

USER VOICE

ONLY OFFENDERS CAN STOP RE-OFFENDING



HM Inspectorate
of Probation

CAPTURING THE VOICE OF PEOPLE ON PROBATION FOR THE KNOWSLEY AND ST HELENS INSPECTION

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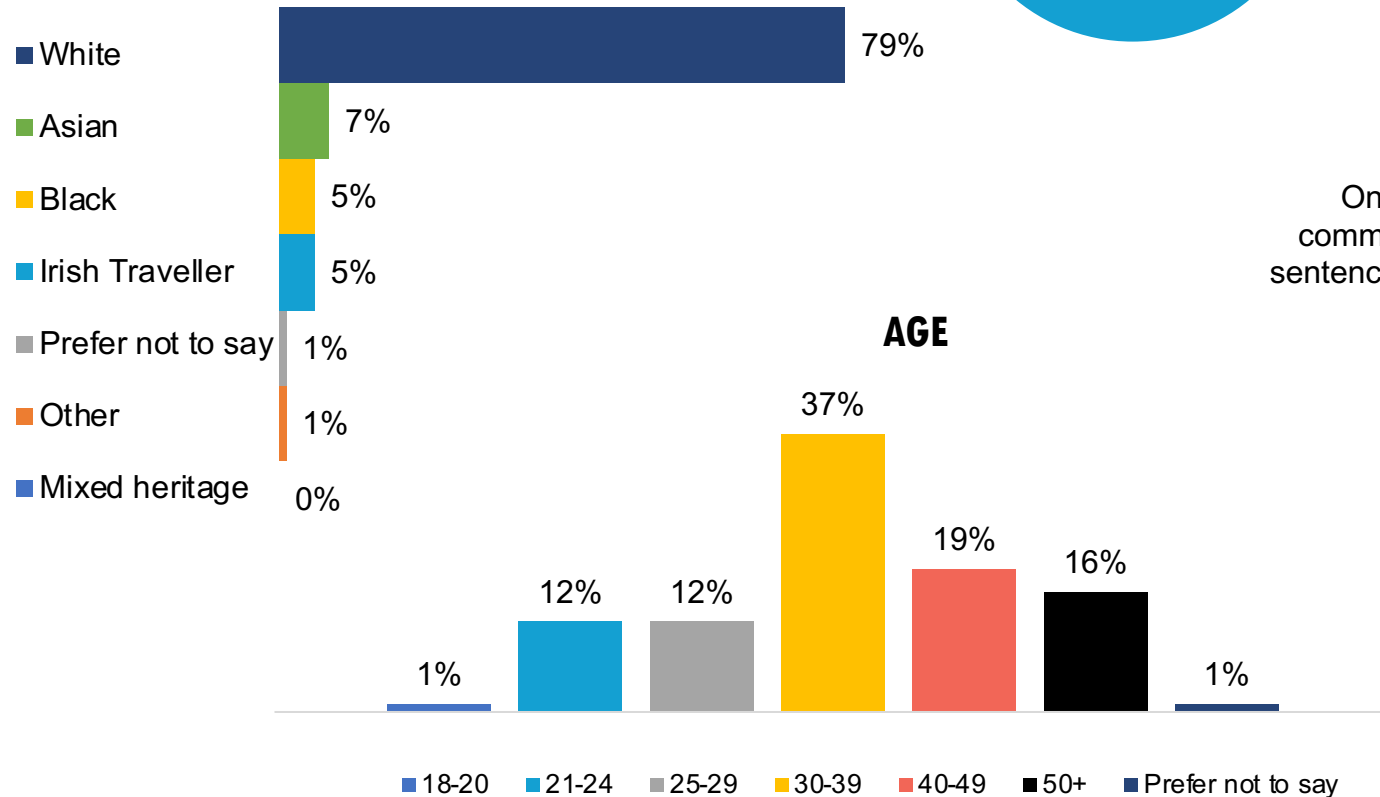
88 PEOPLE HAD THEIR SAY:

10 ONLINE SURVEYS

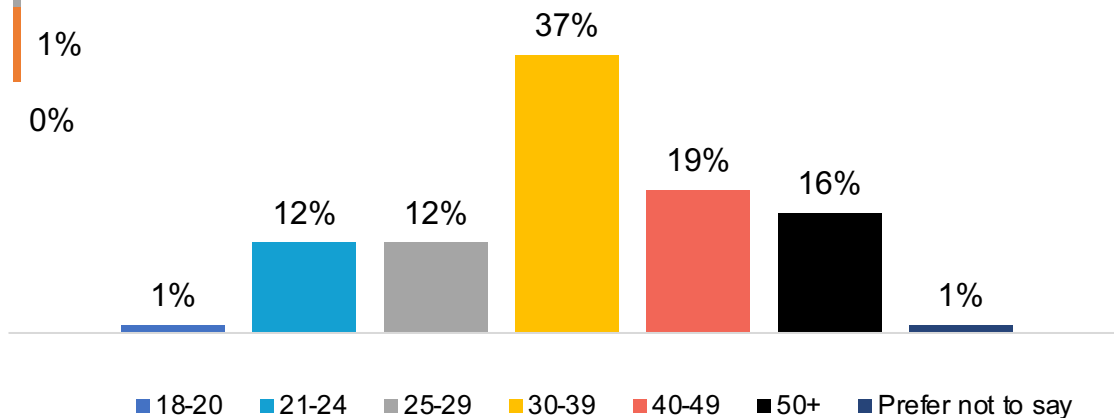
63 FACE TO FACE SURVEYS

15 IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

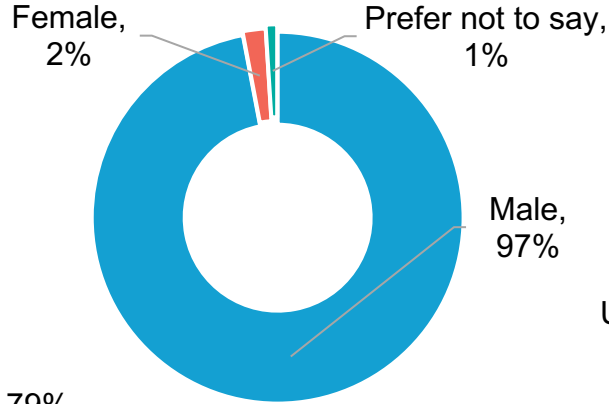
ETHNICITY



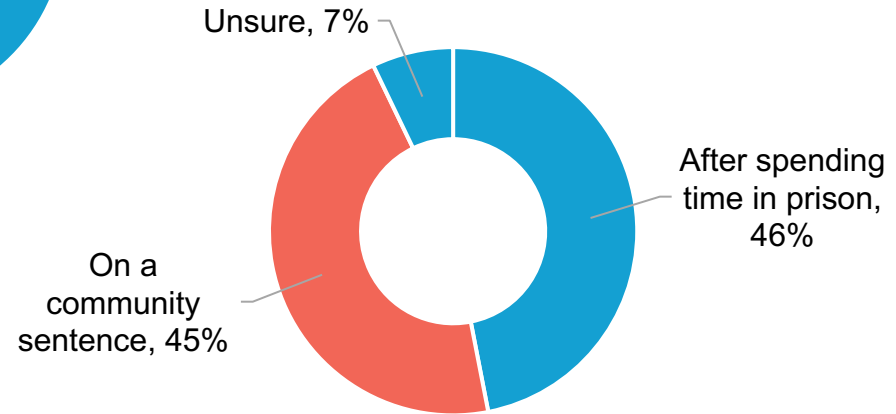
AGE



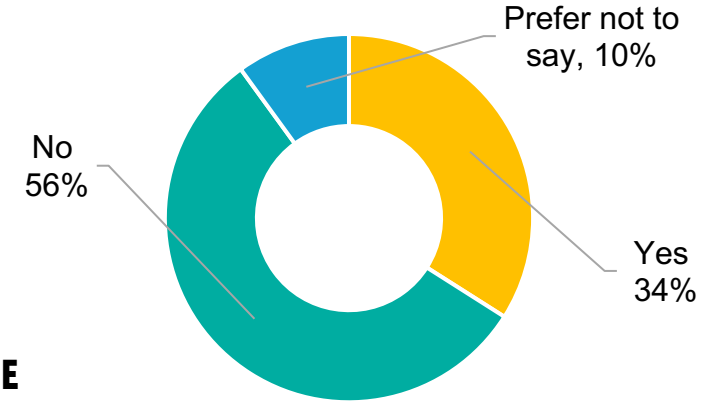
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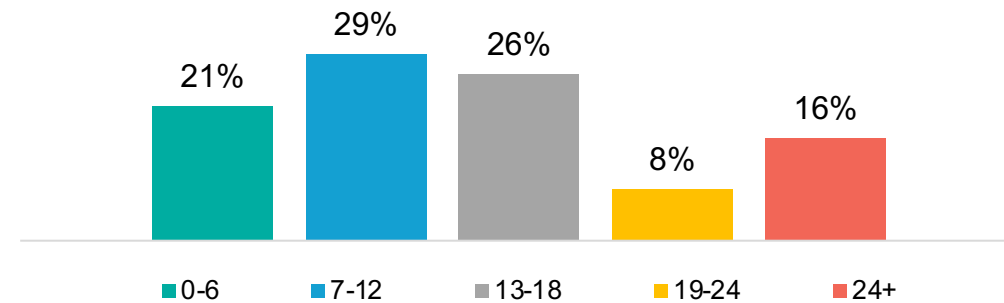
SENTENCE



DISABILITY

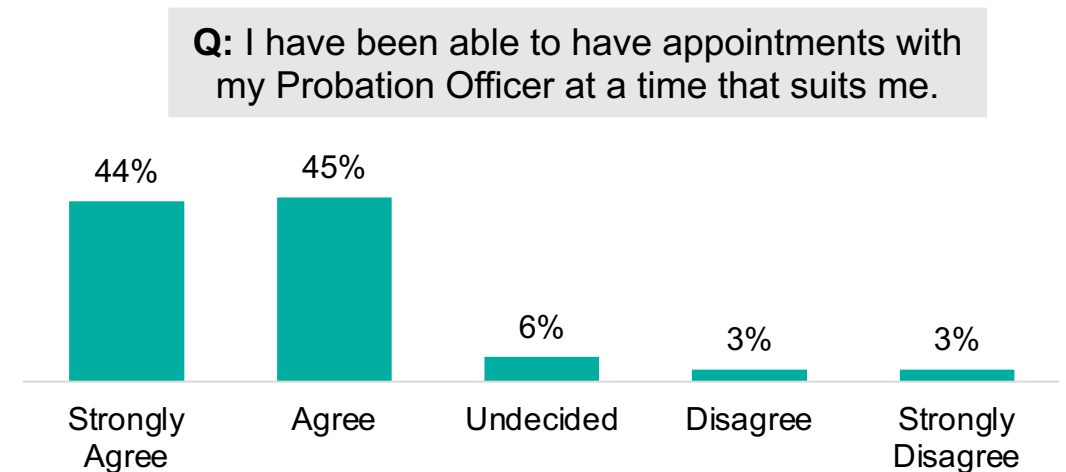
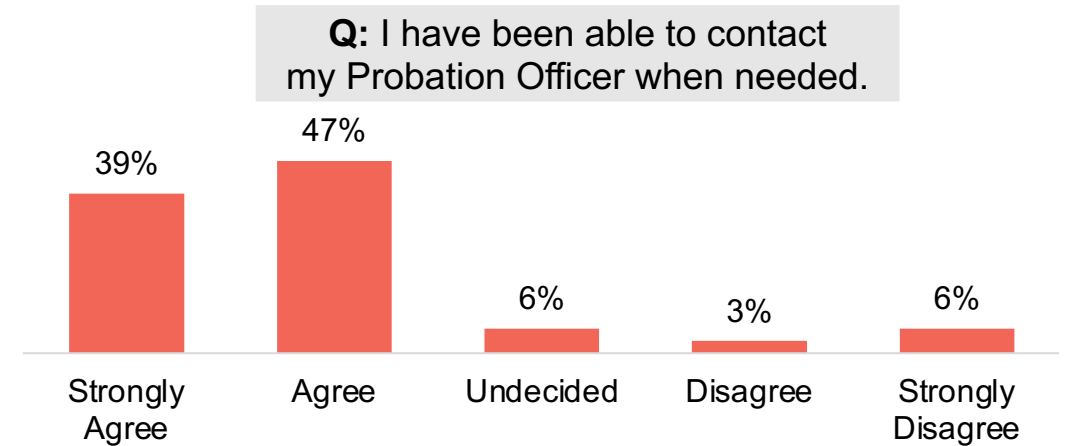


TIME ON PROBATION (MONTHS)



THERE IS POLARITY IN PEOPLE'S EXPERIENCE WITH APPOINTMENTS IN KNOWSLEY AND ST HELENS

- **22%** (14/65) reported '**appointments**' as their biggest challenge whilst on probation. When People on Probation had an issue, appointments was the most frequently cited issue.
- However, **24%** (16/68) reported '**appointments**' as what has been good regarding their probation experience. This demonstrates that People on Probation are having extremely varied experiences with appointments.
- The main causes of dissatisfaction with appointments were:
 - Lack of flexibility with the form of supervision
 - Long distances travelled for, often, pointless appointments
 - Wait times for appointments.



THE VOICE OF PEOPLE ON PROBATION IN KNOWSLEY AND ST HELENS REGARDING THEIR EXPERIENCE ATTENDING APPOINTMENTS

"My Probation Officer is sound and really helpful. They get the best out of me during appointments."

"My probation always keeps her appointments on time."

"Yes, got my head sorted, they are supportive and have helped me with suicide prevention."

"I would prefer video or phone calls as I am working and its hard to get time off work. Its not a good use of my time. I am stable and in a good place. I don't need the support."

"It takes me over an hour to get to probation."

"The times we need to be at appointments is hard, maybe they can have appointments in the evening."

"Fine it's a good balance and they support me being Bi-polar which is good."

"Waiting times are always ages."

"I see my Probation Officer every 2 weeks and would prefer to see speak with them on the phone or video call. I have to travel to probation on a bus which they give me a bus pass for, but it's a nightmare. Reception staff are friendly and outgoing ."

1 IN 5 STRUGGLE WITH TRAVEL IN KNOWSLEY AND ST HELENS

- Travel was the second biggest issue for **20%** (13/65) of those surveyed which was the most popular response. This is high compared to other regions as the national average is **9%**.
- The vast majority of those that stated **'travel'** as their biggest issue attended the St Helens office and struggled for the following reasons:
 - The remote setting of the office.
 - The distance travelled to appointments.
 - Financial difficulties and the fact that the travel card issued doesn't work on the Arriva line which is most convenient.

"It takes me over an hour to get to probation."

"Being on time is difficult because of public transport, however my Probation Officer is very accommodating."

"The location is bad of the probation office and it takes me over an hour to get there."

"The location is difficult to find and a nightmare to get to."

"My biggest problem is getting here."

"Found it hard to travel and make it on time for appointments, I don't want to be recalled."

THERE ARE FEW NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES WITH PROBATION OFFICERS IN KNOWSLEY AND ST HELENS

- Only **3%** (2/65) people stated the relationship with their Probation Officer as their biggest issue during their probation experience.
- **15%** (10/68) stated that '**PO/Service user relationships**' are what has been good about their probation experience
- Those that did have a positive experience put it down to their PO being supportive and helpful.
- **13%** (9/68) stated '**reception**' as what has been good about their probation experience. This is high compared to national figures (**6%**).

"The support from Lisa , Anita and Steph has been phenomenal . Honestly, I am thankful that I got them to help me as they are lovely, supportive and professional people."

"My Probation Officer is sound and really helpful, they get the best out of me."

"Good, I get on well with my Probation Officer and reception staff are decent and talk to you like your a human, there's respect."

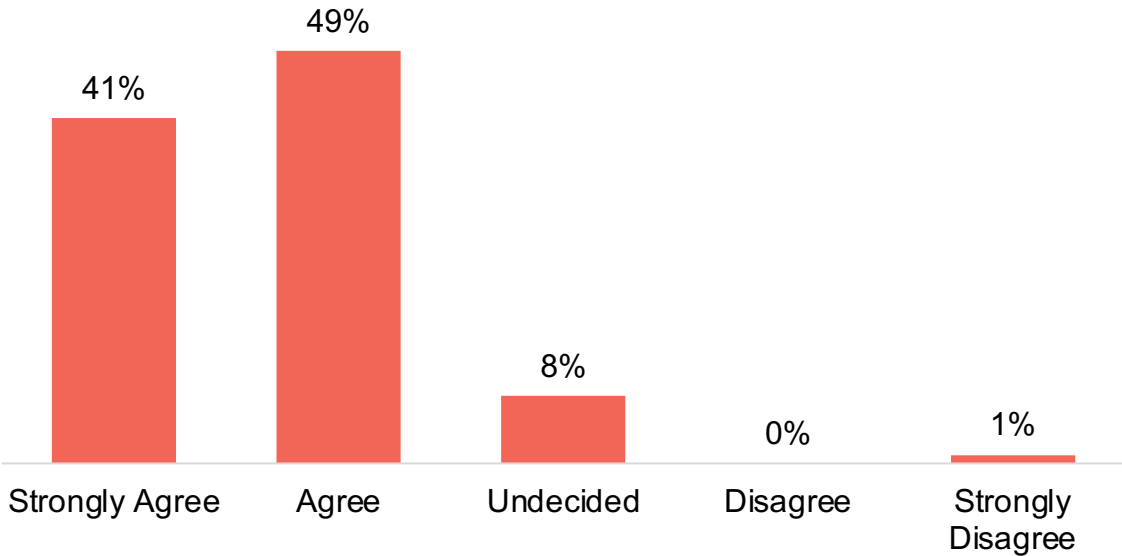
"My Probation Officer always has time for me and the POs have been fantastic. If I have worries or concerns, then they are addressed. I do not have to feel like I have been judged for any of my past."

"My Probation Officer and I have a good working relationship. She is perceptive to the fact I may be working when I take calls and often we talking almost code like as I could be a customers presence. If I am not able to talk for any reason, my Probation Officer is understanding and knows I will return her call as soon as I can."

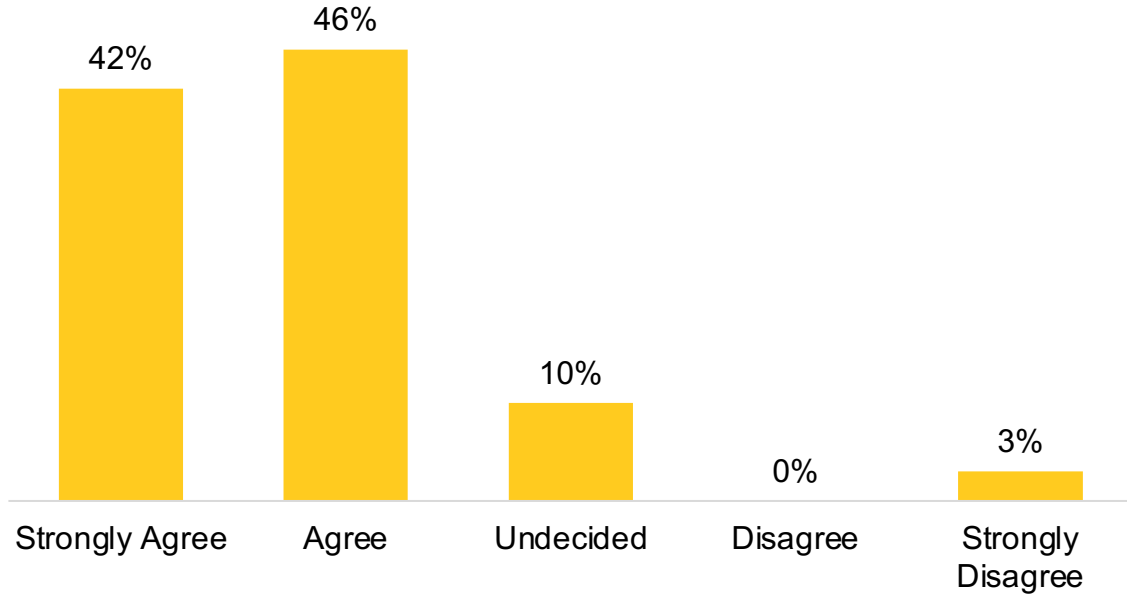
"Reception staff treat me like a person."

88% OF PEOPLE IN KNOWSLEY AND ST HELENS FEEL SAFE WHEN ACCESSING THEIR PROBATION OFFICE

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



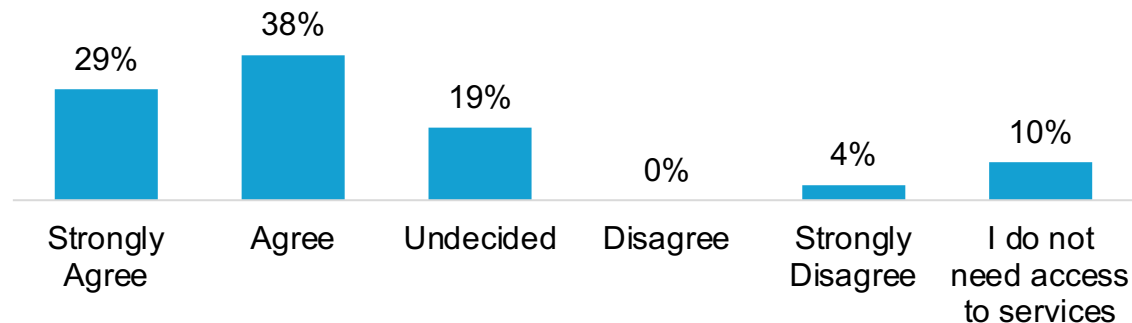
Q: I feel safe accessing the probation office.



THERE'S GOOD ACCESS TO VITAL SERVICES IN KNOWSLEY AND ST HELENS

- **74%** (48/65) of those who need support accessing services feel that probation have helped them in Knowsley and St Helens.
- Many aspects of service access were reported with frequent when participants were asked about the positive aspects of their experience, including:
 - Signposting: **13%**
 - Substance misuse support: **13%**
 - Education, training and employment: **16%**
 - Programmes and groups: **15%**
 - Housing: **12%**

Q: Probation have helped me access the services I need.



'I explained my health conditions to my Probation Officer and they helped me to get a GP for my kidney problems. I have had access to the online campus for learning English.'

"Housing support which I have needed."

'I always get help when I need it. I have been sent a lot of information on jobs and ways to get work. They treat me with respect all the time.'

"The Alice courses are really helpful."

"I have been referred to drugs services, GUM and support with my housing."

"At the moment I am taking part in BBR (Building Better Relationships) and I am enjoying learning new things about myself and learning how to control myself in certain situations."

"Have helped me to access activities, socialising so I am not isolated and binge drinking, they got me access to CGL drug and alcohol services."

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT IS VERY GOOD IN KNOWSLEY AND ST HELENS

- **37%** (25/68) of survey participants stated that support with mental health as what has been good about their probation experience. This was by far the most popular response to the question. This is very high compared to the national average of **10%**.
- Therefore, those who need support with their mental health feel that probation have helped them access the support they need.
- Knowsley and St Helens had a notably higher response rate from Disabled People and Neurodiverse People. Those that spoke about their Neurodiversity stated they feel supported by probation.

"The have signposted me to counseling and this has really helped as my mum committed suicide last year."

"Really good at listening about my mental health and addiction. Caring Probation Officers."

"I have never been given help as much as this time around being convicted. I was able to be given a wellbeing coach, also I was given a counsellor. Without these two key ingredients I would probably be in jail."

"They are helping me with getting my health better and rebuilding my life after time in custody."

"Refereed to counselling service and GP, Siler cloud programme for my mental health which is a online app and helpline which supports me."

THE VAST MAJORITY FEEL SUPPORTED IN REGARD TO ACCESSING SERVICES RELEVANT TO THEIR PERSONAL NEEDS

**80% HAVE
BEEN ABLE TO
ACCESS
SERVICES
RELEVANT TO
THEIR
PERSONAL
NEEDS**

**76% HAVE BEEN
ABLE TO
ACCESS
SERVICES IN A
REASONABLE
TIME**

**76% HAVE BEEN
ABLE TO
ACCESS
SERVICES IN
THEIR LOCAL
AREA**

MOST HAVE A POSITIVE EXPERIENCE WITH THEIR INDUCTION IN KNOWSLEY AND ST HELENS

“All very positive, my Probation Officer spoke about my ADHD and how this affects me. Referred me to support services and medication with the GP. We went through my conditions and when I would see them weekly”.

“I have been on probation since June 2021, Not my first time. They explained my conditions and my health was taken into consideration.

“Straight forward and I have Bi-polar which was good to get support with.”

“I got my conditions and was made aware of the complaints procedure, It was explained how often I needed to attend probation.”

“I missed my induction but my Probation Officer was OK about it, the second time it was good, They explained what to expect from probation and if was clear, It met my expectations.”

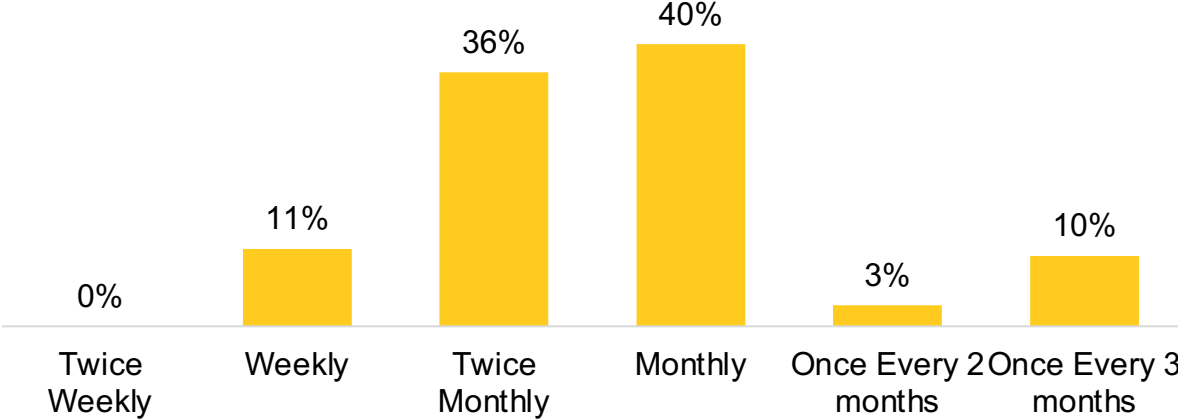
“This was 2 months ago the induction process seemed rushed and I had a lot going on at the time when I came out of prison.”

“Pretty poor to be honest, I had so much going on when I got out of prison, it was over load. E.g. benefits, housing, phone, probation and getting myself sorted”.

PEOPLE ON PROBATION WANT AN ORDER TAILORED TO THEIR INDIVIDUAL NEEDS

- **40%** (28/70) of people in Knowsley and St Helens prefer monthly appointments – This was by far the most popular response to the question: How often do you think you should see your Probation Officer?
- **36%** (25/70) of people responded 'twice monthly' to the same question.
- There was an even split between those wanting remote contact and those that want face-to-face contact in Knowsley and St Helens.
- People on Probation need contact that works for both their Probation Officer and themselves, that is both flexible and relevant to their personal needs.

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



“Definitely face to face as it’s more intimate.”

“Monthly is ok but anymore then they should speak with me on the phone.”

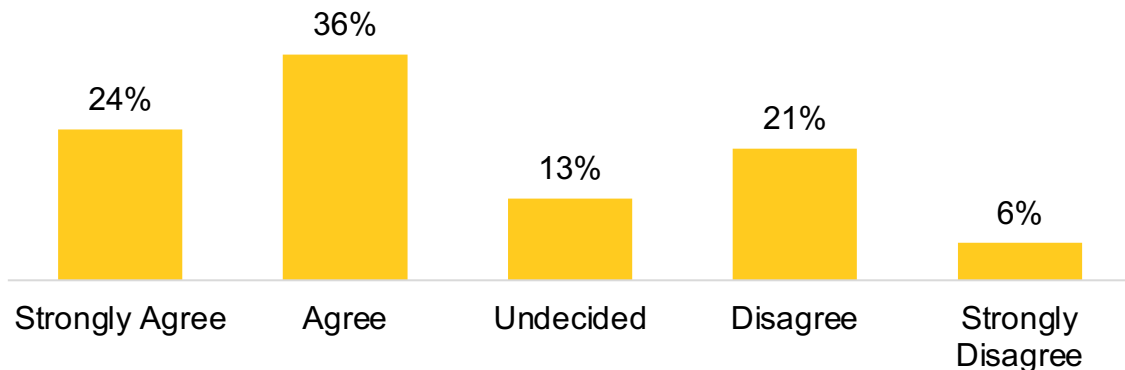
“Stop coming every week and at least do it monthly.”

“It should be a mixture of appointments face to face and phone, everyone is different and we should take that into consideration. It should a a good balance. They are always on time which is good and I can fit it into my day.”

3 IN 5 SURVEYED FEEL LIKE THEY HAVE A SAY IN HOW PROBATION IS RUN

- **60%** (42/70) of those surveyed felt like probation services have asked for their views about being on supervision.
- However, the majority of those interviewed felt like their voice wasn't heard regarding how probation services should operate, and they would like it to be.
- People on Probation have knowledge of how to make a complaint in Knowsley and St Helens. If complaints were made, people reported that they were resolved swiftly

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



"Not really, they probably wouldn't listen to use, Probation Officers should have lived experience."

"Yes, regular surveys are done, but we don't get any feedback, so it feels like a waste of time."

We don't have a voice, we should have groups and/or a council to help improve things.

"Not at all, it needs to be people with lived experience who know what it's like for us."

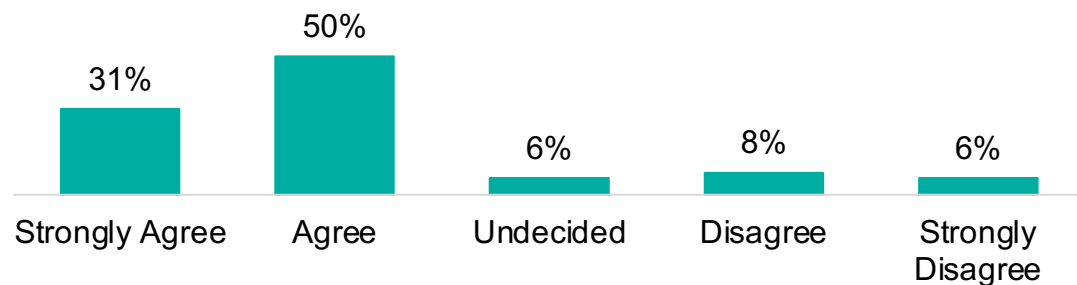
"I have complained and it was resolved quickly, good communication."

"I know how to complain as this was spoke about in induction, I would try to resolve it first with my Probation Officer."

4 IN 5 ARE HAPPY WITH THE OVERALL SUPPORT THEY RECEIVE FROM PROBATION

- **1 in 4** (16/65) people answered ‘**Nothing can be improved**’ when asked about any issues they have whilst on probation.
- Whereas **15%** (10/68) stated that there were ‘**No positives**’ regarding their probation experience.
- The top themes regarding positive experiences were: appointments, access to vital services and the reception staff in Knowsley and St Helens.

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



“I have never been given help as much as this time around being convicted. I was able to be given a wellbeing coach, also I was given a counsellor. Without these two key ingredients I would probably be in jail.”

“I feel more stable and I am back in the community.”

“Yes, got my head sorted, they are supportive and have helped me with suicide prevention, My mental health support and have helped me to get on a mental health act.”

“What’s been positive has been the support with my mental health, housing, counselling and got sorted with my GP.”

“My housing is sorted which is a priority for me and now I can find work when I feel more settled .”

“Reception staff are friendly and outgoing .”

PEOPLE ON PROBATION'S SOLUTIONS TO THE ISSUES THEY FACE

- People on probation in Knowsley and St Helens want better access to and information about local services.
- Some mentioned that they need a place to lock up their bike.
- People want flexibility and for their paid work to be taken into consideration in regards appointment times. E.g., later opening times and Saturday appointments.
- People in Knowsley and St Helens want lived experience to be used in a better way to help the service.
- People tend to be waiting for a long time to access services and want a quicker resolution.
- Others also stated that the service needs improve the wait times for appointments.

"More information and resources available about local services. I'd like to see the charity sector coming into probation to do talks, and more notice boards with staff names and roles. Oh, and somewhere to park my bike please."

"More flexible with people who work e.g. phone or video calls or maybe get to see your Probation Officer at the weekends."

"Your behaviour should be taken into consideration and you should be rewarded for this, especially as I am on a long license. There needs to be more flexibility e.g. see your Probation Officer every 3 months as things are not always black and white."

"Counseling, peer support, and utilising the lived experience of people in support groups."

"I can't see any improvement apart from more help with my language barrier, posters in Polish, peer support who speak my language."

"Reduce waiting times to get access to services and when we have appointments make sure the staff are on time. ADHD led to me offending and I don't want to go back to prison - having the right support networks really helps."

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