

CAPTURING THE VOICE OF PEOPLE ON PROBATION FOR THE EAST KENT INSPECTION

PUBLISHED FEBRUARY 2024

76 PEOPLE HAD THEIR SAY:

13 ONLINE SURVEYS

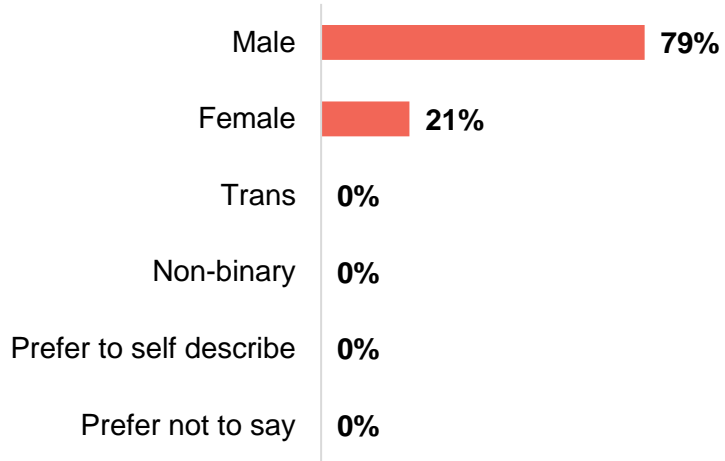
57 FACE TO FACE SURVEYS

6 IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

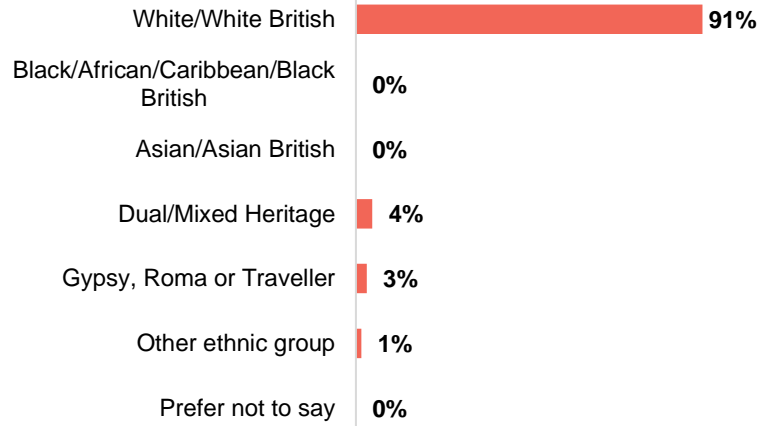
***ALL DATA IN THIS REPORT HAS BEEN CHECKED
FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE. SOME PERCENTAGES DO NOT
TOTAL TO 100% SOLELY FOR REASONS OF ROUNDING**

DEMOGRAPHICS

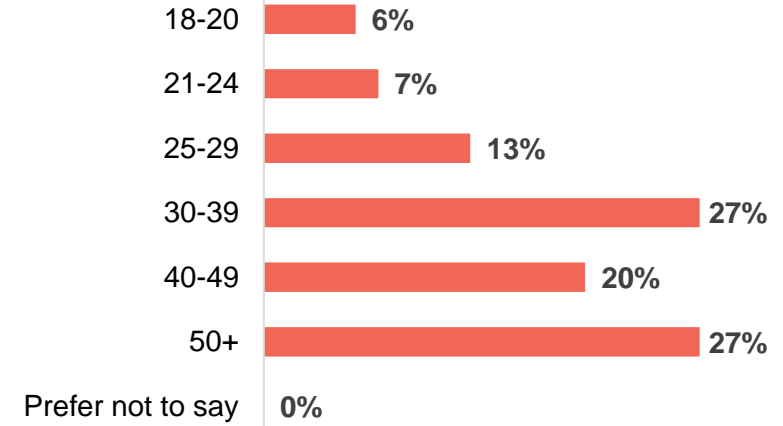
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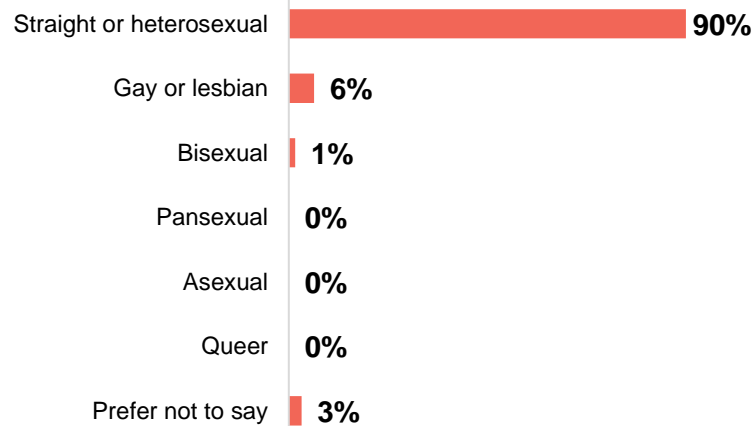
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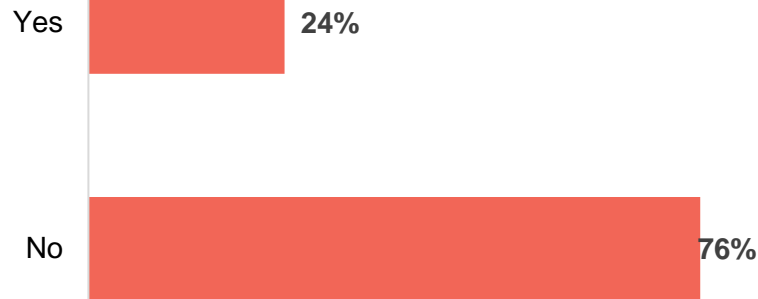
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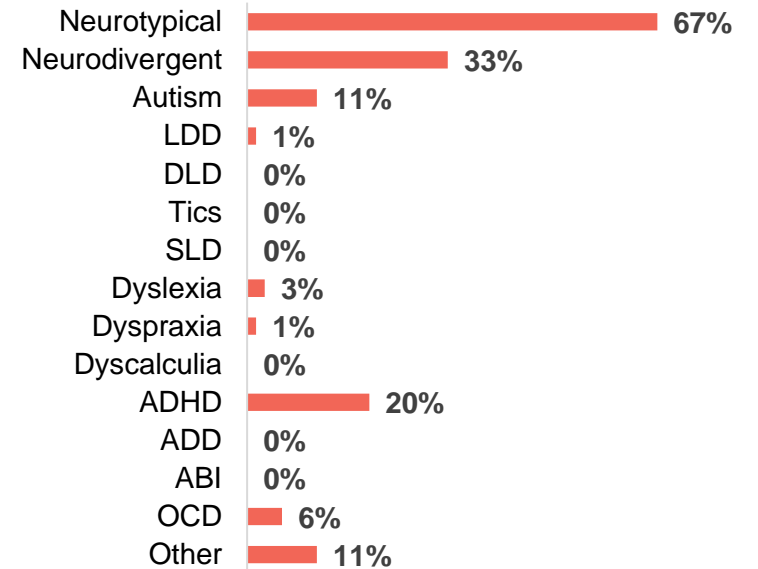
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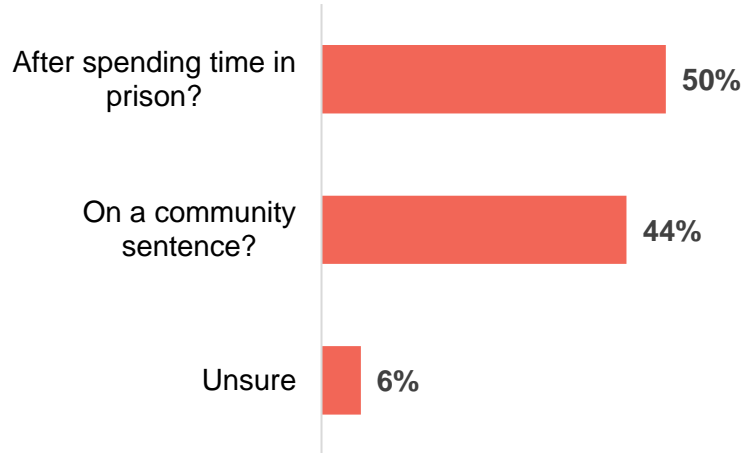
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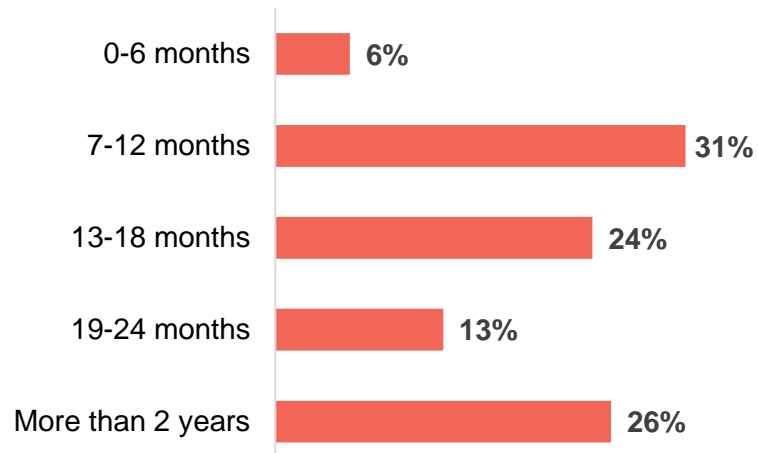
Neurodiversity



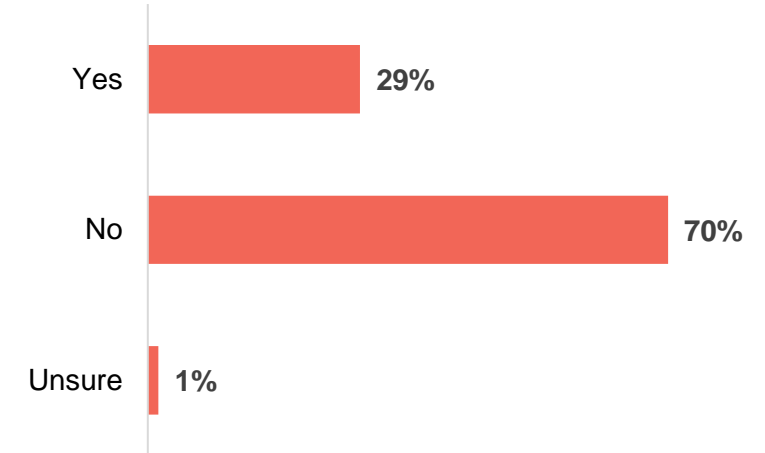
Are you on probation...



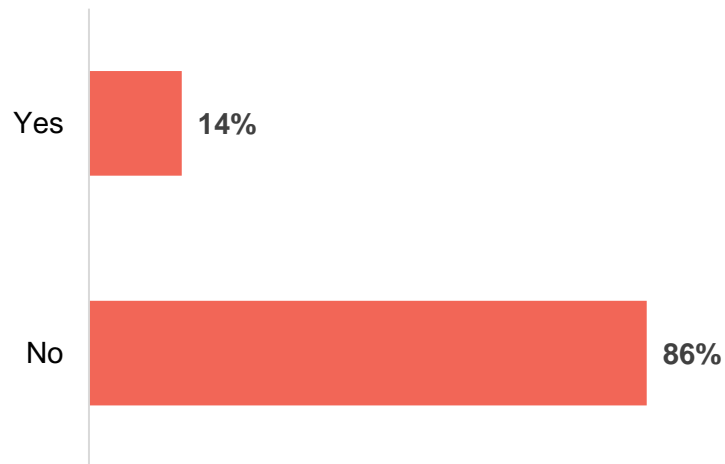
Time on probation



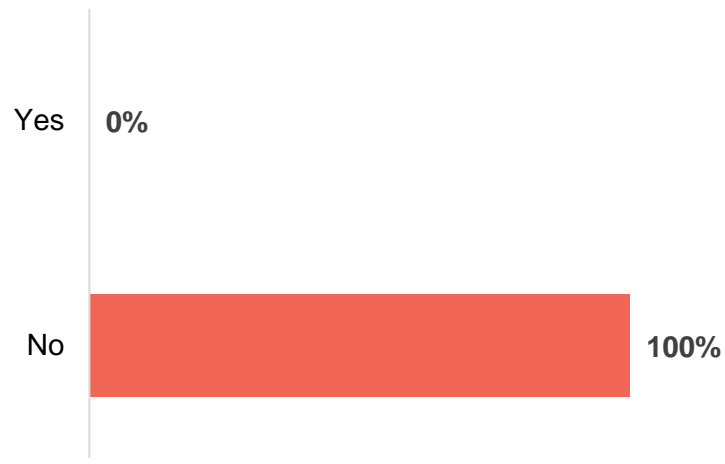
Experience of breach



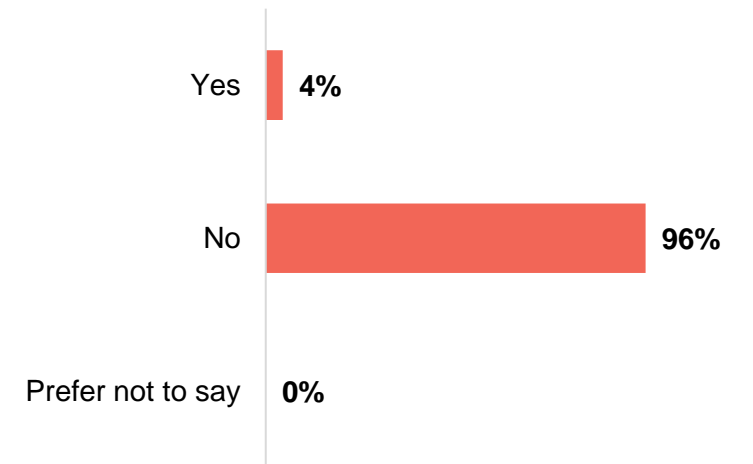
Experience of care as a child



Veteran status



Foreign national status

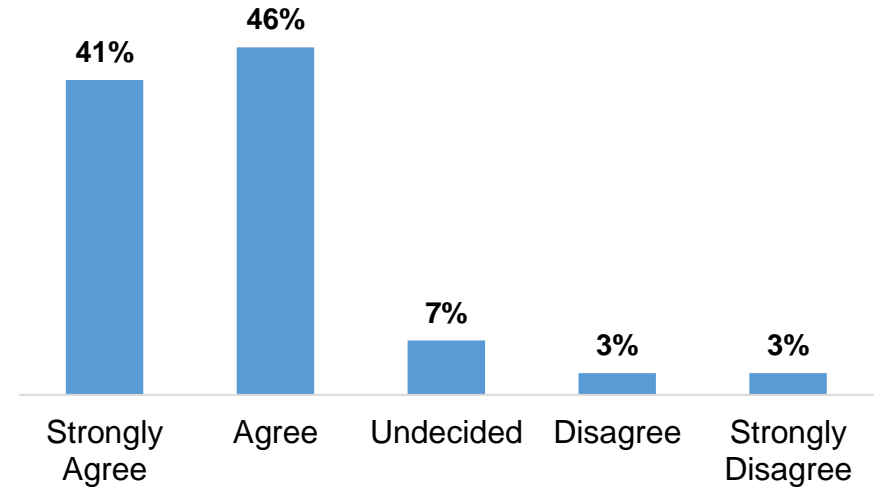


EXPERIENCE WITH INDUCTIONS

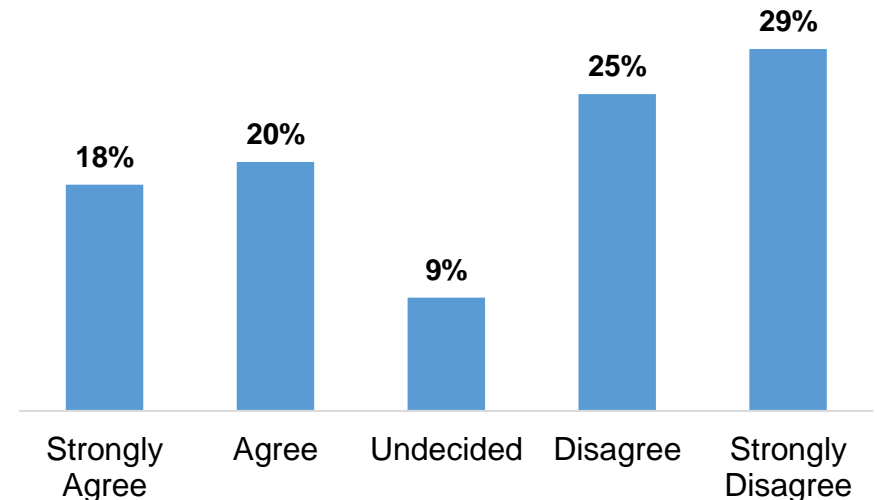
OVER HALF FEEL LIKE THEY WERE NOT INVOLVED IN THE CREATION OF THEIR SENTENCE PLAN IN EAST KENT

- **87%** (61/70) of survey participants stated that they understand what is expected of them whilst on probation.
- **81%** (56/69) of people surveyed stated that they are aware of having a sentence plan when asked the question 'I was involved in creating my sentence plan with my probation practitioner'.
- However, this means that **1 in 5** (13/69) people surveyed stated that they are not aware of having a sentence plan.
- Of those people that stated they did have a sentence plan, **38%** (21/56) stated that they felt involved in creating their sentence plan with their probation practitioner.
- Whereas **over half**, **54%** (30/56) stated that they either 'Disagree' or 'Strongly Disagree' that they were involved in creating their sentence plan.

Q1. I understand what is expected of me whilst on probation



Q2. I was involved in creating my sentence plan with my probation practitioner

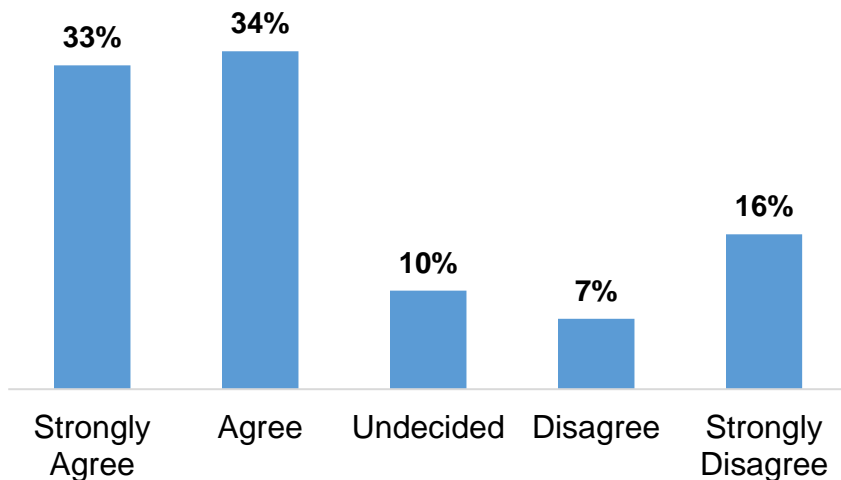


13/69 respondents stated that they are not aware of having a sentence plan. These responses are not included above.

2 IN 3 PEOPLE DISCUSSED THEIR PERSONAL NEEDS DURING THEIR INDUCTION

- **67%** (47/70) of survey participants stated that their probation practitioner took the time to understand their personal needs during an induction.
- **None** of the interviewees in East Kent reported a positive experience with their induction.
- All people surveyed stated that they had an induction. It is uncommon that all service users state they experienced an induction.

Q3. My probation practitioner took the time to understand my personal needs during my induction



“No induction prior to release and I had three different outside probation officers whilst in prison but never spoke to none them hardly.”

“Had a formal induction but can’t really remember but do know they’re not sticking to what got said about supporting me and regular meetings. They didn’t even explain my community service hours properly, just got chucked on it once and never heard anything since induction.”

“Well, that was terrible. I had video link and it kept crashing. They need to look at that system!”

“I had an induction the first appointment at probation upon release they told me they would put me on tag.”

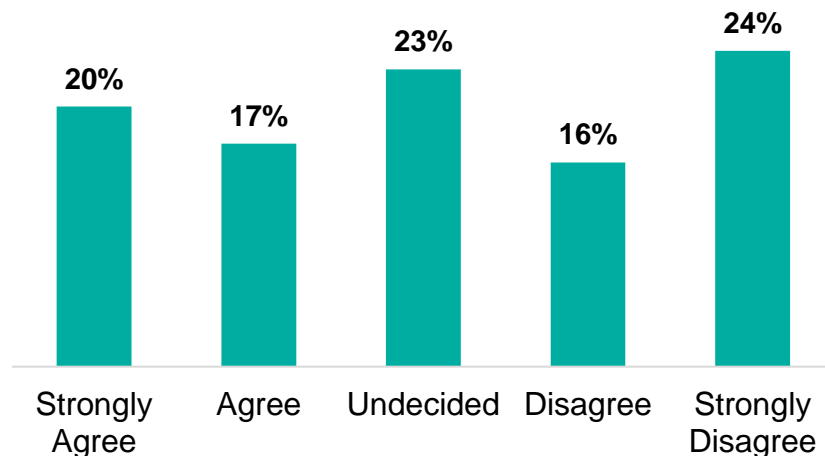
“Face to face induction, I didn’t actually realise I was doing probation. The judge didn’t specifically say I was doing probation! They explained what I could and couldn’t do but they used some words I didn’t understand.”

EXPERIENCE WITH APPOINTMENTS

PEOPLE IN EAST KENT HAVE VARIED EXPERIENCES WITH APPOINTMENTS

- **37%** (26/70) of survey participants stated that their appointments are useful in helping them and their rehabilitation.
- Whereas **2 in 5** (28/70) stated that they either 'Disagree' or 'Strongly Disagree' that that their appointments are useful.
- This contrast in experience was noted during interviews where some people thought that they were a waste of time. Whereas others, found it beneficial to speak with someone regularly and have moments of realisation during appointments.

Q4. I find my appointments useful in helping me and my rehabilitation



"I helped myself rehabilitate, but it's nice to talk to someone. One of the issues I had leading up to my crime was that I had no-one to talk my problems through, so I understand that this helps me not reoffend."

"Yes, 100% I do now [get what I need out of appointments]. I feel listened to and respected. This one is the best probation officer I've ever had."

"It's been five years between my crime and probation, which means it's just bringing back painful memories. I sorted myself and the courses aren't even relevant because of the time between crime and probation."

"It's only wasting my time."

"Appointments are good, you get help with your needs and also gives you a reminder about why you're on probation and gives you motivation to keep out of trouble."

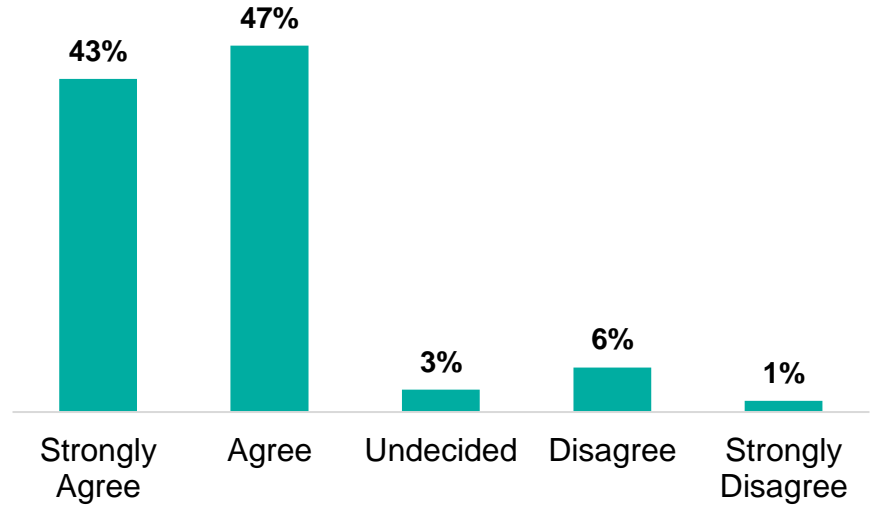
"Made me realise I can't self-medicate no more because the realisation of losing my son is what the appointments do."

"No feel like a waste of time, they do drug swipes on me every 2 weeks for class A drugs & cannabis, also have 2 different probation officers for appointments which does not help because don't know who I'm going to be seeing each week."

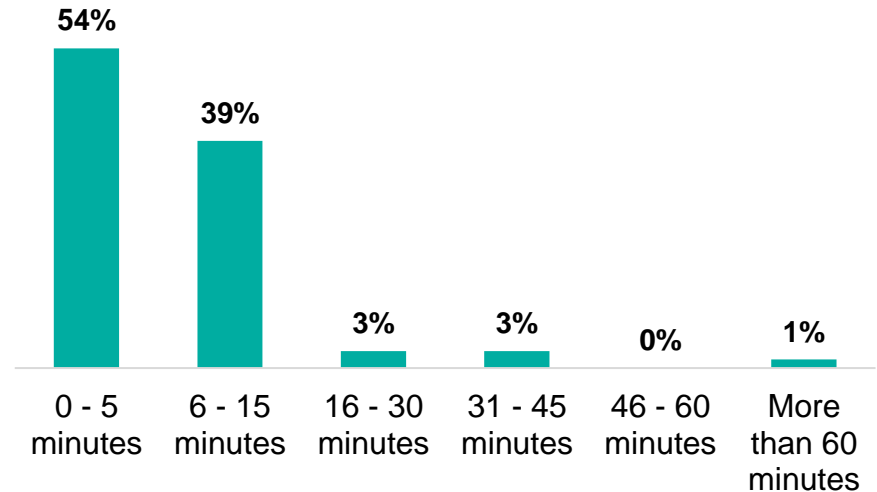
9 IN 10 BELIEVE THEIR APPOINTMENTS START ON TIME IN EAST KENT

- **90%** (63/70) of survey participants stated that more often than not, their appointments start on time.
- Further, **54%** (38/70) people stated that they wait less than 5 minutes for their appointment to start and **39%** (27/70) people stated that their average wait time is between 6 and 15 minutes.

Q6. More often than not, my appointments start on time

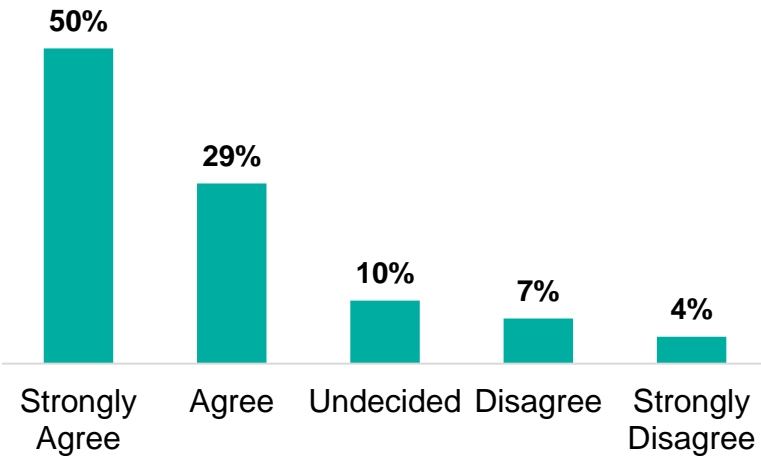


Q6a. What is the average length of time you wait for your appointments after the scheduled time

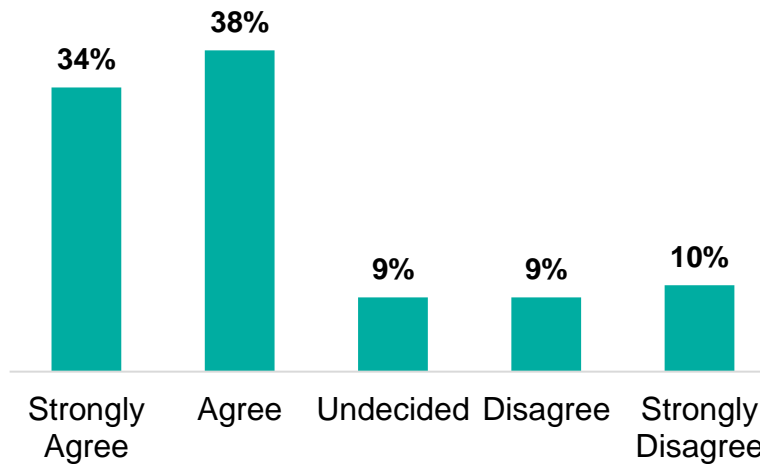


7 IN 10 BELIEVE THE DISTANCE THEY HAVE TO TRAVEL TO GET TO APPOINTMENTS IN EAST KENT IS REASONABLE

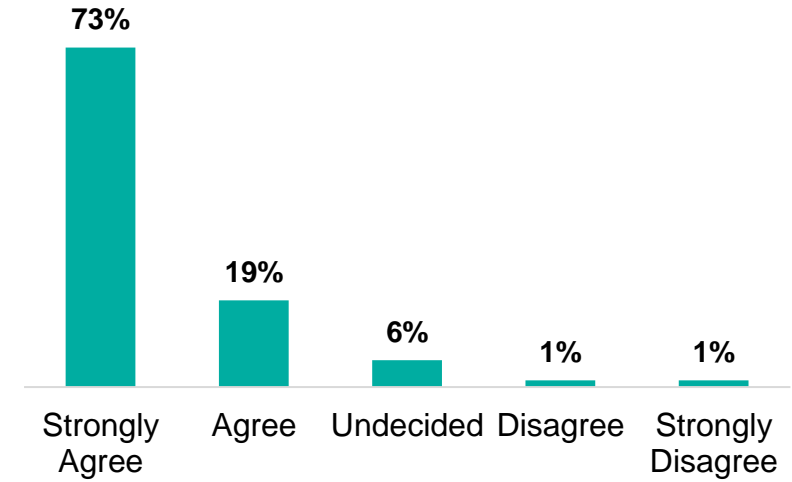
Q5. I have been able to have appointments with my probation practitioner at a time that suits me



Q7. The distance I have to travel to get to appointments is reasonable



Q8. I feel safe accessing the probation office

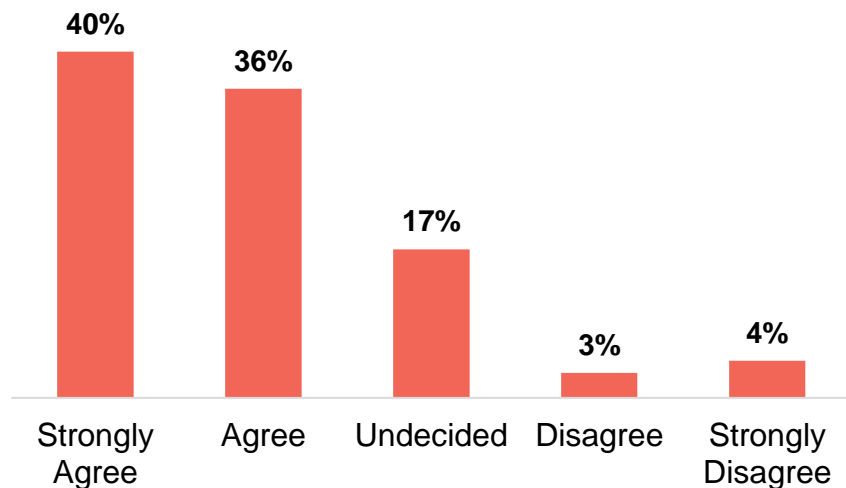


RELATIONSHIPS WITH PROBATION PRACTITIONERS

3 IN 4 HAVE A GOOD RELATIONSHIP WITH THEIR PRACTITIONER

- 76% (53/70) of survey participants stated that they have a good relationship with their probation practitioner.
- Whereas only 7% (5/70) stated that they either 'Disagree' or 'Strongly Disagree' that they have a good relationship.
- For people in East Kent, a good probation practitioner is one that is non-judgmental, facilitates an honest relationship and "makes everything easier."

Q11. I have a good relationship with my probation practitioner



"He is alright, he is helping me with alleged debt repayments. From COVID times. I was homeless, and probation put me in a B&B. Now they're saying I owe nine thousand pounds to which I was never told had to pay. But yeah, probation are helping me with this, with the paperwork to try appeal it."

"Previous one really good, really supportive and helpful. They made an effort to give calls to me like check ins, but now I don't have one and don't even know which office to go. The last officer said I'm no longer on there books and they don't know which office I'm meant to be at."

"She makes everything easier. She's always in contact to make sure I'm not struggling and guides me when I struggle with parts of my licence."

"I have a good relationship with my officer now. I've had three so far. My new has good communication like reminding me about appointments the day before, non-judgmental attitude and treats me like a human being."

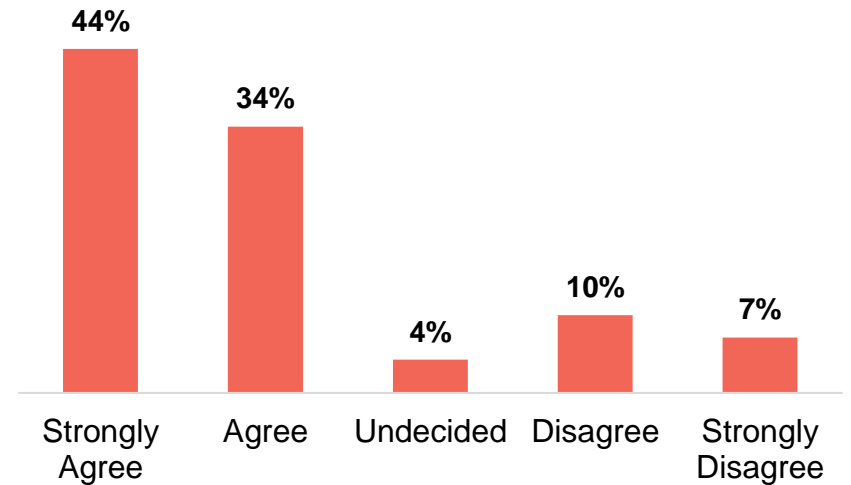
"Good, I get on well with them, easy to talk to. I've not passed over to different probation officers, I've kept the same one throughout."

"I feel like I can be honest. I had to cancel last week and she understood and was okay about it. I don't think it's her fault I can't get on the courses I need. I think there's waiting lists."

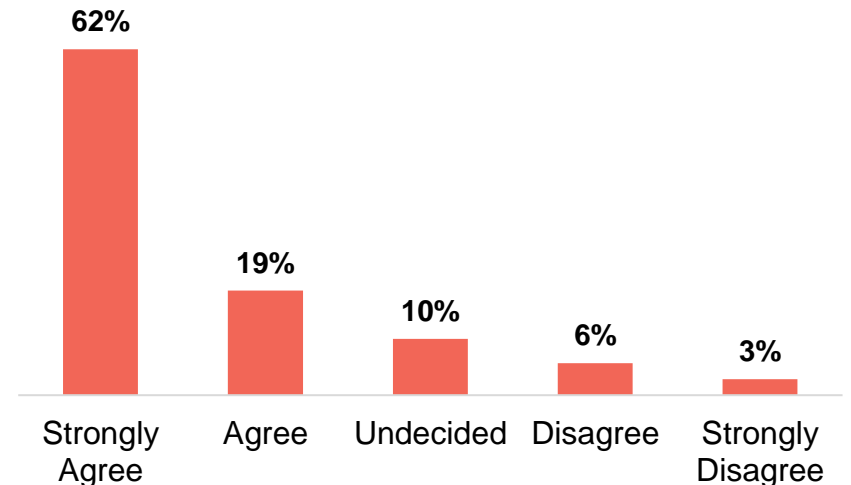
MOST PEOPLE BELIEVE THEY HAVE ENOUGH CONTACT TIME WITH THEIR PROBATION PRACTITIONER IN EAST KENT

- Over **3 in 4** (55/70) of survey participants stated that have been able to contact their probation practitioner when they have needed to.
- 4 in 5** (56/69) participants feel that have enough contact time with their probation practitioner to help them and their rehabilitation.
- However, **1 in 10** (6/69) stated that they either 'Disagree' or 'Strongly Disagree' to the question 'I have enough contact time with my probation practitioner to help me and my rehabilitation.'

Q9. I have been able to contact my probation practitioner when I have needed to (e.g., to change appointments)



Q10. I have enough contact time with my probation practitioner to help me and my rehabilitation

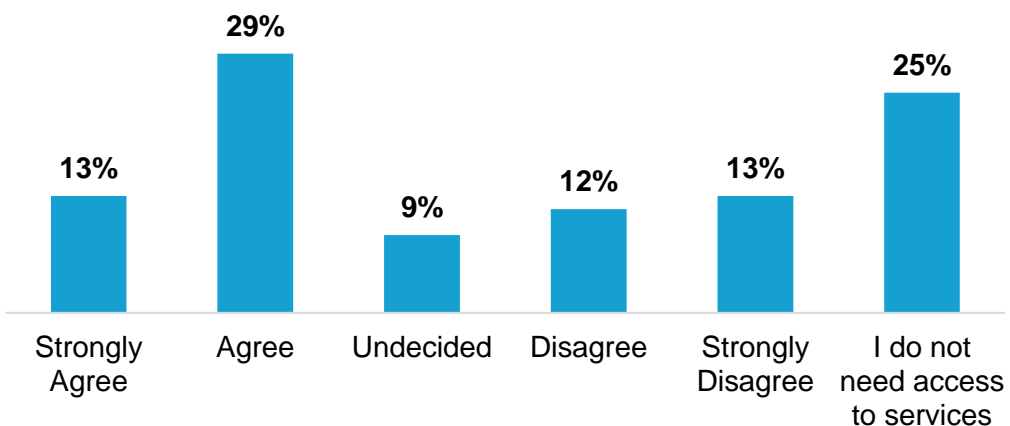


ACCESS TO SERVICES

JUST OVER HALF THAT NEED SERVICES HAVE ACCESS TO THEM IN EAST KENT

- 1 in 4 (17/69) people surveyed stated that they 'do not need access to services' in East Kent.
- Of those that stated they do need access to services, **56%** (29/52) stated that probation have helped them access services relevant to their personal needs, strengths and circumstances.

Q12. Probation have helped me access services relevant to my personal needs, strengths and circumstances



“My worker got me on the Ixion courses to help me get back into employment, but I still can't get help with housing. Prison said probation would sort housing but that's not true, they can only help you get in touch with housing officers.”

“They put me in touch with a woman's service like a break off from probation they was to help me with my RAR days.”

“They got me onto Forward Trust, then put me onto addiction help, put me into group sessions but then told me if don't go to groups could be breached and recalled when it was supposed to be voluntary.”

“Yes, they put me in touch with AA whilst I was still in prison and I'm now a mentor.”

“I had to ask for anything I needed but she has sorted it. Housing was the main issue and that took ages, but it does for everyone.”

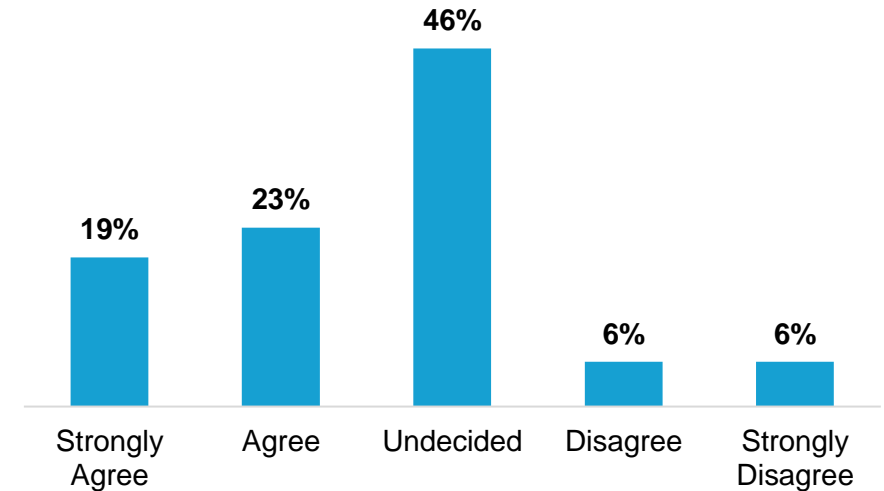
“They've basically told me to go back to my GP and increase my meds for mental health. I don't want to be dragging my kids there though, and I think I need more than just meds. They've given me numbers to call but I want face to face help.”

“They gave me some numbers for mental health and I've got the AA now, but the housing situation is the main issue. I'm stuck with people on drugs and it's an unstable environment. I think I'd stand more of a chance keeping out of trouble if I wasn't in that environment.”

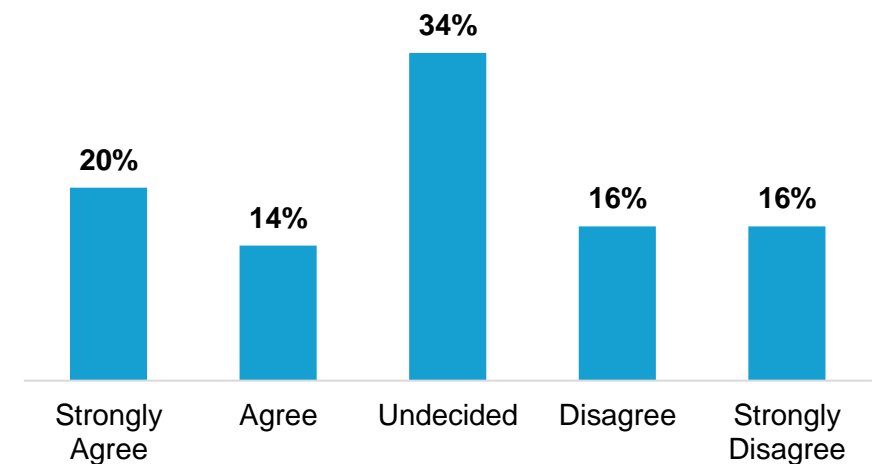
THE MAIN PRIORITIES OF PEOPLE IN EAST KENT IS SUPPORT WITH BOTH MENTAL HEALTH AND HOUSING

- **2 in 5** (22/52) participants surveyed stated the distance they have to travel to get to services and programmes is reasonable. **46%** (24/52) were 'Undecided.'
- **1 in 3** (17/50) people that need access to services responded that they have been able to access support services within a reasonable amount of time. A further **1 in 3** (17/50) were 'Undecided.'
- The most frequently cited types of support needed in East Kent were supporting with mental health (**3 in 5**) and housing (**48%**).
- **1 in 4** of those that need support with their mental health are still waiting and **35%** of those that need help with housing are still waiting for support in East Kent.
- **16 of the 25** people that have needed help with housing rate access as 'Poor' or 'Very Poor.'
- All **9** women that need help with female specific services rate the access as 'Very Good' or 'Good' in East Kent.

Q13. The distance I have to travel to get to services and programmes is reasonable



Q14. I have been able to access support services within a reasonable amount of time



A BREAKDOWN OF WHAT SERVICES PEOPLE ON PROBATION NEED IN EAST KENT

Type of Service	15. Have you needed / do you still need access to any of the following services?						
	Resp.	Yes		No		I still need access	
Mental health support	52	18	35%	21	40%	13	25%
Finance, debt & benefits	52	9	17%	42	81%	1	2%
Education, training & employment	52	9	17%	39	75%	4	8%
Alcohol/substance misuse support	52	12	23%	37	71%	3	6%
Housing/accommodation	52	7	13%	27	52%	18	35%
Women specific services	50	8	16%	41	82%	1	2%
Children and childcare support	34	2	6%	30	88%	2	6%
Partner and families support	45	1	2%	42	93%	2	4%
Other important relationships support	45	1	2%	44	98%	0	0%

HOW PEOPLE ON PROBATION RATE THE ACCESSIBILITY OF SERVICES IN EAST KENT

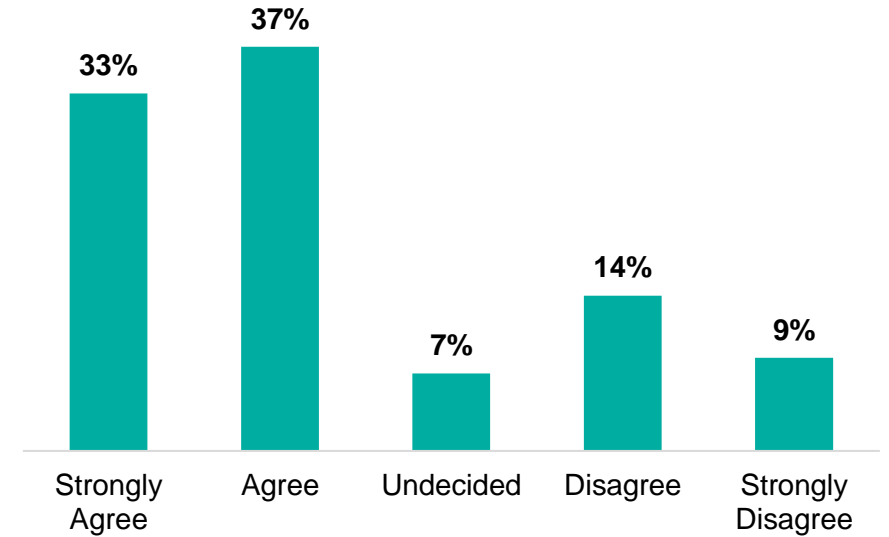
Type of Service	15.a. If you have needed / still need access to that service, how would you rate your overall access? (Both Yes and Still need access)						
	Resp.	Very Good / Good		Neutral		Very Poor / Poor	
Mental health support	31	15	48%	3	10%	13	42%
Finance, debt & benefits	10	7	70%	0	0%	3	30%
Education, training & employment	13	8	62%	1	8%	4	31%
Alcohol/substance misuse support	15	11	73%	1	7%	3	20%
Housing/accommodation	25	6	24%	3	12%	16	64%
Women specific services	9	9	100%	0	0%	0	0%
Children and childcare support	4	2	50%	0	0%	2	50%
Partner and families support	3	0	0%	1	33%	2	67%
Other important relationships support	1	0	0%	1	100%	0	0%

PROCEDURAL JUSTICE AND BEING HEARD

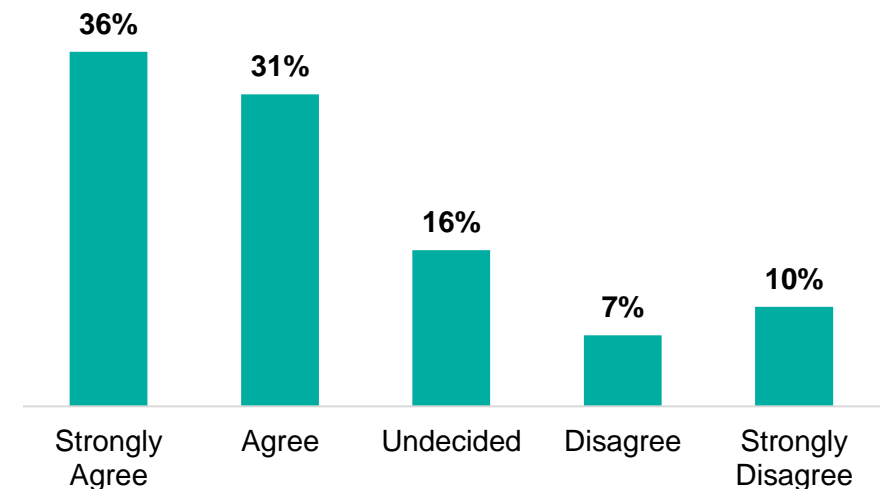
7 IN 10 KNOW HOW TO RAISE COMPLAINTS BUT MANY QUESTION THE OUTCOME IN EAST KENT

- **79%** (49/70) people in East Kent know how to raise complaints..
- However, some respondents stated that they would not complain out of doubt that the complaint would be actioned or because they fear the repercussions.
- **67%** (47/70) of survey participants stated that they feel like they have been treated fairly by probation staff.
- However, **17%** (12/70) stated that they either 'Disagree' or 'Strongly Disagree' that they have been treated fairly by probation staff. This means that nearly **1 in 5** people feel like probation staff are not treating them fairly.

Q16. I know how to raise complaints whilst on probation



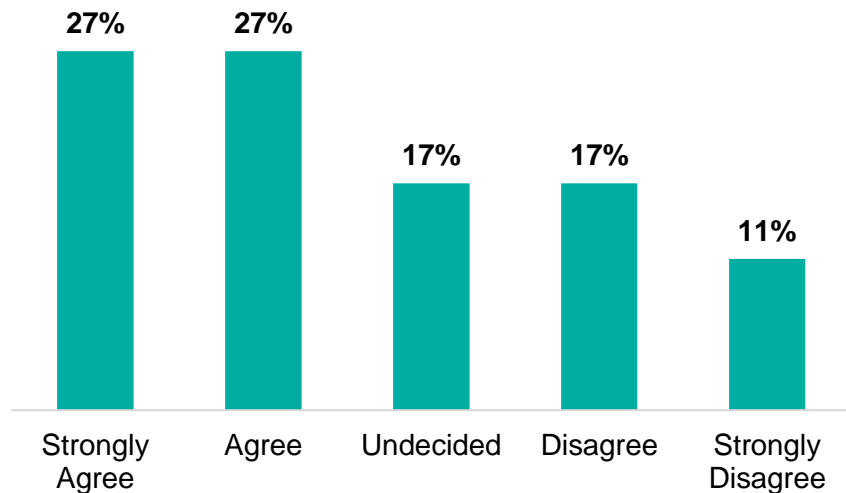
Q18. I have been treated fairly by probation staff



JUST OVER HALF FEEL LISTENED TO AND HAVE BEEN ASKED THEIR VIEWS IN EAST KENT

- **54%** (38/70) of survey participants feel like probation services have asked them for their views about being on supervision, and that they feel listened to.
- The majority of people interviewed do not feel like they have a say in how probation is run.

Q17. Probation services have asked for my views about being on supervision and I feel listened to



“Not really, but I would love to. I think the whole system should be run by people with experience because they KNOW the pitfalls and dangers of a bad probation experience.”

“No, I don't feel heard because it goes in one ear and out the other.”

“No not at all [feel like they have a say in how probation is run], they need to stop setting people up to fail then it would run better. Lived experience within probation would mean they would listen more and would know what there on about because they have lived through it, probation don't live in the real world.”

“Yes, I can raise complaints easy enough but whether they do anything about them is another matter. Always SAME OLD SAME OLD WITH PROBATION.”

“Yes, I did raise complaints about the video link induction, and they said it was going to be looked at.”

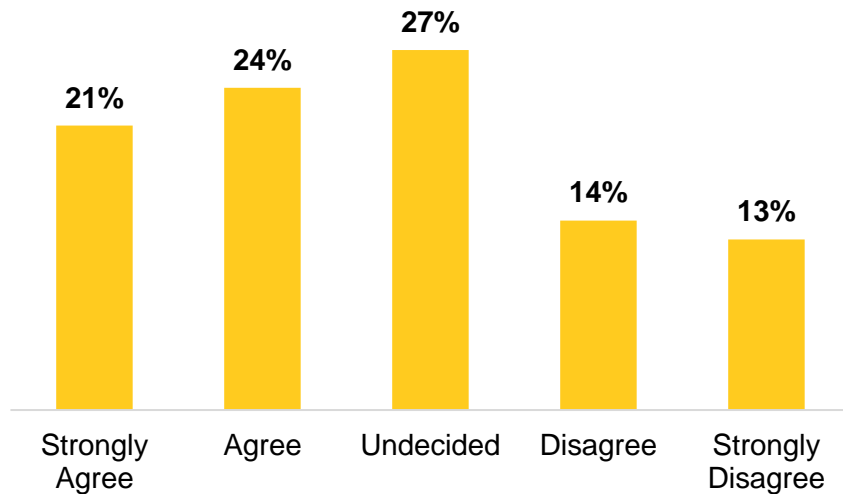
“I know how to [raise complaints], I just don't know how much point there would be in doing it!”

“No [to having a say], I'd like to because I'd make sure there was more sympathy when people can't attend appointments because they're physically ill. Sometimes I feel she's just doing her job and we all want to feel like someone really cares if they're in charge of your life and I think that's what experience of the system would bring.”

OVERALL EXPERIENCE

OPINIONS ON HOW WELL PEOPLE FEEL SUPPORTED WITH THEIR REHABILITATION VARY IN EAST KENT

Q19. Overall, I feel well supported by probation in helping me and my rehabilitation



"They don't really do anything to help or I'd have got the help I need already. Anything done to improve my rehabilitation have been down to me, but I really do need help with the drinking and relationships."

"I have been supporting with everything that I have needed support with and are happy that probation has been here to support me since I've been out of prison."

"She has given me no support at all to be honest."

"They are a waste of taxpayer's money."

"My officer bloke was nice and understanding he listened to me and explained everything properly cant fault him at all but then he left and that support hasn't continued."

"I feel supported but there are certain areas they can't help with. Things like actually getting me somewhere to live that isn't temporary is beyond their control. As someone to talk problems though with, they're okay."

"They listen, they advise. Everyone has different personalities, but I always feel helped here. They really do listen and get you the help you need if you're alright with them."

PEER-LED SOLUTIONS



THE ISSUE:

Some people on probation are experiencing a revolving door of probation practitioners and therefore find themselves explaining their situation frequently rather than getting support.

SUGGESTED PEER-LED SOLUTION:

Better training and support for practitioners to lower staff turnover.

"I think if I had the same worker it wouldn't be so bad. I spend more time going over what I did wrong than trying to get it right going forward. The POs need more support."



THE ISSUE:

Some have lost faith in the system and feel like the probation service doesn't understand the needs of people on probation.

SUGGESTED PEER-LED SOLUTION:

Utilise more lived experience in the probation service to "help get it right."

"It's like we need to stop the whole system and start again, probably using people like User Voice, i.e., with lived experience, to help get it right."



THE ISSUE:

Some people feel like their induction process and appointments are impersonal and not centered on the individual.

SUGGESTED PEER-LED SOLUTION:

Get to know the individual and treat inductions and appointments as an opportunity to understand the individual's needs and support them accordingly.

"Get to know me without relying on what's written down! Ask me MY OPINION!!! Don't just QUOTE YOUR guidelines with how to deal with probationers unilaterally!!! I'm NOT unilateral... I'm a FUCKING PERSON!!!"



THE ISSUE:

People in East Kent are struggling with access to services such as mental health support and housing and temporary accommodation. This isn't conducive with effective rehabilitation,

SUGGESTED PEER-LED SOLUTION:

Facilitate better support from outside organisations for housing and mental health support.

"My biggest problem is housing. My temporary accommodation is no good because I'm living in doubtful circumstances with someone who maybe isn't the best for me to be around. I need help to get a flat but we're just going around in circles."

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