

USER VOICE

ONLY OFFENDERS CAN STOP RE-OFFENDING



HM Inspectorate
of Probation

HMIP INSPECTION - THE VOICE OF PEOPLE ON PROBATION

FINDINGS FOR LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND

FEBRUARY 2023

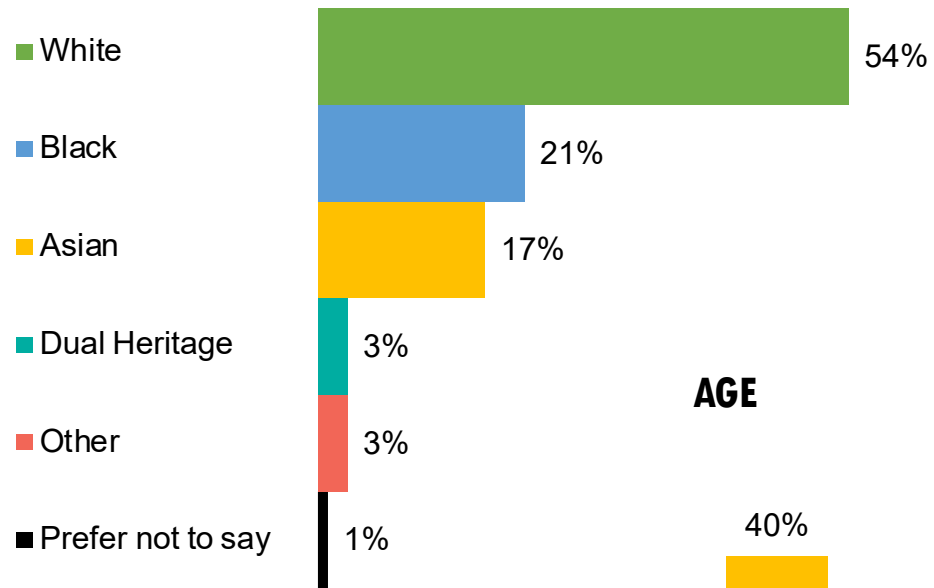
78 PEOPLE HAD THEIR SAY:

10 ONLINE SURVEYS

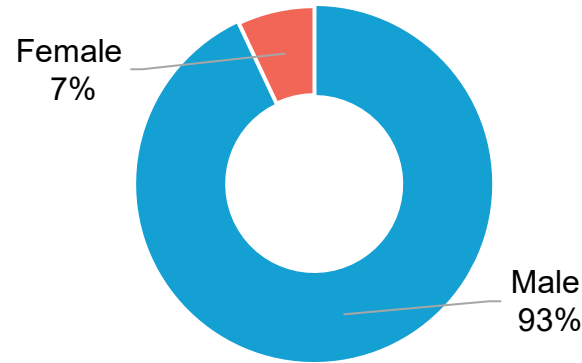
60 FACE-TO-FACE SURVEYS

8 IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

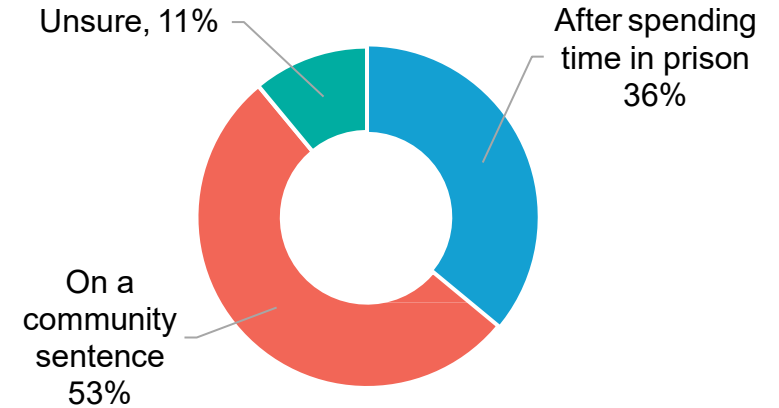
ETHNICITY



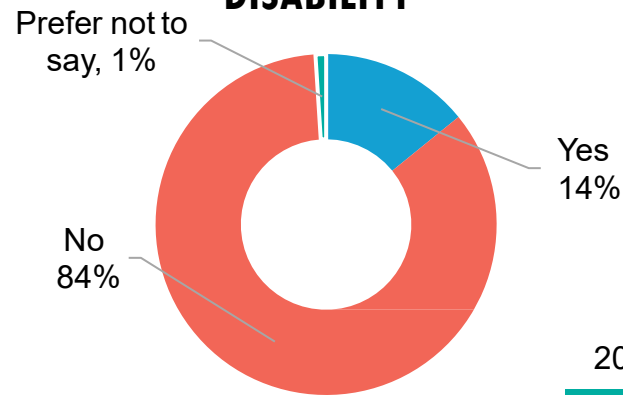
GENDER



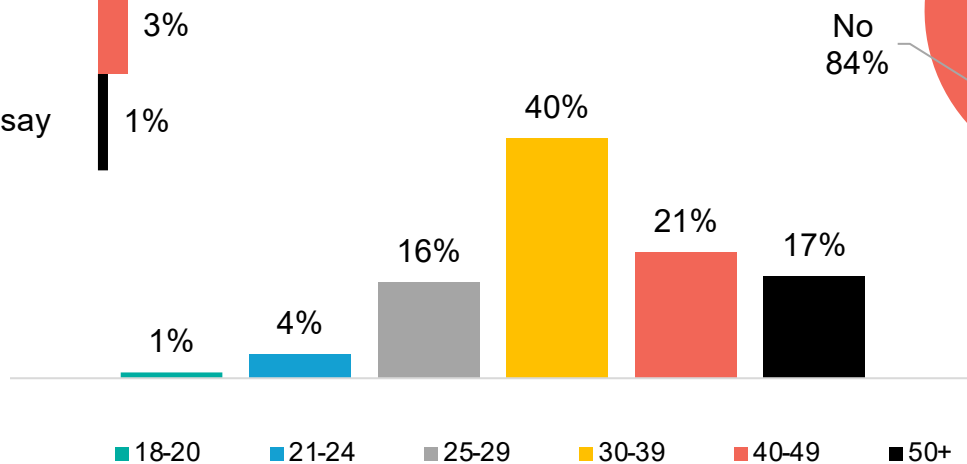
SENTENCE



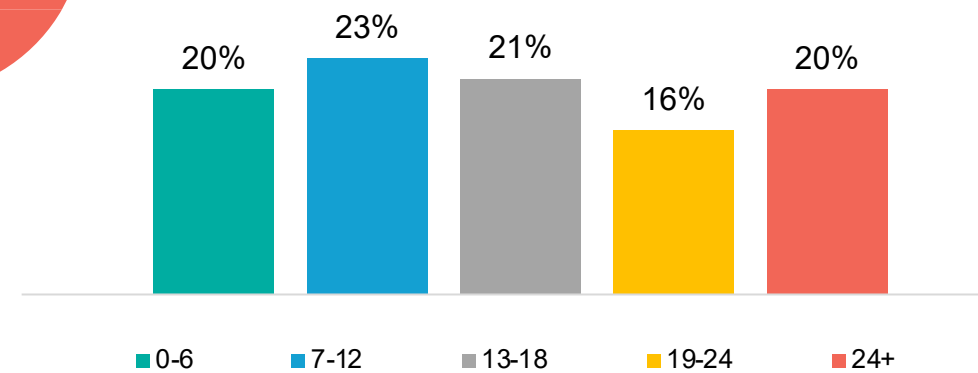
DISABILITY



AGE



TIME ON PROBATION (MONTHS)

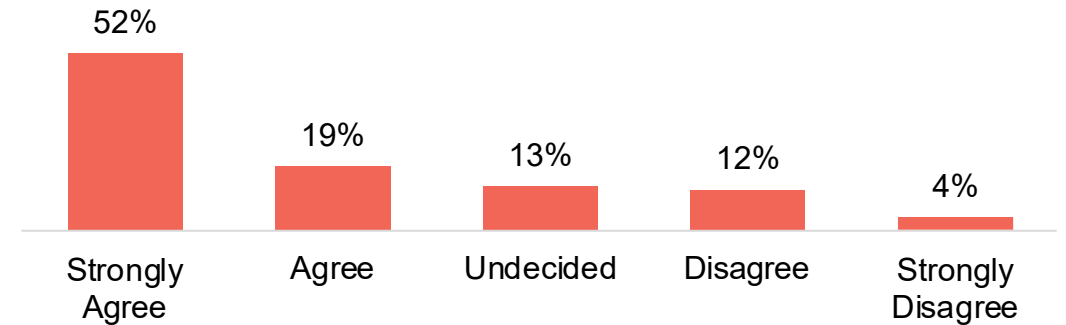


APPOINTMENTS WERE THE NUMBER ONE RESPONSE TO ‘WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST ISSUE?’

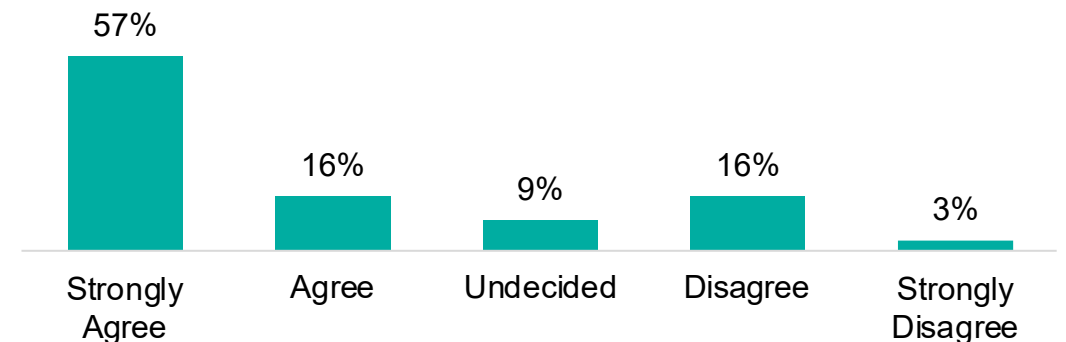
- **22%** (15/69) said that ‘**Appointments**’ are the biggest challenge regarding their probation experience – The most popular response.
- People on Probation feel like appointments often start late, so they are left waiting. People mentioned that there are consequences for them if they are the ones late for appointments but not for probation staff.
- Some report feeling confused due to not getting informed about changes made to their appointment times.
- **1 in 5** do not feel able to have appointments at a time that suits them.
- Some find travel distance and/or expenses to be an issue.

“I don’t see how it’s right. They can keep me waiting for ages and if I am late, they make a big deal of it. What happens when they are late? Sometimes I come here and my probation worker isn’t even in, it’s pointless seeing some random person. They should let me know before I get here if there’s any issues and rearrange an appointment if she’s not there.”

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 THEIR APPOINTMENTS

"She's helped me get supported accommodation in a dry house, as well as a job at the salvation army. She always keeps in contact with my partner too checking in to see if everything is okay with me and her. Elise is really helping me a lot the unit house is amazing and has really turned my life around."

"Got a decent place to stay thanks to my probation worker, saved me all the hassle to be fair. She has been really helpful looking out for me and has been flexible with appointments."

"The probation officer has been very understanding and nice, it's easy being open with her. She helped to back on track with medication and reduced my alcohol problem."

"Time is the issue; I am always left waiting in reception for ages. They don't communicate well enough, you sit there and no one says anything to you, if I don't chase, I would be waiting all day. Just see me on time, it's bad enough having to come here as it is."

"Due to a disability, there is a need for more consideration around appointments but there has been no help at all."

"Poor communication, well actually a lack of it. It's often a case of things getting mentioned but nothing ever happens. I was trying to get support for my drink and drug problem but it seems like it won't happen. I would like them to act on things they say."

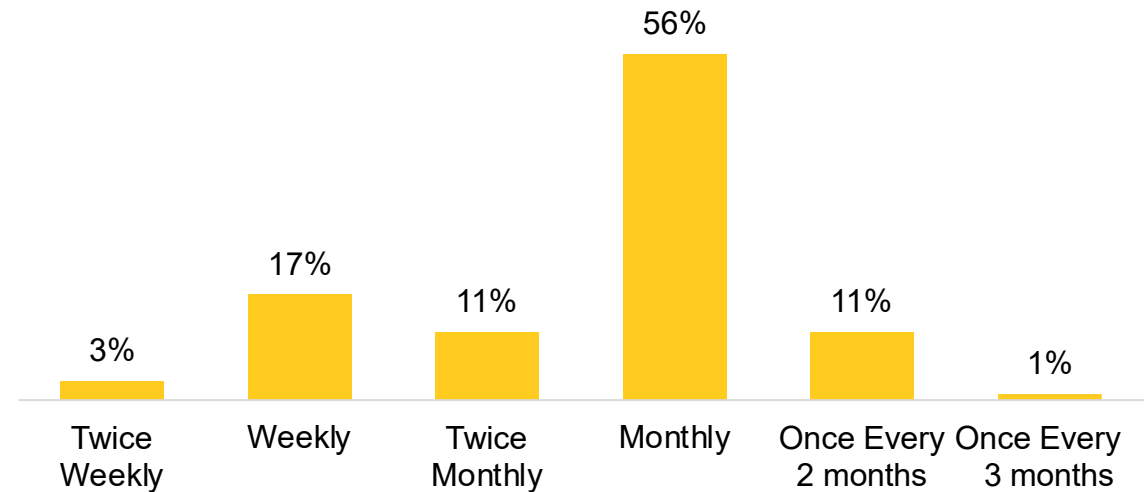
"Yes, I am finding my way again, staying sober and away from bad influences is key and we were able to find some housing that keeps me in a good space."

"Unpaid work not considerate of my work situation, I got a warning even though I work 6 days a week. The communication has been so poor during this time and not everyone knows what is going on. They need to be a bit more understanding and give me the chance to rebuild myself instead of stopping that from happening."

PEOPLE ON PROBATION WANT MONTHLY APPOINTMENTS

- **56%** of People on Probation (39/70) stated that they want monthly appointments – by far the most popular response.
- The type of contact People on Probation want varies, with the majority preferring face-to-face contact while others prefer telephone contact.
- Therefore, a tailored approach based on what works for both the People on Probation and PO is recommended.
- **46%** (32/70) surveyed stated that they have not been asked about their views on being on supervision. Whereas no-one interviewed felt like they had a say in how the probation service is run.
- Only **1** person interviewed had some idea how to raise a complaint.

Q: How often do you think you should see your probation officer?



“Should be offenders choice. Some people like to talk face to face and some people would rather talk over the phone.”

“No, I have dyslexia and they don’t support you to do this (raise complaints).”

“I don’t think it’s easy to do this, when I said I was unhappy at the start no one told me how to raise a complaint.”

“I think so, reception are good with that stuff (complaints).”

NEARLY 1 IN 3 REPORT THE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PO AS THE BEST PART OF THEIR EXPERIENCE

- **31%** (22/70) of those who answered stated their relationship with their PO when asked 'what has been good about your probation experience?' – The most popular response other than 'no positives.'
- However, many experience a high turnover of Probation Officers affects the experience of People on Probation in a negative way in Leicestershire & Rutland.
- **16%** (11/70) stated that their relationship with Probation Officers is what could be improved the most, the second most frequent response. This is mostly due to
 - Poor communication between courts, prisons, probation and the individual.
 - A lack of handover when a Probation Officer change results in frustration because of having to start all over again.
 - Some report experiencing a lack flexibility getting in their way of advancing.

"My probation workers is good and we work on things together well, she supported me in getting some help for my mental health, its still going on but it is helping."

"Probation officer changed recently and sent me a warning as they didn't tell the next officer that I was due to get off soon, they should have told the next person everything and also call me to tell me when they wanted me in again as I thought I was finished."

"Its really good, they understand me well and she always hears me out. It sort of feels like she's my therapist."

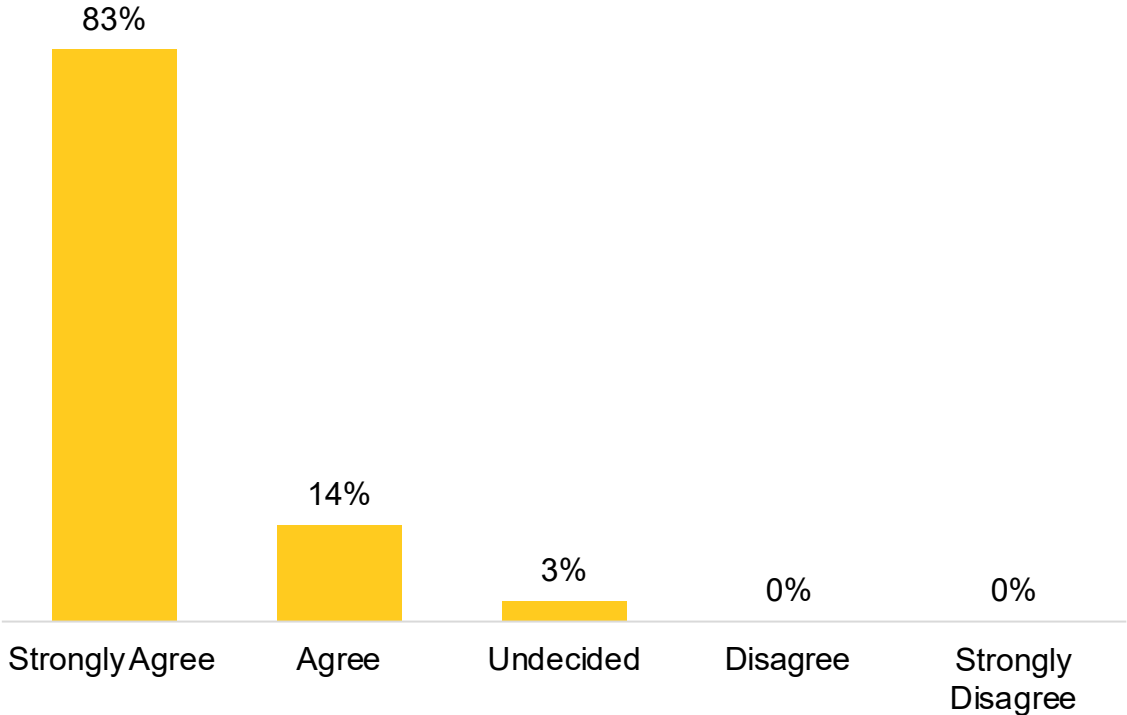
"I have had my probation worker change a fair few times and I don't mind it too much but when you start with someone else they increase appointments so they can get to know you, I don't think it's too fair on me."

"I have had a number of different probation workers now and its so bad, some of the new ones don't tell you when you have an appointment then try and breach you. Its also so expensive to get here, they don't pay for your travel or help you."

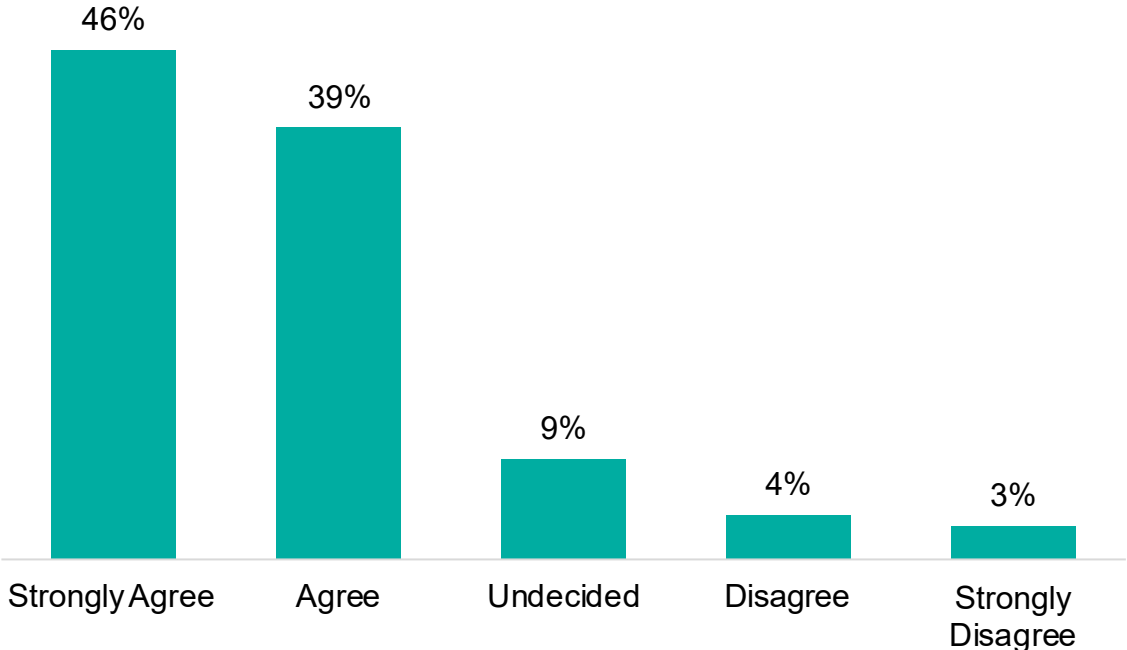
"My probation worker has been good with me and gives me confidence in myself. I wouldn't have been able to get on with my life without confronting my past and she's helped me do that."

PEOPLE FEEL SAFE AT PROBATION OFFICES AND ARE ABLE TO HAVE PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS WITH THEIR POs

Q: I feel safe accessing probation services



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



HALF OF THOSE SURVEYED FELT UNSUPPORTED ACCESSING SERVICES

- **40%** (28/70) do not need help accessing services in Leicestershire & Rutland
- Majority of those interviewed found the services provided to be both accessible and relevant to their personal needs. Those surveyed had more varied experiences.
- There's a good level of support offered in terms of mental health support, education, training and employment.
- Experiences with housing are more varied, some receive support while others do not. Some hold the council responsible for hindering the process.
- The majority of those required to attend unpaid work as part of their license had generally negative experiences with UPW.

44% CAN ACCESS SERVICES RELEVANT TO THEIR PERSONAL NEEDS

45% HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ACCESS TO SERVICES IN THEIR LOCAL AREA

45% HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ACCESS SERVICES IN A REASONABLE TIME

"I am homeless at the moment and nothing with will change, it's been the same situation for months and no one can do anything to help me. I am tired of being made to wait, they should do more for people like me as I keep ending up with the wrong crowd and going back inside."

"It's been helpful to get employment support, I wasn't too sure having a record as to what we can and can't do now, so I have been referred to a employment hub and I'm hoping it's going to help."

"Unpaid work not considerate of my work situation, I got a warning even though I work 6 days a week. The communication has been so poor during this time and not everyone knows what is going on. They need to be a bit more understanding and give me the chance to rebuild myself instead of stopping that from happening."

PEOPLE EXPERIENCE POOR COMMUNICATION REGARDING THEIR ORDER/LICENSE

- Instances of poor communication on order/license are frequent among responses.
- 1 in 8** (9/69) think communication on order/license is their biggest issue whilst on probation – higher than most other regions
- This often results in lack of trust between Probation Officer and the person on Probation.
- 5 in 9** people interviewed had a positive induction experience. Those that did not reflected on feeling confusion and lack of continuity between prison and probation.

"I got a letter about unpaid work once but no one has followed this up and I have no idea what's happening. I was then in court and they increased my unpaid work as I hadn't done any yet, I don't think that's really right. They need someone to explain what is going on to the courts, cause the excuse I get given is Covid."

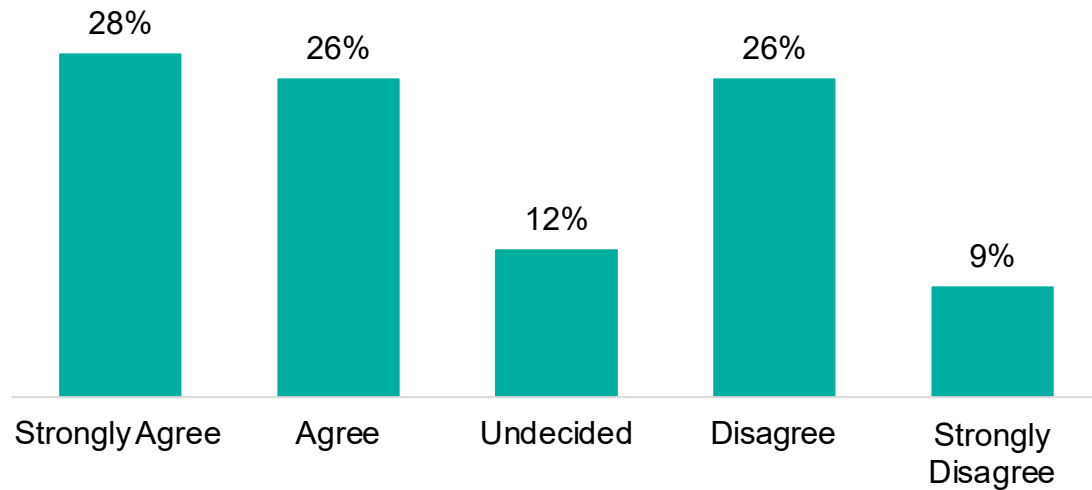
"I was in D cat, then home on but was asked to sign a standard licence and now suddenly I am being told they are adding more conditions to my licence without discussing it with me or me agreeing to it. It will impact my ability to see my kids. It should be clear from the start as to what is going to happen."

"Community service has taken 3 years and extended my time on probation because of this. I have missed out on so many jobs as a result of this. They changed my probation worker 8 times in 3 years too. I was only done for drink driving but all this time coming to probation because I wasn't able to get my community service done. It took them 6 months to transfer my community service to my voluntary work I do."

"My induction was good, we went over a plan of what these appointments are for and I have a much better understanding of the fact they can actually help me too."

OVER HALF ARE HAPPY WITH THE SUPPORT THEY RECEIVE FROM PROBATION. WHEREAS 37% STATED THEY ENCOUNTER NO POSITIVES REGARDING THEIR EXPERIENCE.

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



“My probation worker is pretty sound, she listens to my views on things and if theres something we can do to resolve any issues we will make a plan. Like when I had a housing crisis and needed a place to go, we managed to get a hostel sorted short-term.”

“Doesn’t seem to be much help or offering. More so with people who do have support, I understand others without said support would need extra but I also need help in housing and it just hasn’t been there.”

“They are good people here; my probation worker is very helpful and has helped me get some support locally for my mental health.”

“The people I've had interaction with (probation officer & unpaid work supervisor) have been really nice and polite but the system doesn't help anybody it's a complete waste of time.”

PEOPLE ON PROBATION'S SOLUTIONS TO THE ISSUES THEY FACE

- **35%** (24/69) of People on Probation in Leicestershire and Rutland said “nothing can be improved” regarding their probation experience
- People want Probation staff to be accountable like they are for missing/being late to appointments.
- People want clarity on their order/license, a better handover process and an improved communication within the system (inbetween prison and probation).
- Financial support for travel as they are travelling long distances to get to appointments which is costly.
- Continuity with Probation Officers - the revolving door of Probation Officers affects their progress and rehabilitation.
- There needs to be a more flexible approach for working People on Probation.
- People want more support for services and particularly housing.
- People on Probation want a better process for getting UPW that is better suited to their interests and needs.

“I feel there could be more support for travel as I have recently lost out on job vacancies due to lack of transport. Most recently I have been more involved with ingenious as I am out of work.”

“I think better communications at the different levels (could be improved), courts and probation etc.”

“They always keep me waiting, if I'm late I'd be sanctioned. They should track their own lateness too and also allow us opportunities if we are late.”

“Communication needs to be a lot better and I need one probation worker as I have to start again each time otherwise.”

“It's a bit expensive to get here as I have to travel by bus and takes a while. They could at least help me with my travel.”

“If there was one thing it's the time keeping, I am always on time but it is very rare I am seen at that time. I am not sure what they need to do to make this better but it's obviously an issue as I am always seeing people complaining about it.”