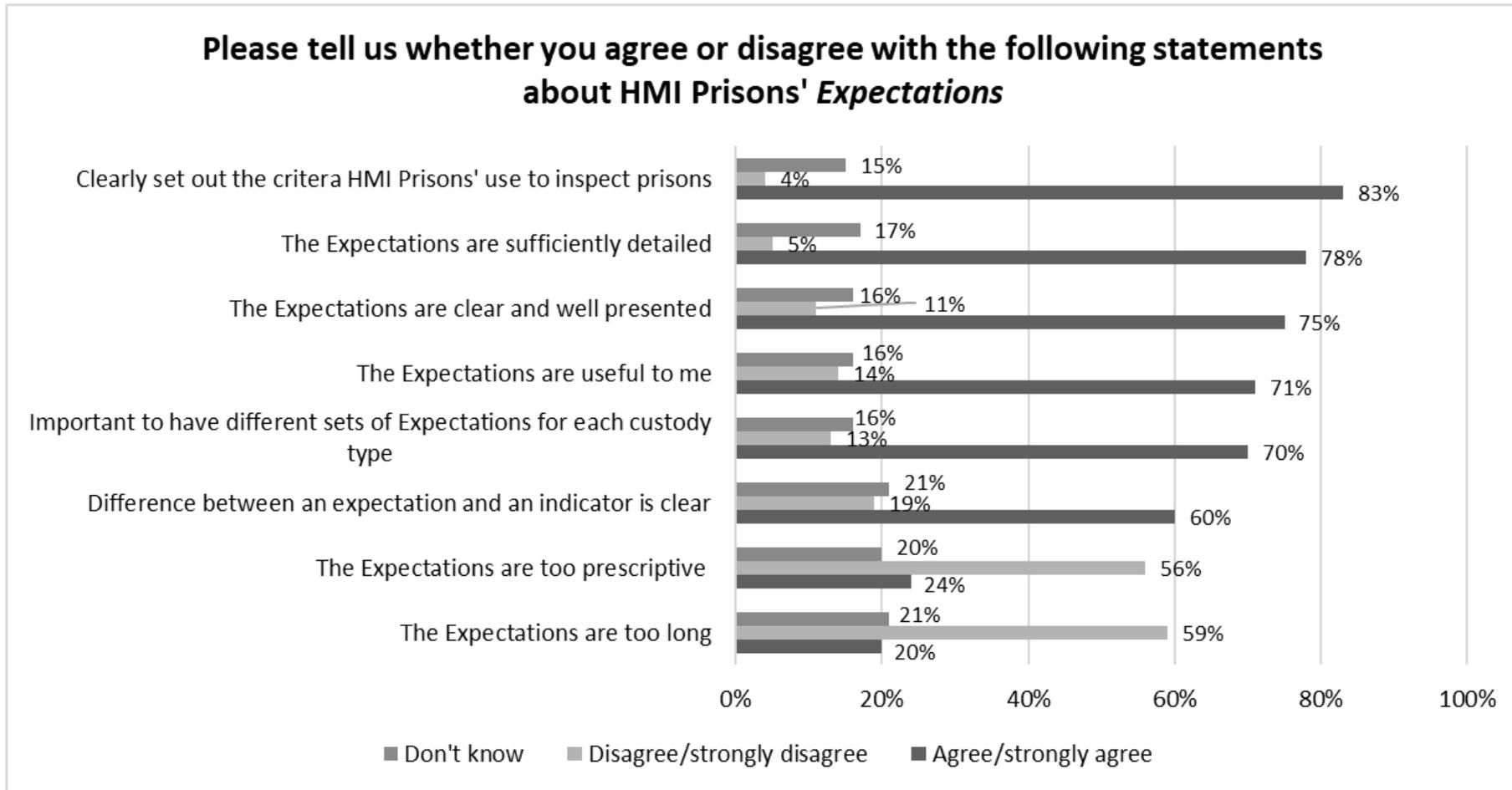
**Figure 13: Engagement with HMI Prisons' new Expectations**



Respondents were then asked to indicate their agreement with a series of statements about all of our *Expectations*, not just those published in the last 12 months.

Perceptions differed more greatly by stakeholder group when it came to *Expectations* than inspection reports. Again, this generally took the form of more positive attitudes indicated by independent scrutineers and 'other' stakeholders, and more negative attitudes indicated by practitioners and managers. All independent scrutineers (100%) agreed that the *Expectations* clearly set out HMI Prisons' inspection criteria, compared with only 75% of managers. Almost one-third (30%) of managers agreed that the *Expectations* are too prescriptive, compared with 0% of independent scrutineers. However, over one-quarter (27%) of independent scrutineers agreed that the *Expectations* are too long, compared with just 18% of managers. All independent scrutineers (100%) compared with just over one-third (67%) of managers agreed that the *Expectations* are clear and well-presented. In terms of usefulness of the *Expectations*, agreement that they are useful was high among independent scrutineers (92%) and 'other' stakeholders (87%) and lower among practitioners (66%) and managers (64%). Similarly, 100% of independent scrutineers and 86% of 'other' stakeholders agreed that the difference between an expectation and an indicator is clear, compared with only 55% of practitioners and 49% of managers.

**Figure 14: Overall stakeholder agreement with statements about HMI Prisons' Expectations**

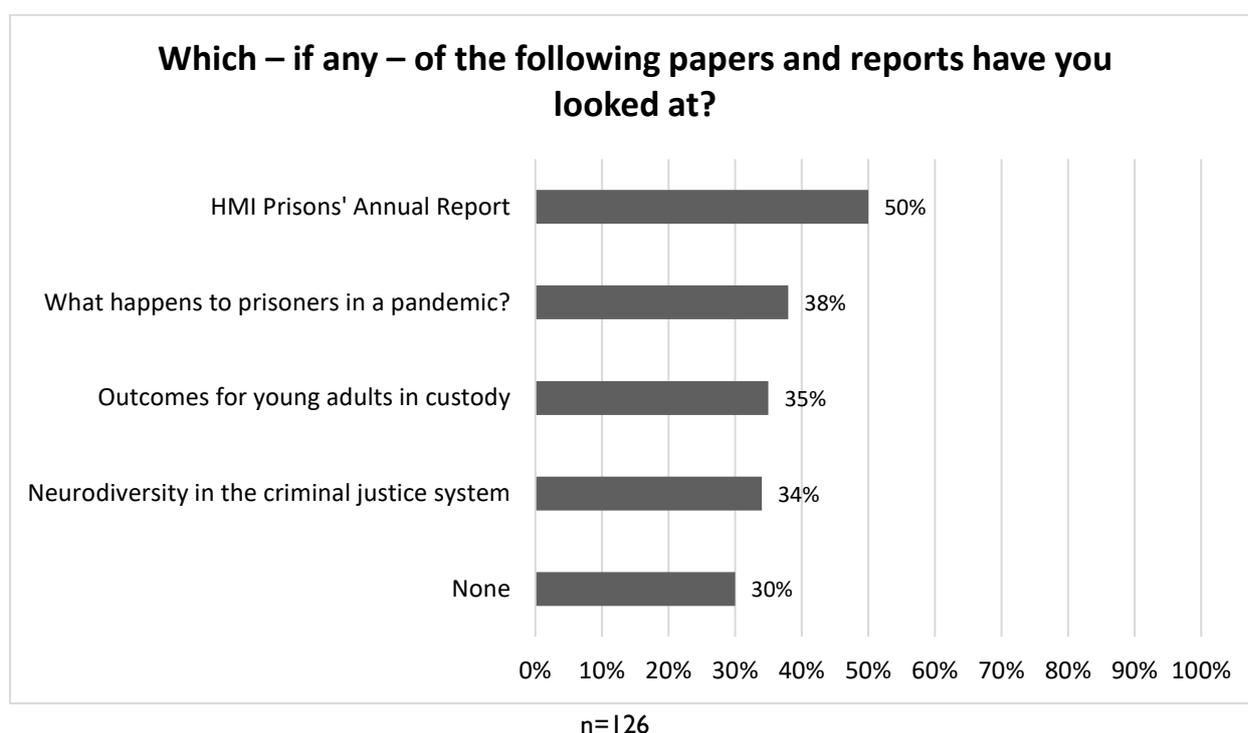


## Other HMI Prisons publications

Aside from scrutiny visit and full inspection reports, stakeholders were asked about their engagement with a range of other publications over the past 12 months, including thematic reports and our annual report.

Overall, just under three-quarters (71%) of respondents had looked at one or more of the thematic or annual reports published by HMI Prisons during the previous 12 months. Of these, the annual report was the most likely to have been seen.

**Figure 15: Engagement with HMI Prisons' other publications**



## Notable positive practice

Stakeholders were asked if they had looked at the notable positive practice on our website or on our LinkedIn page. Of the 125 respondents who answered this question, just under three-quarters (72%) said that they had looked at the notable positive practice.

## Twitter

Just under a third (31%) of respondents follow HMI Prisons on Twitter and 74% of followers reported that the tweets were either very or quite useful. However, a noteworthy proportion of followers (23%) said that tweets were not very useful.

## LinkedIn

Far fewer respondents (9%) said that they follow HM Inspectorate of Prisons on LinkedIn.

## **HMI Prisons' media coverage**

Stakeholders were asked if they had seen any print or heard any broadcast media about HMI Prisons in the last 12 months. Eighty-two of the 127 respondents answered this question. Among these respondents, there was a high recognition of media coverage about HMI Prisons inspections or reports. In terms of print or broadcast media, 66% of respondents reported seeing items about HMI Prisons on national TV, 54% in national newspapers, and 41% on national radio. Recognition of coverage in local print or broadcast media was markedly lower, with 26% of respondents saying they had seen or heard about HMI Prisons on local TV, 23% in local newspapers and 15% on local radio. In terms of online media coverage, respondents were most likely to have seen something about HMI Prisons in an online news story (87%), 29% had read about HMI Prisons in an online comment/analysis piece, and 17% on a discussion/chat forum. A very small number had read or heard about HMI Prisons on a blog or vlog (5%) or a podcast (6%).

## **Policy work**

Just under a third of respondents (28%) said that they had read or heard any of HMI Prisons' contributions to parliamentary inquiries or policy consultations. Respondents were then asked if they had responded to any of HMI Prisons' consultations over the last 12 months. Of the 122 respondents who answered this question, only 18% indicated that they had responded to one or more of HMI Prisons' consultations or attended any of our consultation events. The consultation that most respondents engaged with was the leadership *Expectations* in-person events/focus groups –14% of respondents said they had responded to it. Nine per cent had responded to the women's prisons *Expectations*, and just 2% had responded to the military custody *Expectations*. Those who indicated that they had engaged with one or more consultations were then asked to indicate their agreement with two statements about them. Of the 25 respondents who answered the first question, 92% strongly agreed or agreed (60% and 32%, respectively) that the purpose of HMI Prisons' consultation and how their contribution might be used were both made clear to them. Of the 24 respondents who answered the second question, 71% agreed or strongly agreed that the post-consultation feedback they received from HMI Prisons was useful and just 4% disagreed. A quarter (25%) said they had not received any feedback.

## **National Preventive Mechanism (NPM)**

There was limited awareness of the NPM among respondents (32% having heard of it prior to taking the survey). Among those who had heard of the NPM (n=58), there was reasonably good awareness of HMI Prisons' membership (62%). Over half (58%) of the 45 respondents who answered the question knew that HMI Prisons hosted the NPM Secretariat.

Under half (40%) of respondents who had heard of the NPM said they had visited the NPM website in the past 12 months, and just 16% said that they follow the NPM on Twitter.