

HMIPS Pre-Inspection Survey Findings

**HMP Edinburgh
September 2023**

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Executive Summary

Background

This document reports on the findings of the HMIPS pre-inspection survey conducted in HMP Edinburgh on 27-28 September 2023. The questionnaire was distributed to 270 prisoners held in HMP Edinburgh on the first day of data collection, with a response rate of 72% (194 responses).

The data is presented according to the HMIPS inspection standards. Standard 7 (Transitions from Custody to Life in the Community) is omitted as not enough respondents were due for release in the next six weeks to provide reliable data. Standard 8 (Organisational Effectiveness) is omitted as this is not addressed in the prisoner survey.

The key findings of the survey were:

Standard 1: Lawful and Transparent Custody

- 66% of respondents said they were offered an induction on arrival at HMP Edinburgh.
- 53% reported being treated well on arrival at reception, with 14% saying they were treated badly.

Standard 2: Decency

- Most respondents (80%) rated the quality of food negatively and less than a third (28%) reported always or usually getting enough to eat at mealtimes.
- 89% said they had access to a shower every day and 88% said they could have their clothes washed at least once a week.

Standard 3: Personal Safety

- Over half (58%) reported feeling safe all or most of the time. However, 20% reported rarely or never feeling safe at HMP Edinburgh.
- More than half (55%) reported witnessing staff members abusing, bullying, threatening, or assaulting another prisoner at HMP Edinburgh, and 40% reported that staff had abused, bullied, threatened, or assaulted them.
- 31% reported having been abused, bullied, threatened or assaulted by other prisoners.

Standard 4: Effective, Courteous and Humane Exercise of Authority

- Almost half (46%) said they were never given a reasonable explanation when they or their cell was searched, and 77% felt that the system for accessing personal property worked badly.

Standard 5: Respect, Autonomy and Protection Against Mistreatment

- Just over half (55%) reported being treated with respect by staff all or most of the time. A minority (16%) reported rarely or never being treated with respect by staff.
- Most respondents (84%) reported that the complaints system worked very badly.
- Less than half of respondents (46%) said they had a personal officer but that rose to 73% for convicted prisoners
- Of those who had a personal officer, most (63%) said they were helpful.

Standard 6: Purposeful Activity

- The majority of respondents reported that education (63%), skills training (80%), and prison jobs (74%) were difficult to access or unavailable to them.
- 81% said they were able to spend one hour outdoors in the fresh air every day.
- During the previous week, 89% said they had the opportunity to go to the gym or play sports at least once, while 29% said they had the opportunity to go to the library at least once.
- Less than two-thirds (61%) reported being able to spend more than two hours out of their cell during the previous weekday, and 57% reported being able to spend more than two hours out of their cell on the previous Saturday.
- 64% said they had had the opportunity for in-person visits every week in the previous month, and 49% reported weekly access to video visits.
- More than half (56%) reported that their visitors were treated with respect by staff all or most of the time, but 23% reported that their visitors were rarely or never treated with respect.
- Less than half of convicted respondents (43%) were aware of what courses they needed to do to progress through their sentences; of these, 94% reported the courses they needed being difficult to access or unavailable at HMP Edinburgh.

Standard 9: Health and Wellbeing

- 86% said they were assessed by a medical practitioner within 24 hours of arrival at HMP Edinburgh.
- The majority of respondents reported that it was difficult to access the following services: doctor (82%); a nurse/nurse practitioner (53%); dental services (81%); mental healthcare (73%); a pharmacist (65%); prison-based social work (62%); and medical appointments outside the prison (82%).
- Only addictions services were reported as being easy to access by more than half of respondents (55%).
- Two healthcare services were rated as good by the majority of respondents: nurses/nurse practitioners (61%), and addictions services (55%).
- Half (50%) of those with a disability or long-term health condition said that they were badly supported to manage their condition.
- Of those who said they needed support for alcohol use, 42% reported receiving support that had been helpful.
- Of those who said they had needed support for drug use, 49% reported receiving help that had been helpful.
- Of those who said they had needed support for their mental health, 30% had received support that they found helpful.

Introduction

This document reports on the findings of the HMIPS pre-inspection questionnaire conducted in HMP Edinburgh on 27-28 September 2023.

A randomly selected sample of 270 people held in HMP Edinburgh on the first day of data collection were asked to complete the survey, of whom 194 completed and returned the questionnaire, providing a 72% response rate.

The data is presented according to the HMIPS inspection standards. The responses to questions on Standard 7 (Transitions from Custody to Life in the Community) are not reported as too few respondents answered these questions. 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 Edinburgh, including their cell location. This was used to select a random sample and distribute and collect the surveys. The sample size was calculated to achieve, at minimum, a 95% confidence level with a 7% margin of error to ensure that the sample is sufficiently representative of the whole population of the establishment.

Anonymous data on the characteristics of the prisoner population (including age group, ethnicity, sentence type, citizenship, and gender) was also requested from the prison in order 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 selected 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 also asked if they would need assistance to complete the questionnaire and provided with this assistance later in the day 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.

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.

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

The survey asked a series of demographic questions, the results of which are summarised below, excluding those who did not disclose their demographic information.

Just under a third of respondents reported being aged 30 or under (29%), with 27% aged 31-40, 24% aged 41-50, and 20% aged over 50.

The majority of respondents were white (95%) and UK citizens (95%). Just under half (48%) reported having no religion. The most common religious affiliations were Church of Scotland (16%), Roman Catholic (14%) Other Christian (6%) and Muslim (5%).

Remand prisoners made up 27% of the sample population, while those serving short sentences (less than four years) made up 19%, and 10% were on an Order for Lifelong Restriction (OLR). The largest group was those on long-term or life sentences, who made up 43% of the sample population.

Over half of respondents reported being held on a protection hall (54%), while 42% were in mainstream accommodation and 3% were held in the Segregation and Reintegration Unit (SRU).

Over half (61%) of respondents reported having a disability or long-term health condition.

Sample representativeness

HMIPS requested an anonymous breakdown of the prisoner population in HMP Edinburgh 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 Edinburgh compares with the sample of prisoners who responded to the survey.

As the table below shows the sample closely represents the characteristics of the whole population of HMP Edinburgh, particularly in relation to sentence type. Those aged 21-30 are slightly over-represented compared to those over the age of 30, as well as those of white ethnicity and with UK citizenship.

Characteristics of sample population compared to characteristics of whole population of HMP Edinburgh (%)¹

	Sample population*	Whole population
Age group		
21-30	29%	24%
31-40	27%	31%
41-50	24%	22%
51 or over	20%	23%
Total	100%	100%
Ethnicity		
White	95%	91%
Non-white	5%	9%**
Total	100%	100%
Citizenship		
UK	95%	91%
Non-UK	5%	9%
Total	100%	100%
Prisoner type		
Remand/awaiting sentencing	27%	29%
Short-term	19%	17%
Long-term/life/life recall/OLR	53%	53%
Total	100%	100%

*Excluding those who did not disclose their demographic information

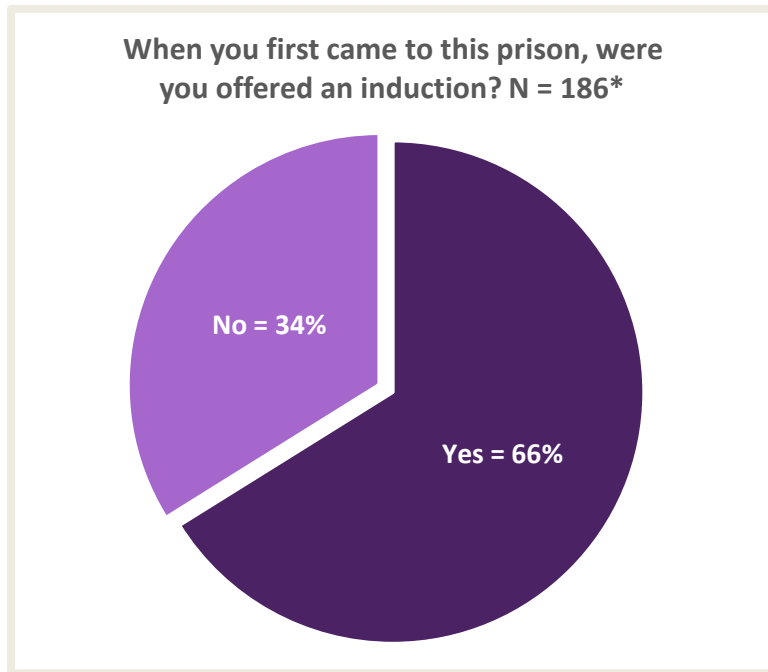
**The comparison between the data supplied by HMP Edinburgh and the data collected by HMIPS is limited by the fact that significantly different categories and data collection methods were used to determine ethnicity.

¹ Due to rounding, totals do not always sum precisely to 100%

Standard 1: Lawful and Transparent Custody

Induction

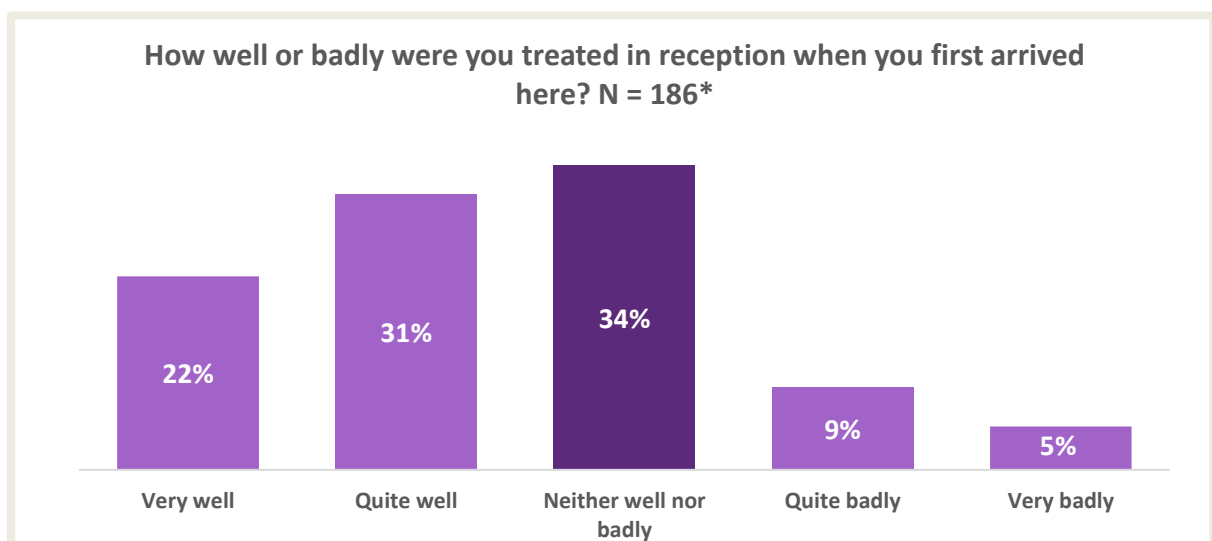
Of those who could remember, two-thirds (66%) of respondents said that they were offered an induction on arrival at HMP Edinburgh.



*Excluding "don't remember".

Treatment in reception

Just over half of respondents (53%) reported being treated well on arrival at HMP Edinburgh. A small percentage (14%) reported being treated badly.

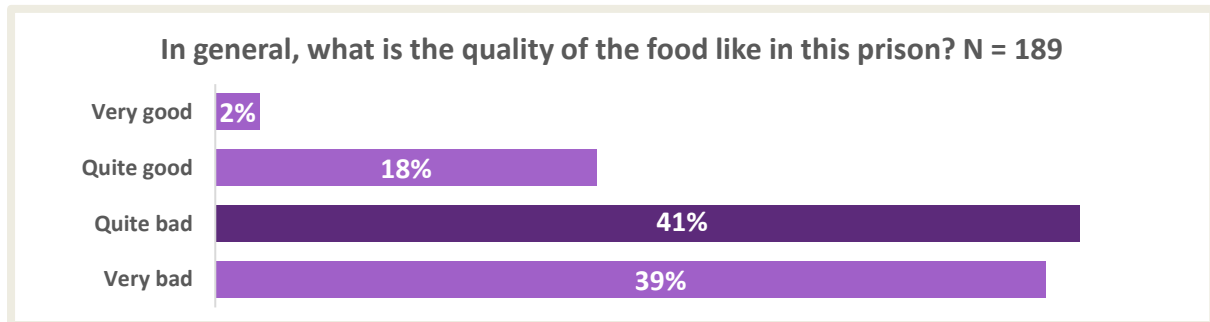


*Excluding "don't remember".

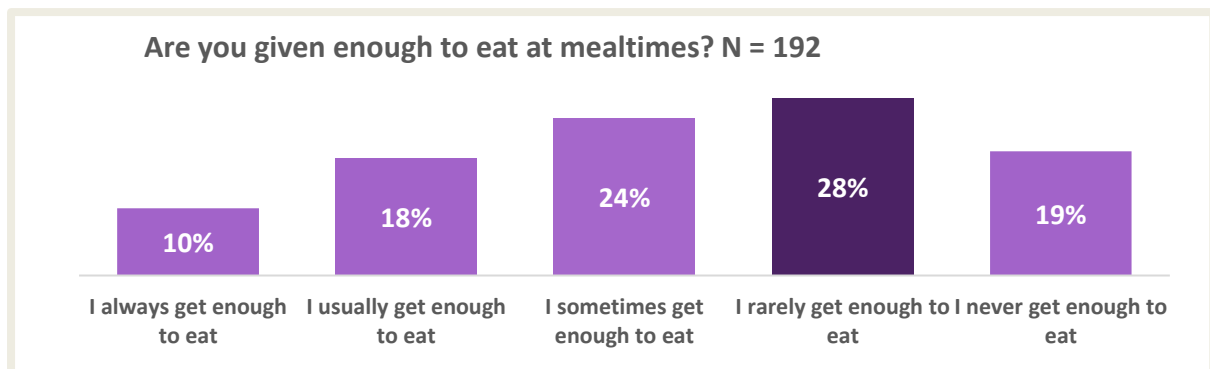
Standard 2: Decency

Food

Overall, respondents were generally negative about the quality of food available at HMP Edinburgh, with 80% describing it as quite or very bad.

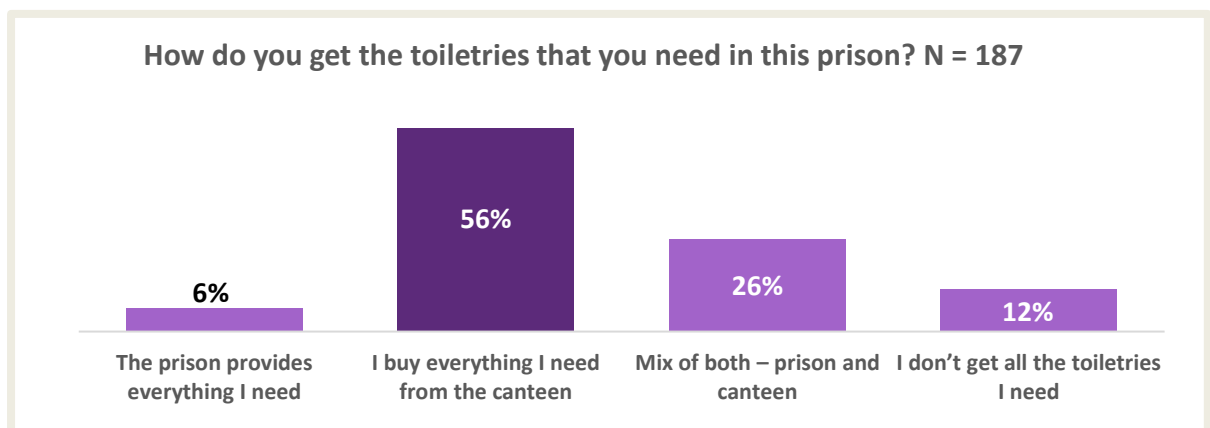


Less than a third of respondents reported always or usually getting enough to eat (28%), while 28% said they rarely got enough to eat, and almost half (47%) said they rarely or never got enough to eat.

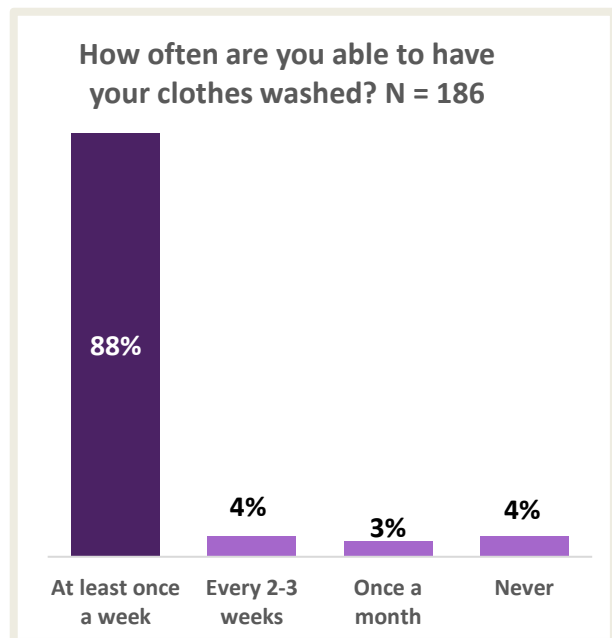
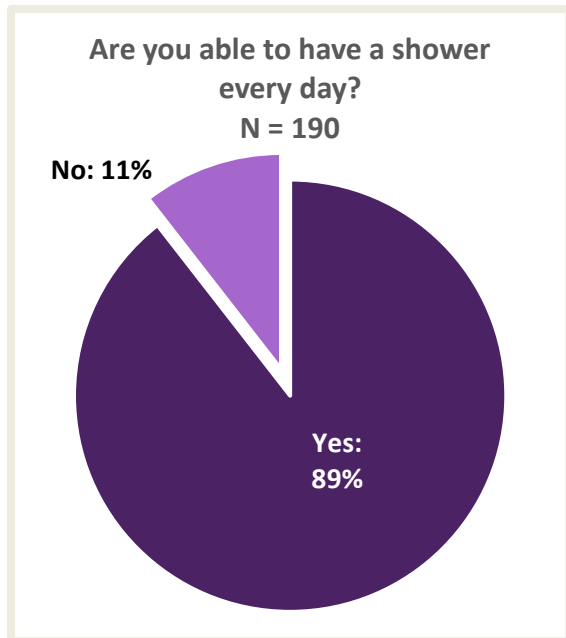


Toiletries, showering and laundry

More than half of respondents (56%) reported that they got all the toiletries they needed from the canteen, while only 6% reported that the prison provides all the toiletries that they need.



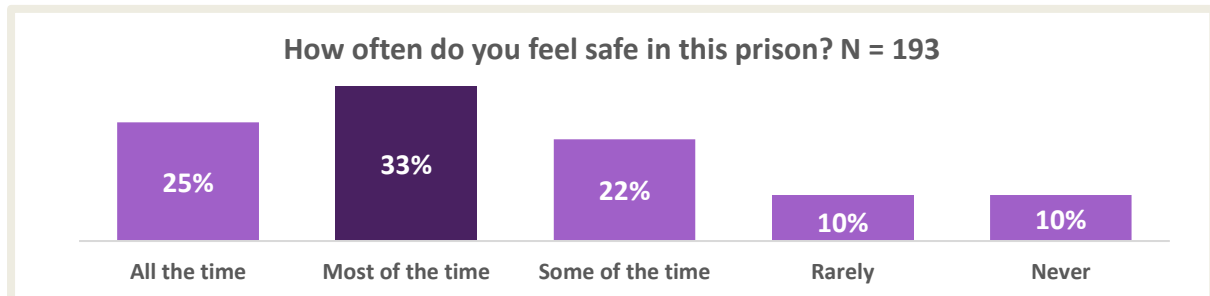
The majority of respondents said that they were able to have a shower every day (89%), and that they were able to have their clothes washed at least once a week (88%).



Standard 3: Personal Safety

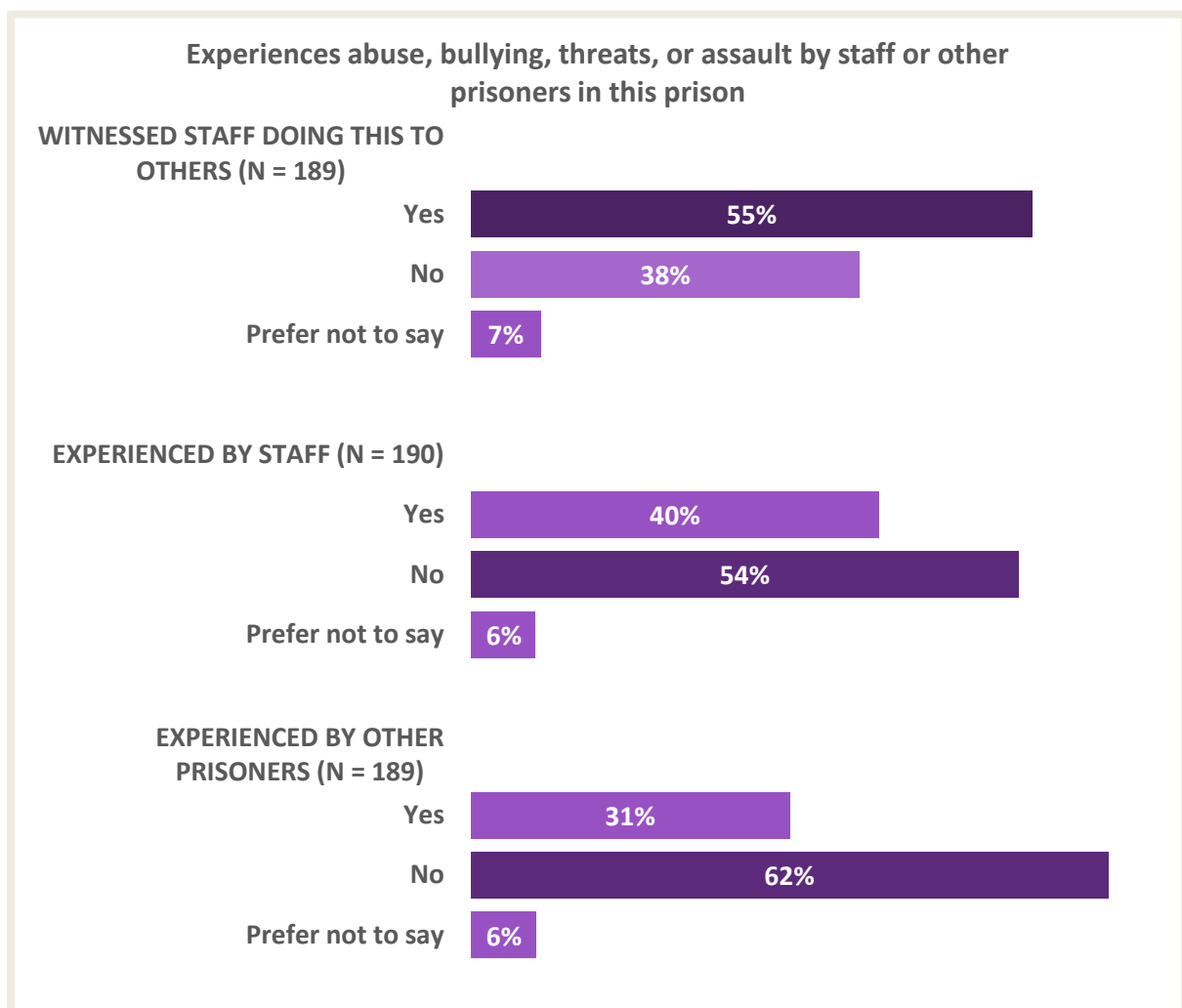
Perception of safety

The majority (58%) of respondents reported feeling safe all or most of the time in HMP Edinburgh. However, 20% reported rarely or never feeling safe.



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

Over half of respondents (55%) said they had witnessed staff members abusing, bullying, threatening or assaulting another prisoner at HMP Edinburgh. Two in five (40%) reported that staff had abused, bullied, threatened or assaulted them.

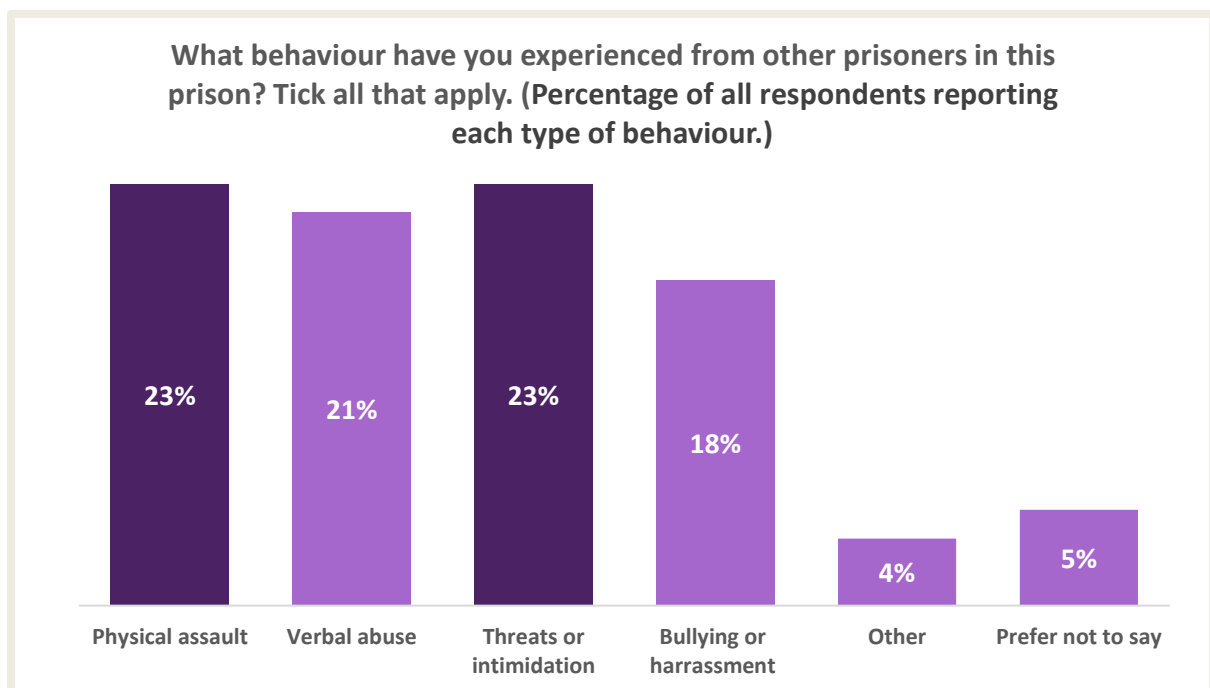


Just under a third (31%) said they had been abused, threatened, bullied, or assaulted by another prisoner in HMP Edinburgh.

When asked what type of negative behaviour they themselves had experienced from staff, the most common responses were: verbal abuse (30%), threats or intimidation (28%), and bullying or harassment (21%). A further 10% reported being physically assaulted by staff.



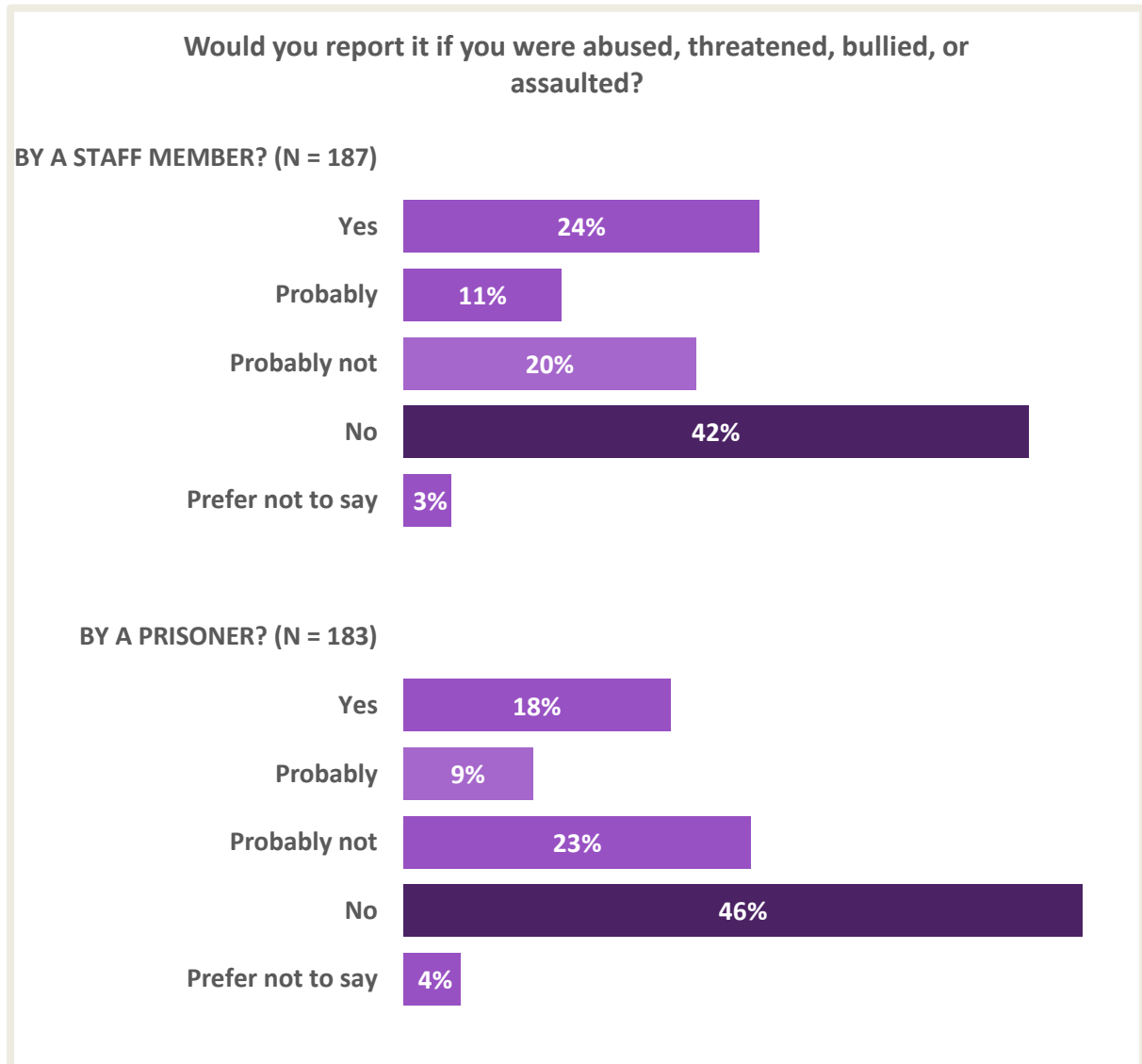
When asked about the types of negative behaviour experienced from other prisoners, the most common responses were: physical assault (23%), threats or intimidation (23%), verbal abuse (21%), and bullying or harassment (18%).



Reporting abuse, threats, bullying or assault

The majority of respondents (62%) said they would not, or probably would not, report it if they were abused, threatened, bullied, or assaulted by a staff member.

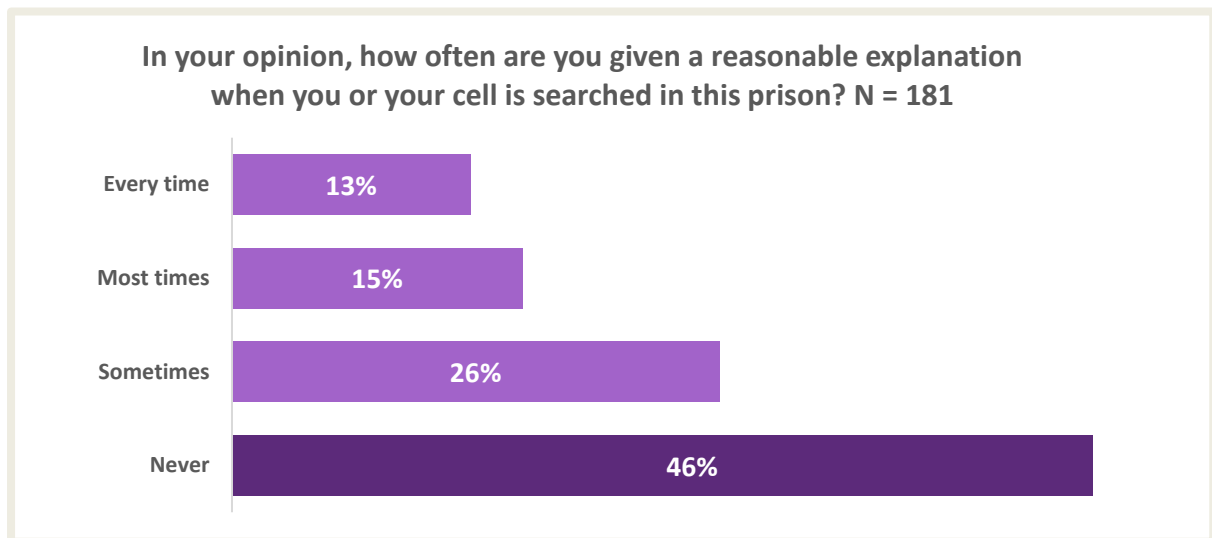
Most (69%) also said that they would not report abuse, threats, bullying, or assault by other prisoners.



Standard 4: Effective, Courteous and Humane Use of Authority

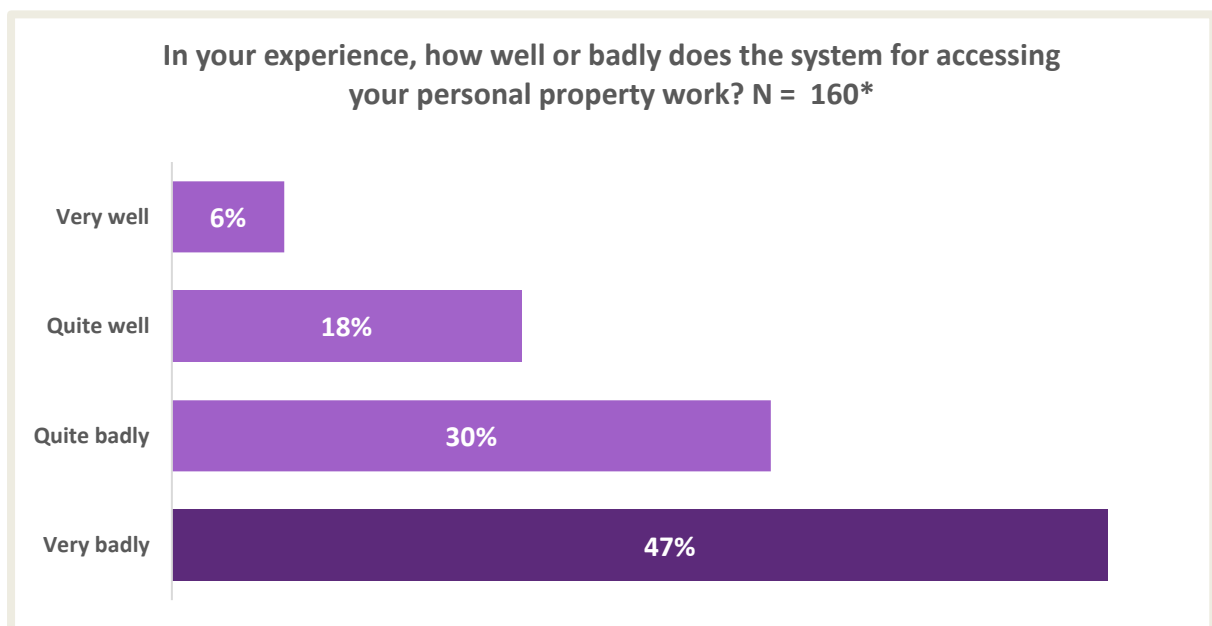
Searching

Just over one quarter of respondents felt that they were given a reasonable explanation most times or every time their cell was searched (28%). However, the most common response (46%) was that they never received a reasonable explanation.



Accessing personal property

Most respondents (77%) felt that the system for accessing personal property worked badly or very badly.

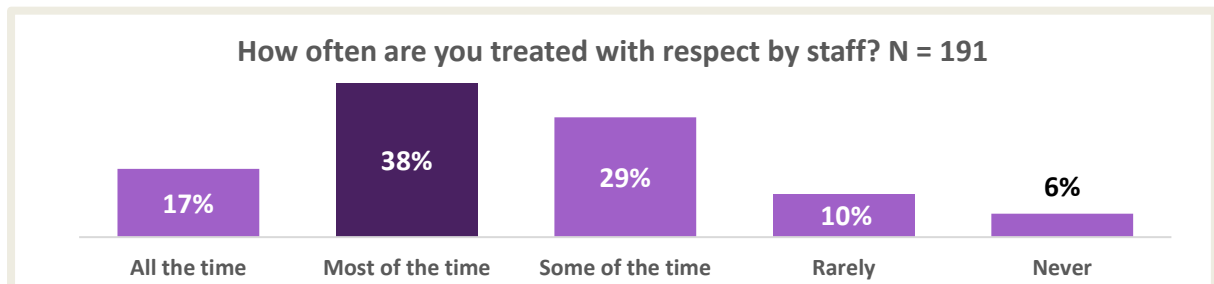


*Excludes "don't know".

Standard 5: Respect, Autonomy and Protection Against Mistreatment

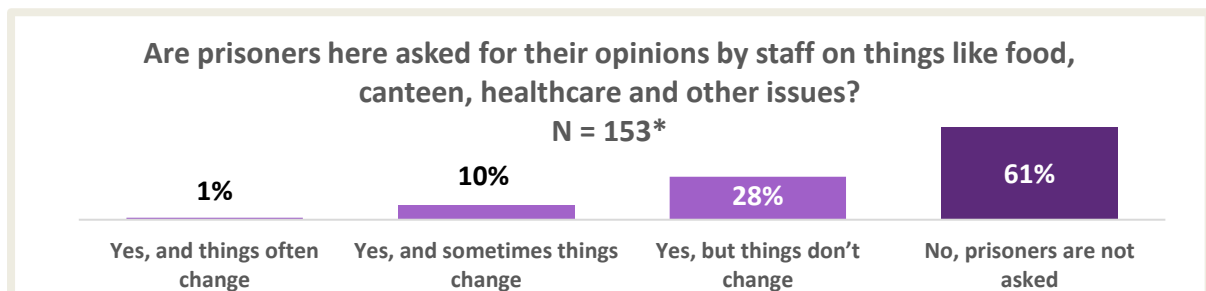
Respect

Just over half (55%) of respondents reported being treated with respect by staff all or most of the time. A minority (16%) reported rarely or never being treated with respect by staff.



Consultation with prisoners

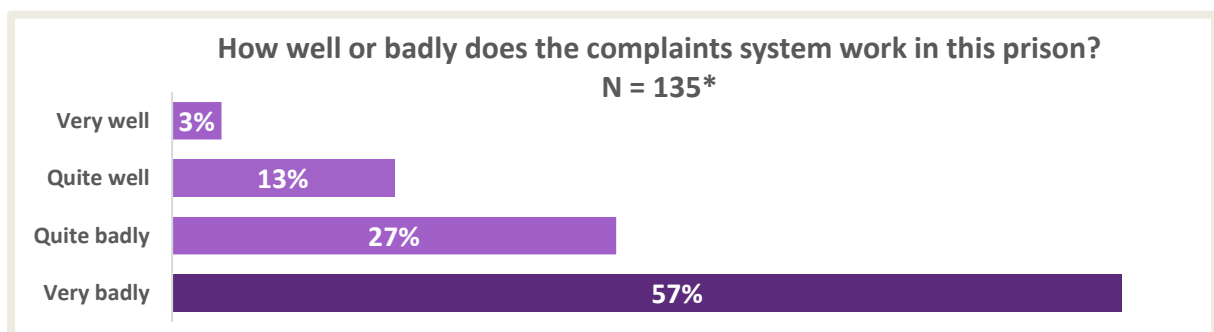
The majority (61%) of respondents reported that the prison did not consult prisoners for their opinions on issues such as food, canteen, and healthcare. Only 11% of respondents felt that the prison did ask for prisoners' opinions, and that things sometimes or often changed as a result.



*Excludes "don't know".

Complaints

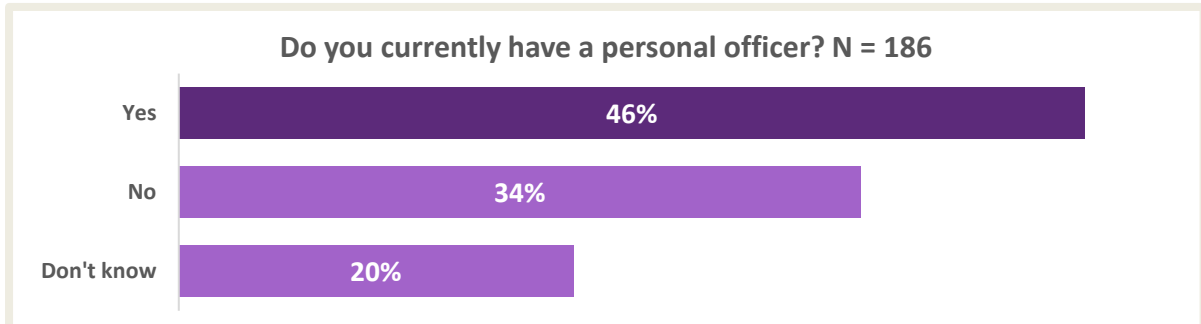
Most (84%) respondents reported that the complaints system worked badly or very badly.



*Excludes "don't know".

Personal Officers

Less than half of respondents (46%) reported having a personal officer (PO), while 36% said they did not have one, and 20% did not know. When looking at convicted respondents only, 73% said they did have a personal officer.



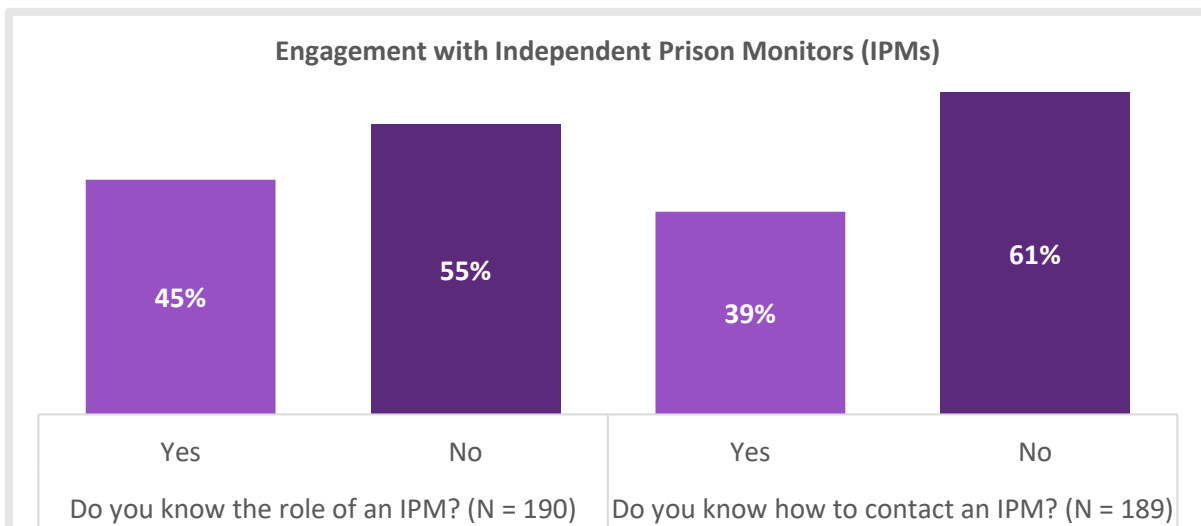
Those who said they had a personal officer were asked how helpful their PO was. The majority reported that their personal officer was very or quite helpful (63%).



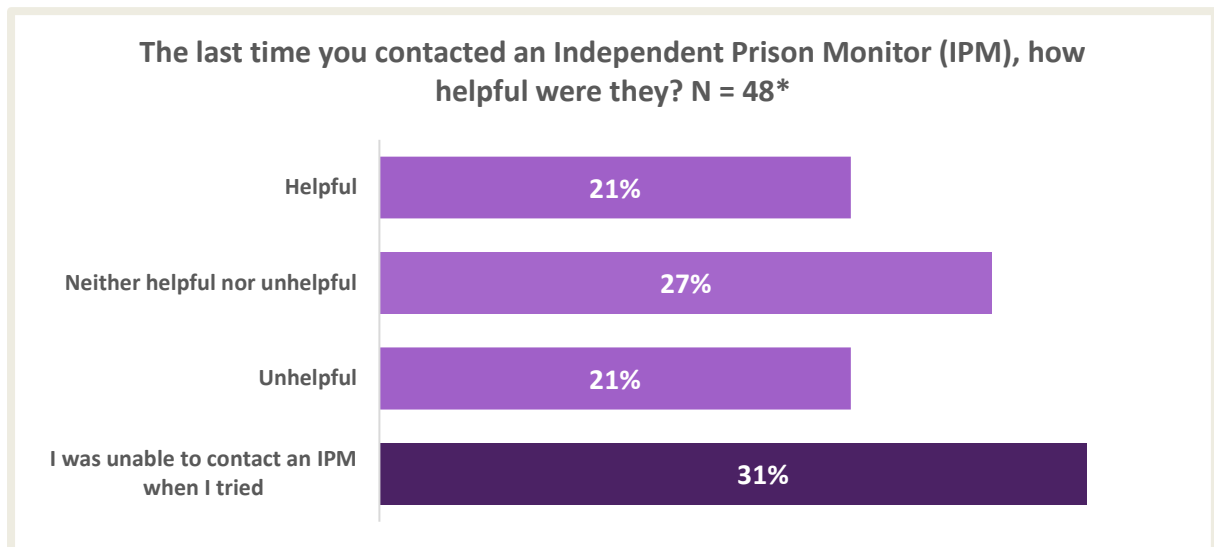
*Excluding those who did not have a PO

Engagement with Independent Prison Monitors (IPMs)

The majority of respondents (55%) said they did not know what the role of an Independent Prison Monitor (IPM) was, or how to contact an IPM (61%).



The majority of respondents had never attempted to contact the IPM service. Of those who had (48 respondents), 21% had found the service to be helpful, and 21% had found it to be unhelpful. Almost one-third (31%) reported that they were unable to contact an IPM when they tried.



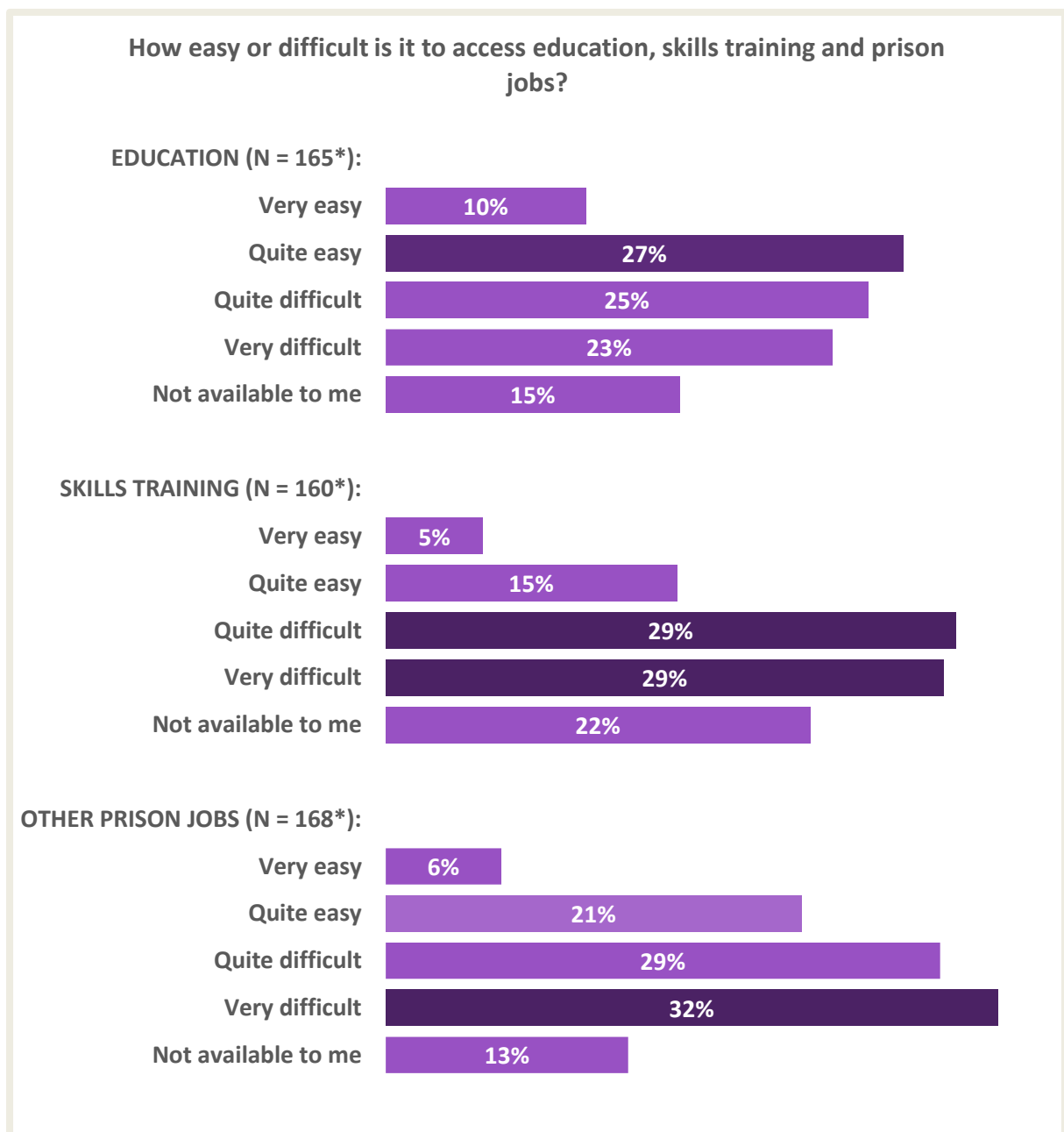
*Excluding those who had never attempted to contact an IPM.

Standard 6: Purposeful Activity

Access to education, training, and work

Excluding those who did not know the answer to the question, most respondents said that it was difficult to access education, or that education was unavailable to them at HMP Edinburgh (63%).

The majority also reported that it was difficult to access skills training, or that this was not available to them (80%), and that prison jobs were difficult to access or unavailable (74%).



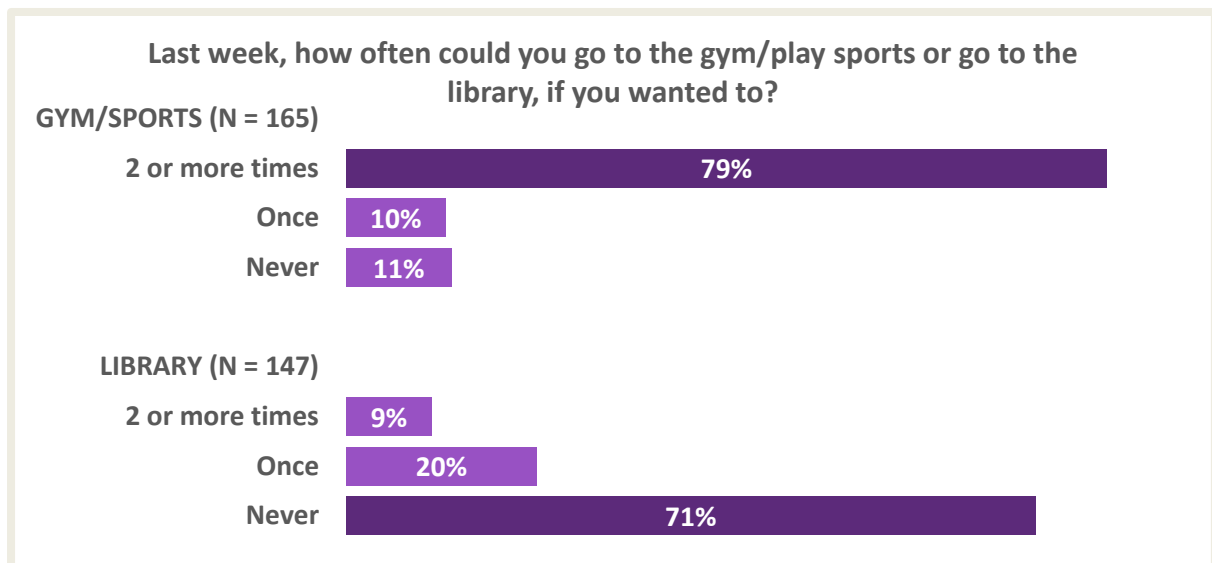
*Excluding "don't know".

Fresh air, gym/sports, and library access

The majority of respondents (81%) reported that they were able to spend at least one hour outdoors in the fresh air every day if they wanted to during the previous week. However, 5% reported never having access to this entitlement during that time, and 14% reported accessing it less than once a day.



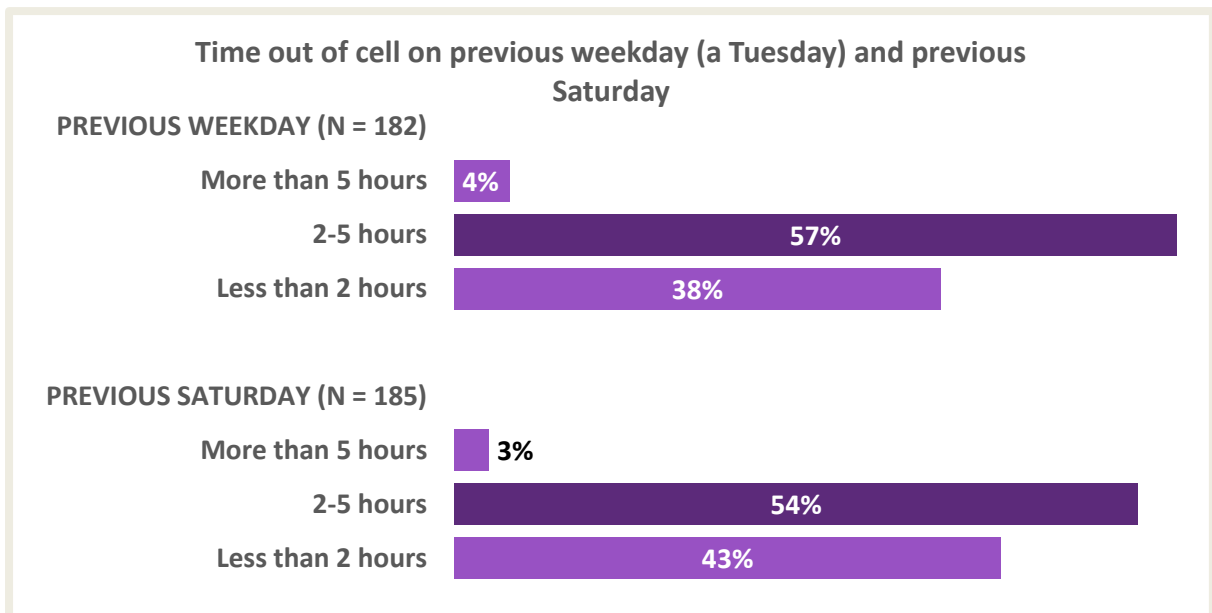
The majority of respondents said they were able to go to the gym or play sports at least once in the last week (89%), however less than one-third (29%) reported having had access to the library during that week.



*Excluding "don't know".

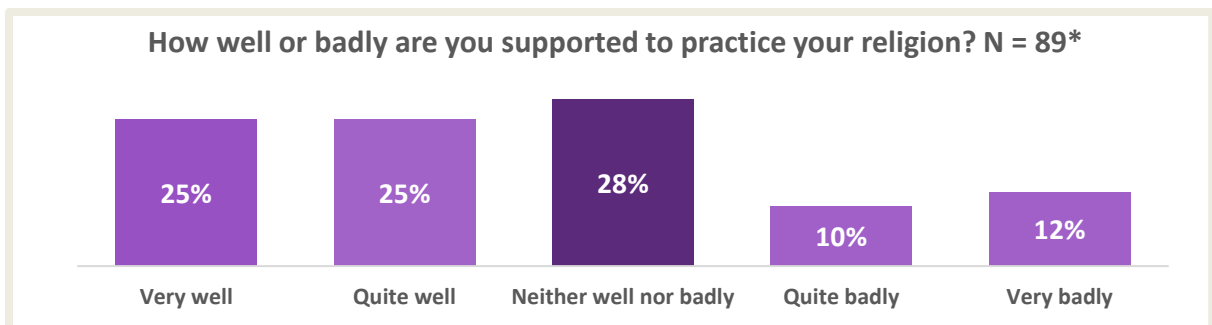
Time out of cell

Less than two-thirds (61%) of respondents reported being able to spend more than two hours out of their cell during the previous weekday (a Tuesday). A slightly lower percentage (57%) reported being able to spend more than two hours out of their cell on the previous Saturday. Only 4% and 3% respectively reported being able to spend more than five hours out of their cells during the previous weekday and the previous Saturday.



Religious practice

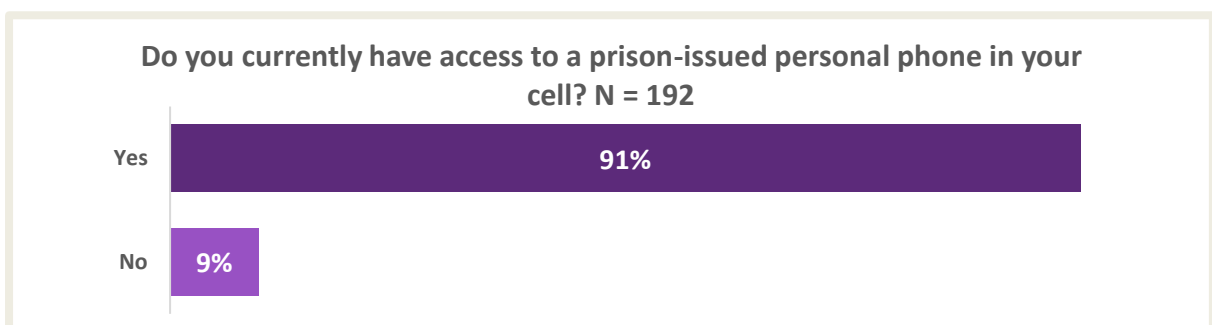
Of those who practiced a religion, half (50%) reported being well supported to do so, and a further 28% reported being “neither well nor badly supported”. Just under a quarter (22%) felt they were poorly supported to practice their religion.



*Excludes "Not applicable - I don't practice a religion".

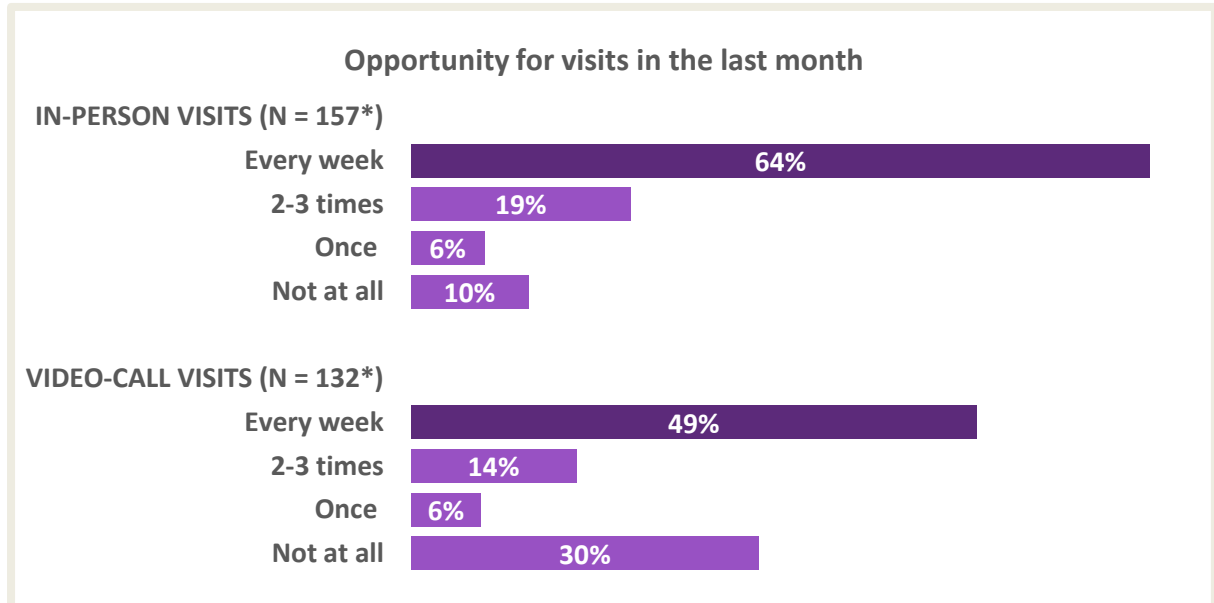
Phones

The majority of respondents (91%) reported that they had access to an in-cell prison issued personal phone.



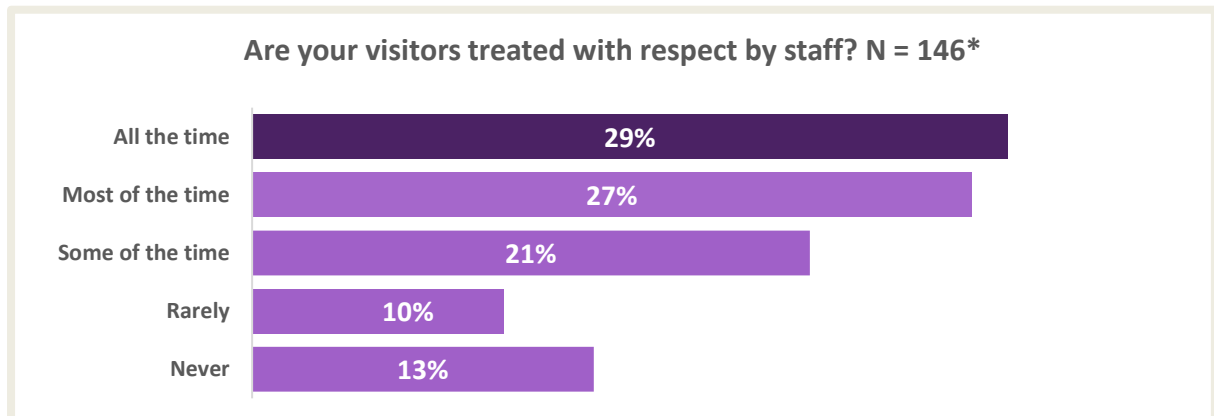
Visits

Of those who were aware of the availability of in-person and video visits, the majority (64%) reported having access to in-person visits every week, and almost half (49%) reported weekly access to video visits.



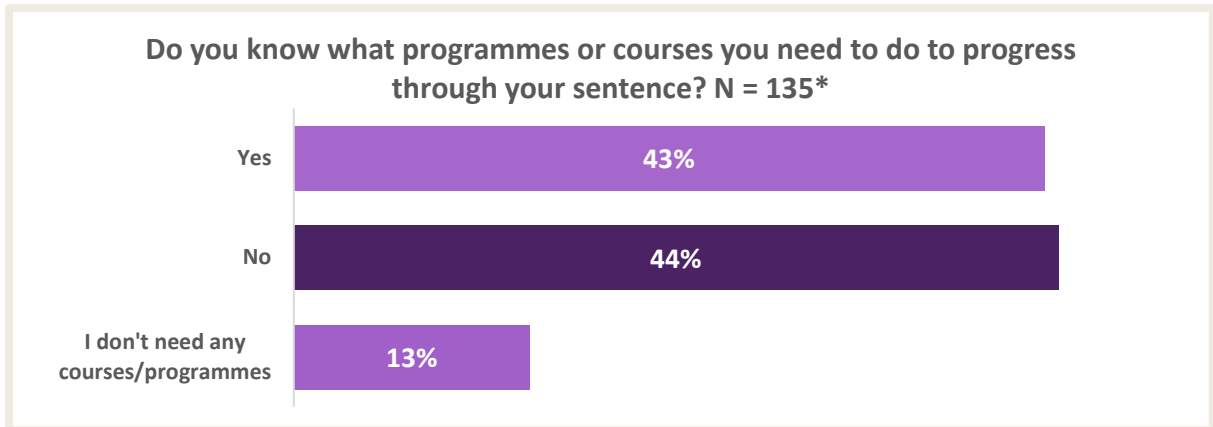
*Excluding "don't know".

Of those who received visits, more than half (56%) reported that their visitors were treated with respect by staff all or most of the time. However, 23% reported that their visitors were rarely or never treated with respect by staff.



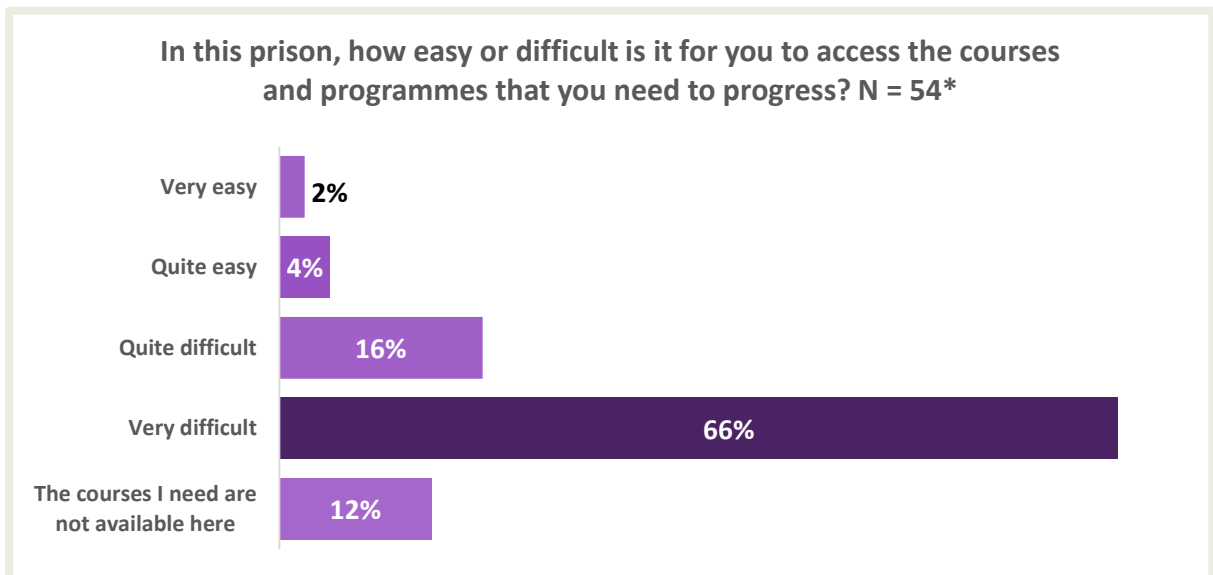
Progression and case management support

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, 43% reported that they knew what programmes they needed to do to progress, while 44% said that they did not know.



*Convicted only

Of those who knew what courses/programmes they needed to undertake to progress through their sentences (54 respondents), almost all (94%) reported that the courses they needed to do were difficult to access or unavailable at HMP Edinburgh.

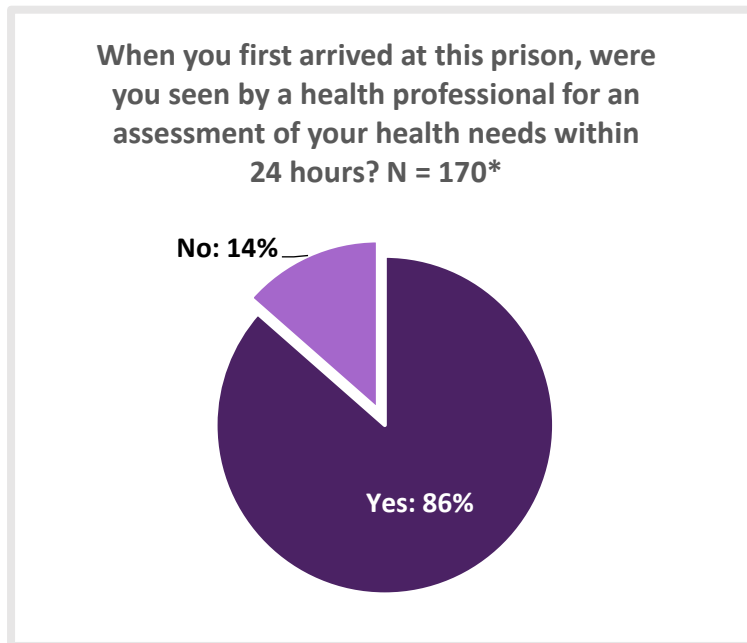


*Only convicted respondents who knew what courses they needed to progress

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 Edinburgh for an assessment of their health needs, although more than one in 10 (14%) said this did not happen.



*Excluding "don't remember".

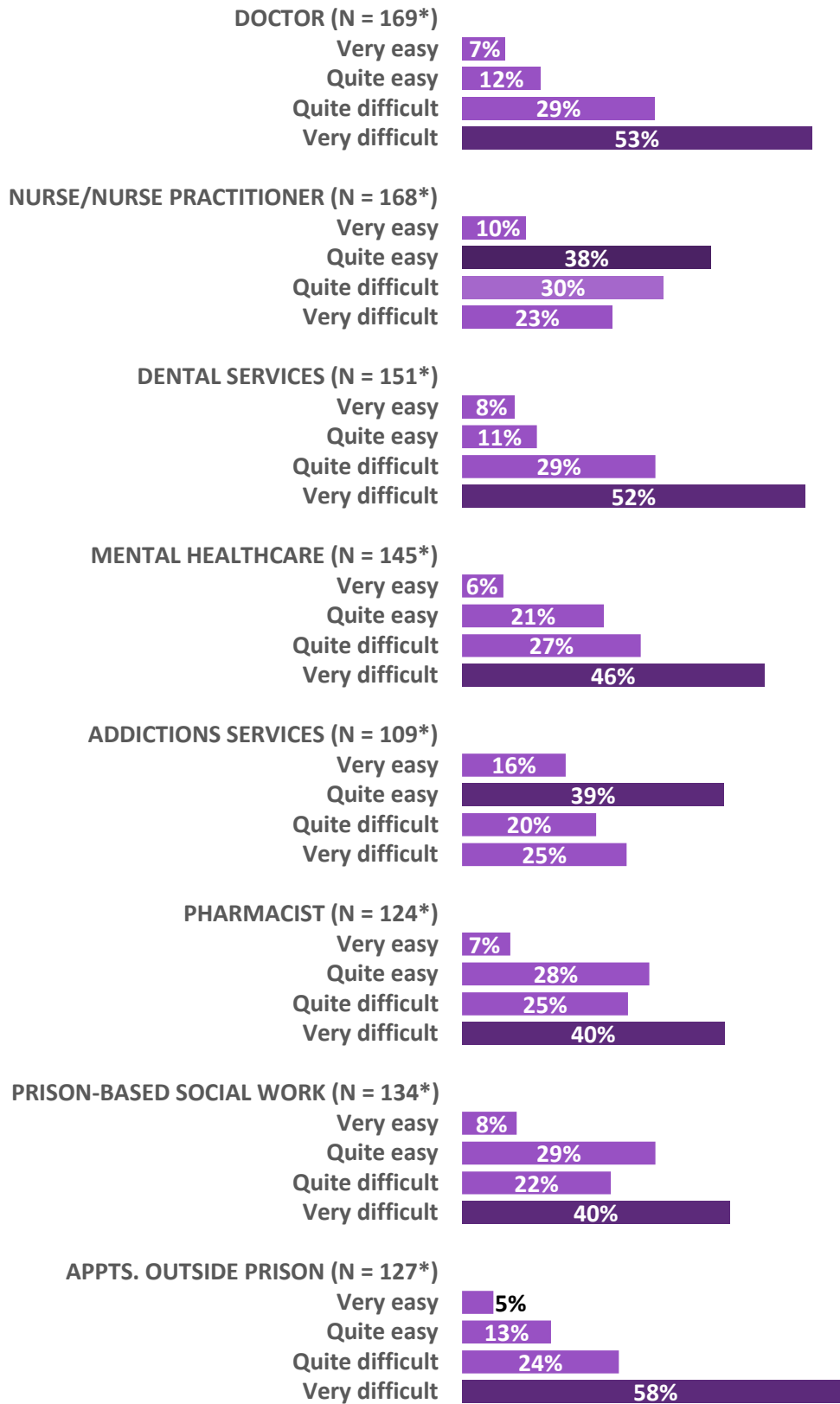
Access to health services

The majority of respondents (88%) said that they knew how to access healthcare in HMP Edinburgh.

Overall, the majority of respondents reported that it was difficult to access most healthcare services. Most respondents reported that it was difficult to access a doctor (82%); a nurse/nurse practitioner (53%); dental services (81%); mental healthcare (73%); a pharmacist (65%); prison-based social work (62%); and medical appointments outside the prison (82%).

Only addictions services were reported as being easy to access by more than half of respondents (55%).

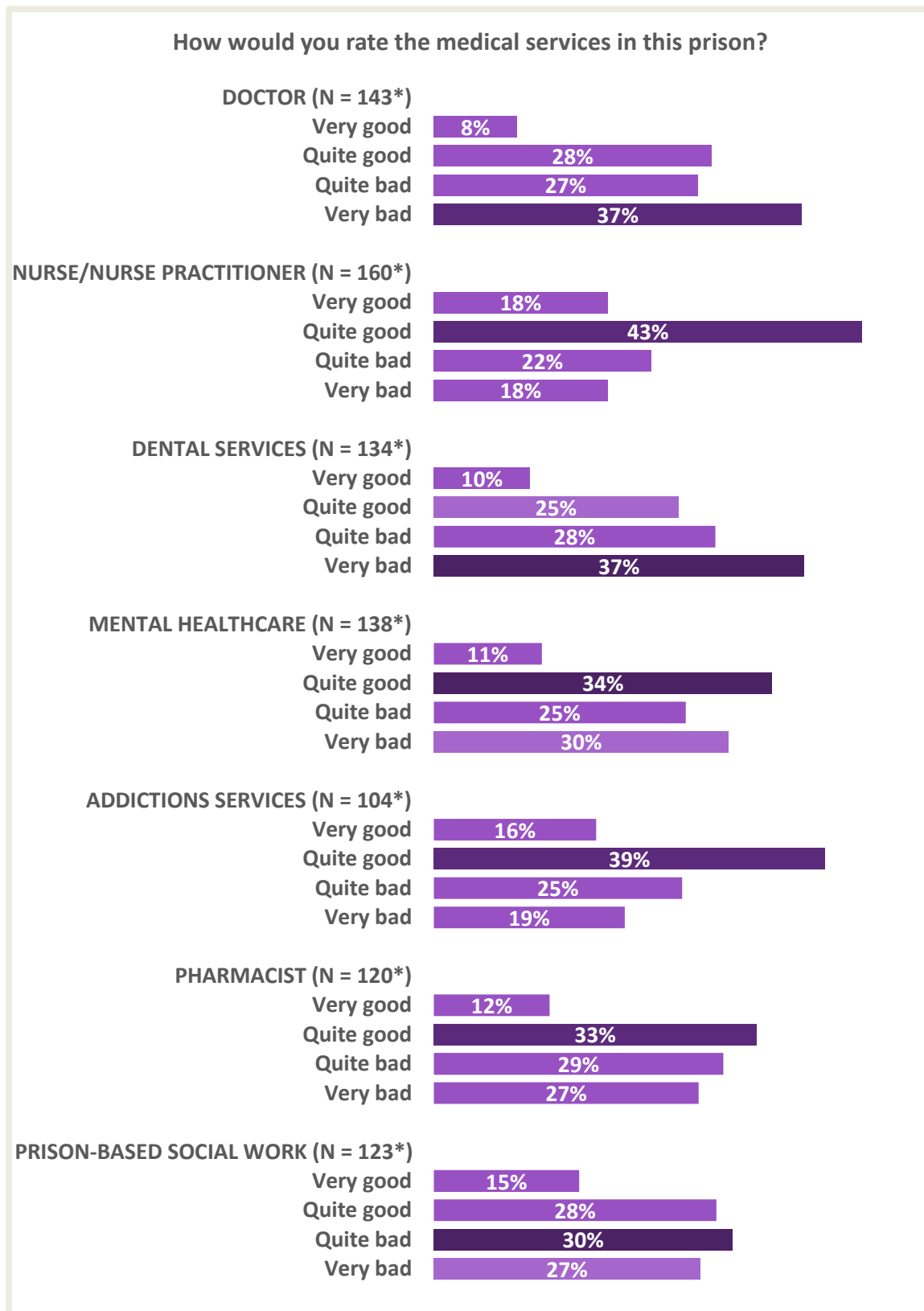
How easy or difficult is it to access health services in this prison?



*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 Edinburgh.



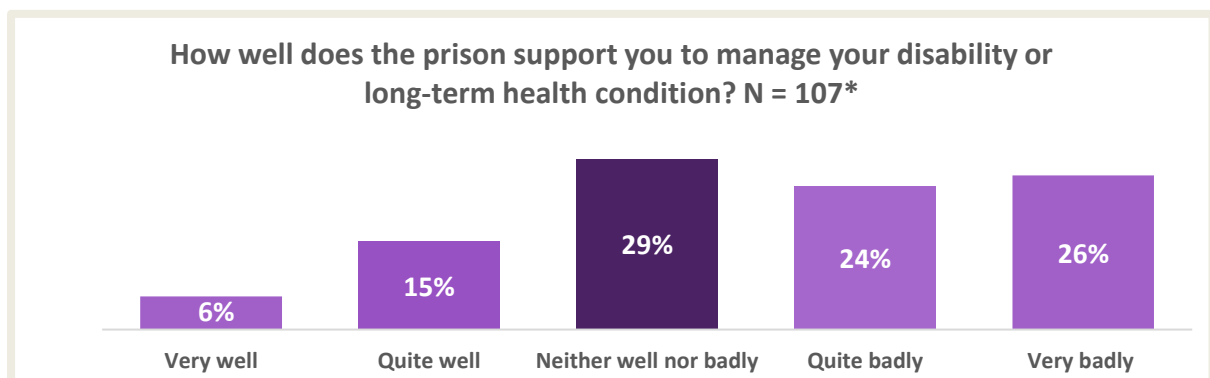
*Excluding "don't know".

Two healthcare services were rated as good by the majority of respondents: the service provided by the nurses/nurse practitioners (61% rated this as good or very good) and addictions services (55% rated this as good or very good).

The quality of all other healthcare services was rated negatively by the majority of respondents: 64% rated the service from the prison doctors negatively; 65% rated dental services negatively; 55% rated mental healthcare services negatively; 56% rated the pharmacy service negatively; and 57% rated the service from prison-based social work negatively.

Support for disabilities and long-term health conditions

In total, 61% of respondents reported having a long-term health condition or disability. When asked about the support provided to manage their conditions, around one in five (21%) reported that they were well supported, while half (50%) reported being badly supported to manage their condition.



*Excluding those who did not disclose a long-term health condition or disability.

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

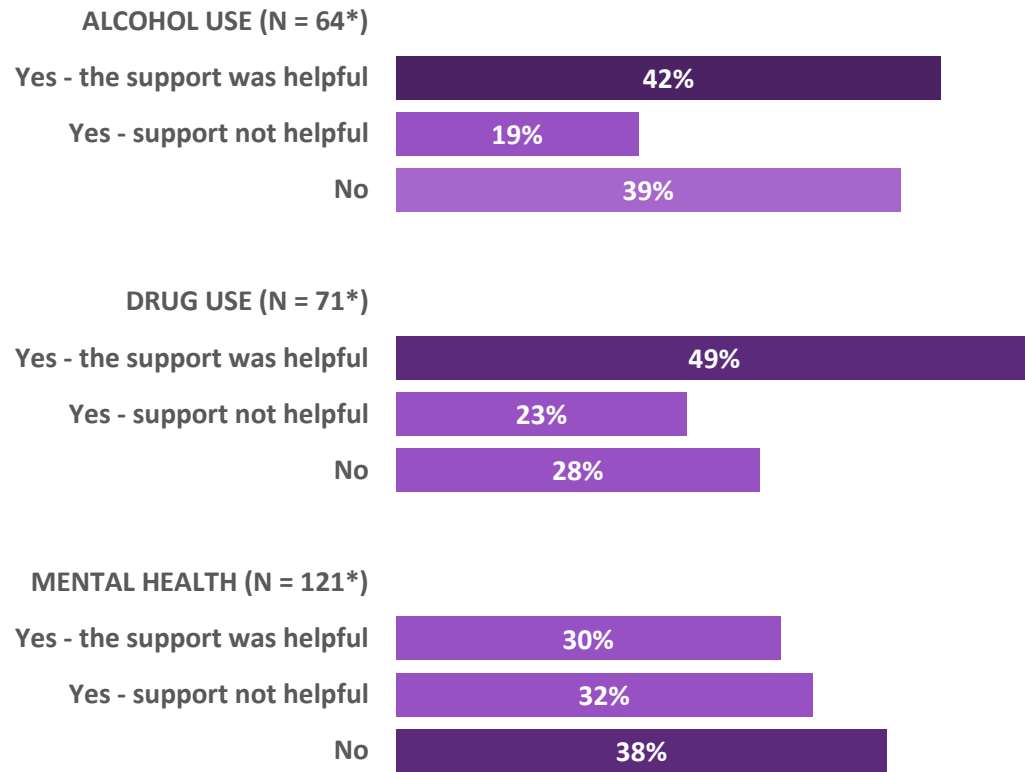
The survey asked about the support provided to those who needed help with alcohol use, drug use, and mental health issues.

Of those who said they needed support for alcohol use, 61% reported having been offered support, while 39% said they had not been offered support. In total, 42% reported that the support received had been helpful, while 19% did not find it helpful.

Of those who said they had needed support for drug use, the majority (72%) said they had been given access to support, while 28% said they had not been offered support. Almost half (49%) reported that the support they received had been helpful while 23% had not found the support helpful.

Of those who said they had needed support for their mental health, 62% said they had been offered support, while 38% said they had not. Just under one-third (30%) of those who had needed support for their mental health had been offered support that they found helpful, while 32% received support but did not find it helpful.

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, 116 respondents (60%) left comments at the end of the questionnaire. The most common issues arising in the comments related to: relationships with staff; healthcare; food; purposeful activity; time out of cell; progression; the physical environment; visits; wages; and personal property and mail. These are summarised below.

Relationships with staff

The most common theme among the comments was relationships with staff, with over 50 respondents commenting on this. A minority of the comments were positive, with some staff members praised for the help and support they had provided to prisoners. However, the majority were negative, and focused predominantly on staff attitudes towards prisoners. Several comments referred to bullying and verbal abuse by staff. Respondents reported staff shouting and swearing at prisoners, laughing and joking about prisoners' personal and health issues, and speaking to prisoners in a "demeaning" and "belittling" manner. Practical issues were also highlighted, including staff not having the time and/or willingness to help with problems, different staff members giving different information and guidance; and prisoners feeling that they could not trust some staff members.

Healthcare

The second most common issue raised was healthcare. Long waiting times for a variety of services, including to see a GP, nurse, mental health, addiction services, and dentist, were mentioned by several respondents. Poor service from healthcare providers was also raised, with respondents raising concerns that potentially serious conditions were being left untreated, and that there was a lack of continuity of care for serious conditions when prisoners transferred into HMP Edinburgh from the community or back to HMP Edinburgh after a hospital stay.

Medication was raised by some respondents, with issues including: being taken off medication prescribed in the community on entry to HMP Edinburgh with detrimental mental and/or physical health effects; being given medication at the wrong time in the day – particularly for those taking sleeping pills or medication that causes drowsiness; and long waits for prescriptions meaning medication not being taken continuously, sometimes leading to significant mental or physical issues.

A number of respondents felt that those with limitations caused by disabilities or medical conditions were not treated with dignity and respect and were not given adequate support by prison staff.

Food

A common theme in the comments was food, with respondents highlighting both the poor quality and quantity of food provided at mealtimes. Complaints about the quality of the food included that the food was greasy, cold, unhealthy and repetitive. Some also noted that the food provided was not suitable for their medical conditions.

Purposeful activity

Almost half of those who wrote comments mentioned purposeful activity. Concerns were raised that there was a lack purposeful activity available to prisoners, with

many unable to get jobs or access education or training or to gain qualifications, and others reporting long waiting times.

Some noted that exercise sometimes started late and finished early, meaning they were not able to have the full one hour outside in the fresh air that they are entitled to, while several commented that they were unable to access the library as it was only available to those going to education. Several respondents noted that they would benefit from more opportunities to boost their physical fitness through exercise and greater gym access. Others noted that they were unable to attend the gym or PT as this clashed with work or exercise in the fresh air.

Time out of cell

Linked to the lack of access to purposeful activity, many respondents reported that they spent too much time in their own cells and were locked up from late afternoon until the following day. Some felt that the long hours spent locked in their cells had a detrimental effect on their and others' mental health, while others reported struggling to spend such a long time in a shared cell. As one respondent commented: "We are locked up from 16:45 to 08:15 every day with no exceptions, around 15 hours locked up straight. I think this is counterproductive, this is supposed to be a place of rehabilitation, being locked up this long has shocking effect on prisoners' mental health which has a knock-on effect to behaviour within the halls and towards staff. Even 30 minutes at night to play cards or even shower will break the long lockup and in turn improve mental health."

Progression

Progression was raised by several respondents, with some people reporting having waited over a year for their GPA assessment, and years to get onto programmes. Several expressed frustrations at the fact that flaws in the progression system meant that they were held back from moving to the Open Estate and becoming eligible for parole. As one respondent noted: "It is impossible to complete [your programmes] before your release date, so where then is the incentive to behave and try and better yourself? This system must be reviewed to allow prisoners the chance of early release which will encourage good behaviour and willingness to co-operate and progress". A number of respondents reported feeling let down and being given false hope as they had been told they would get a chance to progress, but this had not happened because of the flaws in the progression system.

Some held on OLRs also highlighted that there appeared to be no strategy for their progression or rehabilitation.

Physical environment

A number of respondents commented on the poor physical environment within the prison, with the issues raised including: dirty cells and cells not being cleaned before people are moved into them; damage to cells not being fixed; poor overall hygiene, including mice in the landings and inside cells; a lack of ventilation and fresh air in some cells; and mould in some shower blocks. A number of respondents also highlighted that poor quality mattresses were causing or exacerbating back pain, and that it was difficult to access clean clothes and towels, particularly on arrival.

Visits

Issues raised relating to visits included: lack of access to bonding visits; inflexible visiting times; difficulties accessing extended or double visits; and visit times being too short, particularly for those with families who had to travel substantial distances.

Wages and canteen prices

Several respondents noted that while the cost of canteen items has increased recently, there has not been a corresponding rise in wages, meaning that it was difficult to afford necessary items on the canteen. Some respondents reported that this was forcing them to choose between speaking to their families on the phone or buying toiletries and supplementing their meals. Others noted that the lack of job opportunities for many prisoners meant that the money they had available for the canteen was limited.

Personal property and mail

Several comments mentioned issues with personal property and mail, including waiting a long time to receive mail and property, mail and property going missing, and an apparent lack of clarity and action regarding complaints when property or mail has gone missing.

Other

Other issues that were raised (by fewer than 10 respondents) included: the complaints system not working well; poor choice on the canteen; lack of support for those with disabilities and/or long-term health conditions; difficulties relating to cell-sharing; broken and/or faulty phones, and lack of access to international calls; bullying by other prisoners; and laundry taking too long and items going missing.