

USER VOICE

ONLY OFFENDERS CAN STOP RE-OFFENDING



HM Inspectorate
of Probation

CAPTURING THE VOICE OF PEOPLE ON PROBATION FOR THE MANCHESTER NORTH INSPECTION

PUBLISHED W/C 22 MAY 2023

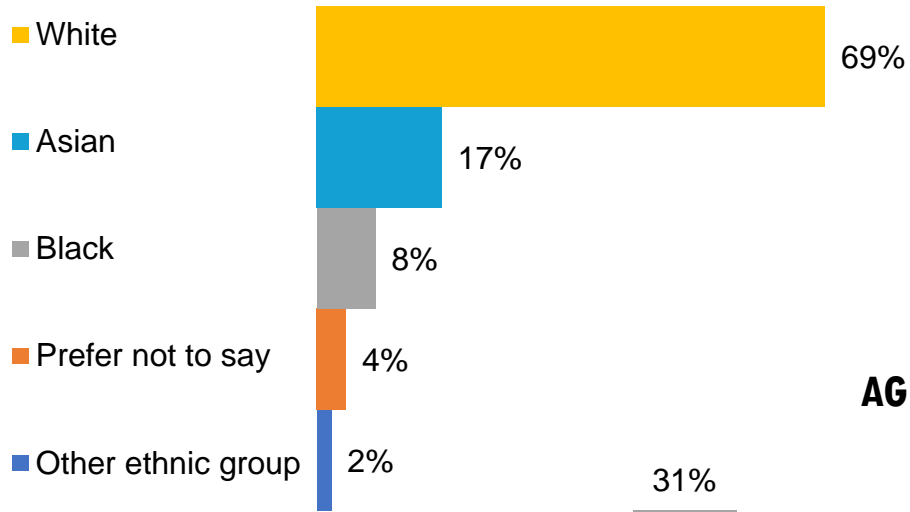
51 PEOPLE HAD THEIR SAY:

2 ONLINE SURVEYS

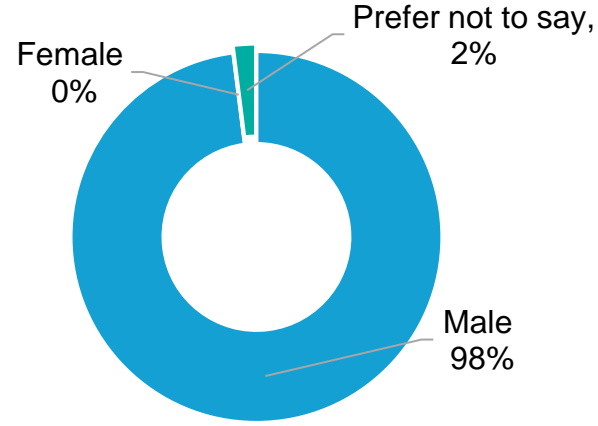
46 FACE TO FACE SURVEYS

3 IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

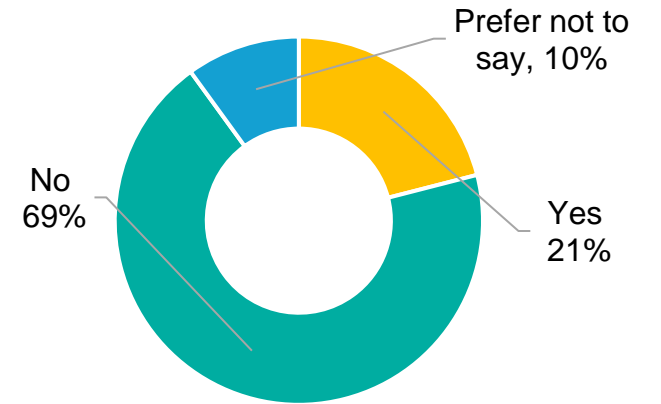
ETHNICITY



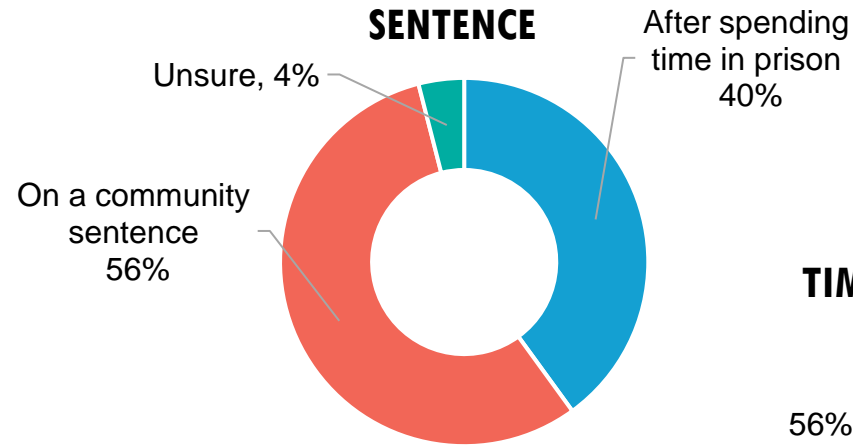
GENDER



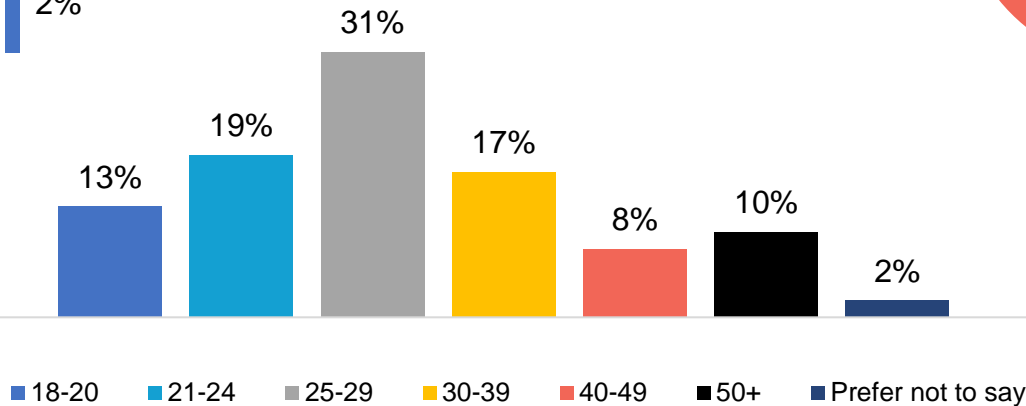
DISABILITY



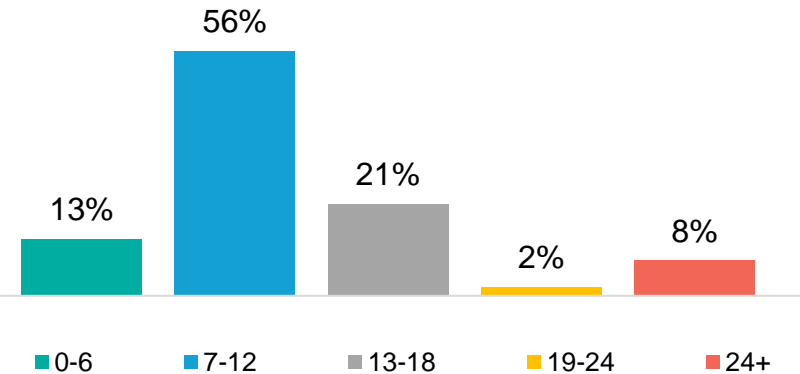
SENTENCE



AGE



TIME ON PROBATION (MONTHS)



APPOINTMENTS WERE PEOPLE ON PROBATION'S BIGGEST ISSUE IN MANCHESTER NORTH

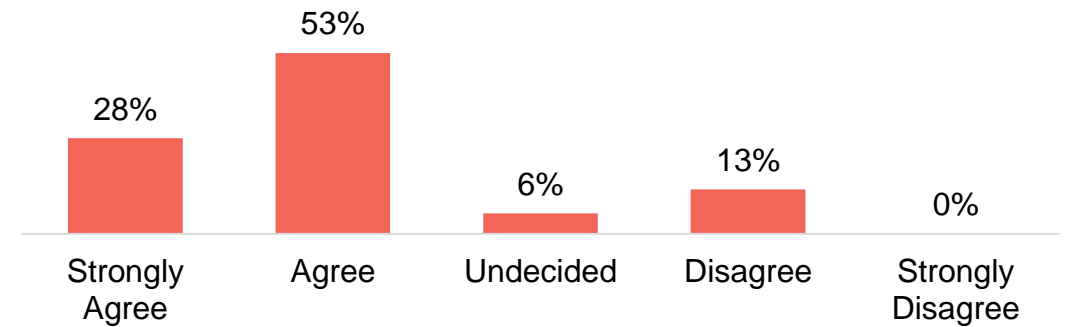
- **23%** (11/48) said that '**appointments**' are their biggest challenge during their probation experience – the most popular response for those with issues other than 'Nothing can be improved.' The most common causes of dissatisfaction were:

- A lack of real induction.
- Unhelpful appointments that are just 'tick box exercises.'
- A lack of flexibility with appointment time.
- Long waiting times due to rooms not being available.

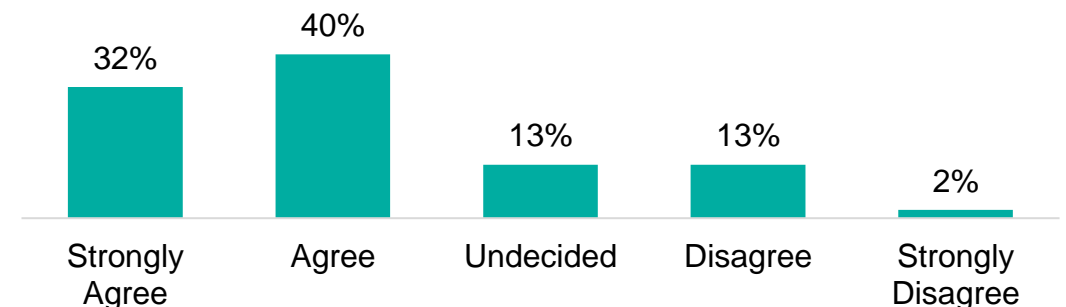
- **13%** (6/48) stated that '**appointments**' are what has been good about their probation experience. This was for the following reasons:

- Help with achieving their goals.

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



VOICES OF PEOPLE ON PROBATION IN MANCHESTER NORTH REGARDING THEIR EXPERIENCE ATTENDING APPOINTMENTS

"It's annoying being told of what time my appointment was with no discussion and when I have other things to do."

"I can have a chat but not sure it's helpful really."

"On the outside probation were not helpful and I didn't really get an induction."

"I don't need anything, courses, help etc. I feel the appointments are largely a tick box exercise."

"Rooms not being available for appointments and having to wait long periods for appointments."

"In Manchester, yes, I am getting what I need out of my appointments. Bolton are useless and unhelpful. Manchester are helping me to achieve my goals."

"Appointment slots kept changing."

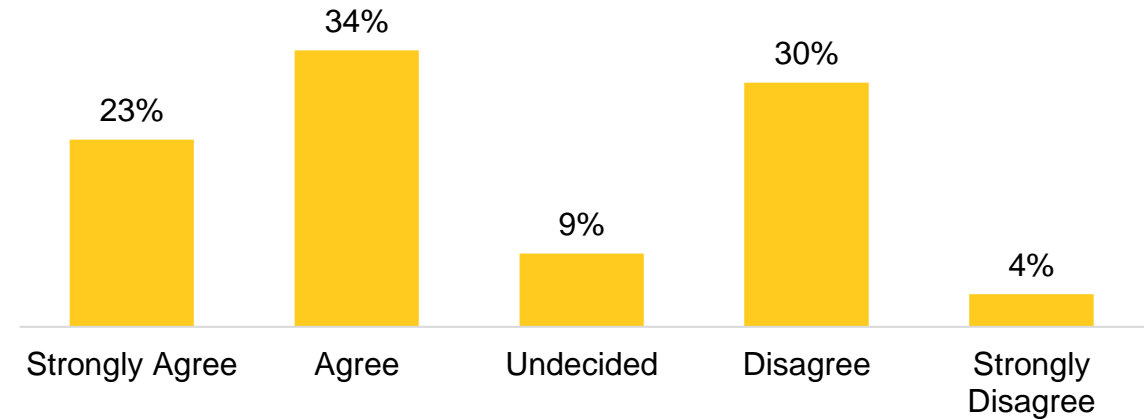
"Terrible, I didn't really have an induction, didn't discuss my sentence plan or licence or anything."

"My appointment gets cancelled sometimes, that's the only good thing."

1 IN 3 PEOPLE FEEL UNSAFE WHILST IN THE REDFERN BUILDING PROBATION OFFICE

Q: I feel safe accessing the probation office

- **57%** (27/47) of People on Probation in Manchester North stated that they feel safe accessing the probation office, whereas **34%** (16/47) stated that they felt unsafe.
- This is significantly lower than other regions, where on average **86%** feel safe in their probation office, and only **7%** feel unsafe.
- People reported that they often come across others they would rather avoid.



"Keeping away from people I used to know is difficult."

"Having to sit in a room with others I don't like."

PEOPLE ON PROBATION STRUGGLE WITH THE DISTANCE TO TRAVEL FOR APPOINTMENTS

- Travel was the biggest issue for **15%** (7/48) of those surveyed, which is high compared to other regions (**7%**).
- The majority of these issues relate to the distance travelled via public transport to get to appointments that don't last very long.

"Travelling here is a problem due to distance."

"Getting here is difficult."

"Getting here due to the distance, I'm miles out, it's an hour travelling."

"Travel is difficult to the Manchester office."

PEOPLE IN MANCHESTER NORTH GENERALLY HAVE POSITIVE OPINIONS OF THEIR PROBATION OFFICER

- **46%** (22/48) 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 current Probation Officer.
- People often reflected on feeling well supported by their PO with employment, drug support, and housing. In general, people feel that their PO listens.
- The **10%** (5/48) for which their Probation Officer was their biggest issue, had issues due to the frequent changing of POs and the attitude of the individual PO.

"My probation officer has kept great track of my employment and has been a staple in making sure that I'm comfortable with employment and works great around my work patterns."

"Alex is a good officer, having been moved around a lot with loads of different POs."

"My PO kept me sane and is very good and easy to talk to."

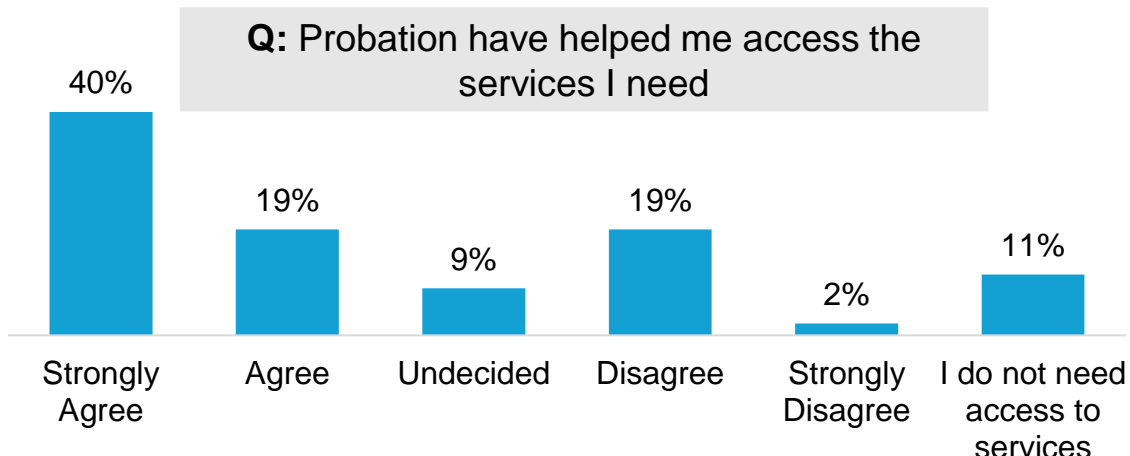
"They are willing to work with me. My PO goes above and beyond."

"Nothing is good. my PO isn't really helping me, and he is arrogant."

"My first officer was horrible, arguing and shouting. My current officer is good. My first officer stormed off and I raised a complaint, but nothing was done about his behaviour, I was ignored."

2 IN 3 CAN ACCESS THE SERVICES THEY NEED IN MANCHESTER NORTH

- **65%** (28/43) of those that need support accessing services feel that probation have helped them access it.
- **95%** (41/43) have been able to access services relevant to their personal needs, which is significantly higher than the national average.
- Signposting for **housing, substance misuse, and employment** is seen by people as being effective and is well appreciated in the area. Although for some it is still difficult, with **13%** saying **housing** is their biggest challenge.



"I've been helped with housing, and they gave me a phone and I have had some good advice and they have been helpful."

"My PO found me a drug support centre."

"They helped me find a house."

"I'm homeless and can't seem to get any help."

"Probation helped me find a place in a hostel."

"Helping me with housing at the Manchester office. Bolton are just telling me I'm going to be homeless."

2 IN 3 HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ACCESS SERVICES IN THEIR LOCAL AREA AND ALSO ACCESS THEM IN A REASONABLE TIME

**95% HAVE
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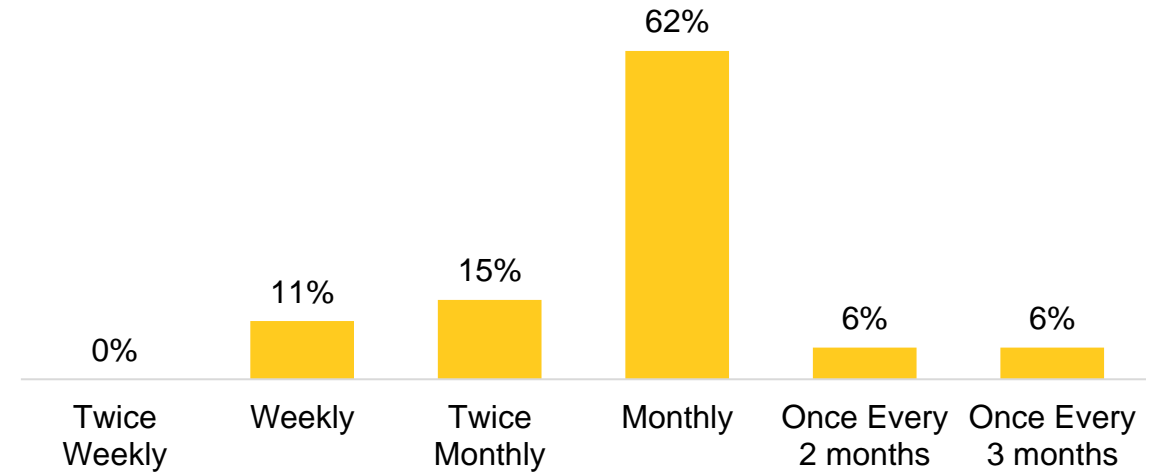
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PEOPLE WANT MONTHLY APPOINTMENTS IN MANCHESTER NORTH

- People on Probation prefer telephone contact in Manchester North.
- Nearly **2 in 3** (29/47) prefer monthly appointments.
- The frequency of contact wanted depends on the individual and their need for support.
- **84%** (39/46) of 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?



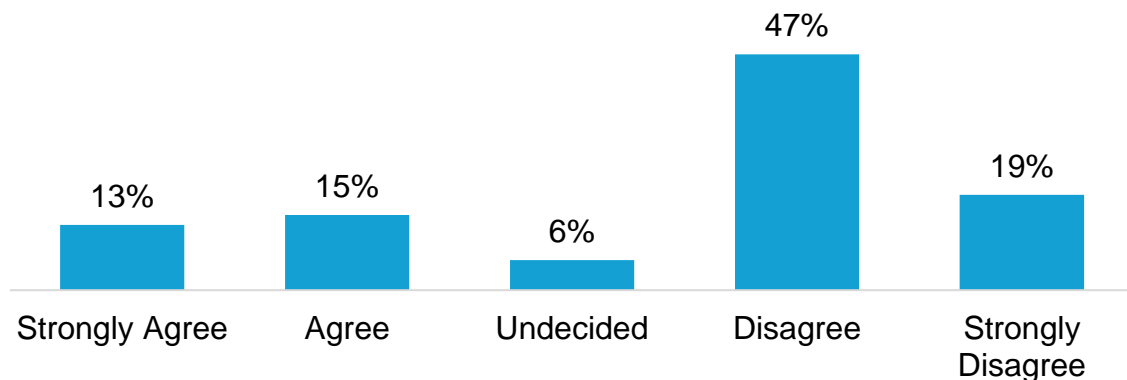
“Monthly by phone, I’m at the end of my probation period and I think weekly is too much.”

“Never really but by phone if needed. I was done for malicious communications and I’m made to come in her with all these scary hard guys. They went overboard with my sentence and my supervision.”

2 IN 3 PEOPLE ON PROBATION FEEL LIKE THEIR VOICE ISN'T HEARD IN MANCHESTER NORTH

- **66%** (31/47) of those surveyed have not been asked their views about being on probation in Manchester North.
- This is an average response in general but is high considering inspections, since the ePOP programmes have been rolled out across probation regions.
- People don't seem to know the pathway for making complaints. When some individuals have complained, they feel like it has fallen on deaf ears.

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



"Not being listened to. I have issues that I raise but probation aren't listening."

"Not really, they tell you what's going on, but they don't ask me."

"No say at all, I've never been asked."

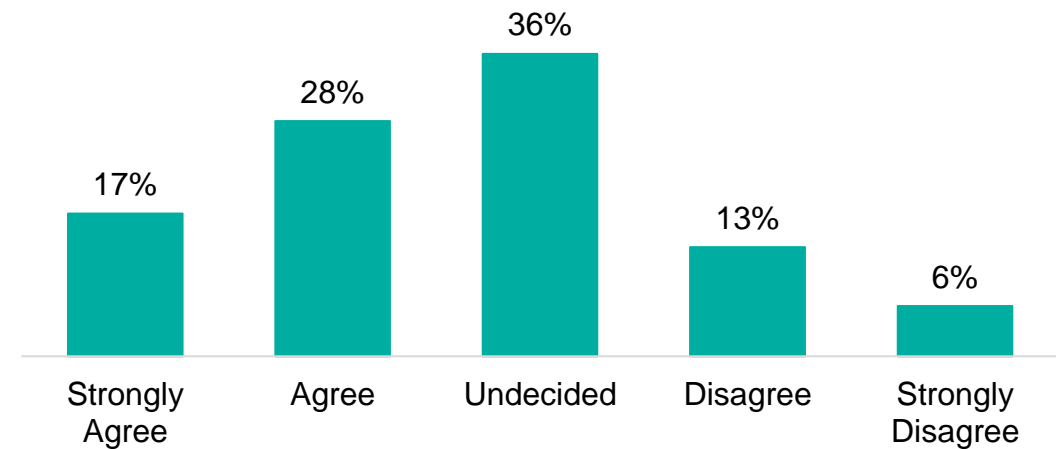
"I have complained to two line managers at Manchester and nothing was done at all about a legitimate issue I raised. My PO was in the wrong and I didn't get a satisfactory reply to my complaint."

"No idea how to make complaints at all. It was never mentioned."

LESS THAN HALF ARE HAPPY WITH THE OVERALL SUPPORT THEY RECEIVE FROM PROBATION

- **45%** (21/48) are happy with their overall probation experience in Manchester North. This is lower than the national average of **66%** across other regions. The most popular response in Manchester North was 'undecided.'
- **27%** (13/48) answered '**nothing can be improved**' when asked about the issues they had and what improvements they would like to see in probation.
- Whereas **25%** (12/48) stated that there were '**no positives**' regarding their probation experience.
- When People on Probation are happy with their overall probation experience, the relationship with their Probation Officer stands out as the reason why.

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



PEOPLE ON PROBATION'S SOLUTIONS TO THE ISSUES THEY FACE IN MANCHESTER NORTH

- People in Manchester North want their voice to be heard. They want to be asked about their probation experience.
- People want a less chaotic experience in the Redfern building, particularly on Mondays and Wednesdays. As a result of the high footfall and encountering individuals from their personal life, people feel unsafe.
- People on Probation would like to reduce travel times to appointments.
- Continuity with Probation Officers is imperative.
- People on Probation should have clarity regarding the complaint process.

“I want to be asked how I feel about things and to be listened to if I have a problem.”

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