HMIPS Pre-Inspection Survey Findings

HMP Shotts

October 2025

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Executive Summary

Background

This document reports on the findings of the HMIPS pre-inspection questionnaire conducted in HMP Shotts on 8 and 9 October 2025. The questionnaire was distributed to a random sample of 240 prisoners held on the first day of data collection, with a response rate of 67% (160 responses).

The data is presented according to the HMIPS inspection standards. Standard 7 is omitted as there were not enough prisoners due for release to be able to publish anonymous data on their responses. Standard 8 (Organisational effectiveness) is omitted as this is not addressed in the prisoner survey.

Standard 1: Lawful and transparent custody

- Two-thirds (63%) said they were offered an induction on arrival at HMP Shotts
- Just over half (54%) said they were treated well on arrival at HMP Shotts.

Standard 2: Decency

- Most respondents said the quality of food was poor (67%) and one-third (32%) said they always or usually had enough to eat at meal times.
- All respondents (100%) said they were able to have a shower every day, and 90% said they could have their clothes washed at least once a week.

Standard 3: Personal safety

- Two-thirds of respondents (66%) said they felt safe all or most of the time in HMP Shotts.
- Around half of respondents (51%) said they had witnessed staff members abusing, bullying, threatening or assaulting other prisoners in HMP Shotts.
- Just over a third (36%) said they had been abused, bullied, threatened or assaulted by a staff member.
- Just over a third (36%) also said that they had been abused, bullied, threatened or assaulted by another prisoner.
- Most respondents said that they would not or probably would not report abuse by staff members (69%) or by other prisoners (81%).

Standard 4: Effective, courteous and humane use of authority

- Around one-third (32%) of respondents felt that they were given a reasonable explanation either every time or most times they or their cell was searched.
- Less than half (41%) felt that the system for accessing personal property worked well in HMP Shotts.

Standard 5: Respect, autonomy and protection against mistreatment

- Most respondents (69%) said they were treated with respect by staff all or most of the time.

- The majority of respondents (62%) said that prisoners were consulted about issues that affect them such as food and healthcare. However, only 18% said that things can change as a result of this consultation.
- Most respondents said that the complaints system worked badly (80%).
- Most respondents (87%) said that they currently had a Personal Officer. Of these, 66% said that their personal officer was helpful.

Standard 6: Purposeful activity

- Most (85%) said that it was easy to access education and prison jobs (66%) at HMP Shotts.
- However less than half (44%) said it was easy to access skills training.
- Just over three-quarters (78%) said they could spend at least one hour exercising in the fresh air each day
- Most (96%) said they could go to the gym or play sports at least once during the last week, and most also said they were able to access the library at least once (84%).
- Most respondents said they were able to spend more than two hours out of their cell during the previous weekday (89%) and during the previous Saturday (90%).
- Of those who practiced a religion, almost half (47%) said they were well supported to do so.
- Of those who said they were aware of the availability of visits, the majority said they were able to have an in-person visit at least once a week (77%), and a video visit at least once a week (67%).
- Just over a quarter (28%) said that their visitors were treated with respect all the time by visits staff.
- Most respondents (61%) knew what programmes they needed to progress through their sentences, but most said it was difficult or not possible to access the programmes they needed in HMP Shotts (85%).

Standard 9: Health and wellbeing

- Three-quarters of respondents (76%) said they were seen by a health professional for an assessment of their health needs within 24 hours of arriving at HMP Shotts.
- Almost all respondents (99%) said they knew how to access health services in HMP Shotts.
- The majority of respondents reported that it was easy to access several health services in HMP Shotts, including a nurse (74%), addictions services (76%), and a pharmacist (65%).
- Most said it was difficult to access a doctor (53%), a dentist (57%), mental health services (57%) and medical appointments outside the prison (77%).
- Several health services were rated positively by the majority of respondents, including addictions services (75%), nurses (70%), pharmacy (66%) and dental services (56%).
- Less than half of respondents rated the quality of service from the doctors (40%) or mental health services (49%) positively.
- Of those who said they had a disability or long-term health condition, 30% said they were well supported to manage their condition.

- Of those who said they needed support for alcohol use, 58% said they had received support that had been helpful.
- Of those who said they had needed support for drug use, 64% said they had been given support that had been helpful.
- Of those who said they had needed support for their mental health 35% said they had been given support that had been helpful.

Introduction

This document reports on the findings of the HMIPS pre-inspection questionnaire conducted in HMP Shotts on 8 – 9 October 2025.

A random sample of 240 prisoners held in HMP Shotts on the first day of data collection were asked to complete the survey, of whom 160 completed and returned the questionnaire, providing a 67% 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 Shotts, including their cell location and primary language. This was used to select the random sample, distribute and collect the surveys, and provide translated versions where necessary. Anyone who did not speak English was offered a copy of the survey translated into their own language.

The random sample was generated by using the random number generator function in Microsoft Excel to assign a random number to every prisoner in the list. The prisoner list was then ordered from the lowest to highest random number, and the first 240 names on the list were selected to take part in the survey. This method ensures that the selection of participants is completely random. The sample size was calculated to achieve a minimum 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 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 selected in the sample 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 given this assistance by HMIPS staff 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. In cases where the individual was away from the hall when the survey was handed out, the survey was left on their bed with a cover letter explaining the survey and what to do to take part. HMIPS staff returned to each hall several times over the next 48 hours to collect the 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 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

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

The majority of respondents self-reported being white (87%) and UK citizens (92%). 66% reported having a religion, with the most common religions being Roman Catholic (27%), Church of Scotland (18%) and Other Christian (10%).

HMP Shotts does not hold remand prisoners. The vast majority of respondents (98%) said that they were serving long term sentences (four years or more), although 2% said their current sentence was shorter than four years.

70% Reported living in mainstream halls, with the remainder living in protection halls (26%) or the Separation and Reintegration Unit (SRU) (2%).

Sample representativeness

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

As the table below shows the age profile, prisoner type and citizenship profile of the sample population closely matched that of the whole population. However, those taking part in the survey were more likely to self-report having a non-white ethnicity than the overall population, with 13% self-reporting a non-white ethnicity in the sample, compared to 8% of the whole population, according to data provided by the prison.

Characteristics of sample population compared to characteristics of whole population of HMP Shotts (%)[1]

	Sample population*	Whole population
Age group[2]		
21-30 (21-29)	24 (15%)	72 (13%)
31-40 (30-39)	58 (36%)	195 (36%)
41-50 (40-49)	41 (26%)	139 (26%)
51 or over (50 or over)	37 (23%)	130 (24%)
Total	**160 (100%)**	**536 (100%)**
Ethnicity		

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

[2] Age groupings provided by HMP Shotts differed slightly from those collected by the survey (age groups in brackets denote those supplied by HMP Shotts).

White	126 (87%)	492 (92%)
Non-white	19 (13%)	44 (8%)
Total	**145 (100%)**	**536 (100%)**

Citizenship		
UK	135 (92%)	500 (93%)
Non-UK	11 (8%)	36 (7%)
Total	**146 (100%)**	**536 (100%)**

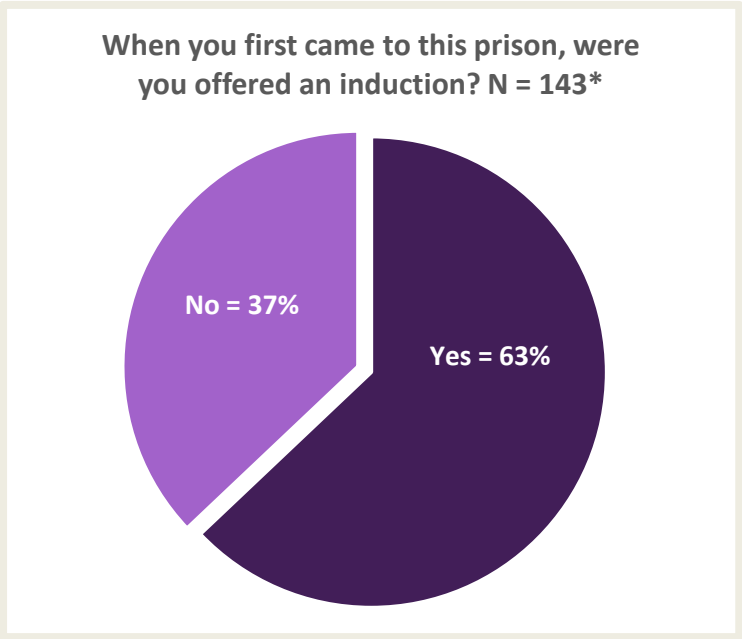
Prisoner type		
Remand	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Short-term	3 (2%)	0 (0%)
Long-term/life/life recall/OLR	155 (98%)	536 (100%)
Total	**158 (100%)**	**536 (100%)**

**Excluding those who did not disclose their demographic information.*

Standard 1: Lawful and Transparent Custody

Induction

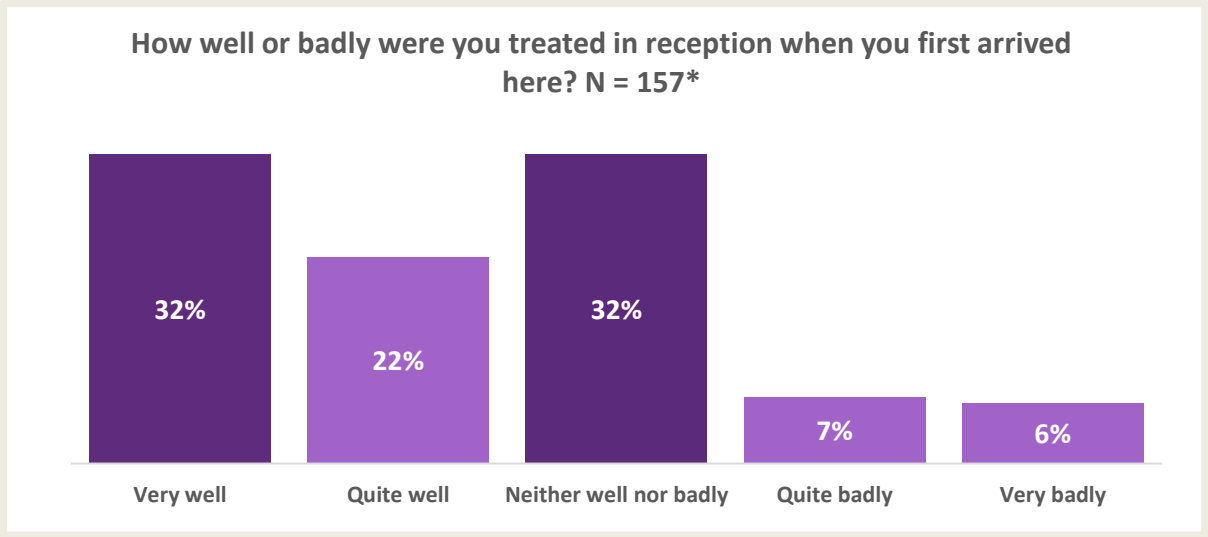
Of those who could remember, 63% of respondents said that they were offered an induction on arrival at HMP Shotts.



Excluding "don't remember"

Treatment in Reception

Just over half of respondents (54%) reported being treated well on arrival at HMP Shotts, including around one-third (32%) who said they were treated “very well”. A further 32% reported that they were treated “neither well nor badly”.

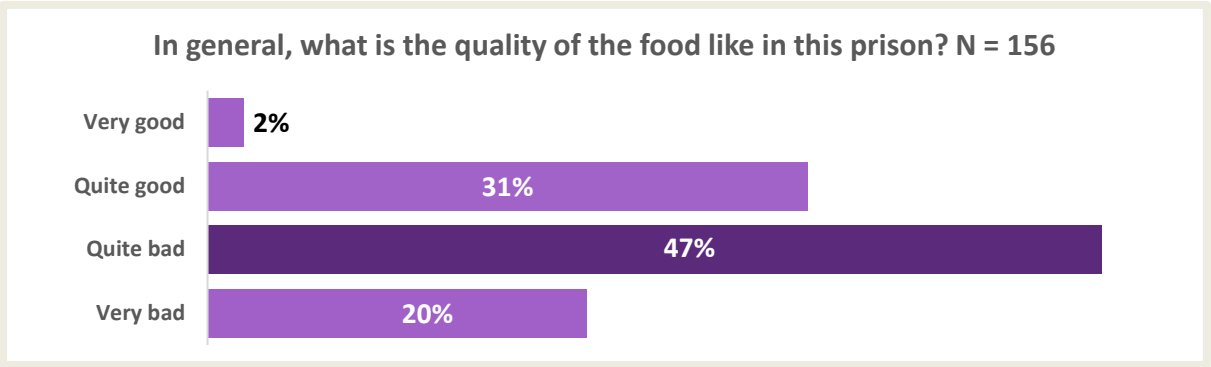


Excluding "Don't remember"

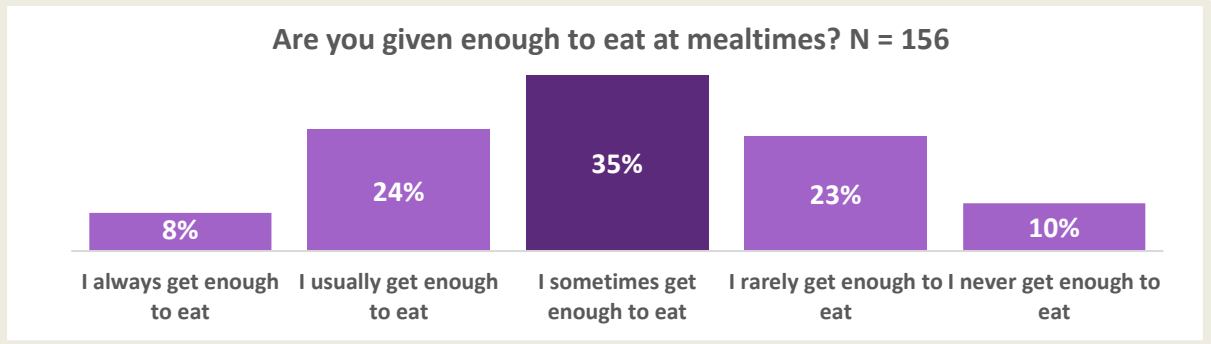
Standard 2: Decency

Food

Overall, respondents were generally negative about the quality of food available at HMP Shotts, with 67% describing it as quite or very bad.

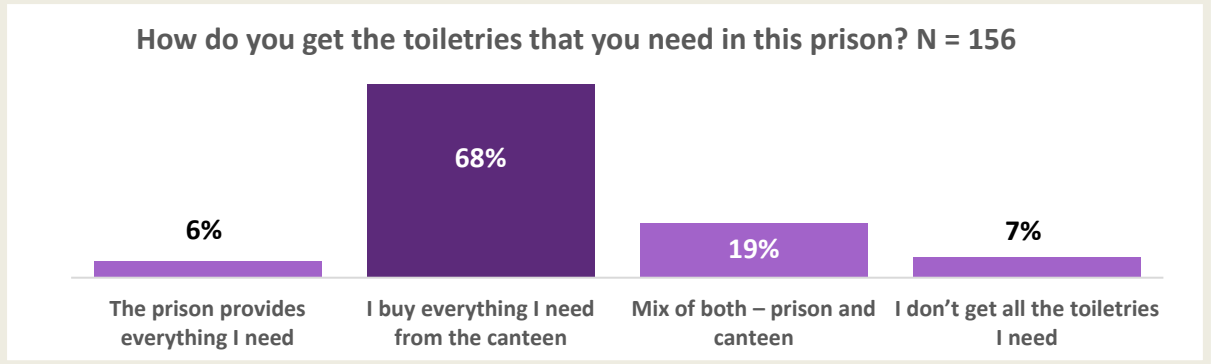


Around one-third of respondents (32%) reported always or usually getting enough to eat at mealtimes, while 35% said they sometimes got enough to eat. A further third (33%) said they rarely or never got enough to eat.

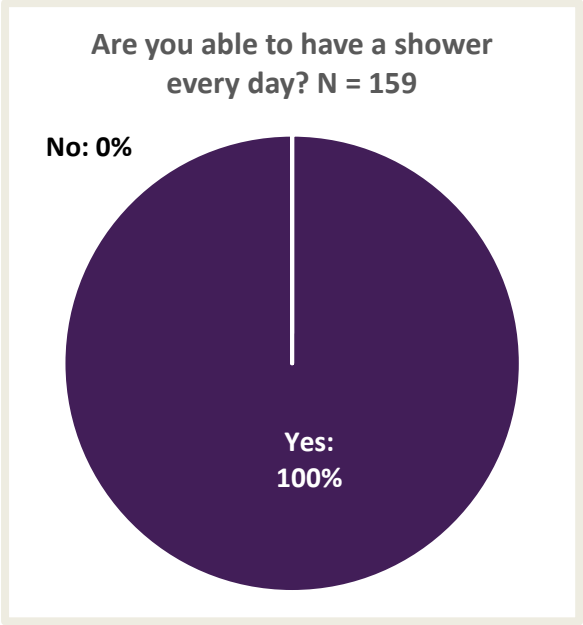


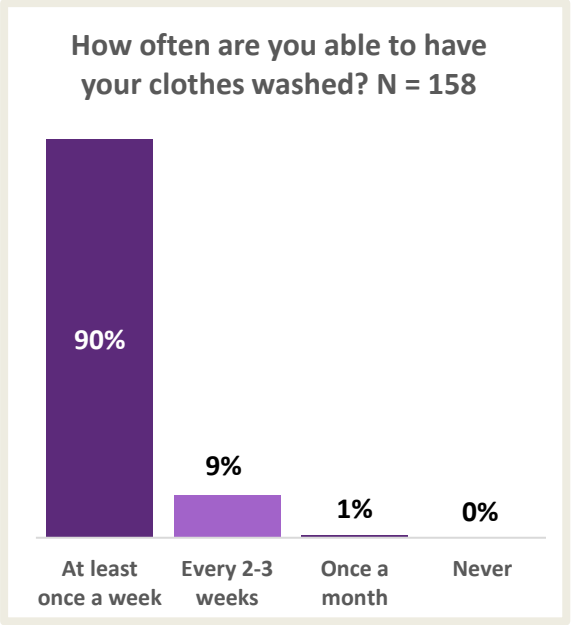
Toiletries, showering and laundry

Most respondents (68%) said that they got all the toiletries they needed from the canteen, while only 6% said that they prison provided everything they needed.



All respondents (100%) said they were able to have a shower every day, and 90% said they were able to have their clothes washed at least once a week.

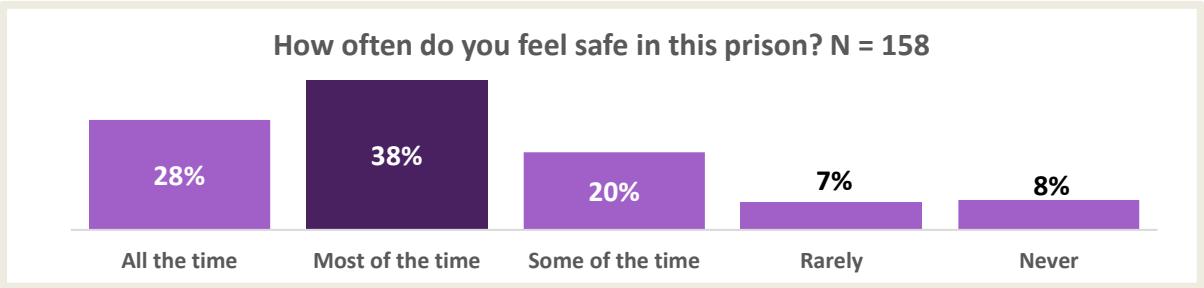




Standard 3: Personal Safety

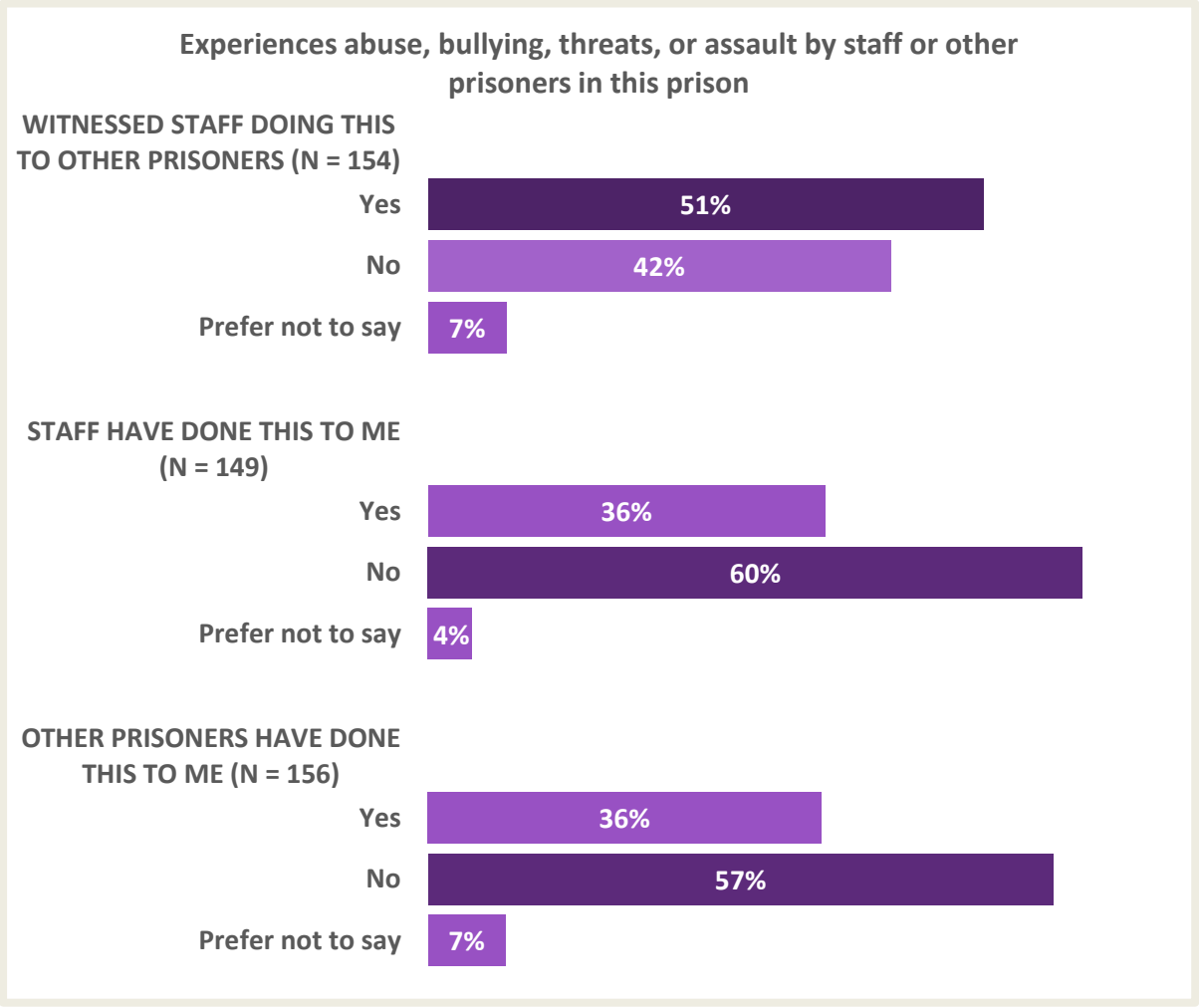
Perception of safety

The majority of respondents (66%) said that they felt safe all or most of the time in HMP Shotts. However 15% said they rarely or never felt safe.



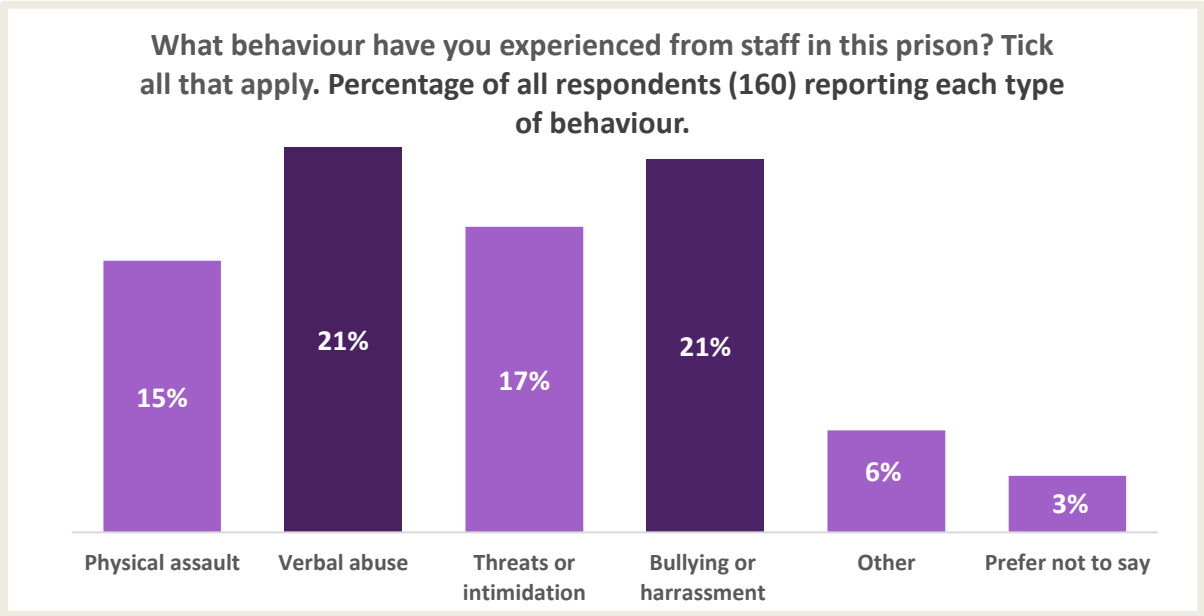
Abuse, threats, bullying or assault by staff or other prisoners

Around half of respondents (51%) said they had witnessed prison staff abusing, bullying, threatening or assaulting another prisoner at HMP Shotts. Just over one-third (36%) said they had been abused, bullied, threatened or assaulted by staff themselves.

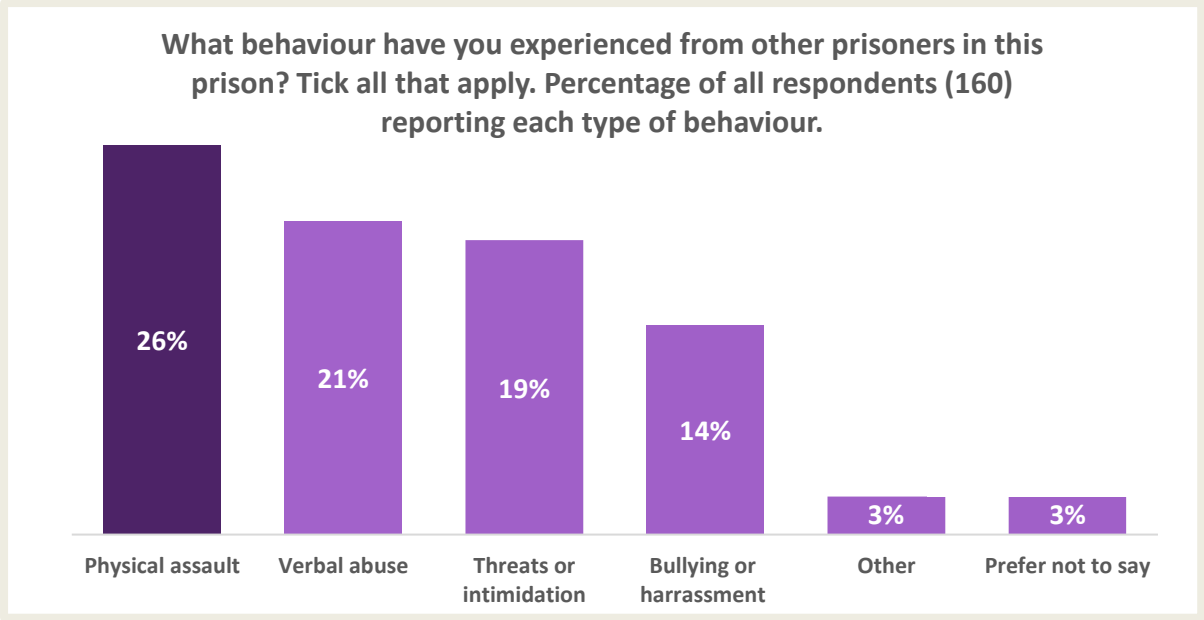


Just over one-third (36%) said they had been abused, threatened, bullied or assaulted by another prisoners in HMP Shotts.

When asked what type of negative behaviour they had experienced from staff, the most common responses were: verbal abuse (21%) and bullying or harassment (21%).



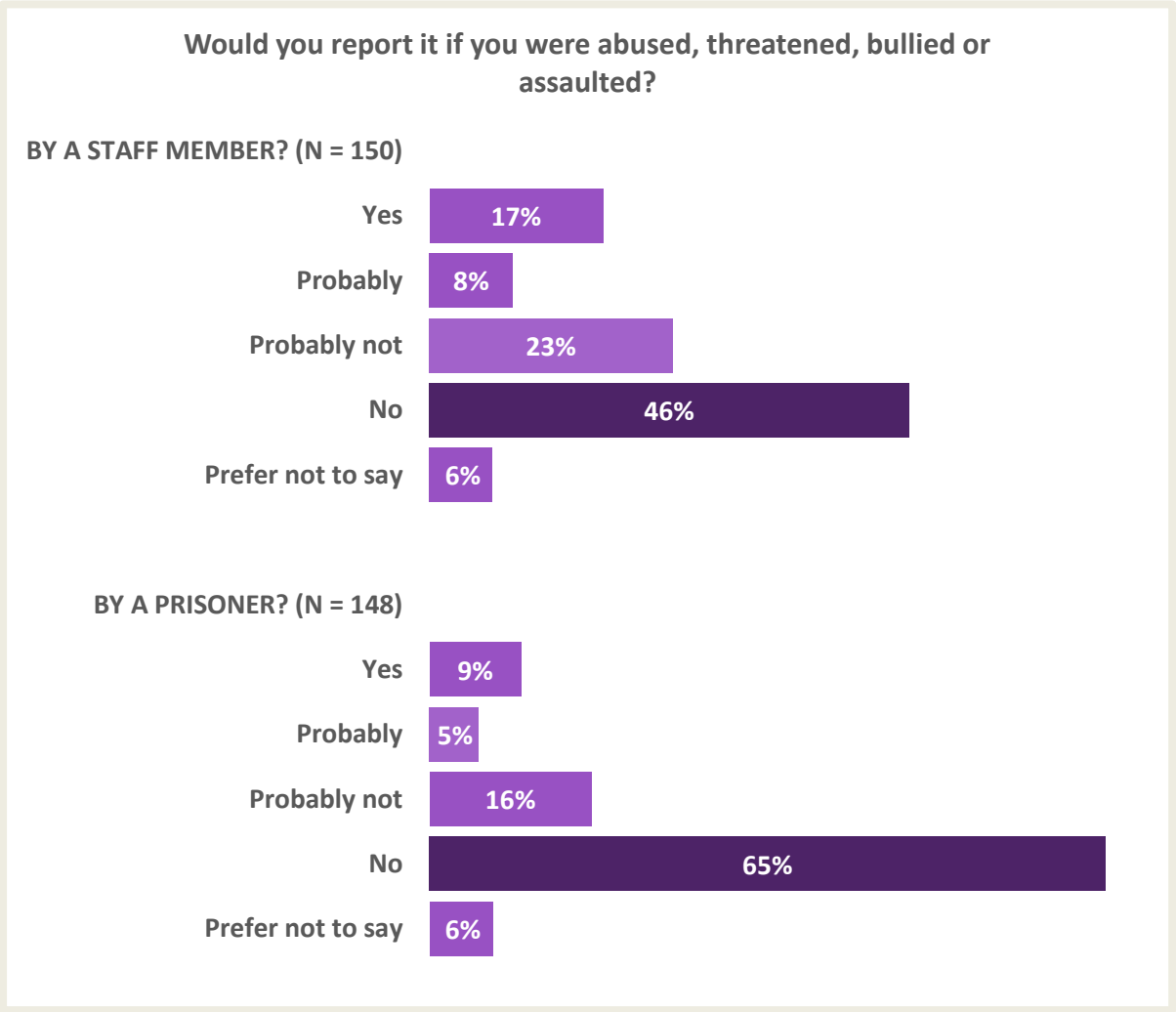
When asked what type of negative behaviour they had experienced from other prisoners, the most common responses were: physical assault (26%), verbal abuse (21%) and threats or intimidation (19%).



Reporting abuse, threats, bullying or assault

Just over half of respondents (69%) said they would not or probably would not report it if they abused, threatened, bullied or assaulted by a prison staff member.

Most (81%) said they would not report it if they abused, threatened, bullied or assaulted by another prisoner.



Standard 4: Effective, Courteous and Humane Use of Authority

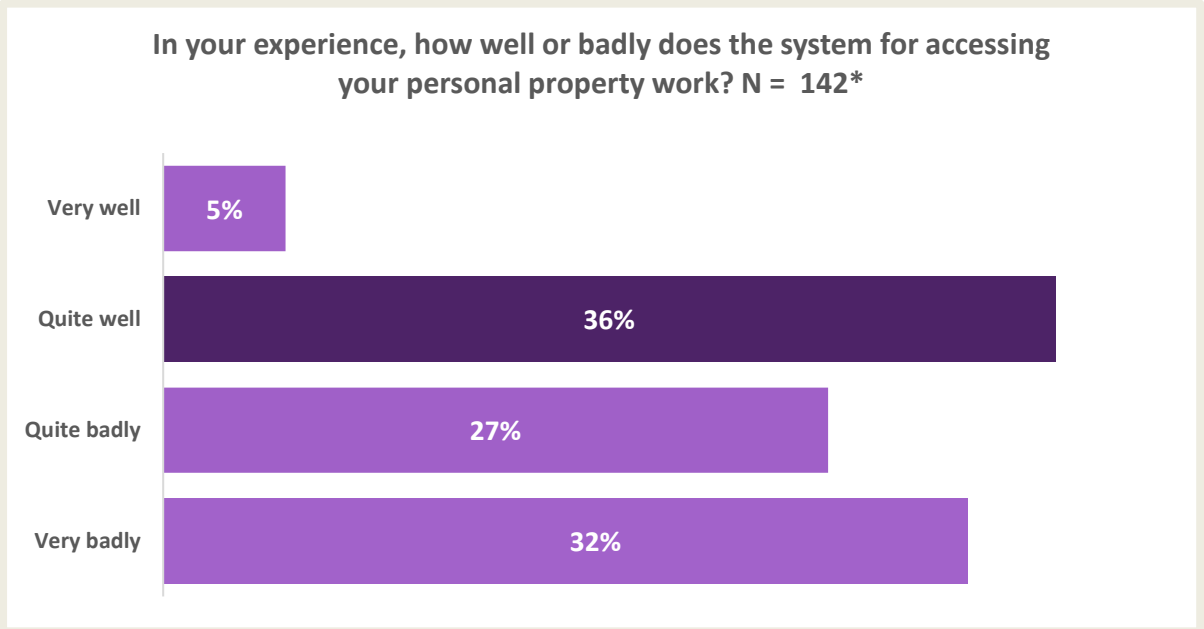
Searching

Around one-third (32%) of respondents felt that they were given a reasonable explanation either every time or most times they or their cell was searched. However, the most common response to this question was that they were never given a reasonable explanation (38%).



Accessing personal property

Less than half (41%) felt that the system for accessing personal property worked well in HMP Shotts.

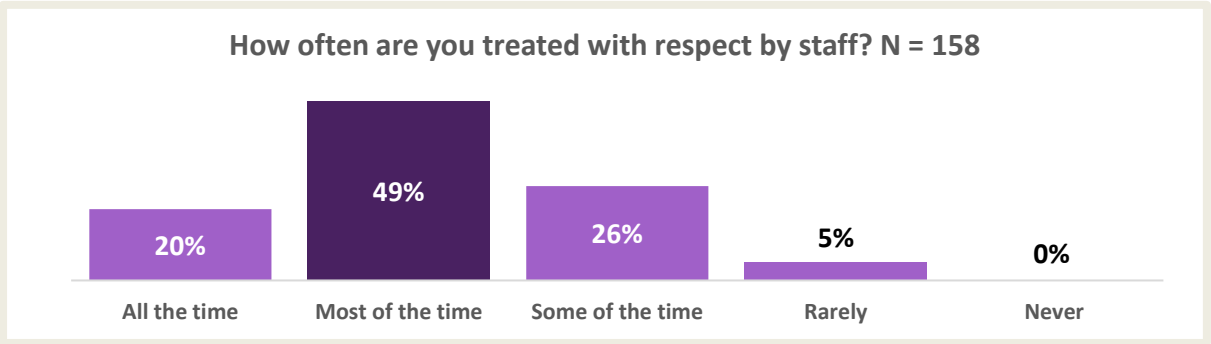


**Excluding "don't know".*

Standard 5: Respect, Autonomy and Protection against Mistreatment

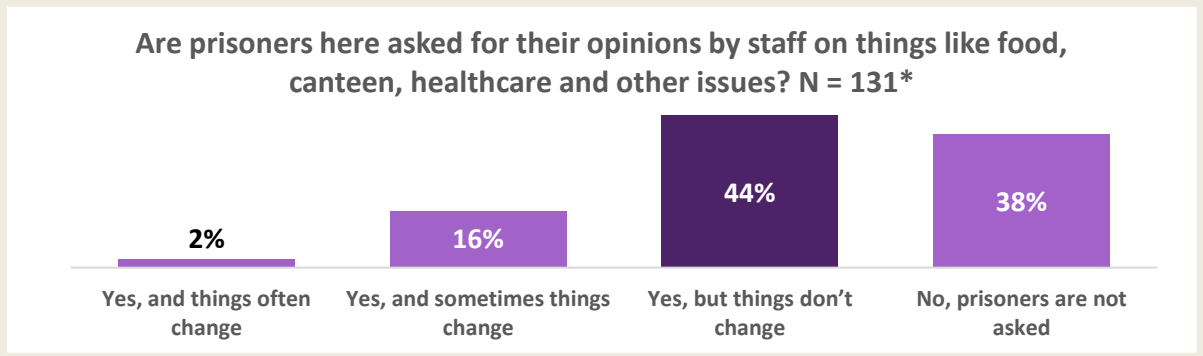
Respect

Most respondents (69%) said they were treated with respect by staff all or most of the time, with a further 26% saying they were treated with respect some of the time.



Consultation with prisoners

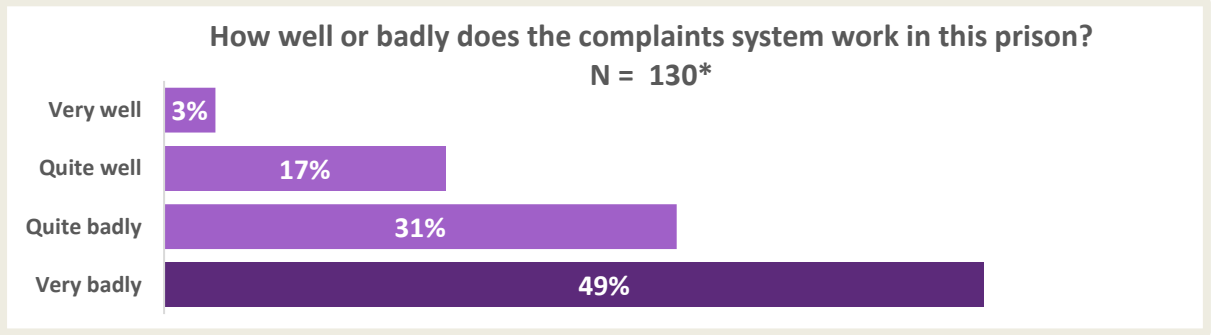
The majority of respondents (62%) said that prisoners were consulted about issues that affect them such as food and healthcare. However, only 18% said that things can change as a result of this consultation.



**Excluding "don't know".*

Complaints

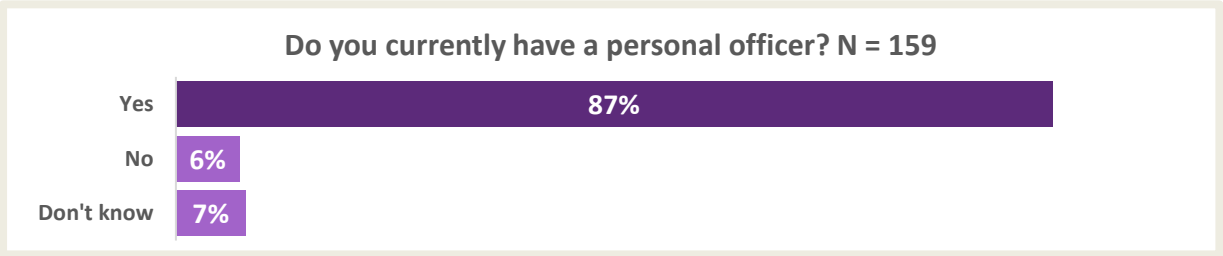
Most respondents said that they complaints system worked badly (80%).



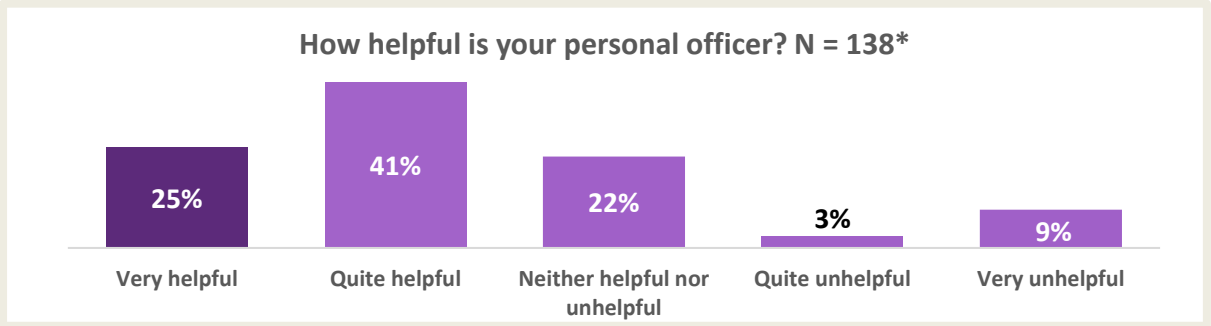
**Excluding "don't know"*

Personal officers

Most respondents (87%) said that they currently had a Personal Officer.



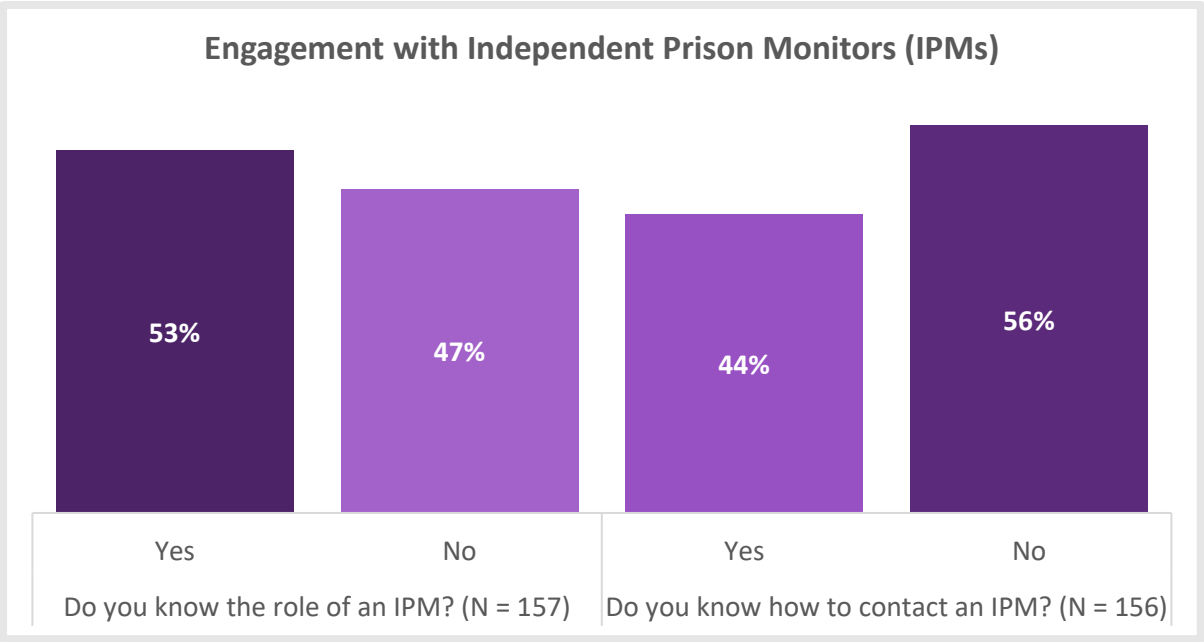
Those who had a Personal Officer were asked how helpful their Personal Officer was. The majority (66%) reported that their Personal Officer was helpful.



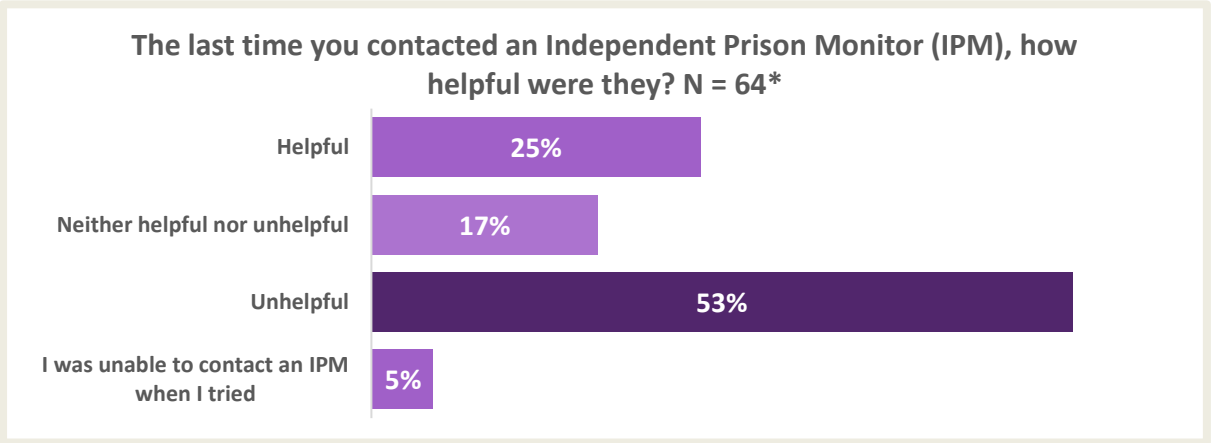
**Excluding those who said they did not have a personal officer*

Engagement with Independent Prison Monitors (IPMs)

Just over half of respondents said they knew the role of an Independent Prison Monitor (IPM) (53%), but fewer than half (44%) said they knew how to contact an IPM.



The majority of respondents said they had never tried to contact the IPM service. Of those who had (64 respondents), a quarter (25%) said they had found the service to be helpful.



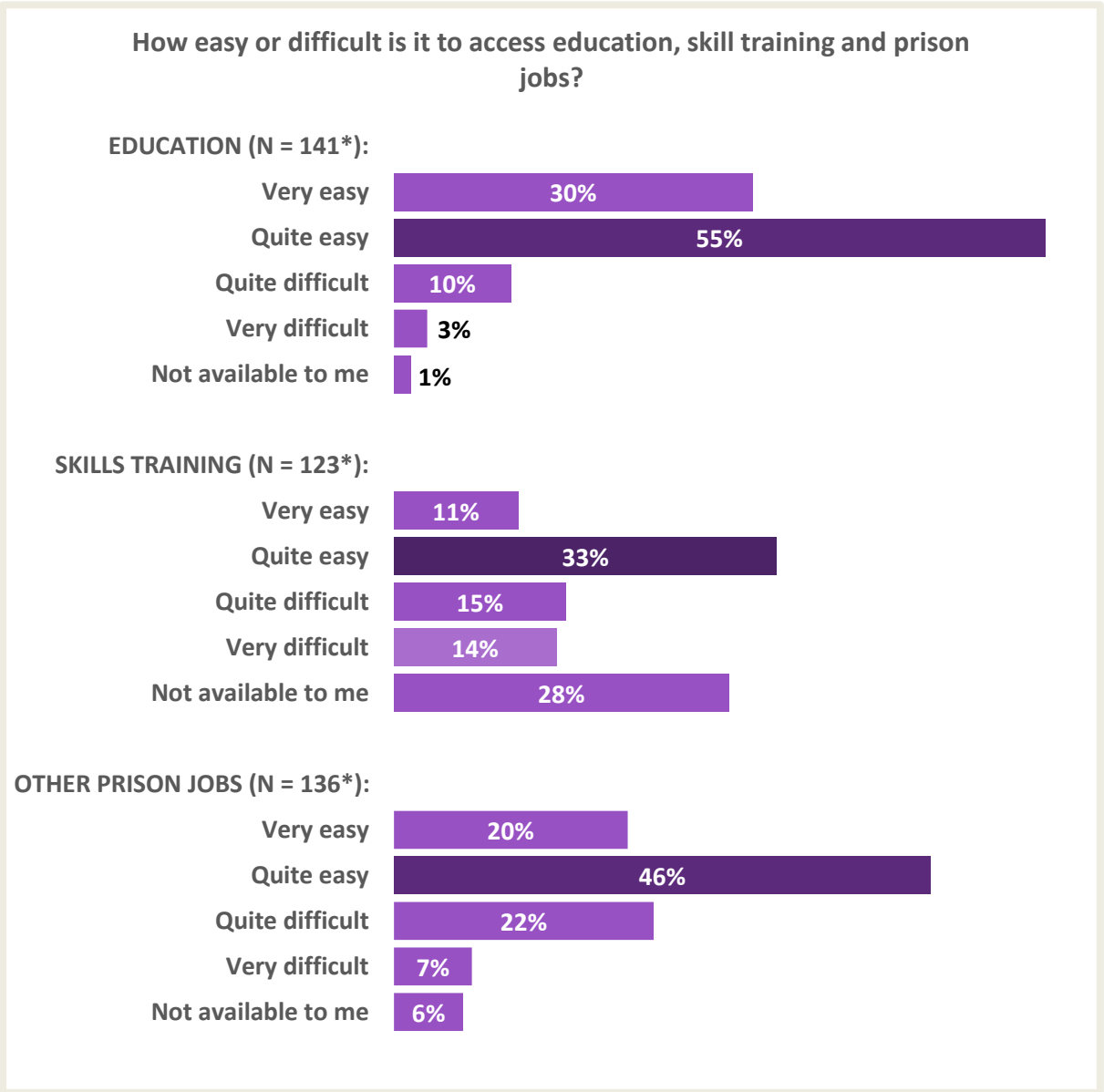
**Excluding those who had never tried to contact an IPM*

Standard 6: Purposeful Activity

Access to education, training and work

Excluding those who did not know the answer to the question, most respondents (85%) said that it was easy to access education at HMP Shotts. Two thirds also said it was easy to access prison jobs (66%).

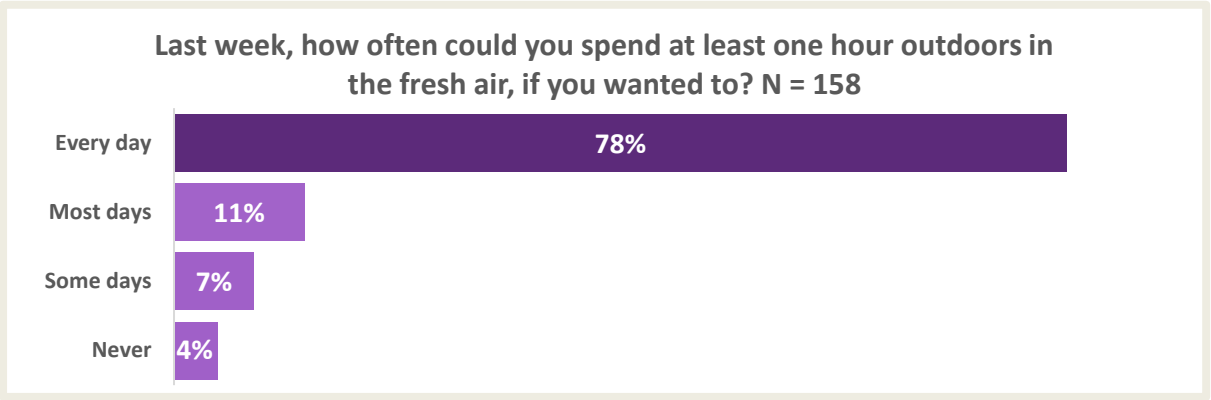
However, fewer than half (44%) said it was easy to access skills training.



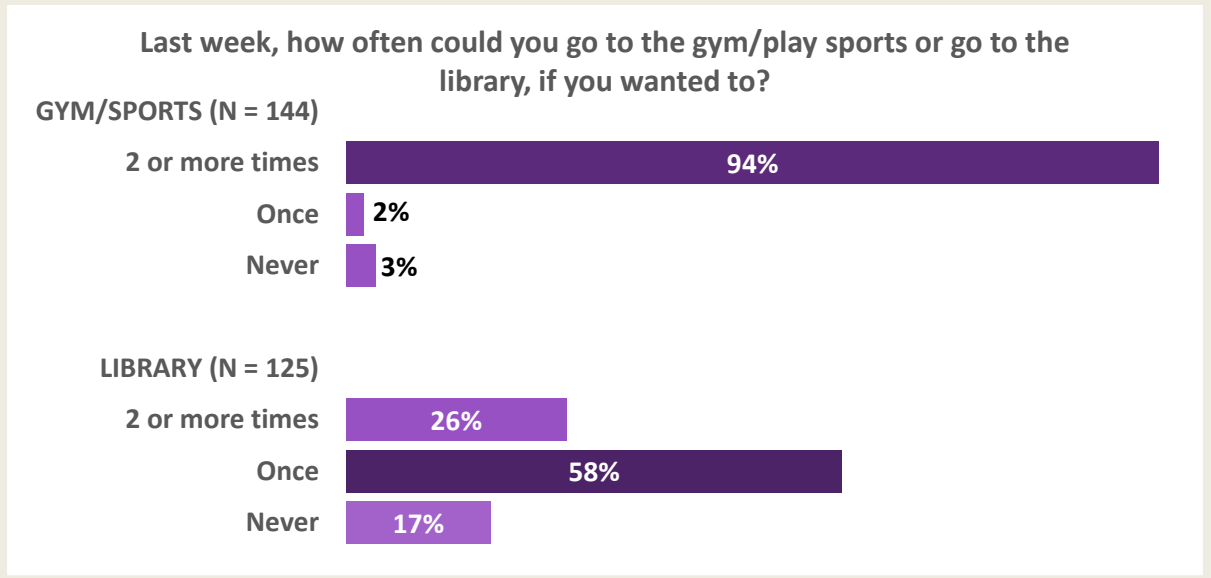
**Excluding "don't know"*

Fresh air, gym/sports and library access

The majority of respondents (78%) reported that they were able to spend at least one hour per day exercising in the fresh air if they wanted to during the previous week. A further 18% said they could access this entitlement at least some days, while 4% said they never could.

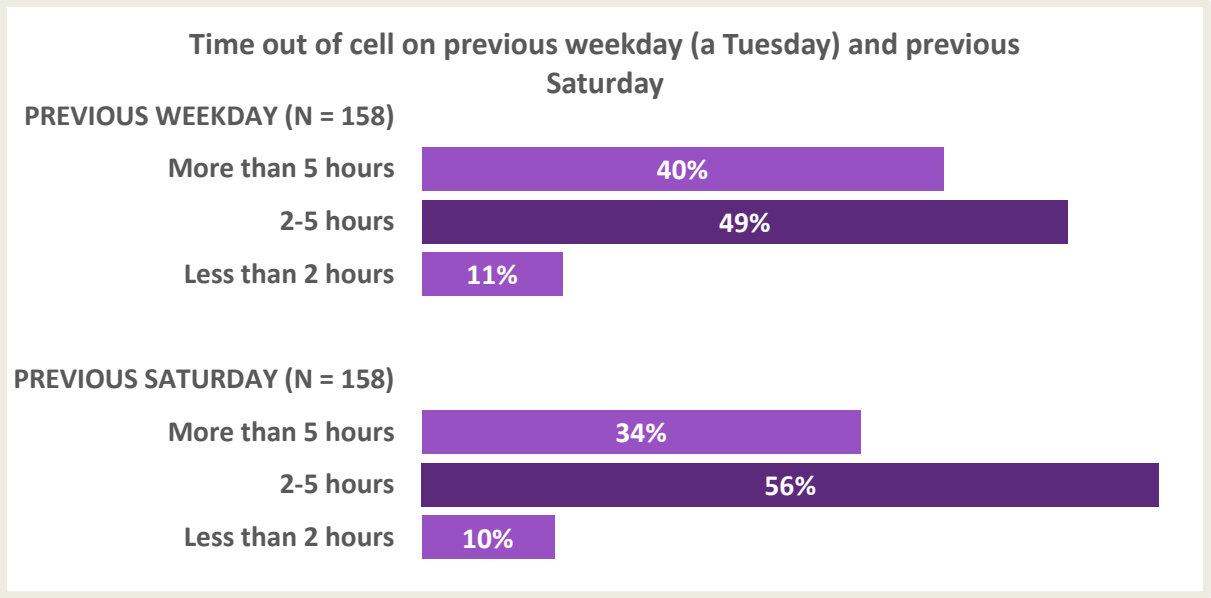


The majority of respondents (96%) said they were able to go to the gym or play sports at least once during the last week, and most also said they were able to access the library at least once (84%).



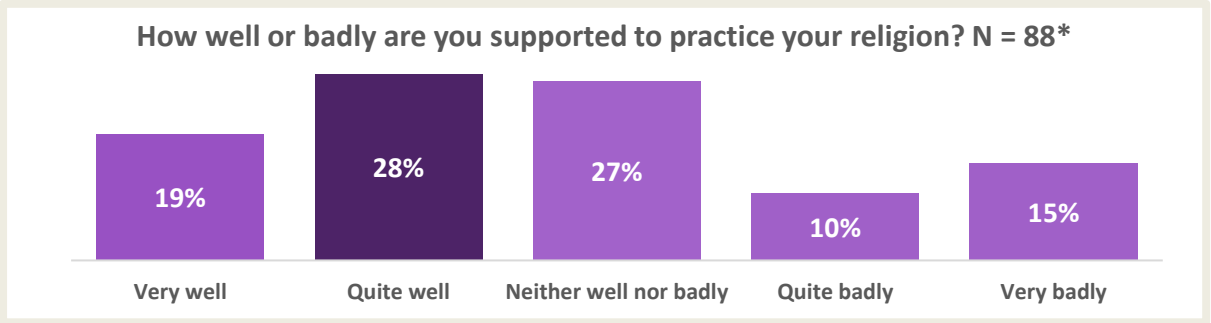
Time out of cell

Most respondents (89%) said they were able to spend at least two hours outside their cell during the previous weekday, including 40% who were out of their cell for more than five hours. Similarly, 90% said they were able to spend at least two hours out of their cell during the previous Saturday, including 34% who were able to spend more than five hours out of their cell.



Religious practice

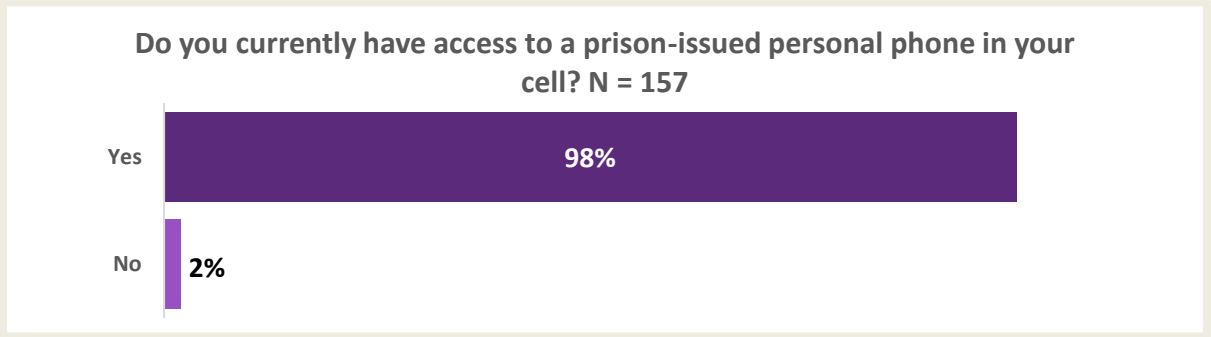
Of those who said they practiced a religion, almost half (47%) said they were well-supported to do so, while a further quarter (27%) said they were “neither well nor badly” supported. A quarter (25%) said they were poorly supported to practice their religion.



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

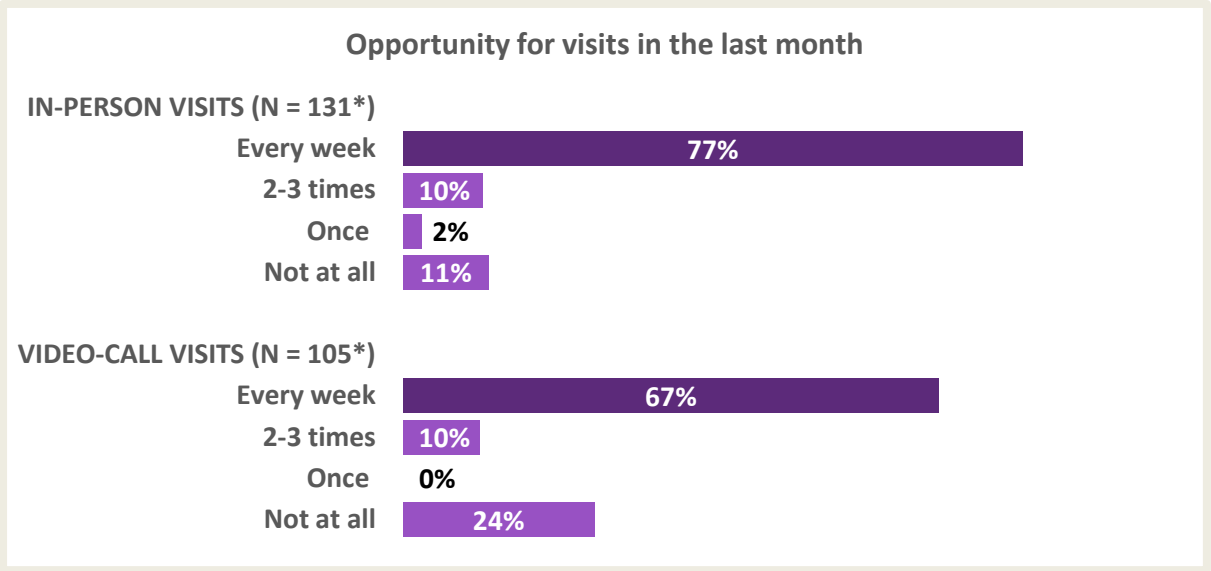
Phones

Almost all (98%) respondents said they had access to an in-cell prison-issued personal phone.



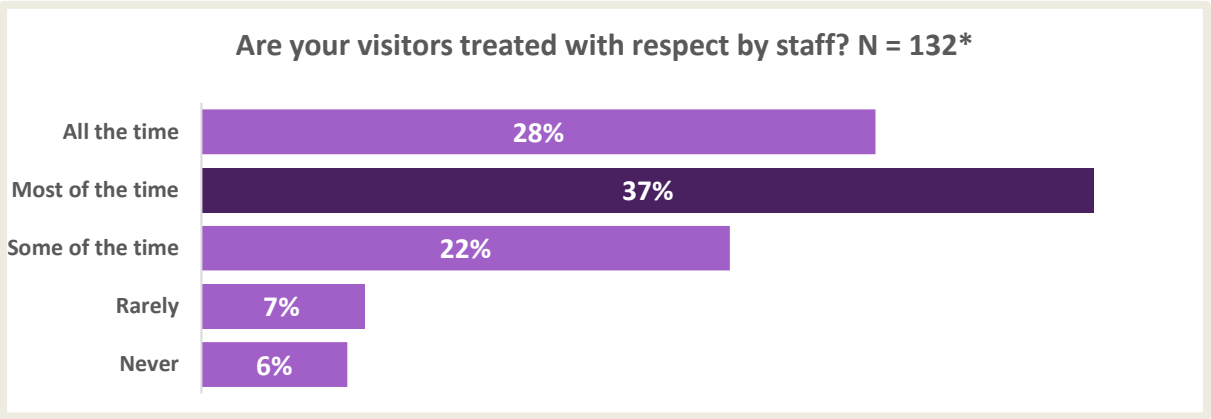
Visits

Of those who said they were aware of the availability of visits, the majority said they were able to have an in-person visit at least once a week (77%), and a video visit at least once a week (67%).



**Excluding "don't know"*

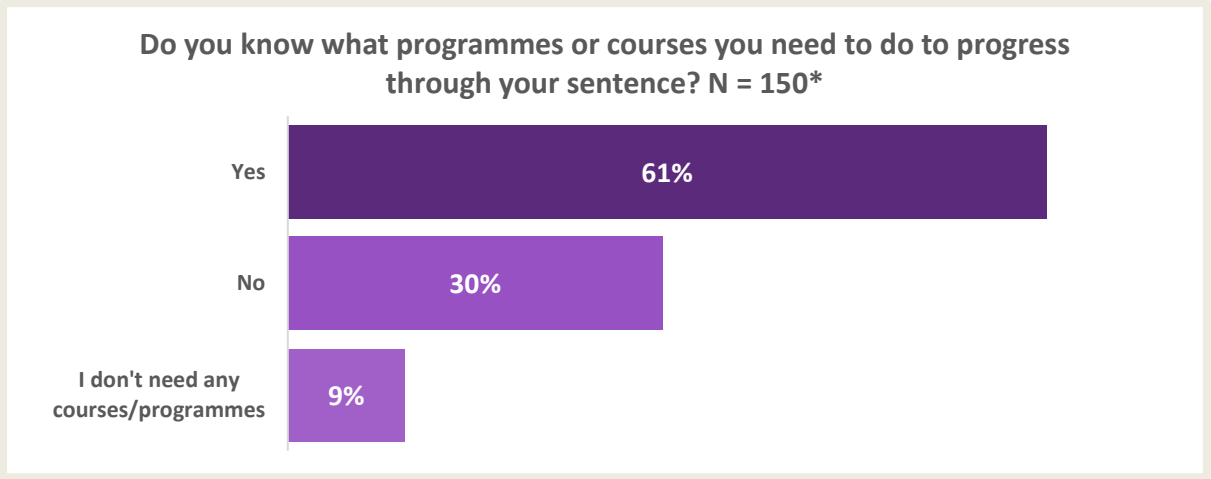
Of those who did receive visits, just over a quarter (28%) said that their visitors were treated with respect all the time by visits staff.



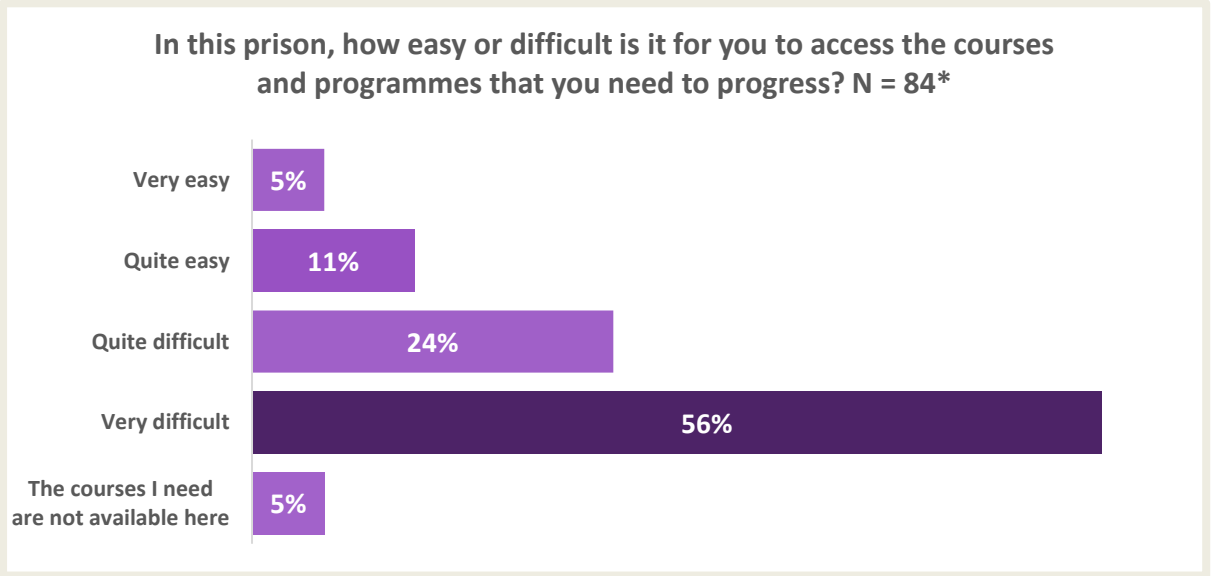
**Excluding "Not applicable - I don't have visits"*

Progression and case management support

The majority of convicted respondents (61%) said that they knew what courses or programmes they needed to undertake to progress through their sentences. Almost one-third (30%) said they did not know, and 9% said they did not need to undertake any programmes.



Of those who said they knew what courses or programmes they needed to undertake (84 respondents), the majority (85%) said it was difficult to access these programmes, or that the courses they needed were not available in HMP Shotts.

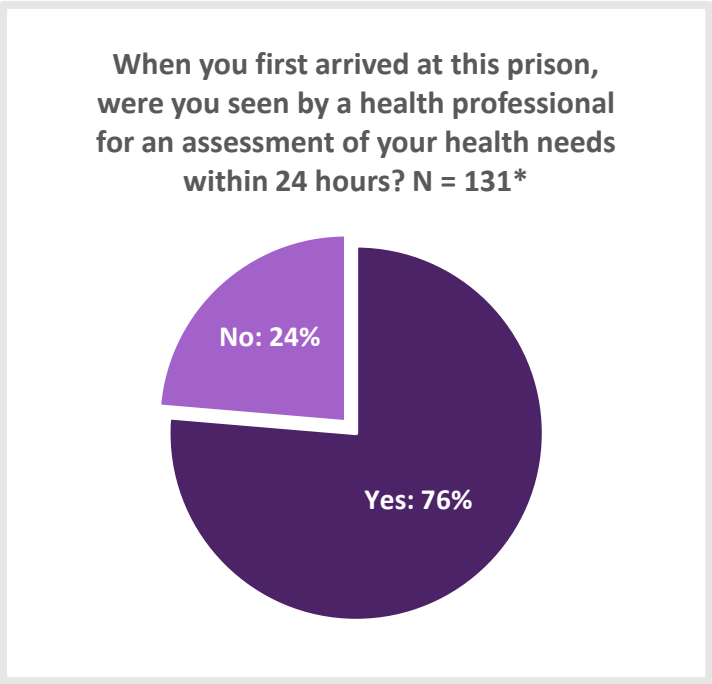


Excluding "Not applicable"

Standard 9: Health and Wellbeing

Health assessment on arrival

Three-quarters of respondents (76%) said they were seen by a health professional for an assessment of their health needs within 24 hours of arriving at HMP Shotts.



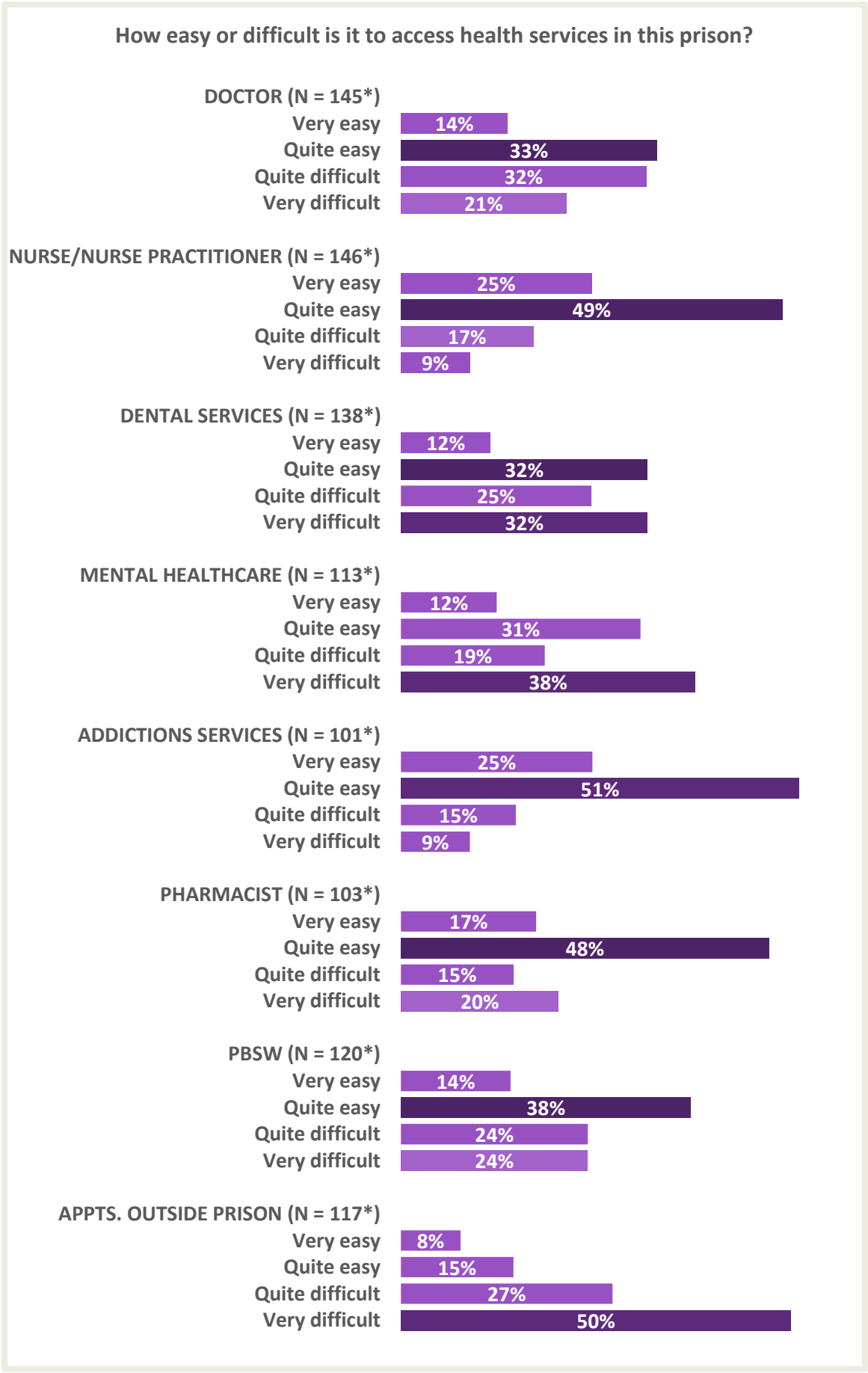
**Excluding "Don't remember"*

Access to health services

Almost all respondents (99%) said they knew how to access health services in HMP Shotts.

The majority of respondents reported that it was easy to access several health services in HMP Shotts. Around three-quarters said it was easy to access a nurse (74%) and that it was easy to access addictions services (76%), and around two-thirds (65%) said it was easy to access a pharmacist. Just over half (52%) said it was easy to access prison-based social work.

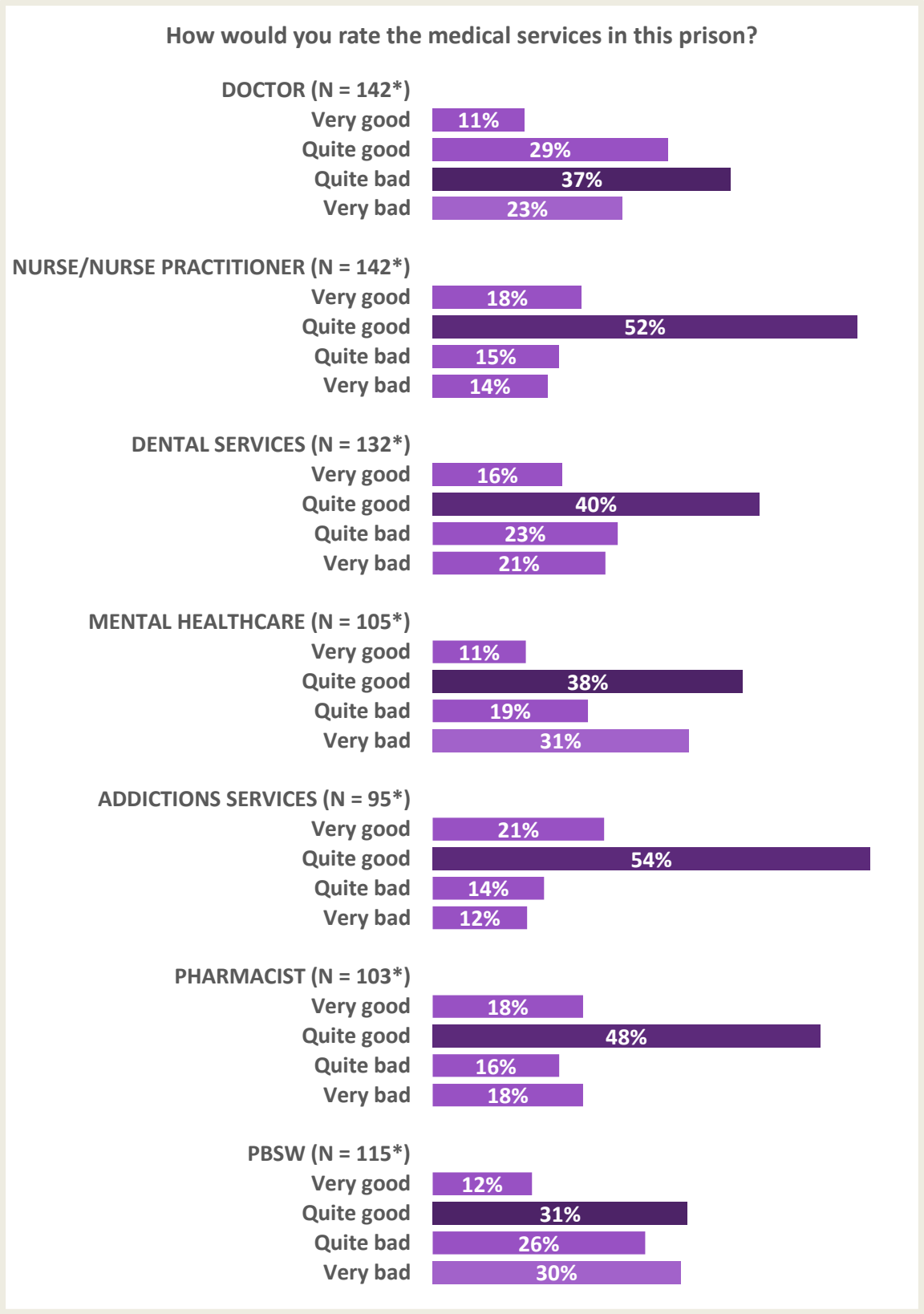
However, the majority of respondents reported that it was difficult to access several other health services. Just over half said it was difficult to access a doctor (53%), a dentist (57%), and mental health services (57%). More than three-quarters of respondents (77%) said it was difficult to access health appointments (e.g. hospital appointments) outside the 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 Shotts.



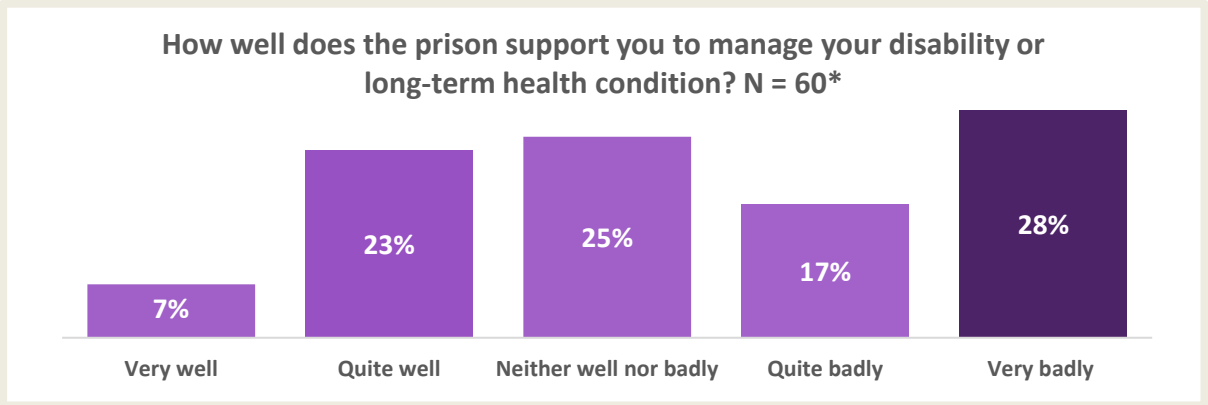
Excluding "Don't know"

Several health services were rated positively by the majority of respondents. Addictions services was rated as good or very good by 75% of respondents; the service provided by the nurses was rated as good or very good by 70%; pharmacy services were rated as good or very good by 66%; and dental services were rated as good or very good by 56% of respondents.

However, less than half of respondents rated the service from the doctors (40%) or prison-based social work (43%) positively. Mental health services were rated positively by just under half of respondents (49%).

Support for disabilities and long term health conditions

In total, 39% of respondents (n = 63) reported living with a long-term health condition or disability. When asked about the support provided to manage their conditions, 30% said they were well supported to do so. Just under half reported being poorly supported (45%), while a quarter (25%) said they were “neither well nor badly” supported to manage their long-term disabilities and health conditions.



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

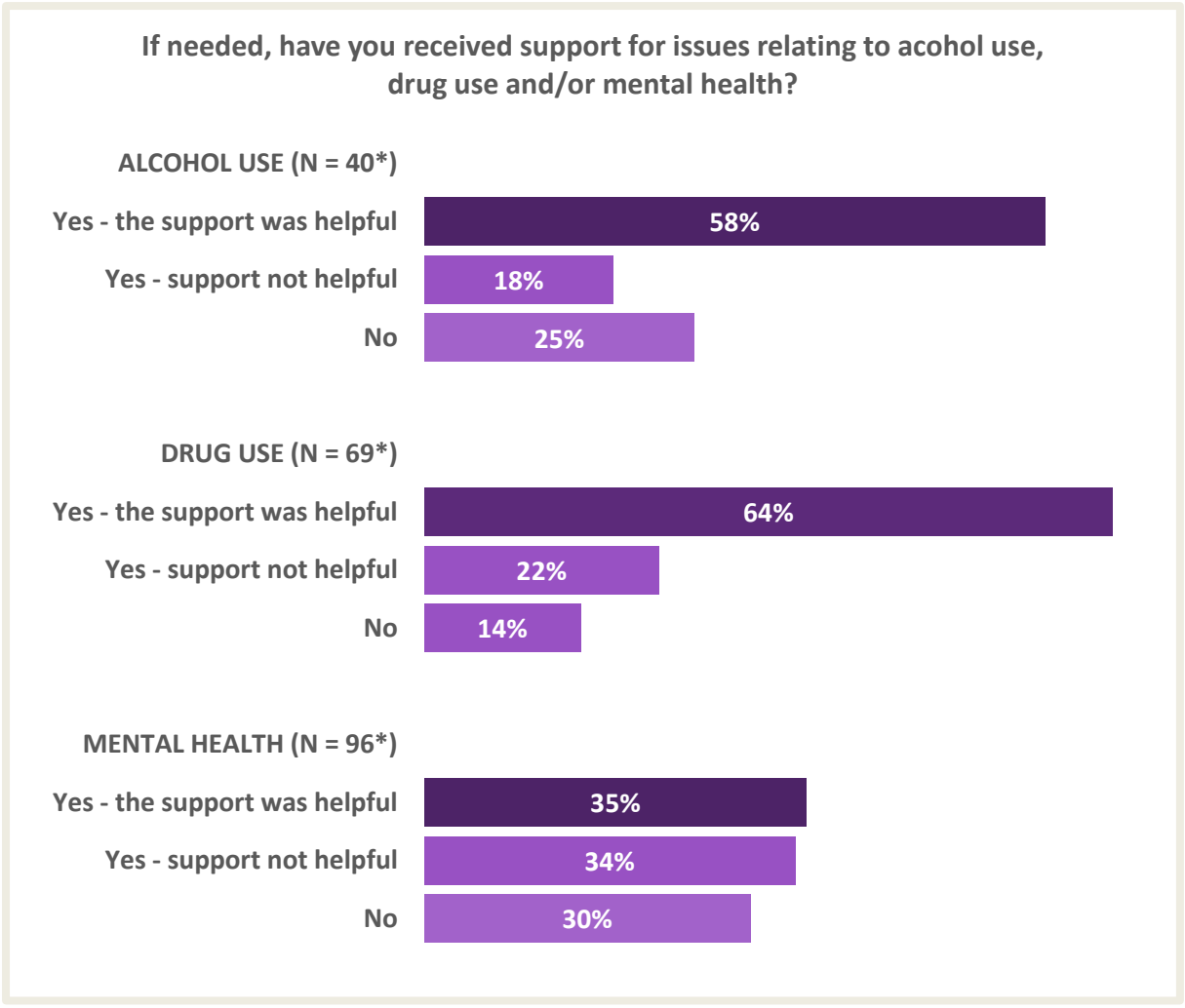
Support for issues relating to alcohol, drugs and mental health

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 (40 respondents), 75% reported having been offered support, while 25% said they had not been offered support. In total, 58% said they had received support that had been helpful.

Of those who said they had needed support for drug use (69 respondents), the majority (86%) said they had been given access to support, while 14% said they had not been offered support. Around two-thirds (64%) said they had been given support that had been helpful.

Of those who said they had needed support for their mental health (96 respondents), 70% said they had been offered support, while 30% said they had not. Around one-third (35%) said the support they had been given had been helpful.



Excluding "Haven't needed this support"

Open Question (General Comments): Thematic Analysis

In total, 80 (50%) respondents left comments at the end of the questionnaire. The most common issues arising in the comments related to relationships with staff; progression; healthcare; regime and purposeful activity; family contact; and canteen, wages and the cost of living.

Relationships with Staff

Around 40% of those who left comments mentioned relationships between prisoners and staff. Some of these were positive, with some prisoners singling out particular individuals or groups of staff for praise. For example:

> *"I would like to speak about my PO [personal officer]. She got me through a lot of bad times. Everyone has given up on me before giving me a chance to show I was worth the help. I wouldn't have got this far without her… She will never know it but she saved my life. In all times in prison I've never had someone go so far to get through to me. I think this happens too little in jail. She deserves my respect."*

> *"SRU staff are great"*

> *"H.M.P. Shotts is the best prison I have been in so far in Scotland. I am on the N.I.C. unit and I must say its just like a big family here. The prison officers are always polite and courteous they try their best to help you."*

However, while there were clear instances of staff making a positive difference to prisoners' lives, a number of comments also highlighted feelings that prisoners did not receive the care and support they needed from staff. For example:

> *"I don't have any good words to describe this prison. Most staff don't care, not interested, nothing ever gets done like paperwork, phone calls. And in general day to day life 90% of the officers are false and say whatever when you have any queries."*

> *"Abuse, lack of assistance, hatred by staff towards prisoners."*

> *"Staff are not helpful at all. Only shout from desk, never one to one situations. Happy to keep locked up as much as they can."*

Several mentioned issues during visits, with reports of visits staff being disrespectful towards both prisoners and their visitors (See "Family Contact").

Some comments raised safety issues due to staff behaviour or a lack of staff presence:

> *"I don't always feel safe, the atmosphere is always tense and there is never much of an officer presence on the landing."*

"Staff provoke prisoners or use prisoners to provoke other prisoners… Staff condone drug use and assisting access to [drugs]."

"Whilst I haven't seen violence I have heard enough anecdotal evidence that there are many staff who, when responding to the bell, are too eager to get involved in a potential fight and to use violence. There have been many situations that could have been de-escalated but staff are too quick to resort to violence to "resolve" the problem."

"The staff try to act like the are one of the boys and pick on less fortunate people to fit in with the big time players."

"About 90% of staff treat and speak badly about other prisoners. I've witnessed it myself and been told by friends who have witnessed it, they laugh and joke about boys who have problems with drugs, disabilities, or mental health problems."

Progression and Release Support

A concern raised by almost 40% of respondents was progression. Respondents highlighted that progression through their sentences was difficult, and that the communication and transparency around their progression was often poor.

Many of the comments drew attention to the difficulties of getting onto courses for progression or meeting the criteria to be eligible to move to HMP Castle Hunty 'The Open Estate' and achieve parole:

"My problem is progression. Trying to progress from here is a myth! I am serving 7 years and am already halfway through my sentence. I am report-free and done everything that is asked of me and I am still not progressed to open conditions. My parole is in a few months and is almost impossible to get [parole from] closed conditions. This is my biggest problem."

"Progression is so difficult and not properly understood or communicated. I never feel like the process is understood and the markers or goal posts for this constantly seem to be out of reach."

"It took them so long to offer me my course that I decided it was pointless to do because [it was] so close to my liberation date. Told them to give it to someone that could actually progress and get parole."

Many of the comments made it clear that there was a lack of trust in the progression system, with people feeling that communication was poor, decision-making was arbitrary, that they were not always told the truth about their progression:

"The staff are mostly helpful but when it comes to progression (RMT) paperwork they become uninterested and take forever to complete it. Some have lied to prisoners about it being submitted when they have not and it gets submitted months later."

"We are constantly lied to by staff and hall managers about our RMT and can't get moved on as there is only one RMT manager to look through paperwork before [it] can be submitted."

"The relaying of pivotal info between different establishments is all but non-existent… This so-called 'oversight' has cost me a lot of years in prison, to the extent of where I've nearly doubled my tariff!"

"The results for progression are random, inconsistent, and based on whether the Castle [Open Estate] is full or [if] an officer on the board likes you or not."

"I believe an overall improved transparency in relation to progression-related subjects both for prisoners and also their family and loved ones is a must. Relationships become fractured… as a direct result of such lack of transparency on information related to progression and the prisoner's inability to keep loved ones informed fully on critical dates."

Health and Wellbeing

The main issue regarding health and wellbeing reported was difficulty accessing medical appointments and NHS services. Several respondents told us that they struggled to access the services they felt they needed, and appointments they had made. For example:

"Getting medical treatment when you require it is hard… It can take you days to see a nurse. It will then take weeks to see a doctor who is not interested in what you have to say or treating you."

"To see a doctor is very difficult and doctors do not care about your health."

"[There is] no acknowledgement of triage/request slips."

"I was meant to be at hospital last [year] and the transport never came for me."

"When we need to see a doctor, the appointment we get is usually well over a month after putting out the referral slip."

"Waiting times for doctor appointments etc. are far too long, then only afforded 15 mins maximum. I've had 4 apps rearranged so far, and I'm still waiting for it. That's been 6 weeks since I was [given] the first date."

The other main issue raised was medication, with respondents reporting being taken off medication they had previously been prescribed and struggling with the timing of medication dispensation changing on a daily basis (especially for those on controlled medication who had to go to the health centre each day to receive medication).

Substance use was raised by several respondents, with some reporting that they felt the MORS system was “abused” by prison staff as a tool to punish individuals and entire halls by keeping people locked up, rather than to support those with substance use issues.

Family Contact

Issues surrounding family contact were raised by a number of respondents. Some reported being unable to receive weekly visits for a variety of reasons, including lack of space at visiting times, needing to book visits too far in advance, and family members who had to travel long distances being unable to attend on days when longer visits were offered.

Some also reported incidents in which they felt their visitors had been poorly treated by staff members, and poor facilities for visits with children.

Others reported struggling to maintain contact with family members due to the high cost of phone credit and the need to include phone credit within the £20 weekly canteen spend (see “Cost of Living, Wages and Canteen”).

Cost of Living, Wages and Canteen

Issues concerning the cost of living, wages and making canteen and other purchases were raised by around 20% of those who left comments. Several commented that while canteen prices have been rising, the wages have not, making it harder to buy what they need from the canteen.

> *“The canteen is very expensive and prisoners do not get the right wages to afford things. The price of vapes is very high.”*
>
> *“We should be allowed to spend more money on canteen... Prices are going up and we have to get everything all off one small budget.”*
>
> *“The SPS need to give us more PPC to spend as prices keep going up and now we are living in poverty. The food quality is really bad… so we are having to buy and make our own food but that’s hard with only £20 per week and protein is £17.50. Vapes are £16.00 then toiletries and money on the phone...”*

A further common issue was that phone credit was included in the £20 weekly canteen spending limit, meaning that people had to choose between extra time on the phone and essential items like toiletries and food.

> *“There needs to be an increase in PPC spending allowance for canteen (£20) to keep up with inflation and should allow us to transfer money to the phone from PPC rather than wages, especially if the SPS wants to encourage family contact.”*
>
> *“The prison goes on about family contact etc., but yet limits you to how much you can put on the phone as credit. You should be allowed to put as much as you want on the phone.”*

Regime and Purposeful Activity

Several people wrote about the regime in HMP Shotts, with the main areas of concern being boredom and a desire for more purposeful activity aimed at preparing prisoners for life outside prison.

A small number of comments mentioned struggling with not having enough to do during the day, with comments including:

> *"While in prison I find most of my time is full of boredom. Nothing to do outside my cell at night times, most time when outside my cell is just walking up and down the landing. Boredom is a big problem and can cause stressful times."*

> *"I don't go out of my cell much, and just get left to get on with it."*

A handful of respondents told us that they worried about being unprepared for the world of work when they were released, and would benefit from having more education and training courses specifically aimed at preparation for employment in the community:

> *"More educational/training/courses [are] needed to prepare guys for release. The time spent in prisons should be used better ourselves so apprenticeships (joiner/plumber/electrician etc) should be possible."*

> *"We need skills training like painters and joiners, things we can get qualifications [for] so when we get out we can get jobs [or] open a business."*

> *"There is no vocational training in the protection wing to help gain employment when released after the sentence is served."*

Annex: HMIPS Pre-Inspection Survey Comparative Data

HMP Shotts 2025 in Comparison with HMP Shotts 2022

This table shows a comparison between the survey results for HMP Shotts (October 2025) and HMP Shotts (March 2022). Where results are shown as statistically significant, this means that it is unlikely that the difference between the two surveys 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 within the results, meaning that some results may appear significant by chance when in reality there is no real difference.

In total, there were 160 respondents in the HMP Shotts 2025 sample, and 145 respondents in the HMP Shotts 2022 sample.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Please note that there are likely to be some minor discrepancies between the figures reported in the table below compared with the figures reported in the main survey findings report. There are two reasons for this:

1. Where there are discrepancies of one percentage point, this is due to the different rounding systems used by the two different sets of software used to run the analysis. The main report uses Microsoft Excel, which uses the “bankers’ rounding” system, which rounds .5 numbers to the nearest even number. However, the figures shown in the table below were generated using SPSS analytical software, which rounds .5 values up to the next whole number.

2. Several questions in this survey contain a “prefer not to say option” (e.g. most questions about personal safety). These are marked with a double asterisk (**) in the table below. In order to create binary categories for chi square significance testing, the “prefer not to say” option was treated as missing data for these questions. However, in the main report above, “prefer not to say” is included in the analysis. As a result, questions with a “prefer not to say” option show slightly different statistics in this table compared to the main report.

Colour coding:
No colour: No statistically significant difference between the two groups
Orange: HMP Shotts 2025 significantly more negative than HMP Shotts 2022.
Green: HMP Shotts 2025 significantly more positive than HMP Shotts 2022.

Question	Shotts 2025		Shotts 2022	
	No. of responses	% of valid responses	No. of responses	% of valid responses
Was offered an induction	90	63%	No data	No data
Was treated well/neutrally in reception	136	87%	134	94%
Able to shower every day	159	100%	145	100%
Quality of food is good/very good	52	33%	36	25%
Always get enough to eat at mealtimes	12	8%	19	13%
Can have clothes washed at least once a week	142	90%	121	85%
Feel safe all/most of the time	104	66%	88	62%
Have witnessed staff abusing, threatening, bullying or assaulting another prisoner in this prison	78	55%	66	50%
Have been abused, threatened, bullied or assaulted by staff member	54	38%	36	27%
Would/probably would report abuse etc. by staff	37	26%	50	37%
Have been abused, threatened, bullied or assaulted by another prisoner	56	39%	57	41%
Would/probably would report abuse etc. by other prisoners	20	14%	19	14%
Given a reasonable explanation every time/most times you or your cell is searched	50	32%	51	35%
System for accessing personal property works well	58	41%	53	38%
Treated with respect by staff all/most of the time	109	69%	100	69%
Complaints system works well	26	20%	27	23%
Have a personal officer	138	87%	130	90%
Personal officer is helpful	90	65%	85	66%
Prisoners are consulted about canteen etc. and things can change as a result	24	18%	24	19%
Know the role of an IPM	83	53%	87	61%
Know how to contact an IPM	68	44%	72	51%
Last time contacted IPM it was helpful/neutral	27	42%	32	63%
Easy to access education	121	86%	144	88%
Easy to access skills training	53	43%	44	38%
Easy to access other prison jobs	89	65%	81	65%
Able to go to the gym/play sports at least once last week	139	97%	128	96%
Able to go to the library at least once last week	104	83%	92	82%
Able to spend at least one hour every day exercising in the fresh air last week	123	78%	103	72%

Able to spend more than 2 hours out of cell on previous weekday	141	89%	131	91%
Able to spend more than 2 hours out of cell on previous Saturday	142	90%	130	90%
Well/neutrally supported to practice religion	66	75%	63	88%
Able to have an in-person visit every week in last month	101	77%	77	67%
Visitors treated with respect by staff all/most of the time	86	65%	70	60%
Able to have video visit every week in last month	70	67%	53	60%
Access to in-cell prison-issued phone	154	98%	No data	No data
Know what courses need to undertake for progression (convicted only)	91	67%	No data	No data
Easy to access the courses I need	13	16%	No data	No data
Seen by a health professional within 24 hours of arrival	100	76%	No data	No data
Know how to access healthcare	148	99%	No data	No data
Easy to access a doctor	68	47%	64	48%
Easy to access a nurse/nurse practitioner	108	74%	90	69%
Easy to access a dentist	60	44%	58	45%
Easy to access mental healthcare	49	43%	50	49%
Easy to access addictions services	77	76%	57	65%
Easy to access pharmacist	67	65%	51	55%
Easy to access prison-based social work	62	52%	No data	No data
Easy to access medical appointments outside the prison	26	22%	30	33%
Good quality service from doctors	57	40%	68	54%
Good quality service from nurses/nurse practitioners	100	70%	98	76%
Good quality dental services	74	56%	74	63%
Good quality mental health services	52	50%	47	50%
Good quality addictions services	71	75%	55	64%
Good quality pharmacy services	68	66%	54	61%
Good quality PBSW service	50	44%	No data	No data
Good/neutral support for managing disabilities/long-term health conditions	33	55%	No data	No data
Received helpful support for alcohol use (only those who said they needed it)	23	58%	11	48%
Received helpful support for drug use (only those who said they needed it)	44	64%	34	65%
Received helpful support for mental health (only those who said they needed it)	34	35%	34	48%

HMP Shotts in Comparison with all other closed establishments

This table shows a comparison between HMP Shotts (October 2025) and all other insert type of comparator prison surveyed in time frame (13 prisons*). Where results are shown as statistically significant, this means that it is unlikely that the difference between HMP Shotts and the comparator group 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 within the results, meaning that some results may appear significant by chance when in reality there is no real difference.

The responses from all prisons in the comparator group were weighted by size to give a representative reflection of the responses from the group of prisons included in this group. In total, there were 160 respondents in the HMP Shotts group, and 2,057 respondents in the comparator group.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Please note that there are likely to be some minor discrepancies between the figures reported in the table below compared with the figures reported in the main survey findings report. There are two reasons for this:

1. Where there are discrepancies of one percentage point, this is due to the different rounding systems used by the two different sets of software used to run the analysis. The main report uses Microsoft Excel, which uses the “bankers’ rounding” system, which rounds .5 numbers to the nearest even number. However, the figures shown in the table below were generated using SPSS analytical software, which rounds .5 values up to the next whole number.

2. Several questions in this survey contain a “prefer not to say option” (e.g. most questions about personal safety). These are marked with a double asterisk (**) in the table below. In order to create binary categories for chi square significance testing, the “prefer not to say” option was treated as missing data for these questions. However, in the main report above, “prefer not to say” is included in the analysis. As a result, questions with a “prefer not to say” option show slightly different statistics in this table compared to the main report.

Colour coding:
No colour: No statistically significant difference between the two groups
Orange: HMP Shotts significantly more negative than the comparator group
Green: HMP Shotts significantly more positive than the comparator group

Question	Shotts 2025		Comparator Group	
	No. of responses	% of valid responses	No. of responses	% of valid responses
Was offered an induction	90	63%	1,105	59%
Was treated well/neutrally in reception	136	87%	1746	89%
Able to shower every day	159	100%	1620	80%
Quality of food is good/very good	52	33%	632	31%
Always get enough to eat at mealtimes	12	8%	248	12%
Can have clothes washed at least once a week	142	90%	1854	93%
Feel safe all/most of the time	104	66%	1245	62%
Have witnessed staff abusing, threatening, bullying or assaulting another prisoner in this prison	78	55%	1055	57%
Have been abused, threatened, bullied or assaulted by staff member	54	38%	726	39%
Would/probably would report abuse etc. by staff	37	26%	619	34%
Have been abused, threatened, bullied or assaulted by another prisoner	56	39%	773	41%
Would/probably would report abuse etc. by other prisoners	20	14%	431	24%
Given a reasonable explanation every time/most times you or your cell is searched	50	32%	638	33%
System for accessing personal property works well	58	41%	514	30%
Treated with respect by staff all/most of the time	109	69%	1221	61%
Complaints system works well	26	20%	270	19%
Have a personal officer	138	87%	1148	58%
Personal officer is helpful	90	65%	460	41%
Prisoners are consulted about canteen etc. and things can change as a result	24	18%	278	17%
Know the role of an IPM	83	53%	942	47%
Know how to contact an IPM	68	44%	756	38%
Last time contacted IPM it was helpful/neutral	27	42%	287	53%
Easy to access education	121	86%	885	50%
Easy to access skills training	53	43%	467	28%
Easy to access other prison jobs	89	65%	620	36%
Able to go to the gym/play sports at least once last week	139	97%	1584	87%
Able to go to the library at least once last week	104	83%	1048	65%
Able to spend at least one hour every day exercising in the fresh air last week	123	78%	1460	73%
Able to spend more than 2 hours out of cell on previous weekday	141	89%	1202	61%

Able to spend more than 2 hours out of cell on previous Saturday	142	90%	1084	55%
Well/neutrally supported to practice religion	66	75%	780	77%
Able to have an in-person visit every week in last month	101	77%	1034	65%
Visitors treated with respect by staff all/most of the time	86	65%	945	63%
Able to have video visit every week in last month	70	67%	539	43%
Access to in-cell prison-issued phone	154	98%	1803	91%
Know what courses need to undertake for progression (convicted only)	91	67%	515	42%
Easy to access the courses I need	13	16%	107	23%
Seen by a health professional within 24 hours of arrival	100	76%	1614	88%
Know how to access healthcare	148	99%	1792	94%
Easy to access a doctor	68	47%	462	26%
Easy to access a nurse/nurse practitioner	108	74%	883	49%
Easy to access a dentist	60	44%	334	20%
Easy to access mental healthcare	49	43%	420	28%
Easy to access addictions services	77	76%	553	45%
Easy to access pharmacist	67	65%	511	38%
Easy to access prison-based social work	62	52%	458	35%
Easy to access medical appointments outside the prison	26	22%	285	22%
Good quality service from doctors	57	40%	629	38%
Good quality service from nurses/nurse practitioners	100	70%	966	55%
Good quality dental services	74	56%	556	39%
Good quality mental health services	52	50%	488	36%
Good quality addictions services	71	75%	547	50%
Good quality pharmacy services	68	66%	552	44%
Good quality PBSW service	50	44%	460	38%
Good/neutral support for managing disabilities/long-term health conditions	33	55%	463	48%
Received helpful support for alcohol use (only those who said they needed it)	23	58%	195	35%
Received helpful support for drug use (only those who said they needed it)	44	64%	369	44%
Received helpful support for mental health (only those who said they needed it)	34	35%	379	28%

*Comparator Prisons:

Inverness 2022

Greenock 2023

Perth 2023

Polmont 2023

Grampian 2023
Stirling 2024
Addiewell 2024
Dumfries 2024
Barlinnie 2024
Glenochil 2025
Kilmarnock 2025
Edinburgh 2025
Low Moss 2025