

# **HMIPS Pre-Inspection Survey Findings**

**HMP Dumfries  
July 2024**

# HMIPS Pre-Inspection Survey Findings HMP Dumfries, July 2024

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## **Executive Summary**

### **Background**

This document reports on the findings of the HMIPS pre-inspection questionnaire conducted in HMP Dumfries on 24 to 25 July 2023. The questionnaire was distributed to all 176 prisoners held in HMP Dumfries on the first day of data collection, with a response rate of 76% (134 responses).

The data is presented according to the HMIPS inspection standards. Standard 8 (Organisational Effectiveness) is omitted as this is not addressed in the prisoner survey.

### **Standard 1: Lawful and Transparent Custody**

- Fifty-seven per cent of respondents said they were offered an induction on arrival at HMP Dumfries, and 80% reported being treated well in reception.

### **Standard 2: Decency**

- Most respondents rated the quality of food positively (71%), although less than half said they always or usually get enough to eat at mealtimes (42%).
- Almost all respondents said that they were able to have a shower ever day (98%) and that they could have their clothes washed at least once a week (92%).

### **Standard 3: Personal Safety**

- Most people reported feeling safe all or most of the time in HMP Dumfries (81%).
- Around two in five (43%) said they had witnessed staff abusing, bullying, threatening or assaulting other prisoners, and a quarter (25%) said staff had done this to them.
- Over a third (36%) reported having been abused, bullied, threatened or assaulted by other prisoners in HMP Dumfries.

### **Standard 4: Effective, Courteous and Humane Use of Authority**

- Almost a third (32%) said they were never given a reasonable explanation when they or their cell was searched, compared to 33% who said they were given a reasonable explanation every time or most times.
- Most respondents (70%) felt the system for accessing personal property worked well.

### **Standard 5: Respect, Autonomy and Protection against Mistreatment**

- The majority of respondents (72%) said that they were treated with respect by prison staff either all or most of the time in HMP Dumfries.
- Most respondents reported that the complaints system worked badly (67%).
- Three quarters (75%) of respondents reported that they had a personal officer. Of these, most (62%) reported that their personal officer was helpful.

### **Standard 6: Purposeful Activity**

- Most respondents (72%) said that it was easy to access education; just over half said it was easy to access skills training (52%); and half (50%) said it was easy to access other prison jobs.

- Most (80%) respondents said they could access one hour outdoors in the fresh air every day.
- Most respondents (87%) said that they were able to go to the gym at least once a week if they wanted to, and that they could visit the library at least once a week (73%).
- The majority (70%) of respondents said that they were able to spend more than two hours outside their cells on the previous weekday, and 76% said they were able to spend more than two hours out of their cells during the previous Saturday.
- Just over half (55%) said they could access weekly in-person visits, while fewer than half (48%) said they could access weekly video visits.
- Of those who were convicted, almost half (46%) said they did not know what courses or programmes they needed to complete to progress through their sentences.
- Of those who knew what courses or programmes they needed to complete, almost all (93%) said the programmes they needed to complete were difficult or unavailable to access at HMP Dumfries.

### **Standard 9: Health and wellbeing**

- Eighty-six per cent said they were assessed by a medical practitioner within 24 hours of arrival at HMP Dumfries.
- Almost all (95%) respondents said they knew how to access health services in HMP Dumfries.
- Overall, more than half of respondents reported that it was easy to access the following health services: a nurse or nurse practitioner (72%); dental services (63%); addictions services (61%); a pharmacist (54%); and prison-based social work (52%).
- However, fewer than half of respondents rated three services as easy to access: doctor (40%); mental healthcare (49%); and medical appointments outside the prison (35%).
- Three healthcare services were rated as good by more than half of respondents: dental services (62%); addictions services (62%); and the nurse/nurse practitioners (60%).
- However, fewer than half of respondents rated the following services positively: doctors (45%); mental health team (45%); pharmacy (49%); and prison-based social work (49%).
- Of those who said they had a disability or long-term health condition, around one-third said they were well-supported to manage this (34%) and a third (35%) said they were poorly supported.
- Of those who said they needed support for alcohol use, 37% reported receiving support that had been helpful.
- Of those who said they had needed support for drug use, 54% reported receiving help that had been helpful.
- Of those who said they had needed support for their mental health, 33% had received support that they found helpful.

## **Introduction**

This document reports on the findings of the HMIPS pre-inspection questionnaire conducted in HMP Dumfries on 24 to 25 July 2024.

All 176 prisoners held in HMP Dumfries on the first day of data collection were asked to complete the survey, of whom 134 completed and returned the questionnaire, providing a 76% response rate.

The data is presented according to the HMIPS inspection standards. There are no results for Standard 8 as there are no questions relating to this standard in the prisoner survey.

## **Method and limitations**

The survey was managed by the HMIPS senior researcher and conducted by HMIPS staff. The day before the survey took place, HMIPS requested a full list of prisoners held in HMP Dumfries, including their cell location and primary language. This was used to distribute and collect the surveys and provide translations where necessary.

Anonymous data on the characteristics of the prisoner population (including age group, ethnicity, sentence type, citizenship and gender) was requested from the prison to understand how closely the sample of survey respondents matched those of the overall prison population (see “Participant Profile”).

HMIPS staff sought to speak to each participant, to explain the survey and ask if they wished to take part. Those who wanted to take part were given a paper copy of the questionnaire along with a privacy notice, a pen and an envelope. They were asked if they would need assistance to complete the questionnaire, and provided with this assistance later in the day by an HMIPS staff member if required. Those who did not wish to take part were not given the questionnaire. Respondents were asked to complete the questionnaire, seal it in the envelope provided and to hand it back to HMIPS staff when they returned later in the day. Staff returned to each hall several times throughout the day, and the following day, to collect completed questionnaires.

Anyone who did not speak English was provided with a copy of the survey translated into their own language.

The responses to each completed questionnaire were entered into a digital version of the same survey by HMIPS staff on site, and these results were analysed.

All digital data generated during the pre-inspection surveys is stored securely on HMIPS secure servers, and hard-copies of completed surveys are securely held according to Scottish Government data protection guidelines. Hard-copies of the surveys are destroyed after the inspection has been completed and the findings have been published.

As with all survey data, the findings reported here are limited by a number of factors, including non-response and response bias.

### **Note on presentation of data**

For each question in the following report, any non-responses or invalid responses have been excluded from the analysis. When conducting the data entry, responses were marked as invalid where a respondent had ticked two or more answers, or where it was not clear which answer they had selected. Where any other type of response has been excluded in this analysis, this is explained in the text.

Each chart gives a figure (N = X) to show how many responses are included in the analysis.

## Participant Profile

### Demographic information and Sample Representativeness

The survey asked a series of demographic questions, the results of which are summarised below, excluding those who did not disclose their demographic information. HMIPS requested an anonymous breakdown of the prisoner population in HMP Dumfries the day before data collection for the survey took place. This included information on age group, gender, ethnic group, citizenship and sentence type. The table below shows how this data from the whole population of HMP Dumfries compares with the sample of prisoners who responded to the survey. Overall, it shows that the sample of prisoners who responded to the survey closely resembled the overall prison population at the time the survey took place.

#### Characteristics of sample population compared to characteristics of whole population of HMP Dumfries (%)<sup>1</sup>

	Sample population*	Whole population
<b>Age group</b>		
21-30	31% (23-32)	27%
31-40	30% (33-42)	34%
41-50	16% (43-52)	15%
51 or over	24% (52 or over)	23%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Citizenship</b>		
UK	92%	91%
Non-UK	8%	9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Prisoner type</b>		
Remand	21%	20%
Convicted	79%	80%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

*\*Excluding those who did not disclose their demographic information (5% of all respondents)*

Just over a quarter of respondents were aged between 21 and 30 (27%), and just over a third were aged between 31 and 40 (34%). Almost a quarter were aged 51 or over (23%) and the remaining 15% were aged between 41 and 50. As shown in the table below, these age ranges roughly match the age ranges of those held in HMP Dumfries at the time of the survey.

The majority of respondents were white (92%) and were UK citizens (91%). This closely matched citizenship profile of the overall population. Just under half (48%) reported having a religion, with the most common being Church of Scotland (25%), Roman Catholic (21%), Muslim (8%), Jewish (6%) and Other Christian (6%).

<sup>1</sup> Due to rounding, totals do not always sum precisely to 100%



Remand prisoners made up 20% of the survey sample with the remaining 80% convicted. This closely matches the prisoner type profile of the whole population, with 21% of all prisoners on remand, and 79% convicted. In total, 63% respondents said they were serving long-term sentences (over four years), 14% were serving short-term sentences, and three said they were on an Order for Lifelong Restriction (OLR). Most had been in HMP Dumfries for less than three years (66%).

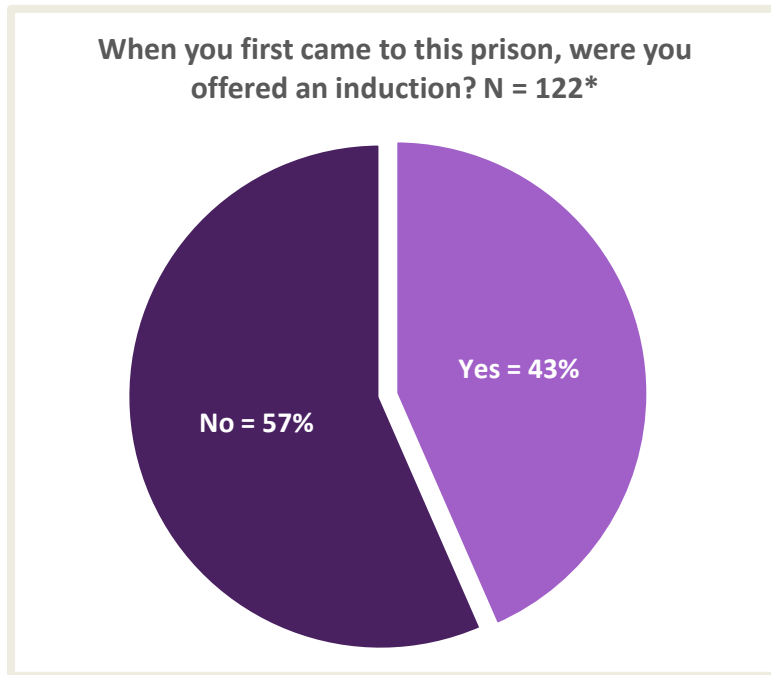
Reflecting the population-type in HMP Dumfries, the majority of respondents (68%) were held on protection halls, with 30% in mainstream accommodation and 2% in segregation.

Over half of respondents reported living with a disability or long-term health condition (56%).

## Standard 1: Lawful and Transparent Custody

### Induction

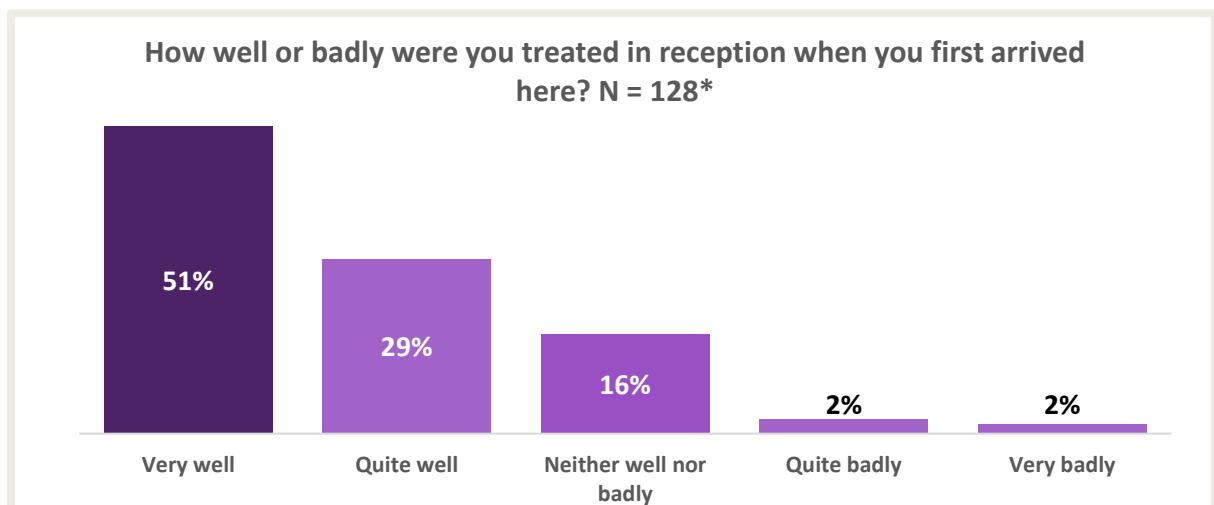
Of those who could remember their arrival into custody, the majority said they were not offered an induction (57%) when they arrived at HMP Dumfries.



\*Excluding "Don't remember".

### Treatment in reception

The majority of respondents (80%) reported being well treated on arrival at HMP Dumfries, including over half (51%) who said they were very well treated.

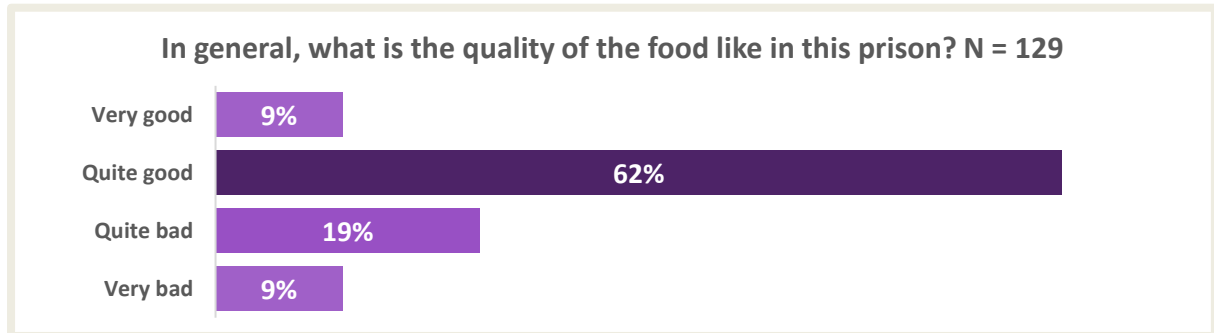


\*Excluding "Don't remember".

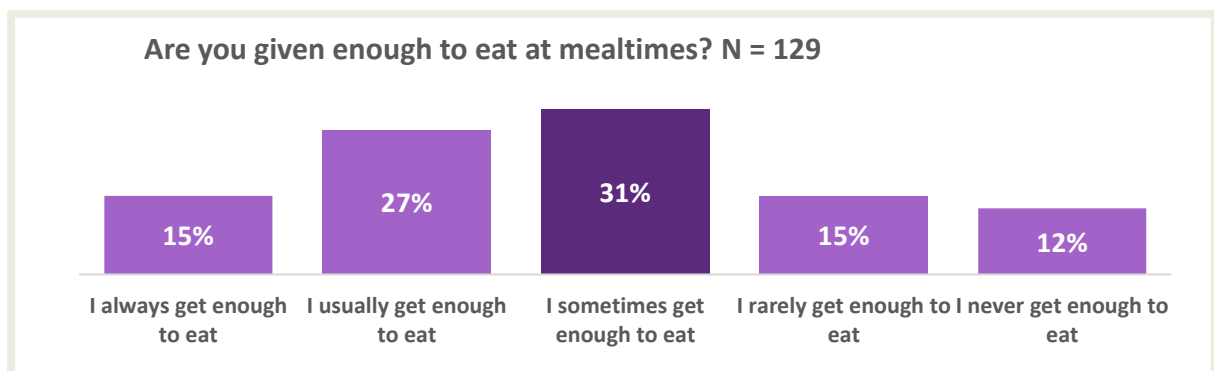
## Standard 2: Decency

### Food

Respondents were generally quite positive about the quality of the food served in HMP Dumfries, but less positive about the amount of food available at mealtimes. The majority (71%) reported that the quality of food was good.

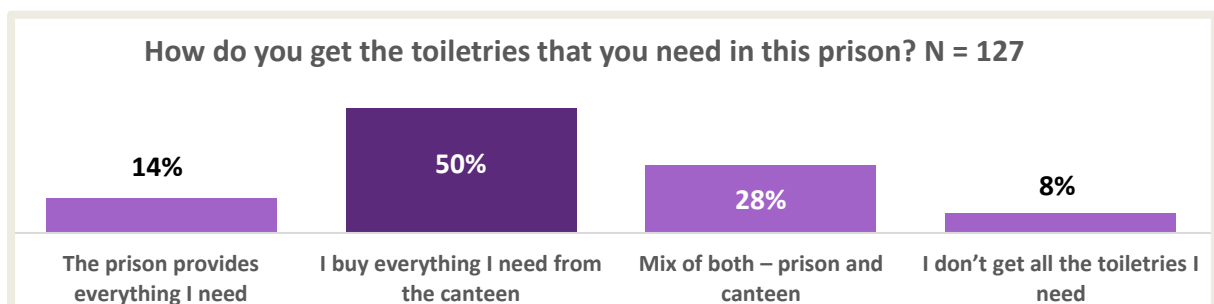


However, less than half (42%) said that they always or usually get enough to eat at mealtimes, while a quarter (27%) said they rarely or never get enough to eat at mealtimes.



### Toiletries, showering and laundry

Half of respondents said they got all the toiletries they needed from the canteen, while 14% said the prison provided everything they needed. Almost one in 10 (8%) said they could not access all the toiletries they needed.



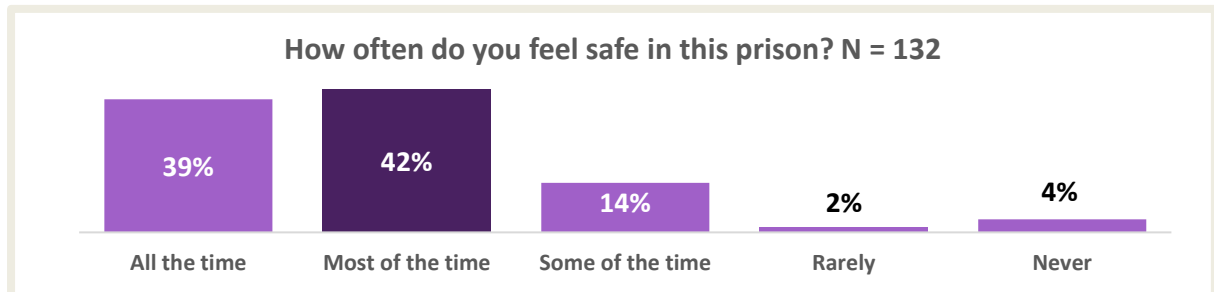
The majority of respondents said they were able to have a shower every day (98%) and that they could have their clothes washed at least once a week (92%).



## Standard 3: Personal Safety

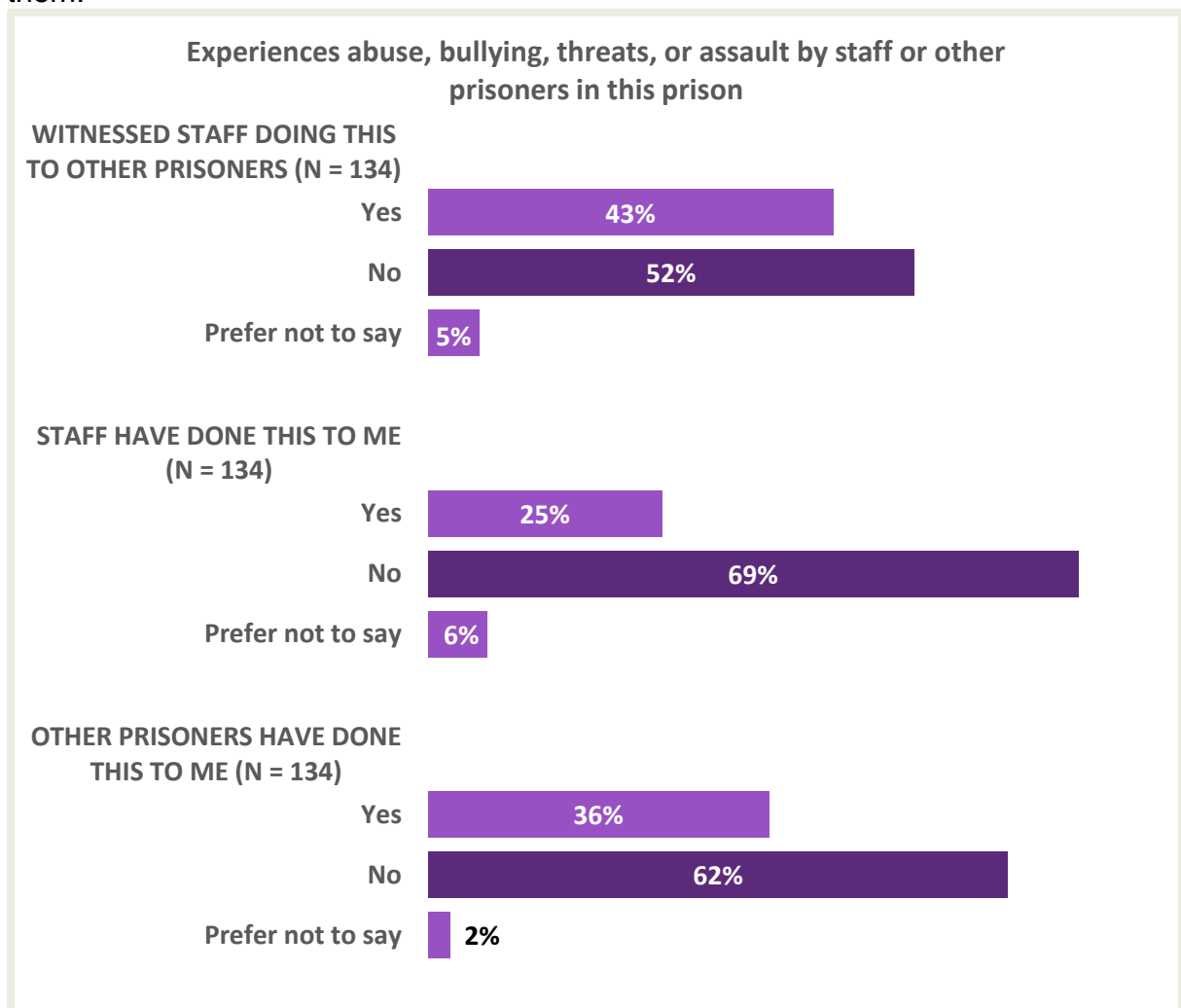
### Perception of safety

The majority of respondents (81%) reported that they feel safe all or most of the time in HMP Dumfries.



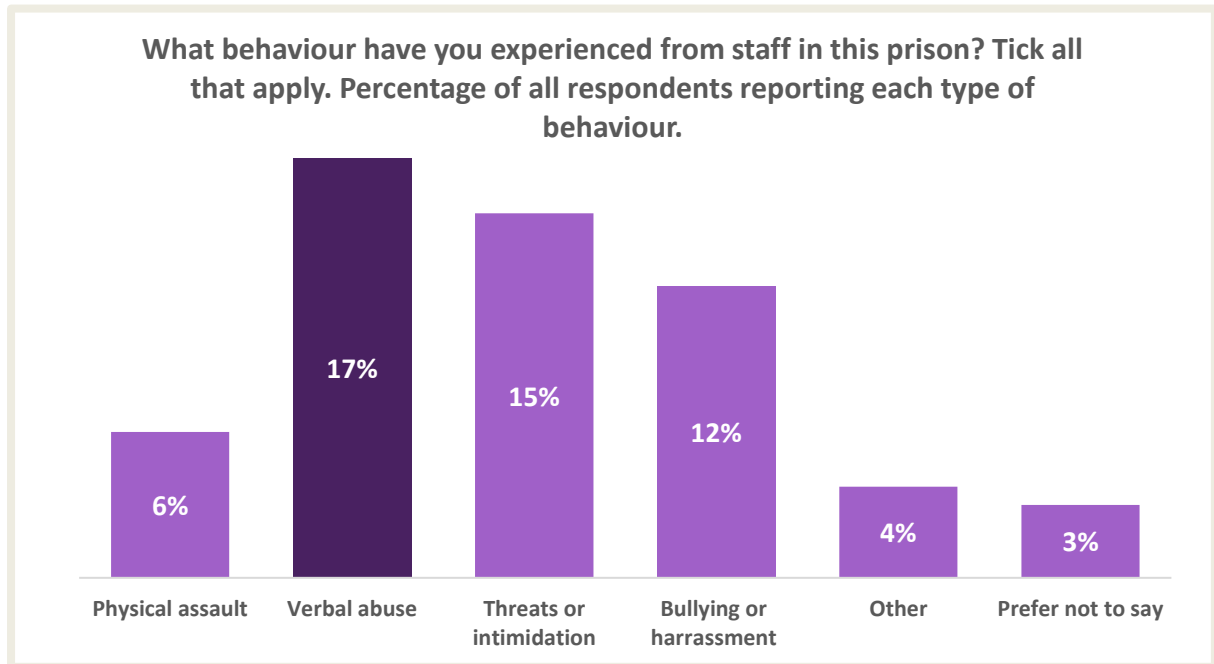
### Abuse, threats, bullying or assault by staff or other prisoners

Just over two in five (43%) of respondents said they had witnessed prison staff abusing, bullying, threatening or assaulting another prisoner at HMP Dumfries. One-quarter (25%) reported that staff had abused, bullied, threatened or assaulted them.

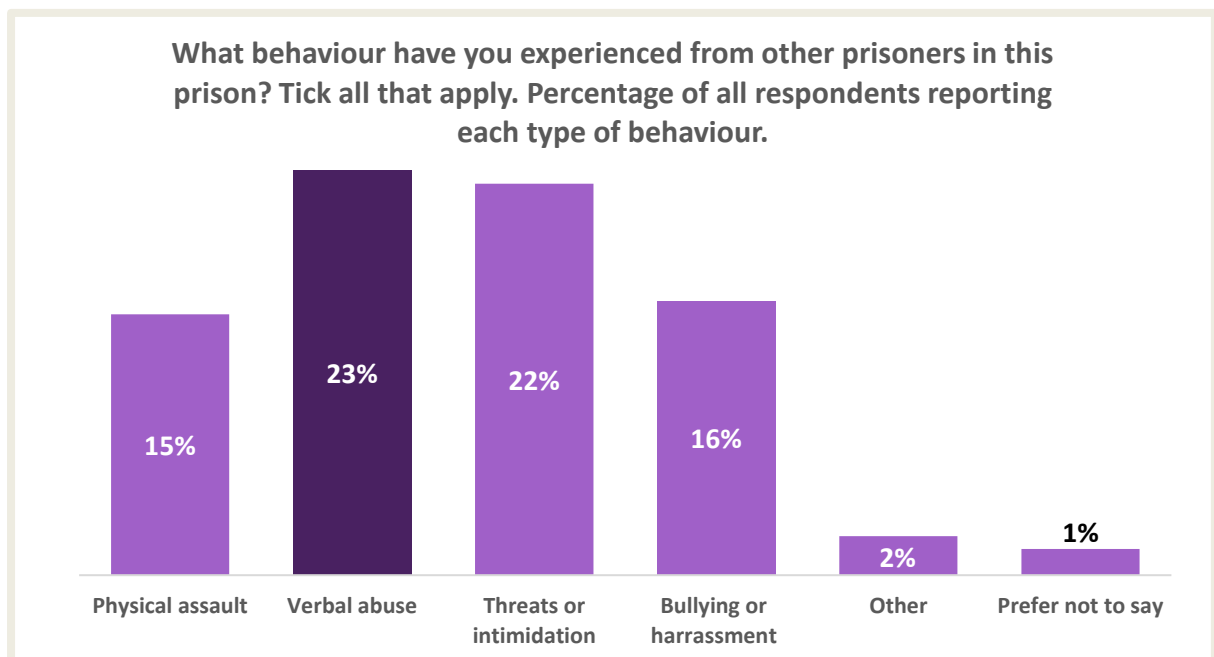


Just over a third (36%) said they had been abused, threatened, bullied, or assaulted by another prisoner in HMP Dumfries.

When asked what type of negative behaviour they themselves had experienced from staff, the most common responses were: verbal abuse (17%), threats or intimidation (15%), and bullying or harassment (12%). A further 6% reported being physically assaulted by staff.



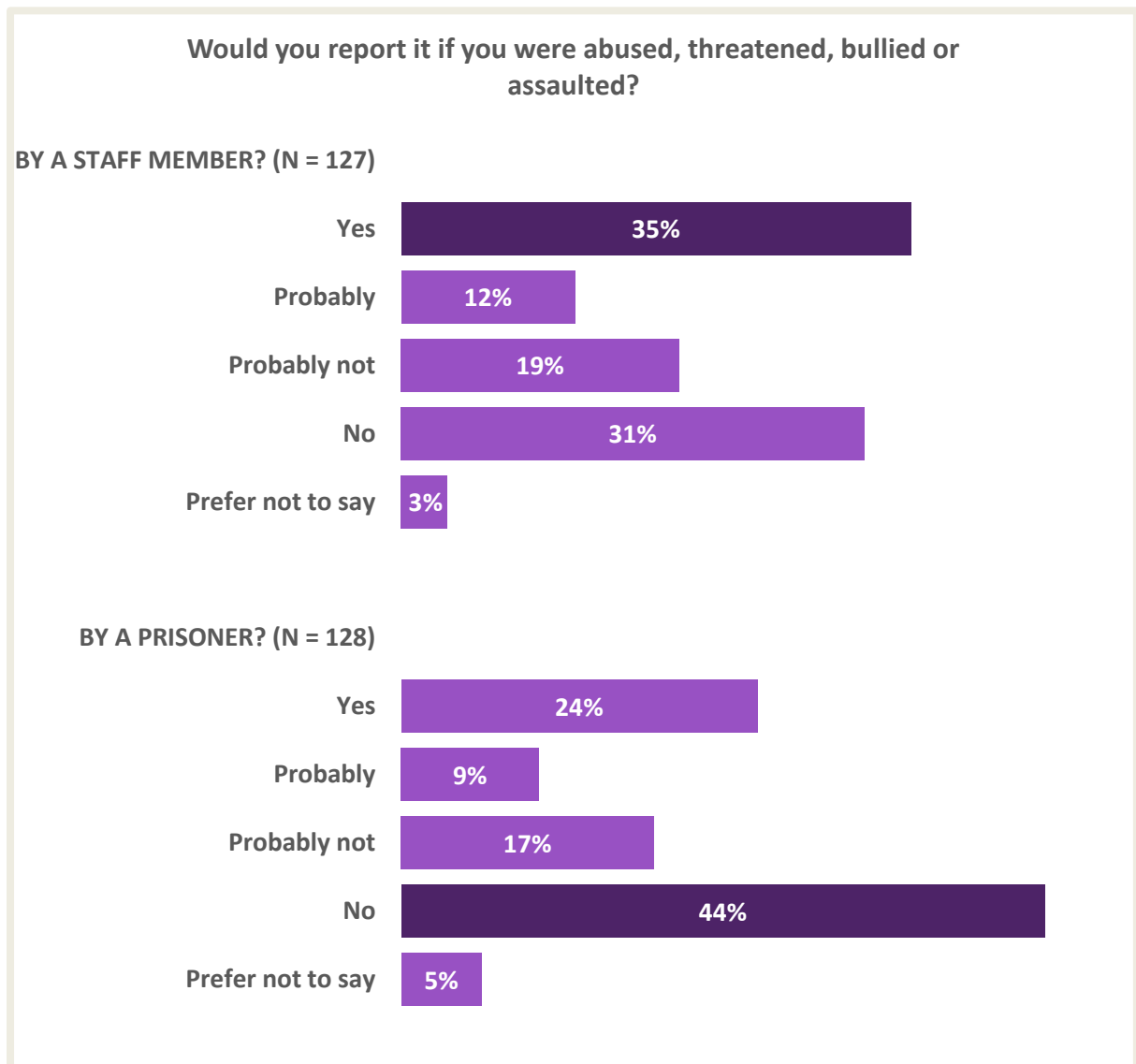
When asked about the types of negative behaviour experienced from other prisoners, the most common responses were: verbal abuse (23%); threats or intimidation (22%); bullying or harassment (16%); and physical assault (15%).



## Reporting abuse, threats, bullying or assault

Half of respondents (50%) said they would not, or probably would not, report it if they were abused, threatened, bullied, or assaulted by a staff member, and almost half said they would or probably would (47%).

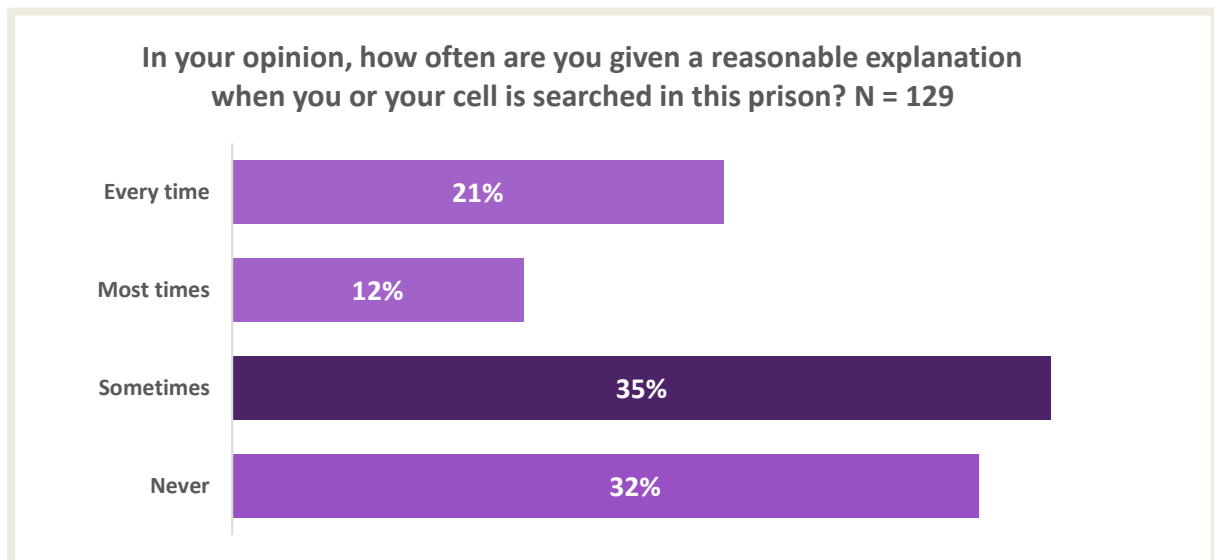
Most (61%) also said that they would not report abuse, threats, bullying, or assault by other prisoners.



## Standard 4: Effective, Courteous and Humane Use of Authority

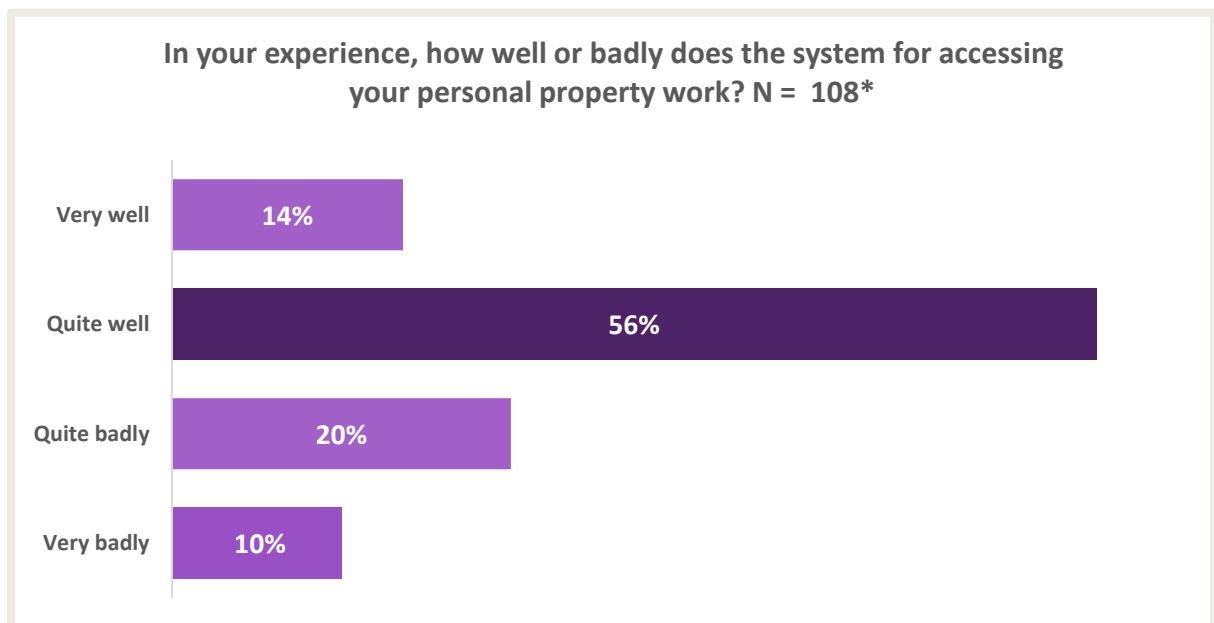
### Searching

A third of respondents (33%) felt that they were given a reasonable explanation most times or every time their cell was searched. The most common response (35%) was that they never received a reasonable explanation, while 32% said they never received a reasonable explanation.



### Accessing personal property

The majority of respondents reported that the system for accessing personal property worked quite well or very well (70%).



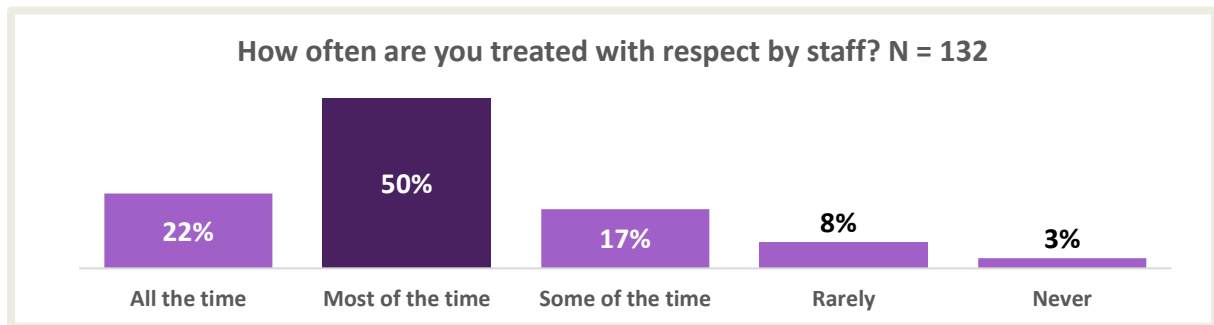
\*Excludes "don't know".



## Standard 5: Respect, Autonomy and Protection against Mistreatment

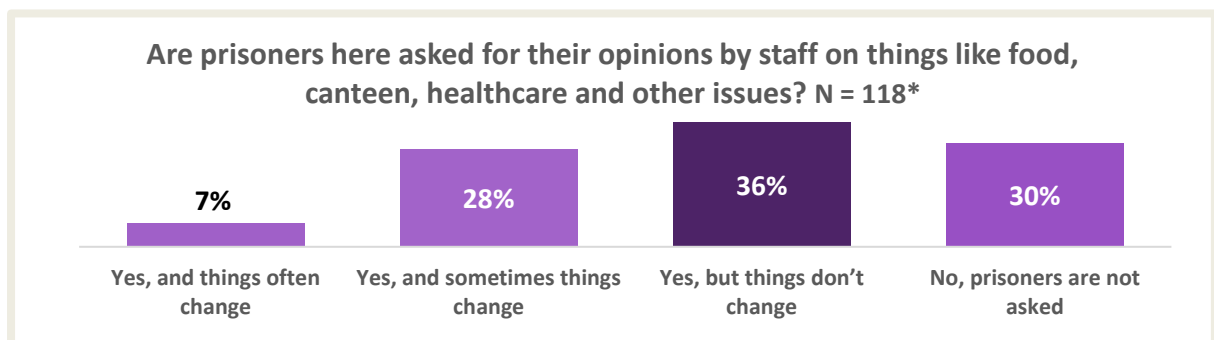
### Respect

The majority of respondents (72%) said that they were treated with respect by prison staff either all or most of the time in HMP Dumfries. However, over one in 10 (11%) said that they were rarely or never treated with respect by staff.



### Consultation with prisoners

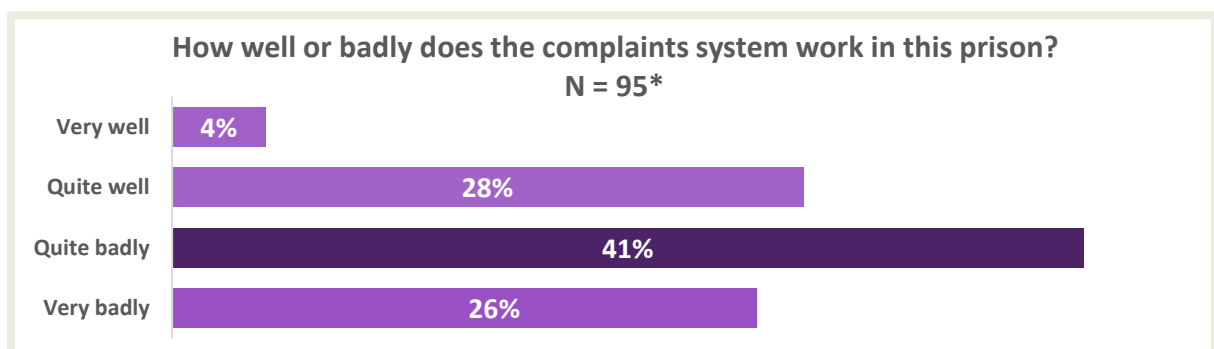
The majority of respondents said that the prison did hold consultation sessions with prisoners (70%). However, only 35% said that things sometimes or often change as a result of this consultation.



\*Excludes "don't know".

### Complaints

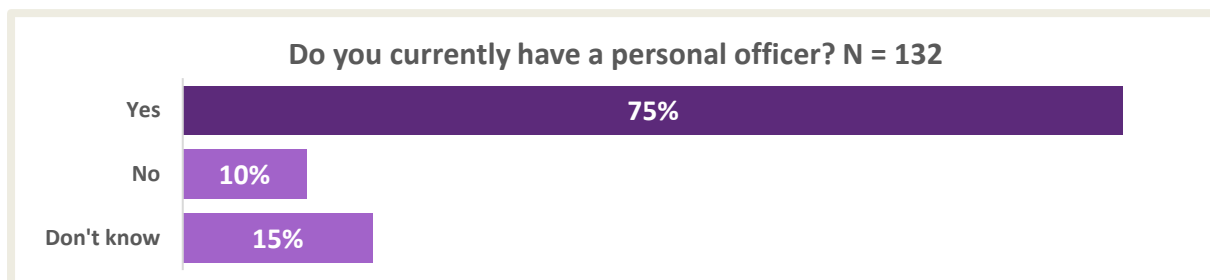
Most respondents reported that the complaints system worked badly (67%).



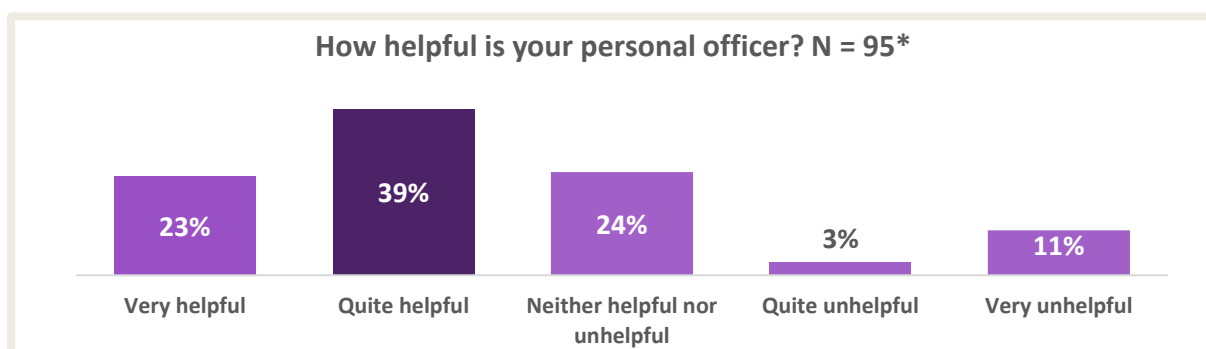
\*Excludes "don't know".

## Personal officers

Three-quarters (75%) of respondents reported that they had a personal officer, while 10% said they did not, and 15% said they did not know if they had one.



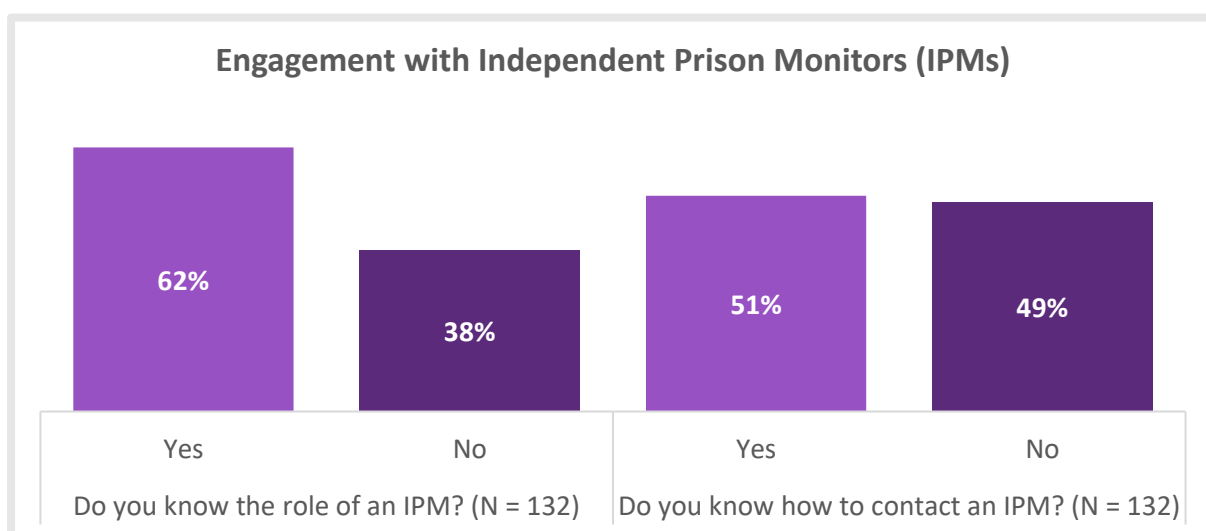
Those who said they had a personal officer were asked how helpful their personal officer was. The majority reported that their personal officer was very or quite helpful (62%).



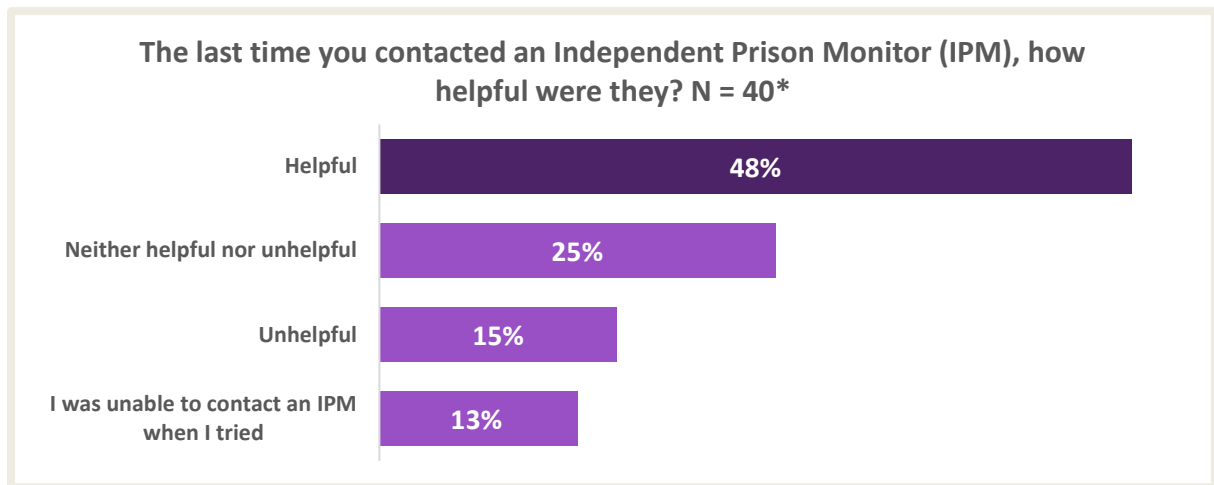
*\*Excluding those who said they did not have a personal officer.*

## Engagement with Independent Prison Monitors (IPMs)

The majority of respondents (62%) said that they knew what the role of an Independent Prison Monitor (IPM) was, and just over half knew how to contact an IPM (51%).



The majority of respondents said they had never attempted to contact the IPM service. Of those who had (40 respondents), almost half said they found the service helpful (48%), and 15% had found it to be unhelpful. Some (13%) reported that they were unable to contact an IPM when they had tried.

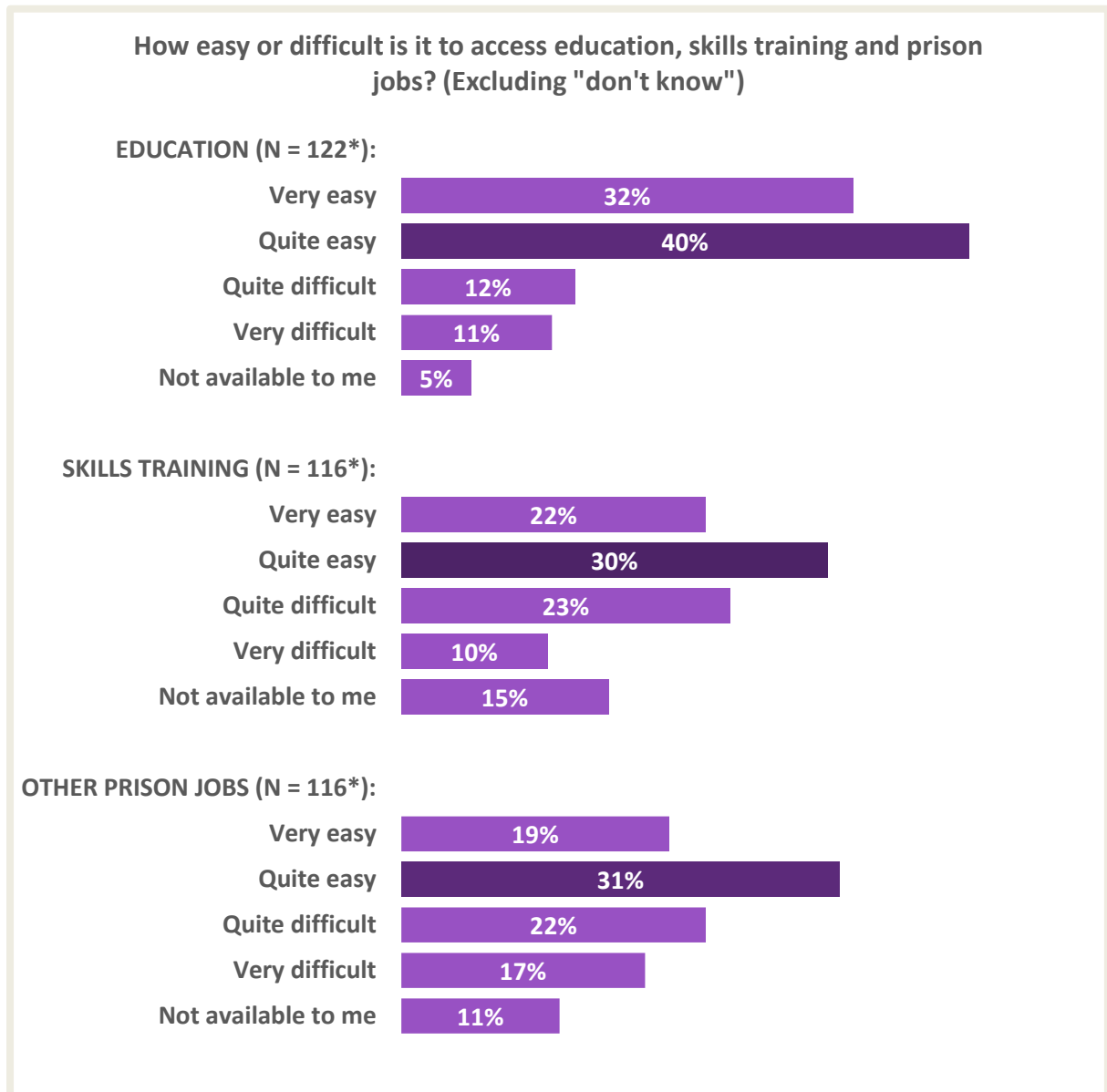


*\*Excludes those who said they had never tried to contact an IPM.*

## Standard 6: Purposeful Activity

### Access to education, training and work

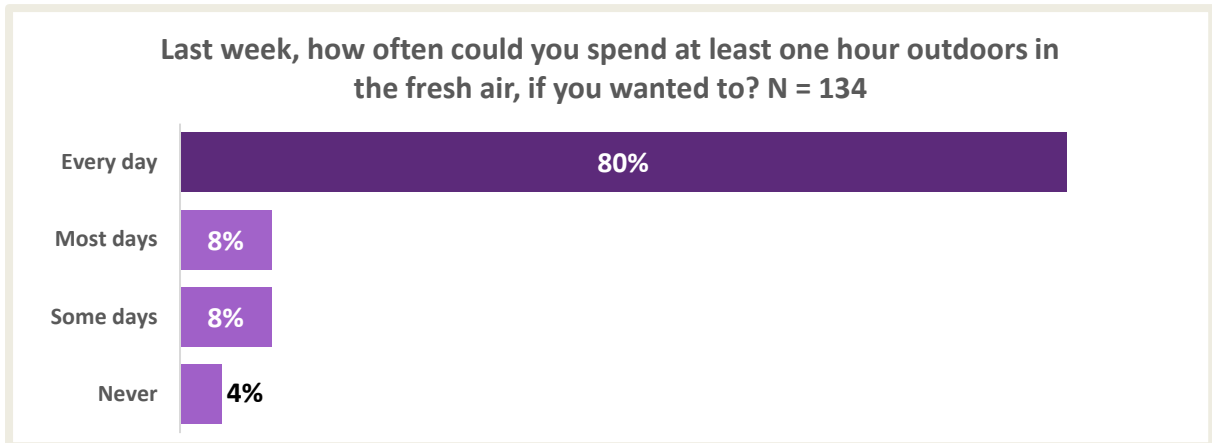
Most respondents (72%) said that it was easy to access education; just over half said it was easy to access skills training (52%); and half (50%) said it was easy to access other prison jobs.



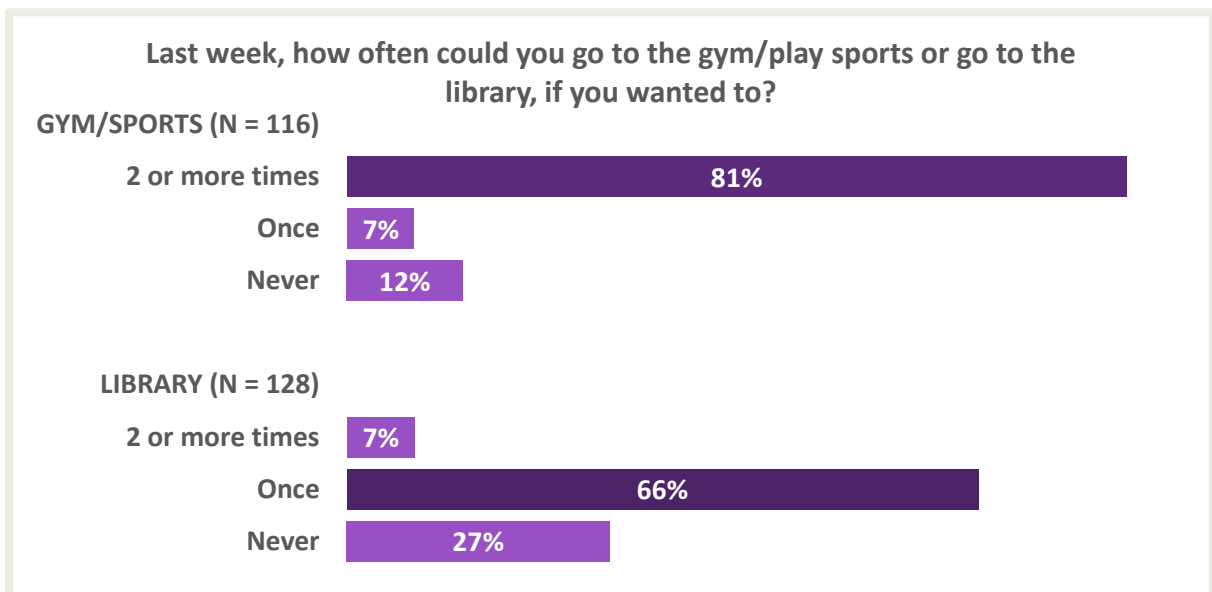
\*Excluding "Don't know".

### Fresh air, gym/sports and library access

The majority of respondents (80%) said that they were given the opportunity to spend at least one hour outdoors in the fresh air if they wanted to do so. However, 16% said they could only do this on some or most days, and 4% said they were never given this opportunity.



Most respondents (87%) said that they were able to go to the gym at least once a week if they wanted to, and that they could visit the library at least once a week (73%).

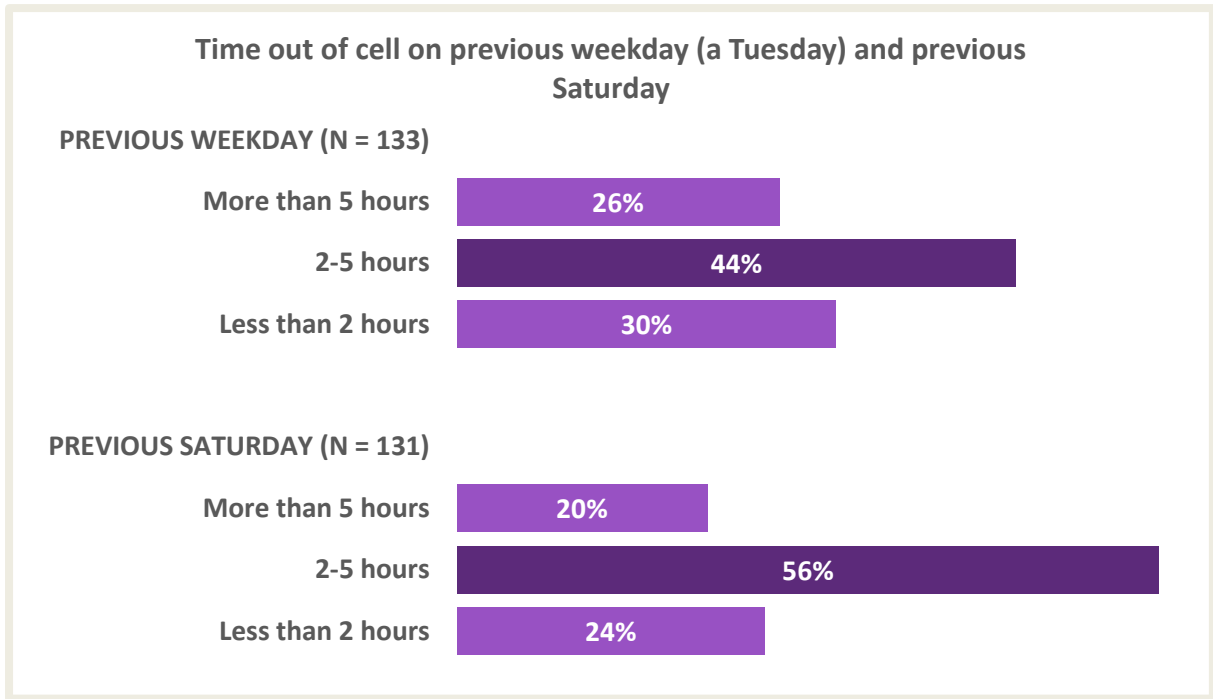


*\*Excluding "Don't know".*

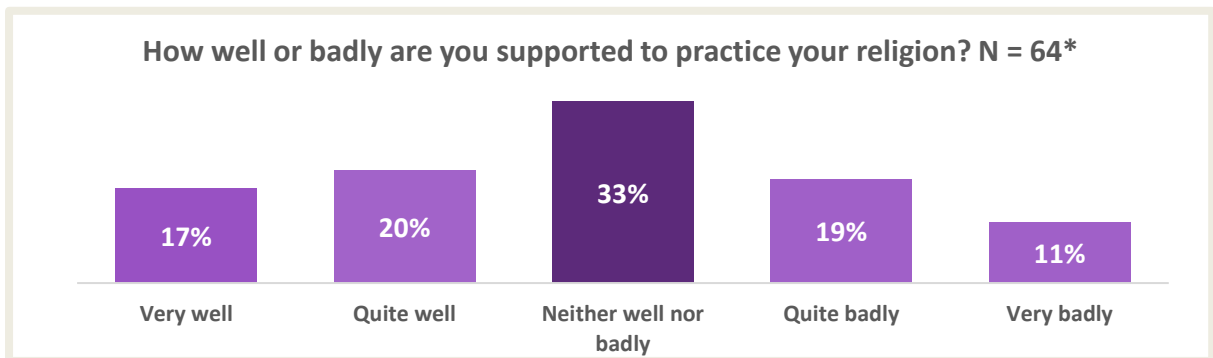
### **Time out of cell**

The majority (70%) of respondents said that they were able to spend more than two hours outside their cells on the previous weekday, including over a quarter (26%) who said they were able to spend more than five hours out of their cells.

Similarly, 76% said they were able to spend more than two hours out of their cells during the previous Saturday.



### Religious practice

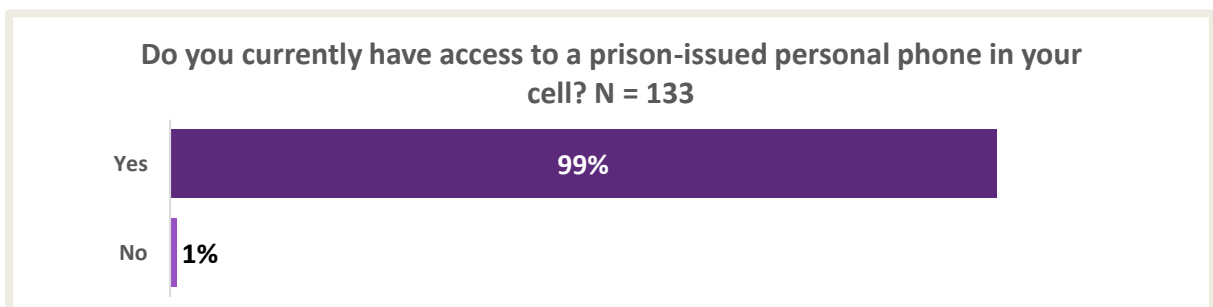


\*Excluding "I don't practice a religion".

Just under half of respondents said they practiced a religion (48%). Of these, 37% said they were well supported to do so, 33% said they were “neither well nor badly” supported, and 30% said they were badly supported to practice their religion.

### Phones

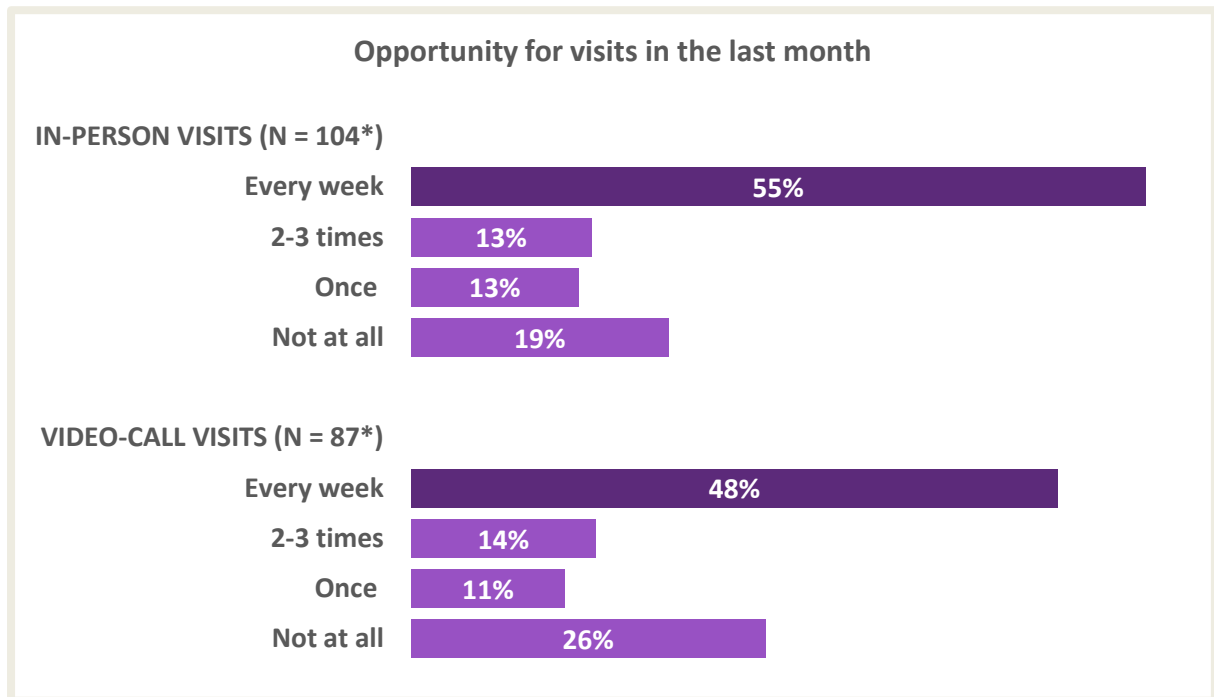
Almost all respondents (99%) said they had access to a prison-issued personal phone in their cell.



## Visits

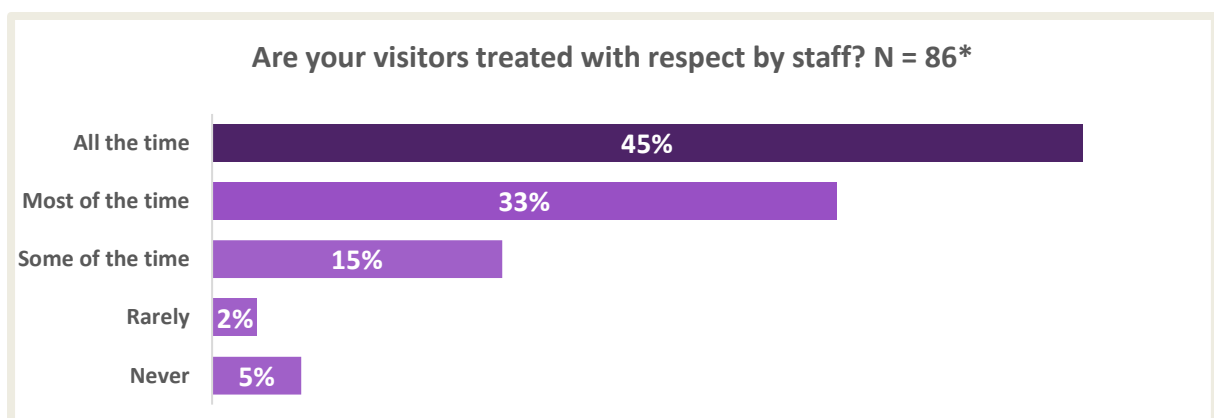
Of those who said they were aware of the availability of visits, more than half said they were given the opportunity for in-person visits every week (55%). A further 26% said they had a chance to have a visit at least once a month, while 19% said they never got an opportunity for in-person visits.

Almost half said they could access video-call visits every week (48%), although 26% said they did not have an opportunity to access these at all.



*\*Excluding "Don't know".*

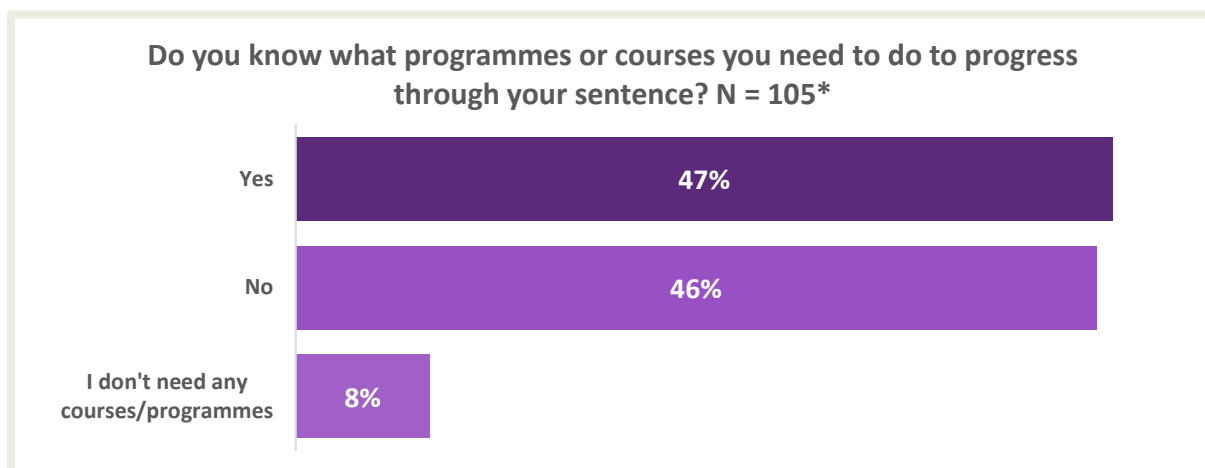
Of those who received in-person visits, the majority said that their visitors were treated with respect by prison staff all or most of the time (78%), although less than half (48%) said this happened "all the time".



*\*Excludes "Not applicable - I don't have visits".*

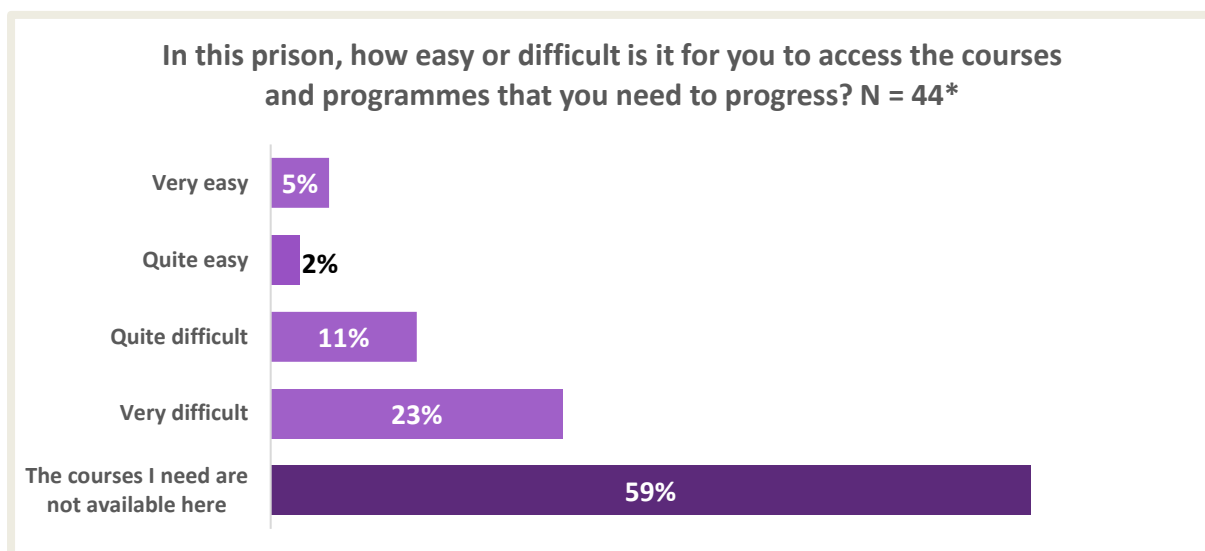
## Progression and case management support

All those serving a sentence were asked whether they knew what courses or programmes they needed to undertake to progress through their sentences. Of these, almost half (47%) said they did and a further 8% said they did not need to undertake any programmes. Almost half (46%) said they did not know what programmes they needed to undertake.



*\*Convicted respondents only.*

Of those who knew what courses/programmes they needed to undertake to progress through their sentences (44 respondents), the vast majority (93%) either said that it was difficult to access the programmes they needed, or that the programmes were not available for them to do in HMP Dumfries.



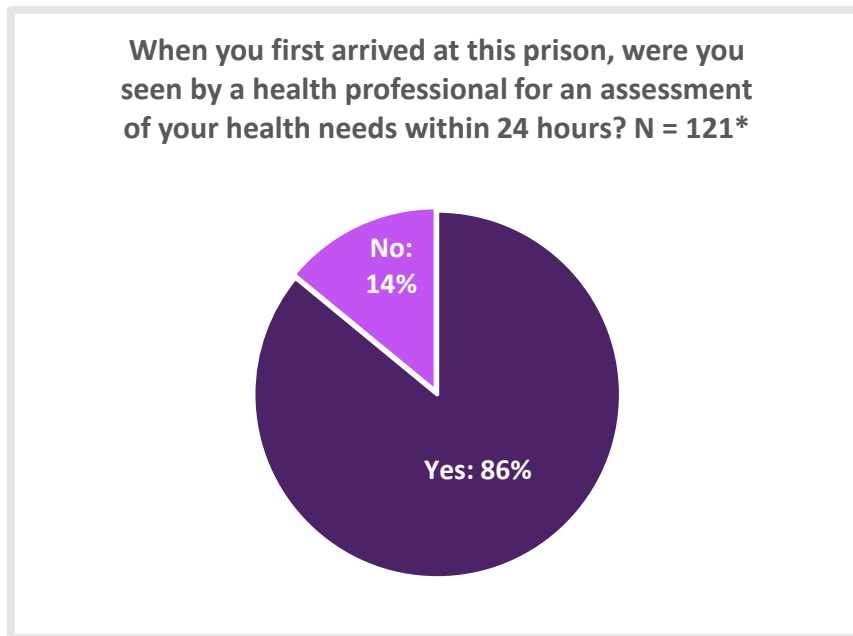
*\*Excluding those who said they did not need to undertake any programmes.*



## Standard 9: Health and Wellbeing

### Health assessment on arrival

Most respondents (86%) reported that they were seen by a health professional within 24 hours of arriving at HMP Dumfries for an assessment of their health needs, although more than one in 10 (14%) said this did not happen.



\*Excluding "Don't remember".

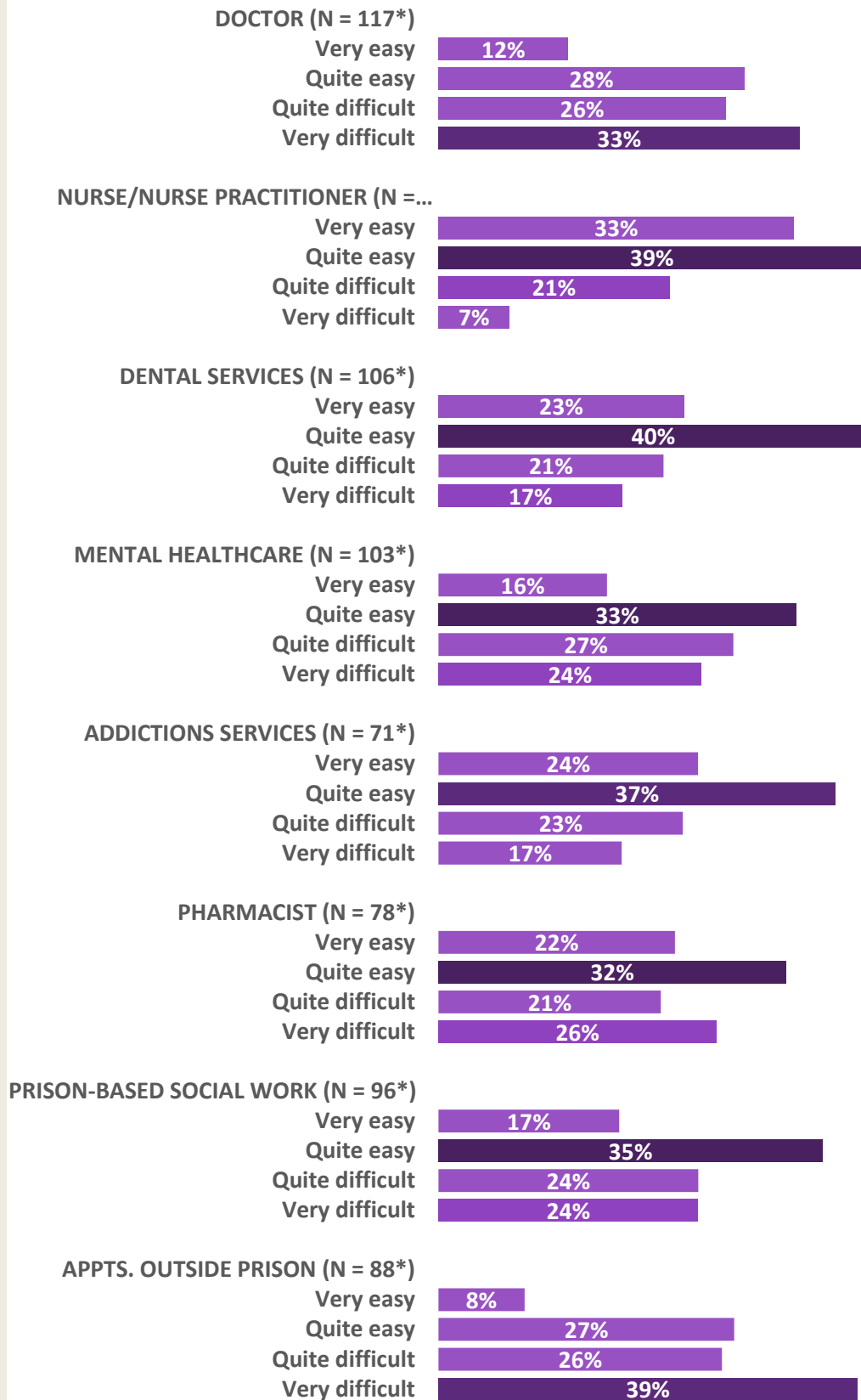
### Access to health services

Almost all (95%) respondents said they knew how to access health services in HMP Dumfries.

Overall, more than half of respondents reported that it was easy to access the following health services: a nurse or nurse practitioner (72%); dental services (63%); addictions services (61%); a pharmacist (54%); and prison-based social work (52%).

However, fewer than half of respondents rated three services as easy to access: doctor (40%); mental healthcare (49%); and medical appointments outside the prison (35%).

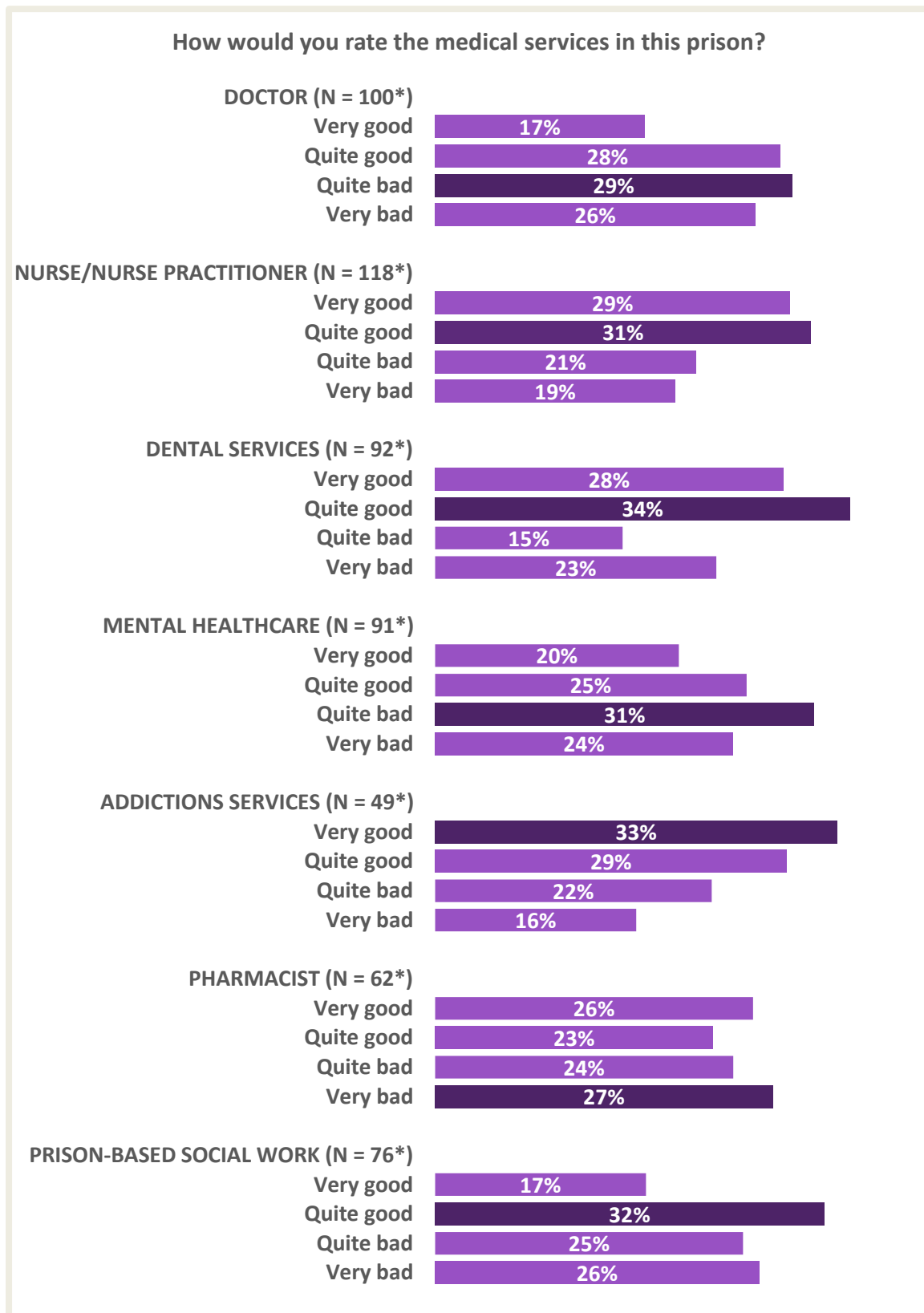
**How easy or difficult is it to access health services in this prison?**



\*Excluding "Don't know".

## Quality of medical services

The chart below shows the responses to the questions about the quality of medical services available at HMP Dumfries.



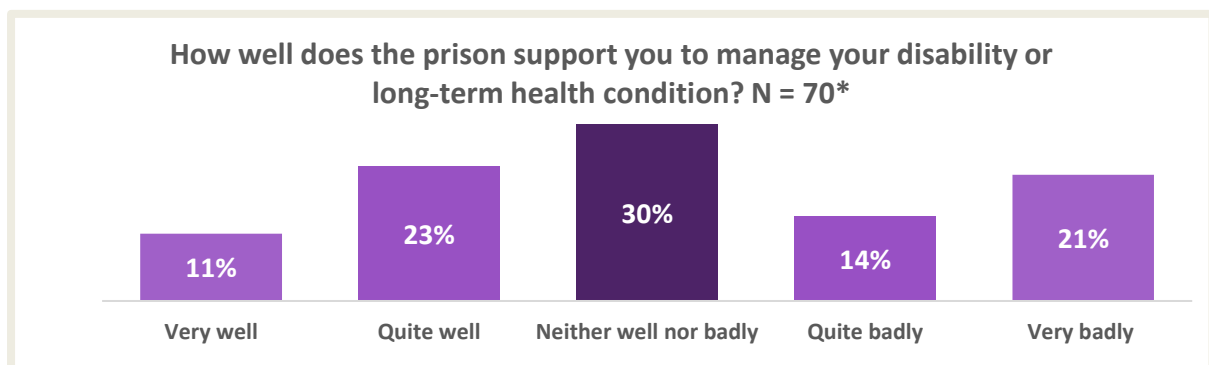
\*Excluding "Don't know".

Three healthcare services were rated as good by more than half of respondents: Dental services (62%); addictions services (62%); and the nurse/nurse practitioners (60%).

However, fewer than half of respondents rated the following services positively: doctors (45%); mental health team (45%); pharmacy (49%); and prison-based social work (49%).

### Support for disabilities and long-term health conditions

In total, 72 (56%) of those who answered the question self-reported having a disability or long-term health condition. When asked about the support provided to manage their conditions, around one-third said they were well supported to manage their condition (34%), with a further 30% saying they were “neither well nor badly supported”. Over a third (35%) felt that they were poorly supported to manage their condition.



*\*Only those reporting having a disability or long-term health condition.*

### Support for issues relating to alcohol, drugs and mental health

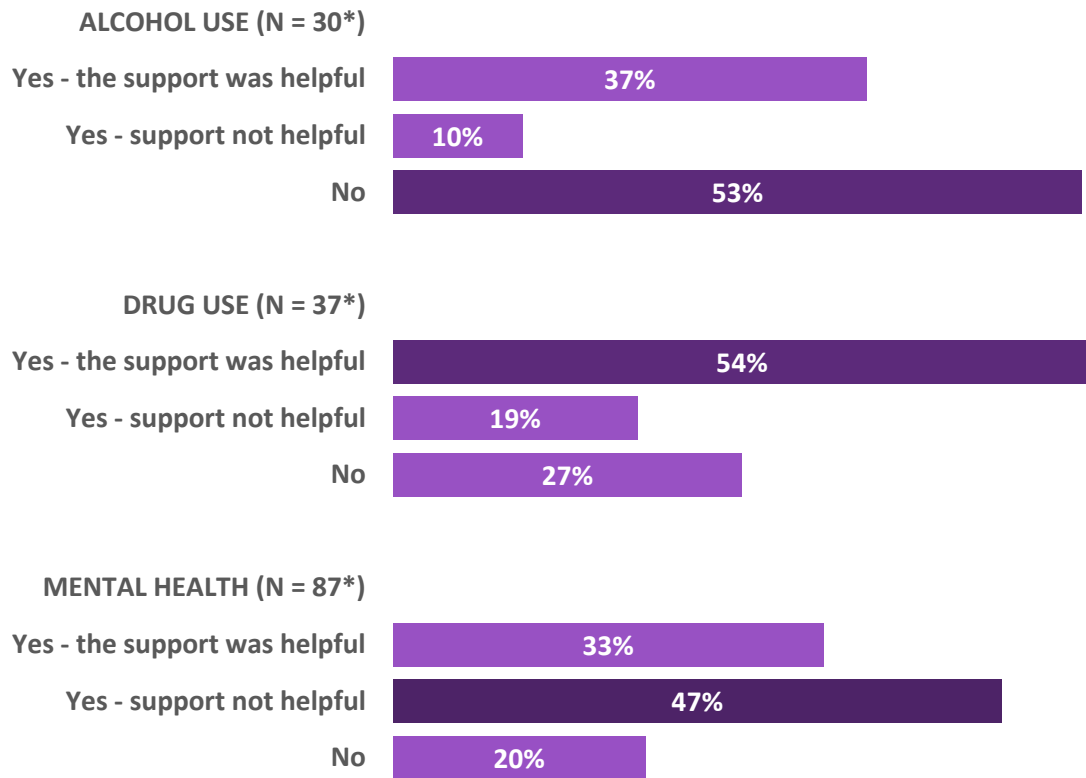
The survey asked about the support provided to those who needed help with alcohol use, drug use, and mental health issues.

Of those who said they needed support for alcohol use (30 respondents), 37% said they had received useful support, while 53% said they had been offered no support. Ten per cent said they had received support but that it had not been helpful.

Of those who said they had needed support for drug use (37 respondents), the majority (73%) said they had been offered support for this, and more than half felt that they had been offered useful support. However, 27% said they had not received any support.

Of those who said they had needed support for their mental health (87 respondents), one-third (33%) said they had been offered support which had been helpful, while a further 47% said they had received support but it had not been helpful. A further 20% said they had needed mental health support but had not received it.

**If needed, have you received support for issues relating to alcohol use, drug use and/or mental health?**



*\*Excluding "I haven't needed this support".*

## Open Question (General Comments): Thematic Analysis

In total, 82 respondents (61%) left comments at the end of the questionnaire. The most common themes were healthcare; relationships with staff; regime and purposeful activity; progression and food.

### Healthcare

Around 50 of those who commented mentioned healthcare, with the main issues being access to services, mental health support, and medication. Respondents reported waiting long periods to see a doctor or nurse, and sometimes having to make a formal NHS complaint in order to be seen. As one person commented:

“You never get to speak to a nurse, never mind a doctor”.

Others commented that they did not trust the quality of care they were receiving, with reports, for example, that their medical issues were not examined properly and that sometimes they were not even seen by a nurse when requested. As two people commented:

“You can’t get real medical help as they just say your fine without properly checking you out.”

“I think the NHS needs to be addressed i.e. a prisoner should be seen by a nurse if not well instead of the nursing staff phoning up to tell prison staff just to tell us to take fluids for an easy solution. We should be getting seen first.”

Others reported delays to treatment as a result of not being taken to hospital appointments. As one person described:

“NHS in prison is appalling overall and must be looked into with great scrutiny, as I’ve been left with some disease that I was awaiting scans to diagnose and operations and medications to treat but was not taken to hospital appointments.”

Mental health was raised by 14 respondents, most of whom reported struggling with their mental health and not getting the support and/or medication that they needed.

“Mental health care is nothing short of a joke in this place... in prison I’m left to deal with my PTSD... But I’m not even being considered for my medication ... this causes me to be placed on report. So not only am I being left to deal with that I’m being punished for it!!”

“My mental health is really bad. I have ADHD and they keep giving me the same answer all the time: there’s no medication left for the one I’m on. It’s a joke.”

“It seems the boys in here are just forgotten about and will need to spend their full sentence due to not getting the treatment they need. The officers would

rather spend half a million on a gym and bring in ITV cameras to film the gardens rather than help the boys with mental health issues.”

Eleven respondents reported issues with their medications. Most commonly, they reported being taken off medication they had been prescribed in the community when they arrived at HMP Dumfries. In some cases, they reported having had to miss several days of medication until the prison health team re-prescribed it for them, and in other cases they were not allowed to continue on the medication they had previously been on. As three people commented:

“The doctor and nurse told me I could not have the meds a specialist [in the community] gave me as they said it’s a currency in this prison so they will not give them.”

“I have been on remand for eight months and haven’t seen a mental health nurse at all and never got my meds and still haven’t.”

“The NHS in here need looking into. The answer to 95% of medical issues should not be paracetamol. Myself and many other prisoners have been taken off long-term prescriptions on arrival here.”

Communication and accountability between NHS and SPS staff was also raised as an issue, with a few respondents noting that it was not clear whether the NHS or SPS were responsible for signing off single-cell markers and requests for medical supports such as mattresses and pillows.

### **Relationships with Staff**

In total, 32 comments referred to relationships with staff. Several respondents highlighted positive engagement with staff members. As one person wrote:

“The prison staff here conduct themselves with common sense. It genuinely feels like they give a f\*\*\*. The attitude of staff here makes me want to be a better person.”

However, others raised a number of issues. Firstly, some respondents highlighted frustration at poor communication from staff members, with issues including having little communication about their progression and not being told when activities were cancelled.

Some reported being locked up by staff when their halls should have been open, and staff not being motivated to help with issues like progression, personal development and rehabilitation, or helping with issues raised by prisoners. Some felt that they did not get enough contact with or support from their personal officers, particularly for support regarding progression.

A small number of respondents described incidents of having been bullied, threatened or intimidated by staff, being treated disrespectfully, or feeling that staff were trying to provoke them into a reaction.

## Regime and Purposeful Activity

Twenty-five respondents left comments about the regime and purposeful activity. Some respondents highlighted the positive aspects of the regime, including activities such as life skills, recovery and wellbeing groups, and the wellbeing garden. As one person commented:

“[The] life skills shed is fantastic. Recovery/wellbeing groups are very useful... [The] prison is forward thinking. Just slow on implementing change. Family fun day by prison was fantastic. Garden is fabulous.”

However, there was a sense among some respondents that the regime at HMP Dumfries was often not used to its full potential, with some respondents commenting that work sheds and sports would often be cancelled, that there was a lack of access to the wellbeing garden for some prisoners. As several different people commented:

“The regime is fantastic here, however it very rarely gets implemented to its full potential, work sheds not on all week due to staffing issues, recreation during the day never seems to happen much meaning when we are not working we are locked up.”

“A lot of prisoners here suffer from mental health and other problems they [the prison management] go on about wellbeing gardens and how it would help prisoners but they never get used... It is just a big show for the prison to show off the gardens to the news and public when prisoners don't get the real benefit of the gardens and you wonder why prisoners struggle in this prison.”

“Exercise yard not getting used to its full potential – we get a box to walk in, the hall is bigger.”

Several long-term prisoners also noted that it would be valuable for them to be able to access better support for learning to live in the community again. As one person put it:

“There is no provision to train LTPs prior to liberation that take into account the complexities of 21<sup>st</sup> Century living.”

A few respondents reported a lack of opportunities for activities and feeling that they were spending too much time locked in their cells. This was particularly the case for those on remand and short-term prisoners, some of whom reported struggling to access jobs and education classes. As several respondents commented:

“They need more work for STPs. People are just in cells thinking. Mental health [problems] are going through the roof.”

“In D Hall you don't get the time out of your cell you're meant to get, if you get it at all. We are in a really small outside yard like 15 to 20 prisoners when there are two big yards.”



“Accessing education work at a suitable level and frequency is very difficult. Access to library is poor. The external service very limited. Access to make suggestions is non-existent. Access to personal development, in any form is discouraged. There is no encouragement to learn, develop or improve yourself. Every barrier is placed in your way. People who achieve things tend to do them out with of the jail regime rather than because of its help.”

“Cells are far too small for two adult men sharing. Especially those of us with mental health and physical health conditions including anxiety and depression... Being locked up 22 to 23 hours a day only exacerbates the above.”

“Remand can’t work and not much to help get ready for outside so we are on our own... we are locked up all day and nothing to do if we don’t want to go to school.”

## **Progression**

Concerns relating to progression were raised by 20 respondents, with the main issues being the time taken to get a Generic Programme Assessment (GPA) and the lack of courses available at HMP Dumfries.

A number of respondents reported feeling held back as it had taken so long to have their GPA. As several respondents explained:

“I am three years into nine-year sentence and I’m still waiting for the relevant GPA and RMT so that I can progress. [If] anyone comes into the prison with an earlier date, then that’s me moving backwards instead of forward. I am being overlooked as the progression criteria has stalled, you feel that you are being left to get on with your sentence and this can affect your wellbeing and mental health can be affected... I am going to get refusal for an open prison as I haven’t had the requirements met and this can be detrimental and affect yourself and your family.”

“The GPA and progression system here is very bad its very rarely prisoners get out on parole due to they do not get their GPA in time. I am now hitting the five-year mark and still not being offered it so the result of that is I have had to miss out on all my chances of parole hearings and chances of the open estate. So now that’s me here to my EDL and this is the case of most of the prisoners here I really do not think it’s fair and it needs a good looking into.”

“Have to wait far too long to have GPA done – been here for five years – prison is way behind and they don’t seem to care. I was promised mine would be done by Christmas 2022! There is no contact from personal officers.”

“Took six years for GPA out of a 10-year sentence.”

Furthermore, respondents noted that once they had their GPA, they still struggled to get access to the courses they required because none are available in HMP Dumfries. As one respondent explained:

“The worst of my experience in this prison has been waiting for a GPA to be done and no progression. I have been here nearly three years and currently still waiting to have a GPA to be started... I will then have to be placed on a programme list which they don't do any programmes here which is causing me major concern as my parole date is two years away and would like a lot of work done before I go in front of a parole board to give me a chance of proving evidence of offence work to be considered for parole. When you ask to push for your GPA to be done staff just shrug you off. I think it is shocking and a big reality that rehabilitation work in this prison is not being achieved. It is unfair for a prisoner to be placed back into a community with no work done. It is also unfair to the safety and protection of the public as prisons are releasing prisoners with no work or rehabilitation been done.”

“I feel like the biggest issue with this jail is they don't deliver programmes. I am currently doing a 12-year sentence and awaiting to do the SCP programme. I am apprehensive about going to another jail as I have trust issues with meeting other prisoners and opening up straight away. Whereas if HMP Dumfries delivered programmes here that would alleviate all my concerns.”

“I have been in HMP Dumfries for over 16 years. I am a model prisoner who causes no concern to the establishment. I have been flagged to do some course work, self change programme (SCP). I was listed on the waiting list in 2017 and I have consistently been pushing to get on to this group and I have been lied to for seven years that I am on the waiting list and when my number comes up I will get onto the group and not before... I am now at my progression date and have no prospect of getting on to a group to address my offending behaviour which means I cannot reduce my risk therefore I cannot progress to less secure conditions are meaning I'll end up doing many, many years more in custody through no fault of my own. This all comes about because this prison does not rollout programmes.”

Finally, several long-term prisoners highlighted a sense of frustration at an apparent lack of communication about their progression, and a sense that staff appeared apathetic about supporting their progression. As one respondent summarised:

“If you don't ask or request updates you are left to fester and you are looked at when it is past your allowed dates for moving onto progression.”

## **Food**

Food was mentioned by 16 respondents, with the most common theme being that respondents felt they did not always get enough to eat at mealtimes. In particular, several respondents noted that the food lacked enough protein, fruit and vegetables. Some noted that it was difficult to supplement the lack of food through the canteen because of the cost of the canteen.

Several commented that there was too little choice for those on a vegan diet, as well as too little protein.

Some expressed concerns that both allergies and religious practices were not appropriately taken into consideration regarding the food available in the prison.

### **Cost of living**

Wages and the cost of living was mentioned on 14 occasions. Some remanded respondents noted that they did not receive a cell wage, meaning that if they have no financial support from family or friends outside prison, they had no money to buy anything they needed from the canteen or phone credit.

Those who did have jobs noted that the wages received were very low and have not risen in line with rises in canteen prices. As one respondent noted:

“The price of items and the canteen are regularly rising but its wages haven’t changed in the seven years I have been in this jail.”

Another expanded on this, commenting that:

“Low wages for prisoners has dire, unseen consequences. Low value for work means more prisoners sell drugs, meals, property and “favours” in desperate need for cash. If wages increased even a little, these problems would recede along with bullying and intimidation. A higher value placed on hard work would also encourage a positive association between hard work and higher self-esteem. Current wages is not sustainable and things will get much worse soon. How is £11.00 per week supposed to encourage hard work for a prisoner who needs phone credit, vapes, toiletries and coffee? Prisoners will find other ways to pay.”

Others noted that they do not get enough food to eat at mealtimes, but struggle to supplement their food through canteen purchases both because canteen items are too expensive for the wages that they earn, and because there is a £20 cap on canteen spending, even if the prisoner has enough money to spend more. As one respondent commented:

“There really needs to be a look at how much you can spend on your canteen. If sentenced £20 does not go far and every month the prices keep going up and up. I’ve been in four and a half years nearly five years and since I’ve been in the prices have increased and increased. But how much you can spend hasn’t meaning you’re buying less.”

### **Safety**

Safety was mentioned on 12 occasions. While several people commented that they generally felt safe in HMP Dumfries, a small number commented that they had been victims of, or had witnessed bullying, harassment or violence by other prisoners. A few respondents felt this was fuelled by the low wages prisoners received, and the lack of cell wage for remand prisoners. As one respondent commented:

“Low wages also encourage other sources of income including selling contraband, meals, canteen items, personal items and leads to bullying, harassment and sometimes violence.”

A handful of respondents reported feeling unsafe around particular prison staff, with a small number of reports of bullying and assault by staff members. For example, one reported that:

“I’ve been bullied since I arrived here by some staff, not all. Live in anxiety of them being on shift. Staff have stolen property from me.”

Several remand prisoners reported that they were sharing halls and cells with convicted prisoners.

### **Family Contact**

Family contact was raised nine times, with issues including: visits sometimes running late; not being able to access double visits for visitors who have to travel long distances; and lack of access to virtual visits and international calls for those with family abroad. Some also reported struggling with only having 200 phone minutes per month, particularly if they did not have any income to buy extra credit.

### **Preparation for Release**

Preparation for release was raised five times. The main issues arising were a lack of life-skills support for long-term prisoners leading up to their release, and a lack of pre-release support for those leaving prison to ensure they had adequate access to housing. Two people on remand noted that they had been returned straight to prison on their bail release because they did not have a bail address to go to when they were released.

## Annex: HMP Dumfries in Comparison with All Other Closed Prison Establishments

This table shows a comparison between HMP Dumfries (July 2024) and all other closed prison establishments surveyed between 2022 and 2024 (Nine establishments were included in the comparator group\*). Where results are shown as statistically significant, this means that it is highly unlikely that the difference between HMP Edinburgh and the rest of the estate is down to chance.

A chi-square test of independence was used to test for statistical significance in each result. Please note that due to the large number of measures tested, there is an increased risk of false positives among the results.

The responses from the comparator group prisons were weighted by size to give a representative reflection of the responses of the group of prisons included in this comparative analysis. Note that as the pre-inspection survey has not yet run in all prisons, the comparator group does not provide a representative picture of the entire prison population.

### Colour coding:

**No colour** - no statistically significant difference between HMP Dumfries and the rest of the closed estate.

**Orange** – HMP Dumfries significantly more negative than the rest of the estate.

**Green** – HMP Dumfries significantly more positive than the rest of the estate.

Question	HMP Dumfries	Comparator Group	Statistically significant?
	Number/(% of valid responses)	Number/(% of valid responses)	
1.1. Was offered an induction	53 (43%)	602 (62%)	Yes
1.2. Was treated well/neutrally in reception	123 (96%)	971 (89%)	Yes
2.1. Able to shower every day	127 (98%)	1049 (94%)	No
2.2. Quality of food is good/very good	92 (71%)	384 (35%)	Yes
2.3. Always get enough to eat at mealtimes	19 (15%)	139 (13%)	No
2.4. Can have clothes washed at least once a week	119 (92%)	997 (92%)	No
3.1. Feel safe all/most of the time	106 (80%)	667 (60%)	Yes
3.2. Have witnessed staff abusing, threatening, bullying or assaulting another prisoner in this prison	55 (46%)	583 (58%)	Yes
3.4. Have been abused, threatened, bullied or assaulted by staff member	32 (26%)	384 (37%)	Yes
3.6. Would/probably would report abuse etc. by staff	59 (48%)	376 (36%)	Yes
3.7. Have been abused, threatened, bullied or assaulted by another prisoner	47 (37%)	417 (40%)	No

3.9.	Would/probably would report abuse etc. by other prisoners	43 <b>(36%)</b>	233 <b>(23%)</b>	Yes
4.1.	Given a reasonable explanation every time/most times you or your cell is searched	43 <b>(33%)</b>	317 <b>(30%)</b>	No
4.2.	System for accessing personal property works well	75 <b>(69%)</b>	290 <b>(30%)</b>	Yes
5.1.	Treated with respect by staff all/most of the time	95 <b>(72%)</b>	678 <b>(61%)</b>	Yes
5.2.	Complaints system works well	31 <b>(33%)</b>	151 <b>(19%)</b>	Yes
5.3.	Have a personal officer	99 <b>(75%)</b>	597 <b>(54%)</b>	Yes
5.4.	Personal officer is helpful	59 (62%)	342 (60%)	No
5.5.	Prisoners are consulted about canteen etc. and things can change as a result	41 <b>(35%)</b>	156 <b>(17%)</b>	Yes
5.6.	Know the role of an IPM	82 <b>(62%)</b>	546 <b>(50%)</b>	Yes
5.7.	Know how to contact an IPM	67 <b>(51%)</b>	440 <b>(40%)</b>	Yes
5.8.	Last time contacted IPM it was helpful/neutral	29 <b>(73%)</b>	181 <b>(58%)</b>	No
6.1.	Easy to access education	88 <b>(72%)</b>	572 <b>(59%)</b>	Yes
6.2.	Easy to access skills training	60 <b>(52%)</b>	310 <b>(34%)</b>	Yes
6.3.	Easy to access other prison jobs	58 <b>(50%)</b>	382 <b>(40%)</b>	Yes
6.4.	Able to go to the gym/play sports at least once last week	102 <b>(88%)</b>	896 <b>(89%)</b>	No
6.5.	Able to go to the library at least once last week	93 <b>(73%)</b>	394 <b>(47%)</b>	Yes
6.6.	Able to spend at least one hour every day exercising in the fresh air last week	107 <b>(80%)</b>	771 <b>(70%)</b>	Yes
6.7.	Able to spend more than 2 hours out of cell on previous weekday	93 <b>(70%)</b>	747 <b>(69%)</b>	No
6.8.	Able to spend more than 2 hours out of cell on previous Saturday	99 <b>(76%)</b>	690 <b>(64%)</b>	Yes
6.9.	Well/neutrally supported to practice religion	45 <b>(70%)</b>	406 <b>(78%)</b>	No
6.11.	Able to have an in-person visit every week in last month	57 <b>(55%)</b>	572 <b>(64%)</b>	No
6.12.	Visitors treated with respect by staff all/most of the time	67 <b>(78%)</b>	527 <b>(61%)</b>	Yes
6.13.	Able to have video visit every week in last month	42 <b>(48%)</b>	395 <b>(54%)</b>	No
6.14.	Know what courses need to undertake for progression (convicted only)	49 <b>(51%)</b>	280 <b>(48%)</b>	No
6.15.	Easy to access the courses I need	3 <b>(7%)</b>	59 <b>(23%)</b>	Yes
9.1.	Seen by a health professional within 24 hours of arrival	104 <b>(86%)</b>	839 <b>(88%)</b>	No
9.2.	Know how to access healthcare	125 <b>(95%)</b>	910 <b>(93%)</b>	No
9.3.	Easy to access a doctor	47 <b>(40%)</b>	269 <b>(27%)</b>	Yes

9.4.	Easy to access a nurse/nurse practitioner	88 (72%)	468 (47%)	Yes
9.5.	Easy to access a dentist	66 (62%)	228 (25%)	Yes
9.6.	Easy to access mental healthcare	50 (49%)	244 (29%)	Yes
9.7.	Easy to access addictions services	43 (61%)	338 (48%)	Yes
9.8.	Easy to access pharmacist	42 (54%)	298 (40%)	Yes
9.9.	Easy to access prison-based social work	50 (52%)	293 (41%)	Yes
9.10.	Easy to access medical appointments outside the prison	31 (35%)	158 (22%)	Yes
9.11.	Good quality service from doctors	45 (45%)	382 (43%)	No
9.12.	Good quality service from nurses/nurse practitioners	70 (59%)	546 (57%)	No
9.13.	Good quality dental services	57 (62%)	322 (41%)	Yes
9.14.	Good quality mental health services	41 (45%)	302 (39%)	No
9.15.	Good quality addictions services	30 (61%)	335 (52%)	No
9.16.	Good quality pharmacy services	30 (48%)	337 (47%)	No
9.17.	Good quality PBSW service	37 (49%)	307 (45%)	No
9.19.	Good/neutral support for managing disabilities/long-term health conditions	45 (64%)	260 (48%)	Yes
9.21.	Received helpful support for alcohol use (only those who said they needed it)	11 (37%)	105 (33%)	No
9.22.	Received helpful support for drug use (only those who said they needed it)	20 (54%)	226 (46%)	No
9.23.	Received helpful support for mental health (only those who said they needed it)	29 (33%)	212 (28%)	No

**\*Establishments included in the comparator group:**

Shotts 2022  
 Inverness 2022  
 Greenock 2023  
 Perth 2023  
 Polmont 2023  
 Edinburgh 2023  
 Stirling 2024  
 Grampian 2024  
 Addiewell 2024